

AN APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE OF  
MR. COLLEY CIBBER.

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*VOLUME THE FIRST.*

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COLLEY CIBBER





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AN APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE OF  
MR. COLLEY CIBBER

*WRITTEN BY HIMSELF*

A NEW EDITION WITH NOTES AND SUPPLEMENT

BY

ROBERT W. LOWE

*WITH TWENTY-SIX ORIGINAL MEZZOTINT PORTRAITS BY*

*R. B. PARKES, AND EIGHTEEN ETCHINGS*

*BY ADOLPHE LALAUZE*

*IN TWO VOLUMES*

VOLUME THE FIRST

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LONDON

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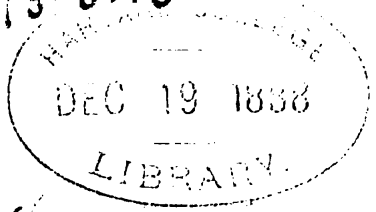
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## PREFACE.

**C**OLLEY CIBBER'S famous Autobiography has always been recognized as one of the most delightful books of its class ; but, to students of theatrical history, the charm of its author's ingenuous frankness has been unable altogether to outweigh the inaccuracy and vagueness of his treatment of matters of fact. To remove this cause of complaint is the principal object of the present edition. But correcting errors is only one of an editor's duties, and by no means the most difficult. More exacting, and almost equally important, are the illustration of the circumstances surrounding the author, the elucidation of his references to current events, and the comparison of his statements and theories with those of judicious contemporaries. In all these particulars I have interpreted my duty in the widest sense, and have aimed at giving, as far as in me lies, an exhaustive commentary on the "Apology."

I am fortunate in being able to claim that my work contains much information which has never before been made public. A careful investigation

of the MSS. in the British Museum, and of the Records of the Lord Chamberlain's Office (to which my access was greatly facilitated by the kindness of Mr. Edward F. S. Pigott, the Licenser of Plays), has enabled me to give the exact dates of many transactions which were previously uncertain, and to give references to documents of great importance in stage history, whose very existence was before unknown. How important my new matter is, may be estimated by comparing the facts given in my notes regarding the intricate transactions of the years 1707 to 1721, with any previous history of the same period. Among other sources of information, I may mention the Cibber Collections in the Forster Library at South Kensington, to which my attention was drawn by the kindness of the courteous keeper, Mr. R. F. Sketchley; and I have also, of course, devoted much time to contemporary newspapers.

In order to illustrate the "Apology," two tracts of the utmost rarity, the "Historia Histrionica" and Anthony Aston's "Brief Supplement" to Cibber's Lives of the Actors, are reprinted in this edition. The "Historia Histrionica" was written, all authorities agree, by James Wright, Barrister-at-Law, whose "History and Antiquities of the County of Rutland" is quoted by Cibber in his first chapter (vol. i. p. 8). The historical value of this pamphlet is very great, because it contains the only formal account in existence of the generation of actors who preceded Betterton, and because it gives many curious

and interesting particulars regarding the theatres and plays, as well as the actors, before and during the Civil Wars. As Cibber begins his account of the stage (see chap. iv.) at the Restoration, there is a peculiar propriety in prefacing it by Wright's work ; a fact which has already been recognized, for the publisher of the third edition (1750) of the "Apology" appended to it "A Dialogue on Old Plays and Old Players," which is simply a reprint of the "Historia Histrionica" under another title, and without the curious preface.

Following the "Historia Histrionica" will be found a copy of the Patent granted to Sir William Davenant, one of the most important documents in English stage history. A similar grant was made to Thomas Killigrew, as is noted on page 87 of this volume.

These documents form a natural introduction to Cibber's History of the Stage and of his own career, which commences, as has been said, at the Restoration, and ends, somewhat abruptly, with his retirement from the regular exercise of his profession in 1733. To complete the record of Cibber's life, I have added a Supplementary Chapter to the "Apology," in which I have also noted briefly the chief incidents of theatrical history up to the time of his death. In this, too, I have told with some degree of minuteness the story of his famous quarrel with Pope ; and to this chapter I have appended a list of Cibber's dramatic productions, and a Bibliography of works by, or relating to him.

Anthony Aston's "Brief Supplement to Colley Cibber, Esq; his Lives of the late famous Actors and Actresses," of which a reprint is given with this edition, is almost, if not quite, the rarest of theatrical books. Isaac Reed, says Genest, "wrote his name in his copy of Aston's little book, with the date of 1769—he says—'this Pamphlet contains several circumstances concerning the Performers of the last century, which are no where else to be found—it seems never to have been published'—he adds—'Easter Monday, 1795—though I have now possessed this pamphlet 26 years, it is remarkable that I never have seen another copy of it.'" Of Aston himself, little is known. According to his own account he came on the stage about 1700, and we know that he was a noted stroller; but as to when he was born, or when he died, there is no information. He is supposed, and probably with justice, to be the "trusty Anthony, who has so often adorned both the theatres in England and Ireland," mentioned in Estcourt's advertisement of his opening of the Bumper Tavern, in the "Spectator" of 28th and 29th December, 1711; and he was no doubt a well-known character among actors and theatre-goers. He would thus be well qualified for his undertaking as biographer of the actors of his time; and, indeed, his work bears every mark of being the production of a writer thoroughly well acquainted with his subject. This valuable pamphlet has been, until now practically a sealed book to theatrical students.

The three works which make up this edition—Cibber's "Apology," Wright's "Historia Histrionica," and Aston's "Brief Supplement"—are reprinted *verbatim et literatim*; the only alterations made being the correction of obvious errors. Among obvious errors I include the avalanche of commas with which Cibber's printers overwhelmed his text. A more grotesque misuse of punctuation I do not know, and I have struck out a large number of these points, not only because they were unmeaning, but also because, to a modern reader, they were irritating in the highest degree. The rest of the punctuation I have not interfered with, and with the single exception of these commas the present edition reproduces not only the matter of the works reprinted, but the very manner in which they originally appeared, the use of italics and capitals having especially been carefully observed.

The "Apology" of Cibber has gone through six editions. I have reprinted the text of the second, because it was certainly revised by the author, and many corrections made. But I have carefully compared my text with that of the first edition, and, wherever the correction is more than merely verbal, I have indicated the fact in a note (*e. g.* vol. i. p. 72). The only edition which has been annotated is that published in 1822, under the editorship of Edmund Bellchambers. Whether the Notes were written by the Editor or by Jacob Henry Burn, who annotated Dickens's "Grimaldi," is a point which I have raised

in my "Bibliographical Account of English Theatrical Literature" (p. 373). I have been unable to obtain any authentic information on the subject, so give Burn's claim for what it is worth. The statement as to the latter's authorship was made in his own handwriting on the back of the title-page of a copy of the book, sold by a well-known bookseller some years ago. It was in the following terms:—

"In 1821, while residing at No. 28, Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, the elder Oxberry, who frequently called in as he passed, found me one day adding notes in MS. to Cibber's 'Apology.' Taking it up, he said he should like to reprint it; he wanted something to employ the spare time of his hands, and proffered to buy my copy, thus annotated. I think it was two pounds I said he should have it for; this sum he instantly paid, and the notes throughout are mine, not Bellchambers's, who having seen it through the press or corrected the proofs whilst printing, added his name as the editor.—J. H. BURN."

Whether Burn or Bellchambers be the author, the notes, I find, are by no means faultlessly accurate. I have made little use of them, except that the Biographies, which are by far the most valuable of the annotations, are reprinted at the end of my second volume. Even in these, it will be seen, I have corrected many blunders. Some of the memoirs I have condensed slightly; and, as the Biographies of Booth, Dogget, and Wilks were in all essential points merely a repetition of Cibber's narrative, I have not reprinted them. In all cases where I have made any use of Bellchambers's edition, or have had

a reference suggested to me by it, I have carefully acknowledged my indebtedness.

Among the works of contemporary writers which I have quoted, either in illustration, in criticism, or in contradiction of Cibber, it will be noticed that I make large drafts upon the anonymous pamphlet entitled "The Laureat : or, the right side of Colley Cibber, Esq;" (1740). I have done this because it furnishes the keenest criticism upon Cibber's statements, and gives, in an undeniably clever style, the views of Cibber's enemies upon himself and his works. I am unable even to guess who was the author of this work, but he must have been a man well acquainted with theatrical matters.

Another pamphlet from which I quote, "The Egotist : or, Colley upon Cibber" (1743), is interesting as being, I think without doubt, the work of Cibber himself, although not acknowledged by him.

Many of the works which I quote in my notes have gone through only one edition, and my quotations from these are easily traced ; but, for the convenience of those who may wish to follow up any of my references to books which have been more than once issued, I may mention that in the case of Davies's "Dramatic Miscellanies" I have referred throughout to the edition of 1785; that Dr. Birkbeck Hill's magnificent edition of Boswell's "Life of Johnson" is that which I have quoted; and that the references to Nichols's reprint of Steele's "Theatre," the "Anti-Theatre," &c., are to the scarce and valuable

edition in 2 vols. 12mo, 1791. My quotations from the "Tatler" have been made from a set of the original folio numbers, which I am fortunate enough to possess; and I have made my extracts from the "Roscius Anglicanus" from Mr. Joseph Knight's beautiful facsimile edition. The index, which will be found at the end of the second volume, has been the object of my special attention, and I have spared no pains to make it clear and exhaustive.

ROBERT W. LOWE.

LONDON, *September*, 1888.



## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

THE twenty-six portraits and eighteen chapter headings in this new edition of Colley Cibber's "Apology" are all newly engraved. The portraits are copperplate mezzotints, engraved by R. B. Parkes from the best and most authentic originals, in the selection of which great care has been taken. Where more than one portrait exists, the least hackneyed likeness has been chosen, and pains have been taken to secure those pictures which are likely to be esteemed as rarities. The chapter headings are etched by Adolphe Lalauze, and the subjects represent scenes from plays illustrating the costumes, manner, and appearance of the actors of Cibber's period, from contemporary authorities.

LONDON, *October*, 1888.



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<sup>1</sup> Colley Cibber's "brazen brainless brothers." According to Horace Walpole, "one of the Statues was the portrait of Oliver Cromwell's porter, then in Bedlam."

HISTORIA HISTRIONICA:

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A N

Historical Account

OF THE

English = Stage ,

SHEWING

The ancient Use, Improvement,  
and Perfection, of Dramatick Repre-  
sentations, in this Nation.

I N A

Dialogue, of *PLAYS* and *PLAYERS*.

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— *Olim meminisse juvabit.*

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L O N D O N .

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## THE PREFACE.

*MUCH has been Writ of late pro and con, about the Stage, yet the Subject admits of more, and that which has not been hetherto toucht upon ; not only what that is, but what it was, about which some People have made such a Busle. What it is we see, and I think it has been sufficiently display'd in Mr. Collier's Book; What it was in former Ages, and how used in this Kingdom, so far back as one may collect any Memorials, is the Subject of the following Dialogue. Old Plays will be always read by the Curious, if it were only to discover the Manners and Behaviour of several Ages ; and how they alter'd. For Plays are exactly like Portraits Drawn in the Garb and Fashion of the time when Painted. You see one Habit in the time of King Charles I. another quite different from that, both for Men and Women, in Queen Elizabeths time ; another under Henry the Eighth different from both ; and so backward all various. And in the several Fashions of Behaviour and Conversation, there is as much Mutability as in that of cloaths. Religion and Religious matters was once as much the Mode in publick Entertainments, as the Contrary has been in*

*some times since. This appears in the different Plays of several Ages: And to evince this, the following Sheets are an Essay or Specimen.*

*Some may think the Subject of this Discourse trivial, and the persons herein mention'd not worth remembering. But besides that I could name some things contested of late with great heat, of as little, or less Consequence, the Reader may know that the Profession of Players is not so totally scandalous, nor all of them so reprobate, but that there has been found under that Name, a Canonized Saint in the primitive Church; as may be seen in the Roman Martyrology on the 29th of March; his name Masculas a Master of Interludes, (the Latin is Archimimus, and the French translation un Maitre Comedien) who under the Persecution of the Vandals in Africa, by Geisericus the Arian King, having endured many and greivious Torments and Reproaches for the Confession of the Truth, finisht the Course of this glorious Combat. Saith the said Martyrology.*

*It appears from this, and some further Instances in the following Discourse, That there have been Players of worthy Principles as to Religion, Loyalty, and other Virtues; and if the major part of them fall under a different Character, it is the general unhappiness of Mankind, that the Most are the Worst.*

A  
DIALOGUE  
OF  
PLAYS and PLAYERS.

LOVEWIT, TRUMAN.

LOVEW. HONEST Old Cavalier! well met, 'faith  
I'm glad to see thee.

TRUM. Have a care what you call me. Old, is a  
Word of Disgrace among the Ladies; to be Honest is  
to be Poor, and Foolish, (as some think) and Cavalier  
is a Word as much out of Fashion as any of 'em.

LOVEW. The more's the pity: But what said the  
Fortune-Teller in *Ben. Johnson's* Mask of *Gypsies*, to  
the then *Lord Privy Seal*,

*Honest and Old!*

*In those the Good Part of a Fortune is told.*

TRUM. *Ben. Johnson?* How dare you name  
*Ben. Johnson* in these times? When we have such a  
crowd of Poets of a quite different Genius; the least  
of which thinks himself as well able to correct *Ben.*  
*Johnson*, as he could a Country School Mistress that  
taught to Spell.

LOVEW. We have indeed, Poets of a different  
Genius; so are the Plays: but in my Opinion, they

are all of 'em (some few excepted) as much inferior to those of former Times, as the Actors now in being (generally speaking) are, compared to *Hart, Mohun, Burt, Lacy, Clun,* and *Shatterel*; for I can reach no farther backward.

TRUM. I can; and dare assure you, if my Fancy and Memory are not partial (for Men of my Age are apt to be over indulgent to the Thoughts of their youthful Days) I say the Actors that I have seen before the Wars, *Lowin, Tayler, Pollard,* and some others, were almost as far beyond *Hart* and his Company, as those were beyond these now in being.

LOVEW. I am willing to believe it, but cannot readily; because I have been told, That those whom I mention'd, were Bred up under the others of your Acquaintance, and follow'd their manner of Action, which is now lost. So far, that when the Question has been askt, Why these Players do not revive the *Silent Woman*, and some other of *Johnson's* Plays, (once of highest esteem) they have answer'd, truly, Because there are none now Living who can rightly Humour those Parts; for all who related to the *Black-friers*, (where they were Acted in perfection) are now Dead, and almost forgotten.

TRUM. 'Tis very true, *Hart* and *Clun*, were bred up Boys at the *Black-friers*, and acted Womens Parts, *Hart* was *Robinson's* Boy or Apprentice: He acted the Dutchess in the Tragedy of *the Cardinal*, which was the first Part that gave him Reputation. *Cartwright*, and *Wintershal* belong'd to the private

House in *Salisbury-court*, *Burt* was a Boy first under *Shank* at the *Black-friers*, then under *Beeston* at the *Cockpit*; and *Mohun*, and *Shatterel* were in the same Condition with him, at the last Place. There *Burt* used to Play the principal Women's Parts, in particular *Clariana* in *Love's Cruelty*; and at the same time *Mohun* acted *Bellamente*, which Part he retain'd after the Restauration.

LOVEW. That I have seen, and can well remember. I wish they had Printed in the last Age (so I call the times before the Rebellion) the Actors Names over against the Parts they Acted, as they have done since the Restauration. And thus one might have guest at the Action of the Men, by the Parts which we now Read in the Old Plays.

TRUM. It was not the Custome and Usage of those Days, as it hath been since. Yet some few Old Plays there are that have the Names set against the Parts, as, *The Dutchess of Malfy*; *the Picture*; *the Roman Actor*; *the deserving Favourite*; *the Wild Goose Chace*, (at the *Black-friers*) *the Wedding*; *the Renegado*; *the fair Maid of the West*; *Hannibal and Scipio*; *King John and Matilda*; (at the *Cockpit*) and *Holland's Leaguer*, (at *Salisbury Court*).

LOVEW. These are but few indeed: But pray Sir, what Master-Parts can you remember the Old *Black-friers* Men to Act, in *Johnson*, *Shakespear*, and *Fletcher's* Plays.

TRUM. What I can at present recollect I'll tell you; *Shakespear*, (who as I have heard, was a much

better Poet, than Player) *Burbadge*, *Hemmings*, and others of the Older sort, were Dead before I knew the Town; but in my time, before the Wars, *Lowin* used to Act, with mighty Applause, *Falstaffe*, *Morose*, *Volpone*, and *Mammon* in the *Alchymist*; *Melancius*, in the *Maid's* Tragedy, and at the same time *Amyntor* was Play'd by *Stephen Hammerton*, (who was at first a most noted and beautiful Woman Actor, but afterwards he acted with equal Grace and Applause, a Young Lover's Part); *Tayler* Acted *Hamlet* incomparably well, *Jago*, *Truewit* in the *Silent Woman*, and *Face* in the *Alchymist*; *Swanston* used to Play *Othello*; *Pollard*, and *Robinson* were Comedians, so was *Shank* who us'd to Act Sir *Roger*, in the *Scornful Lady*. These were of the *Black-friers*. Those of principal Note at the *Cock-pit*, were, *Perkins*, *Michael Bowyer*, *Sumner*, *William Allen*, and *Bird*, eminent Actors, and *Robins* a Comedian. Of the other Companies I took little notice.

LOVEW. Were there so many Companies?

TRUM. Before the Wars, there were in being all these Play-houses at the same time. The *Black-friers*, and *Globe* on the *Bankside*, a Winter and Summer House, belonging to the same Company, called the King's Servants; the *Cockpit* or *Phœnix*, in *Drury-lane*, called the Queen's Servants; the private House in *Salisbury-court*, called the Prince's Servants; the *Fortune* near *White-cross-street*, and the *Red Bull* at the upper end of *St. John's-street* :

The two last were mostly frequented by Citizens, and the meaner sort of People. All these Companies got Money, and Liv'd in Reputation, especially those of the *Black-friers*, who were Men of grave and sober Behaviour.

LOVEW. Which I admire at; That the Town much less than at present, could then maintain Five Companies, and yet now Two can hardly subsist.

TRUM. Do not wonder, but consider, That tho' the Town was then, perhaps, not much more than half so Populous as now, yet then the Prices were small (there being no Scenes) and better order kept among the Company that came; which made very good People think a Play an Innocent Diversion for an idle Hour or two, the Plays themselves being then, for the most part, more Instructive and Moral. Whereas of late, the Play-houses are so extreamply pestered with Vizard-masks and their Trade, (occasioning continual Quarrels and Abuses) that many of the more Civilized Part of the Town are uneasy in the Company, and shun the Theater as they would a House of Scandal. It is an Argument of the worth of the Plays and Actors, of the last Age, and easily inferr'd, that they were much beyond ours in this, to consider that they cou'd support themselves meerly from their own Merit; the weight of the Matter, and goodness of the Action, without Scenes and Machines: Whereas the present Plays with all that shew, can hardly draw an Audience, unless there be the additional Invitation of a *Signior Fideli*, a *Monsieur*

*L'abbe*, or some such Foreign Regale exprest in the bottom of the Bill.

LOVEW. To wave this Digression, I have Read of one *Edward Allin*, a Man so famed for excellent Action, that among *Ben. Johnson's* epigrams, I find one directed to him, full of Encomium, and concluding thus

*Wear this Renown, 'tis just that who did give  
So many Poets Life, by one should Live.*

Was he one of the *Black-friers*?

TRUM. Never, as I have heard; (for he was Dead before my time). He was Master of a Company of his own, for whom he Built the *Fortune* Play-house from the Ground, a large, round Brick Building. This is he that grew so Rich that he purchased a great estate in *Surrey* and elsewhere; and having no Issue, He built and largely endow'd *Dulwich* College, in the Year 1619, for a Master, a Warden, Four Fellows, Twelve aged poor People, and Twelve poor Boys, &c. A noble Charity.

LOVEW. What kind of Play houses had they before the Wars?

TRUM. The *Black-friers*, *Cockpit*, and *Salisbury-court*, were called Private Houses, and were very small to what we see now. The *Cockpit* was standing since the Restauration, and *Rhode's* Company Acted there for some time.

LOVEW. I have seen that.

TRUM. Then you have seen the other two, in effect; for they were all three Built almost exactly



alike, for Form and Bigness. Here they had Pits for the Gentry, and Acted by Candle-light. The *Globe*, *Fortune* and *Bull*, were large Houses, and lay partly open to the Weather, and there they alwaies Acted by Daylight.

LOVEW. But, prithee, *Truman*, what became of these Players when the Stage was put down, and the Rebellion rais'd ?

TRUM. Most of 'em, except *Lowin*, *Tayler* and *Pollard* (who were superannuated) went into the King's Army, and like good Men and true, Serv'd their Old Master, tho' in a different, yet more honourable, Capacity. *Robinson* was Kill'd at the Taking of a Place, (I think *Basing House*) by *Harrison*, he that was after Hang'd at *Charing-cross*, who refused him Quarter, and Shot him in the Head when he had laid down his Arms ; abusing Scripture at the same time, in saying, *Cursed is he that doth the Work of the Lord negligently*. *Mohun* was a Captain, (and after the Wars were ended here, served in *Flanders*, where he received Pay as a Major) *Hart* was a Lieutenant of Horse under Sir *Thomas Dallison*, in *Prince Rupert's* Regiment, *Burt* was Cornet in the same Troop, and *Shatterel* Quarter-master. *Allen* of the *Cockpit*, was a Major, and Quarter Master General at *Oxford*. I have not heard of one of these Players of any Note that sided with the other Party, but only *Swanston*, and he profest himself a Presbyterian, took up the Trade of a Jeweller, and liv'd in *Alder-manbury*, within the Territory of Father *Calamy*. The

rest either Lost, or expos'd their Lives for their King. When the Wars were over, and the Royalists totally Subdued, most of 'em who were left alive gather'd to *London*, and for a Subsistence endeavour'd to revive their Old Trade, privately. They made up one Company out of all the Scatter'd Members of Several; and in the Winter before the King's Murder, 1648, they ventured to Act some Plays with as much caution and privacy as cou'd be, at the *Cockpit*. They continu'd undisturbed for three or four Days; but at last as they were presenting the Tragedy of the *Bloudy Brother* (in which *Lowin* Acted *Aubrey*, *Taylor* *Rollo*, *Pollard* the *Cook*, *Burt* *Latorch*, and I think *Hart* *Otto*) a Party of Foot Souldiers beset the House, surpriz'd 'em about the midle of the Play, and carried 'em away in their habits, not admitting them to shift, to *Hatton-house*, then a Prison, where having detain'd them some time, they Plunder'd them of their Cloths and let 'em loose again. Afterwards in *Oliver's* time, they used to Act privately, three or four Miles, or more, out of Town, now here, now there, sometimes in Noblemens Houses, in particular *Holland-house* at *Kensington*, where the Nobility and Gentry who met (but in no great Numbers) used to make a Sum for them, each giving a broad Peice, or the like. And *Alexander Goffe*, the Woman Actor at *Black-friers* (who had made himself known to Persons of Quality) used to be the Jackal, and give notice of Time and Place. At Christmass, and *Bartlemew-fair*, they used to Bribe the Officer

who Commanded the Guard at *Whitehall*, and were thereupon connived at to Act for a few Days, at the *Red Bull*; but were sometimes notwithstanding Disturb'd by Soldiers. Some pickt up a little Money by publishing the Copies of Plays never before Printed, but kept up in Manuscript. For instance, in the Year 1652, *Beaumont* and *Fletcher's Wild Goose Chace* was Printed in Folio, *for the Public use of all the Ingenious*, (as the Title-page says) *and private Benefit of John Lowin and Joseph Tayler, Servants to his late Majesty*; and by them Dedicated *To the Honour'd few Lovers of Dramatick Poesy*: Wherein they modestly intimate their Wants. And that with sufficient Cause; for whatever they were before the Wars, they were, after, reduced to a necessitous Condition. *Lowin* in his latter Days, kept an Inn (the three Pidgions) at *Brentford*, where he dyed very Old, (for he was an Actor of eminent Note in the Reign of K. *James* the first) and his Poverty was as great as his Age. *Tayler* Dyed at *Richmond* and was there Buried. *Pollard* who Lived Single, and had a Competent Estate; Retired to some Relations he had in the Country, and there ended his Life. *Perkins* and *Sumner* of the *Cockpit*, kept House together at *Clerkenwel*, and were there Buried. These all Dyed some Years before the Restauration. What follow'd after, I need not tell you: You can easily Remember.

LOVEW. Yes, presently after the Restauration, the King's Players Acted publickly at the *Red Bull* for some time, and then Removed to a New-built Play-

house in *Vere-street*, by *Claremarket*. There they continued for a Year or two, and then removed to the *Theater Royal* in *Drury-lane*, where they first made use of Scenes, which had been a little before introduced upon the publick Stage by Sir *William Davenant* at the *Duke's Old Theater* in *Lincolns-Inn-fields*, but afterwards very much improved, with the Addition of curious Machines, by Mr. *Betterton* at the New *Theater* in *Dorset-Garden*, to the great Expence and continual Charge of the Players. This much impair'd their Profit o'er what it was before; for I have been inform'd, (by one of 'em) That for several Years next after the Restauration, every whole Sharer in Mr. *Hart's* Company, got 1000*l. per an.* About the same time that Scenes first enter'd upon the Stage at *London*, Women were taught to Act their own Parts; since when, we have seen at both Houses several excellent Actresses, justly famed as well for Beauty, as perfect good Action. And some Plays (in particular *The Parson's Wedding*) have been Presented all by Women, as formerly all by Men. Thus it continued for about 20 Years, when Mr. *Hart* and some of the Old Men began to grow weary, and were minded to leave off; then the two Companies thought fit to Unite; but of late, you see, they have thought it no less fit to Divide again, though both Companies keep the same Name of his Majesty's Servants. All this while the Play-house Musick improved Yearly, and is now arrived to greater Perfection than ever I knew it. Yet for all these Advantages, the Reputation

of the Stage, and Peoples Affection to it, are much Decay'd. Some were lately severe against it, and would hardly allow Stage-Plays fit to be longer permitted. Have you seen Mr. *Collier's* book ?

TRUM. Yes, and his Opposer's.

LOVEW. And what think you ?

TRUM. In my mind Mr. *Collier's* Reflections are Pertinent, and True in the Main ; the Book ingeniously Writ, and well Intended : But he has over-shot himself in some Places ; and his Respondents, perhaps, in more. My Affection inclines me not to Engage on either side, but rather Mediate. If there be Abuses relating to the Stage ; (which I think is too apparent) let the Abuse be Reformed, and not the use, for that Reason only, Abolish'd. 'Twas an Old saying when I was a Boy,

*Absit Abusus, non desit totaliter Usus.*

I shall not run through Mr. *Collier's* Book ; I will only touch a little on two or three general Notions, in which, I think he may be mistaken. What he urges out of the Primitive Councils, and Fathers of the Church, seems to me to be directed against the Heathen Plays, which were a sort of Religious Worship with them, to the Honour of *Ceres, Flora*, or some of their false Deities ; they had always a little Altar on their Stages, as appears plain enough from some places in *Plautus*. And Mr. *Collier* himself, p. 235, tells us out of *Livy*, that Plays were brought in upon the Score of Religion, to pacify the Gods. No wonder

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then, they forbid Christians to be present at them, for it was almost the same as to be present at their Sacrifices. We must also observe that this was in the Infancy of Christianity, when the Church was under severe, and almost continual Persecutions, and when all its true Members were of most strict and exemplary Lives, not knowing when they should be call'd to the Stake, or thrown to Wild-Beasts. They communicated Daily, and expected Death hourly; their thoughts were intent upon the next World, they abstain'd almost wholly from all Diversions and pleasures (though lawfull and Innocent) in this. Afterwards when Persecution ceased, and the church flourisht, Christians being then freed from their former Terrors, allow'd themselves, at proper times, the lawfull Recreations of Conversation, and among other (no doubt) this of Shewes and Representations. After this time, the Censures of the Church indeed, might be continued, or revived, upon occasion, against Plays and Players; tho' (in my Opinion) it cannot be understood generally, but only against such Players who were of Vicious and Licencious Lives, and represented profane Subjects, inconsistant with the Morals and probity of Manners requisite to Christians; and frequented chiefly by such loose and Debaucht People, as were much more apt to Corrupt than Divert those who associated with them. I say, I cannot think the Canons and Censures of the Fathers can be applyed to all Players, *quatenus* Players; for if so how could Plays be continued among the Chris-

tians, as they were, of Divine Subjects, and Scriptural Stories? A late French Author, speaking of the Original of the *Hotel de Bourgogne* (a Play-house in *Paris*) says that the ancient Dukes of that Name gave it to the Brotherhood of the Passion, established in the Church of Trinity-Hospital in the *Rue S. Denis*, on condition that they should represent here Interludes of Devotion: And adds that there have been public Shews in this Place 600 Years ago. The Spanish and Portuquize continue still to have, for the most part, such Ecclesiastical Stories, for the Subject of their Plays: And, if we may believe *Gage*, they are Acted in their Churches in *Mexico*, and the Spanish *West-Indies*.

LOVEW. That's a great way off, *Truman*; I had rather you would come nearer Home, and confine your discourse to Old *England*.

TRUM. So I intend. The same has been done here in *England*; for otherwise how comes it to be prohibited in the 88<sup>th</sup> Canon, among those past in Convocation, 1603. Certain it is that our ancient Plays were of Religious Subjects, and had for their Actors, (if not Priests) yet Men relating to the Church.

LOVEW. How does that appear?

TRUM. Nothing clearer. *Stow* in his Survey of *London*, has one Chapter of the *Sports and Pastimes of old time used in this City*; and there he tells us, That in the Year 1391 (which was 15 R. 2.) a Stage-Play was play'd by the Parish-Clerks of *London*, at the *Skinner's-well* beside

*Smithfield*, which Play continued three Days together, the King, Queen, and Nobles of the Realm being present. And another was play'd in the Year 1409, (11 H. 4.) which lasted eight Days, and was of Matter from the Creation of the World; whereat was present most part of the Nobility and Gentry of *England*. Sir *William Dugdale*, in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 116, speaking of the *Gray-friers* (or *Franciscans*) at *Coventry*, says, Before the suppression of the Monasteries, this City was very famous for the Pageants that were play'd therein upon *Corpus-Christi* Day; which Pageants being acted with mighty State and Reverence by the Friers of this House, had Theatres for the several Scenes very large and high, plac'd upon Wheels, and drawn to all the eminent Parts of the City, for the better advantage of the Spectators; and contain'd the Story of the New Testament, composed in old English Rhime. An ancient Manuscript of the same is now to be seen in the *Cottonian Library*, *Sub Effig. Vespas. D. 8*. Since the Reformation, in Queen *Elizabeth's* time, Plays were frequently acted by Quiristers and Singing Boys; and several of our old Comedies have printed in the Title Page, *Acted by the Children of Paul's*, (not the School, but the Church) others, *By the Children of Her Majesty's Chappel*; in particular, *Cinthias Revels*, and the *Poetaster* were play'd by them; who were at that time famous for good Action. Among *Ben. Johnson's* Epigrams, you may find *An Epitaph on S. P.*



(Sal Pavy) *one of the Children of Queen Elizabeth's Chappel*, part of which runs thus,

*Years he counted scarce Thirteen  
When Fates turn'd Cruel,  
Yet three fill'd Zodiacks he had been  
The Stages Jewell ;  
And did act (what now we moan)  
Old Men so duly,  
As, sooth, the Parcæ thought him one,  
He play'd so truly.*

Some of these Chappel Boys, when they grew Men, became Actors at the *Black-friers*; such were *Nathan Feild*, and *John Underwood*. Now I can hardly imagine that such Plays and Players as these, are included in the severe Censure of the Councils and Fathers; but such only who are truly within the Character given by *Didacus de Tapia*, cited by Mr. *Collier*, p. 276, viz. *The Infamous Playhouse; a place of contradiction to the strictness and sobriety of Religion; a place hated by God, and haunted by the Devil*. And for such I have as great an abhorrance as any man.

LOVEW. Can you guess of what Antiquity the representing of Religious Matters, on the Stage, hath been in *England*?

TRUM. How long before the Conquest I know not, but that it was used in *London* not long after, appears by *Fitz-Stevens*, an Author who wrote in the reign of King *Henry the Second*. His words are, *Londonia pro spectaculis theatralibus, pro ludis scenicis, ludos habet sanctiores, Representationes mira-*

*culorum, quæ sancti Confessores operati sunt, seu Representationes passionum quibus claruit constantia Martyrum.* Of this, the Manuscript which I lately mention'd, in the *Cottonian* Library, is a notable instance. Sir *William Dugdale* cites this Manuscript, by the Title of *Ludus Coventriæ*; but in the printed Catalogue of that Library, p. 113, it is named thus, *A Collection of Plays in old English Metre. h. e. Dramata sacra in quibus exhibentur historiæ Veteris & N. Testamenti, introductis quasi in Scenam personis illic memoratis, quas secum invicem colloquentes pro ingenio fingit Poeta. Videntur olim coram populo, sive ad instruendum sive ad placendum, a fratribus mendicantibus representata.* It appears by the latter end of the Prologue, that these Plays or Interludes, were not only play'd at *Coventry*, but in other Towns and Places upon occasion. And possibly this may be the same Play which *Stow* tells us was play'd in the reign of King *Henry IV.*, which lasted for Eight Days. The Book seems by the Character and Language to be at least 300 Years old. It begins with a general Prologue, giving the arguments of 40 Pageants or Gesticulations (which were as so many several Acts or Scenes) representing all the Histories of both Testaments, from the Creation, to the choosing of *St. Mathias* to be an Apostle. The Stories of the New Testament are more largely exprest, *viz.* The Annunciation, Nativity, Visitation; but more especially all Matters relating to the Passion very particularly, the Resur-

rection, Ascention, the choice of St. *Mathias*: After which is also represented the Assumption, and last Judgment. All these things were treated of in a very homely style, (as we now think) infinitely below the Dignity of the Subject: But it seems the Gust of that Age was not so nice and delicate in these Matters; the plain and incurious Judgment of our Ancestors, being prepared with favour, and taking every thing by the right and easiest Handle: For example, in the Scene relating to the Visitation:

*Maria.* But husband of oo thyng pray you most mekely,  
I haue knowing that our Cosyn Elizabeth with childe is,  
That it please yow to go to her hastyly,  
If ought we myth comfort her it wer to me blys.

*Joseph.* A Gods sake, is she with child, sche?  
Than will her husband Zachary be mery.  
In Montana they dwelle, fer hence, so moty the,  
In the city of Juda, I know it verily;  
It is hence I trowe myles two a fifty,  
We ar like to be wery or we come at the same.  
I wole with a good will, blessyd wyff Mary;  
Now go we forth then in goddys name, &c.

#### A little before the Resurrection:

*Nunc dormient milites, & veniet anima Christi de inferno, cum  
Adam & Eva, Abraham, John Baptist, & aliis.*

*Anima Christi.* Come forth Adam, and Eve with the,  
And all my fryndes that herein be,  
In Paradys come forth with me  
In blysse for to dwelle.  
The fende of hell that is yowr foo  
He shall be wrappyd and woundyn in woo:  
Fro wo to welth now shall ye go,  
With myrth euer mor to melle.

*Adam.* I thank the Lord of thy grete grace  
That now is forgiuen my gret trespase,  
Now shall we dwellyn in blyssful pace, &c.

The last Scene or Pageant, which represents the  
Day of Judgment, begins thus :

*Michael.* *Surgite,* All men aryse,  
*Venite ad iudicium,*  
For now is set the High Justice,  
And hath assignyd the day of Dome :  
Kepe you redyly to this grett assyse,  
Both gret and small, all and sum,  
And of yowr answer you now advise,  
What you shall say when that yow com, &c.

These and such like, were the Plays which in former Ages were presented publickly : Whether they had any settled and constant Houses for that purpose, does not appear ; I suppose not. But it is notorious that in former times there was hardly ever any Solemn Reception of Princes, or Noble Persons, but Pageants (that is Stages Erected in the open Street) were part of the Entertainment. On which there were Speeches by one or more Persons, in the nature of Scenes ; and be sure one of the Speakers must be some Saint of the same Name with the Party to whom the Honour is intended. For instance, there is an ancient Manuscript at *Coventry*, call'd the *Old Leet Book*, wherein is set down in a very particular manner, (fo. 168) the reception of Queen *Margaret*, wife of *H. 6*, who came to *Coventry* (and I think, with her, her young Son, Prince *Edward*) on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy-Cross, 35

*H. 6. (1456).* Many Pageants and Speeches were made for her Welcome ; out of all which, I shall observe but two or three, in the Old English, as it is Recorded.

*St. Edward.* Moder of mekenes, Dame Margarete, princes most excellent,

I King Edward wellcome you with affection cordial,  
 Certefying to your highnes mekely myn entent,  
 For the wele of the King and you hertily pray I shall,  
 And for prince Edward my gostly chyld, who I love principal.  
 Praying the, John Evangelist, my help therein to be,  
 On that condition right humbly I giue this Ring to the.

*John Evangelist.* Holy Edward crowned King, Brother in Verginity,

My power plainly I will prefer thy will to amplefy.  
 Most excellent princes of wymen mortal, your Bedeman will I be.  
 I know your Life so vertuous that God is pleased thereby.  
 The birth of you unto this Reme shall cause great Melody :  
 The vertuous voice of Prince Edward shall dayly well encrease,  
 St. Edward his Godfader and I shall pray therefore doubtlese.

*St. Margaret.* Most notabul princes of wymen earthle,  
 Dame Margarete, the chefe myrth of this Empyre,  
 Ye be hertely welcome to this Cyte.  
 To the plesure of your highnesse I wyll set my desyre ;  
 Both nature and gentlenesse doth me require,  
 Seth we be both of one name, to shew you kindnesse ;  
 Wherefore by my power ye shall have no distresse.

I shall pray to the Prince that is endlese  
 To socour you with solas of his high grace ;  
 He will here my petition this is doubtlesse,  
 For I wrought all my life that his will wace.  
 Therefore, Lady, when you be in any dredfull case,  
 Call on me boldly, thereof I pray you,  
 And trust in me feythfully, I will do that may pay you.

In the next Reign (as appears in the same Book,

fo. 221) an other Prince *Edward*, Son of King *Edward* the 4, came to *Coventry* on the 28 of *April*, 14 *E.* 4, (1474) and was entertain'd with many Pageants and Speeches, among which I shall observe only two: one was of *St. Edward* again, who was then made to speak thus,

Noble Prince Edward, my Cousin and my Knight,  
 And very Prince of our Line com yn dissent,  
 I Saint Edward have pursued for your faders imperial Right,  
 Whereof he was excluded by full furious intent.  
 Unto this your Chamber as prince full excellent  
 Ye be right welcome. Thanked be Crist of his sonde,  
 For that that was ours is now in your faders honde.

The other Speech was from *St. George*; and thus saith the Book.

———— Also upon the Conдите in the Croscheping was *St. George* armed, and a kings daughter kneeling afore him with a Lamb, and the fader and the moder being in a Towre aboven beholding *St. George* saving their daughter from the Dragon, and the Conдите renning wine in four places, and Minstralcye of Organ playing, and *St. George* hauing this Speech under-written.

O mighty God our all succour celestiall,  
 Which this Royme hast given in dower  
 To thi moder, and to me *George* protection perpetuall  
 It to defend from enimys fer and nere,  
 And as this mayden defended was here  
 By thy grace from this Dragons devour,  
 So, Lord preserve this noble prince, and ever be his socour.

LOVEW. I perceive these holy Matters consisted very much of Praying; but I pittie poor *St. Edward* the Confessor, who in the compass of a few Years, was made to promise his favour and assistance to

two young Princes of the same Name indeed, but of as different and opposite Interests as the two Poles. I know not how he could perform to both.

TRUM. Alas! they were both unhappy, notwithstanding these fine Shews and seeming caresses of Fortune, being both murder'd, one by the Hand, the other by the procurement of *Rich. Duke of Gloucester*. I will produce but one Example more of this sort of Action, or Representations, and that is of later time, and an instance of much higher Nature than any yet mentioned, it was at the marriage of Prince *Arthur*, eldest Son of king *Henry 7.* to the Princess *Catherine of Spain, An. 1501.* Her passage through *London* was very magnificent, as I have read it described in an old M.S. Chronicle of that time. The Pageants and Speeches were many; the Persons represented *St. Catherine, St. Ursula, a Senator, Noblesse, Virtue, an Angel, King Alphonse, Job, Boetius, &c.* among others one is thus described.

When this Spech was ended, she held on her way tyll she cam unto the Standard in Chepe, where was ordeyned the fifth Pagend made like an hevyn, theryn syttyng a Personage representing the fader of hevyn, beyng all formyd of Gold, and brennyng beffor his trone vii Candyilis of wax standyng in vii Candylystykis of Gold, the said personage beyng environed wyth sundry Hyrarchies off Angelis, and sytting in a Cope of most rich cloth of Tyssu, garnishyd wyth stoon and perle in most sumptuous wyse. Foragain which said Pagend upon the sowth syde of the strete stood at that tyme, in a hows wheryn that tyme dwellyd *William Geffrey* habyrdasher, the king, the Quene, my Lady the Kingys moder, my Lord of *Oxynfford*, with many othir Lordys and Ladys, and Perys of this Realm, wyth also certayn Ambassadors of France lately sent from the French King; and so

passyng the said Estatys, eyther guyvyng to other due and convenient Saluts and Countenancs, so sone as hyr grace was approachid unto the sayd Pagend, the fadyr began his Spech as folowyth :

*Hunc veneram locum, septeno lumine septum.  
Dignumque Arthuri totidem astra micant.*

I am begynyng and ende, that made ech creature  
My sylfe, and for my sylfe, but man especially  
Both male and female, made aftyr myne aun fygure,  
Whom I joynd togydyr in Matrimony  
And that in Paradyse, declaring opynly  
That men shall weddyng in my Chyrch solempnize,  
Fyгурid and signified by the erthly Paradyze.

In thys my Chyrch I am allway recydent  
As my chyeff tabernacle, and most chosyn place,  
Among these goldyn candylstikkis, which represent  
My Catholyk Chyrch, shynyng affor my face,  
With lyght of feyth, wisdom, doctryne, and grace,  
And mervelously eke enflamyd toward me  
Wyth the extyngwible fyre of Charyte.

Wherefore, my welbelovid dowgthyr Katharyn,  
Syth I have made yow to myne awn semblance  
In my Chyrch to be maried, and your noble Childryn  
To regn in this land as in their enherytance,  
Se that ye have me in speciall remembrance :  
Love me and my Chyrch yowr spiritual modyr,  
For ye dispysing that oon, dyspysse that othyr.

Look that ye walk in my precepts, and obey them well :  
And here I give you the same blyssyng that I  
Gave my well beloved chylder of Israell ;  
Blyssyd be the fruyt of your bely ;  
Yower substance and frutys I shall encrease and multiply ;  
Yower rebellious Enimyys I shall put in yowr hand,  
Encreasing in honour both yow and yowr land.

LOVEW. This would be censured now a days as profane to the highest degree.



TRUM. No doubt on't: Yet you see there was a time when People were not so nicely censorious in these Matters, but were willing to take things in the best sence: and then this was thought a noble Entertainment for the greatest King in *Europe* (such I esteem King *H. 7.* at that time) and proper for that Day of mighty Joy and Triumph. And I must farther observe out of the Lord *Bacon's* History of *H. 7.* that the chief Man who had the care of that Days Proceedings was Bishop *Fox*, a grave Counselor for War or Peace, and also a good Surveyor of Works, and a good Master of Cerimonies, and it seems he approv'd it. The said Lord *Bacon* tells us farther, That whosoever had those Toys in compiling, they were not altogether Pedantical.

LOVEW. These things however are far from that which we understand by the name of a Play.

TRUM. It may be so; but these were the Plays of those times. Afterwards in the Reign of K. *H. 8.* both the Subject and Form of these Plays began to alter, and have since varied more and more. I have by me, a thing called *A merry Play between the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and Neybour Pratte.* Printed the 5 of *April* 1533, which was 24 *H. 8.* (a few Years before the Dissolution of Monasteries). The design of this Play was to ridicule Friers and Pardoners. Of which I'll give you a taste. To begin it, the Fryer enters with these Words,

Deus hic ; the holy Trynyte  
Preserue all that now here be.

Dere bretherne, yf ye will consyder  
 The Cause why I am com hyder,  
 Ye wolde be glad to knowe my entent ;  
 For I com not hyther for mony nor for rent,  
 I com not hyther for meat nor for meale,  
 But I com hyther for your Soules heale, &c.

After a long Preamble, he addresses himself to  
 Preach, when the Pardoner enters with these  
 Words,

God and St. Leonarde send ye all his grace  
 As many as ben assembled in this place, &c.

And makes a long Speech, shewing his Bulls and his  
 Reliques, in order to sell his Pardons for the raising  
 some Money towards the rebuilding,

Of the holy Chappell of sweet saynt Leonarde,  
 Which late by fyre was destroyed and marde.

Both these speaking together, with continual inter-  
 ruption, at last they fall together by the Ears. Here  
 the Curate enters (for you must know the Scene lies  
 in the Church)

Hold your hands ; a vengeance on ye both two  
 That euer ye came hyther to make this ado,  
 To polute my Chyrche, &c.

*Fri.* Mayster Parson, I marvayll ye will give Lycence  
 To this false knaue in this Audience  
 To publish his ragman rolles with lyes.  
 I'desyred hym ywys more than ones or twyse  
 To hold his peas tyll that I had done,  
 But he would here no more than the man in the mone.

*Pard.* Why sholde I suffre the, more than thou me ?  
 Mayster parson gaue me lycence before the.  
 And I wolde thou knowest it I have relykes here,  
 Other maner stufte than thou dost bere :

I wyll edefy more with the syght of it,  
 Than will all thy pratyng of holy wryt ;  
 For that except that the precher himselfe lyve well,  
 His predycacyon wyll helpe never a dell, &c.

*Par.* No more of this wranglyng in my Chyrch :  
 I shrewe your hertys bothe for this lurche.  
 Is there any blood shed here between these knaues ?  
 Thanked be god they had no stauys,  
 Nor egotoles, for then it had ben wronge.  
 Well, ye shall synge another songe.

Here he calls his Neighbour *Prat* the Constable, with design to apprehend 'em, and set 'em in the Stocks. But the Frier and Pardoner prove sturdy, and will not be stockt, but fall upon the poor Parson and Constable, and bang 'em both so well-favour'dly, that at last they are glad to let 'em go at liberty: And so the Farce ends with a drawn Battail. Such as this were the Plays of that Age, acted in Gentlemens Halls at Christmas, or such like festival times, by the Servants of the Family, or Strowlers who went about and made it a Trade. It is not unlikely that\* Lords in those days, and Persons of eminent Quality, had their several Gangs of Players, as some have now of Fidlers, to whom they give Cloaks and Badges. The first Comedy that I have seen that looks like regular, is *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, writ I think in the reign of King *Edward* 6. This is composed of five Acts, the Scenes unbroken, and the unities of Time and Place duly

\* Till the 25 Year of Queen *Elisabeth*, the Queen had not any Players; but in that Year 12 of the best of all those who belonged to several Lords, were chosen & sworn her Servants, as Grooms of the Chamber. *Stow's Annals*, p. 698.

observed. It was acted at *Christ Colledge* in *Cambridge*; there not being as yet any settled and publick Theaters.

LOVEW. I observe, *Truman*, from what you have said, that Plays in *England* had a beginning much like those of *Greece*, the Monologues and the Pageants drawn from place to place on Wheels, answer exactly to the Cart of *Thespis*, and the Improvements have been by such little steps and degrees as among the Ancients, till at last, to use the Words of Sir *George Buck* (in his *Third University of England*) *Dramatick Poesy is so lively exprest and represented upon the publick Stages and Theatres of this City, as Rome in the Auge (the highest pitch) of her Pomp and Glory, never saw it better perform'd, I mean* (says he) *in respect of the Action and Art, and not of the Cost and Sumptuousness.* This he writ about the Year 1631. But can you inform me *Truman*, when publick Theaters were first erected for this purpose in *London*?

TRUM. Not certainly; but I presume about the beginning of Queen *Elizabeths* Reign. For *Stow* in his Survey of *London* (which Book was first printed in the Year 1598) says, *Of late Years, in place of these Stage-plays (i. e. those of Religious Matters) have been used Comedies, Tragedies, Interludes, and Histories, both true and feigned; for the acting whereof certain publick Places, as the Theatre, the Curtine, &c. have been erected.* And the continuator of *Stows Annals*, p. 1004, says, That in Sixty Years

before the publication of that Book, (which was *An. Dom.* 1629) no less than 17 publick Stages, or common Playhouses, had been built in and about *London*. In which number he reckons five Inns or Common Osteries, to have been in his time turned into Play-houses, one Cock-pit, *St. Paul's* singing School, one in the *Blackfriars*, one in the *Whitefriars*, and one in former time at *Newington Butts*; and adds, before the space of 60 years past, I never knew, heard, or read, of any such Theaters, set Stages, or Playhouses, as have been purposely built within Man's Memory.

LOVEW. After all, I have been told, that Stage-Plays are inconsistant with the Laws of this Kingdom, and Players made Rogues by Statute.

TRUM. He that told you so strain'd a point of Truth. I never met with any Law wholly to suppress them: Sometimes indeed they have been prohibited for a Season; as in times of *Lent*, general Mourning or publick Calamities, or upon other occasions, when the Government saw fit. Thus by Proclamation, 7 of *April*, in the first Year of Queen *Elizabeth*, Plays and Interludes were forbid till *All hallow-tide* next following. *Hollinshed*, p. 1184. Some Statutes have been made for their Regulation or Reformation, not general suppression. By the Stat. 39 *Eliz.* c. 4, (which was made *for the suppressing of Rogues, Vagabonds and sturdy Beggars*) it is enacted,

S. 2, That all persons that be, or utter themselves to be, Proctors, Procurers, Patent gatherers, or Collectors for Gaols,

d

Prisons or Hospitals, or Fencers, Barewards, common players of Interludes and Minstrels, wandering abroad, (other than Players of Interludes belonging to any Baron of this Realm, or any other honourable Personage of greater Degree, to be authoriz'd to play under the Hand and Seal of Arms of such Baron or Personage) All Juglers, Tinkers, Pedlers, and Petty chapmen, wandering abroad, all wandring Persons, &c. able in Body, using loytering, and refusing to work for such reasonable Wages as is commonly given, &c. These shall be ajudged and deemed Rogues, Vagabonds and sturdy Beggars, and punished as such.

LOVEW. But this priviledge of Authorizing or Licensing, is taken away by the Stat. 1 *Ja.* 1. ch. 7, S. 1, and therefore all of them (as Mr. *Collier* says, p. 242) are expresly brought under the foresaid Penalty, without distinction.

TRUM. If he means all Players, without distinction, 'tis a great Mistake. For the force of the Queens Statute extends only to *wandring Players*, and not to such as are the King or Queen's Servants, and establisht in settled Houses by Royal Authority. On such, the ill Character of vagrant Players (or as they are now called, Strolers) can cast no more aspersion, than the wandring Proctors, in the same Statute mentioned, on those of *Doctors-Commons*. By a Stat. made 3 *Ja.* I. ch. 21. It was enacted,

That if any person shall in any Stage-play, Enterlude, Shew, Maygame, or Pageant, jestingly or prophanely speak or use the holy name of God, Christ Jesus, the holy Ghost, or of the Trinity, he shall forfeit for every such offence, 10*l*.

The Stat. 1 *Char.* I. ch. 1, enacts,

That no Meetings, Assemblies, or concourse of People shall be

out of their own Parishes, on the Lords day, for any Sports or Pastimes whatsoever, nor any Bear-bating, Bull-bating, Enterludes, Common Plays, or other unlawful Exercises and Pastimes used by any person or persons within their own Parishes.

These are all the Statutes that I can think of relating to the Stage and Players; but nothing to suppress them totally, till the two Ordinances of the Long Parliament, one of the 22 of *October* 1647, the other of the 11 of *Feb.* 1647. By which all Stage-Plays and Interludes are absolutely forbid; the Stages, Seats, Galleries, &c. to be pulled down; all Players tho' calling themselves the King or Queens Servants, if convicted of acting within two Months before such Conviction, to be punished as Rogues according to Law; the Money received by them to go to the Poor of the Parish; and every Spectator to Pay 5s. to the use of the Poor. Also Cock-fighting was prohibited by one of *Oliver's* Acts of 31 *Mar.* 1654. But I suppose no body pretends these things to be Laws; I could say more on this Subject, but I must break off here, and leave you, *Lovewit*; my Occasions require it.

LOVE. Farewel, Old *Cavalier*.

TRUM. 'Tis properly said; we are almost all of us, now, gone and forgotten.





15 January, 14 Car. II. 1662.

A Copy of the LETTERS PATENTS then granted by King Charles II. under the Great Seal of England, to SIR WILLIAM D'AVENANT, KNT. his Heirs and Assigns, for erecting a new Theatre, and establishing of a company of actors in any place within London or Westminster, or the Suburbs of the same : And that no other but this company, and one other company, by virtue of a like Patent, to THOMAS KILLIGREW, ESQ. ; should be permitted within the said liberties.

CHARLES the second, by the Grace of God, king of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. to all to whom all these presents shall come, greeting.

Whereas our royal father of glorious memory, by his letters patents under his great seal of England bearing date at Westminster the 26th day of March, in the 14th year of his reign, did give and grant unto Sir William D'avenant (by the name of William D'avenant, gent.) his heirs, executors, administrators,

Recites former patents, 14 Car. I. ann. 1639, to Sir Will. D'avenant.

and assigns, full power, licence, and authority, That he, they, and every of them, by him and themselves, and by all and every such person and persons as he or they should depute or appoint, and his and their laborers, servants, and workmen, should and might, lawfully, quietly, and peaceably, frame, erect, new build, and set up, upon a parcel of ground, lying near unto or behind the Three Kings ordinary in Fleet-street, in the parishes of St. Dunstan's in the West, London; or in St. Bride's, London; or in either of them, or in any other ground in or about that place, or in the whole street aforesaid, then allotted to him for that use; or in any other place that was, or then after should be assigned or allotted out to the said Sir William D'avenant by Thomas Earl of Arundel and Surry, then Earl Marshal of England, or any other commissioner for building, for the time being in that behalf, a theatre or play-house, with necessary tiring and retiring rooms, and other places convenient, containing in the whole forty yards square at the most, wherein plays, musical entertainments, scenes, or other the like presentments might be presented. And our said royal father did grant unto the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs, executors, and administrators and assignes, that it should and might be lawful to and for him the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assignes, from time to time, to gather together, entertain, govern, privilege, and keep, such and so many players and

persons to exercise actions, musical presentments, scenes, dancing, and the like, as he the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs, executors, administrators, or assignes, should think fit and approve for the said house. And such persons to permit and continue, at and during the pleasure of the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs, executors, administrators, or assignes, from time to time, to act plays in such house so to be by him or them erected, and exercise musick, musical presentments, scenes, dancing, or other the like, at the same or other houses or times, or after plays are ended, peaceably and quietly, without the impeachment or impediment of any person or persons whatsoever, for the honest recreation of such as should desire to see the same; and that it should and might be lawful to and for the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, to take and receive of such as should resort to see or hear any such plays, scenes, and entertainments whatsoever, such sum or sums of money as was or then after, from time to time, should be accustomed to be given or taken in other play-houses and places for the like plays, scenes, presentments, and entertainments as in and by the said letters patents, relation being thereunto had, more at large may appear.

And whereas we did, by our letters patents under the great seal of England, bearing date the 16th day of May, in the 13th year of our reign, exemplifie

13 Car. II. exemplification of said letters patents.

the said recited letters patents granted by our royal father, as in and by the same, relation being thereunto had, at large may appear.

**Surrender of both to the king in the court of Chancery.** And whereas the said Sir William D'avenant hath surrendered our letters patents of exemplification, and also the said recited letters patents granted by our royal father, into our Court of Chancery, to be cancelled; which surrender we have accepted, and do accept by these presents.

**New grant to Sir William D'avenant, his heirs and assignes.** Know ye that we of our especial grace, certain knowledge, and meer motion, and upon the humble petition of the said Sir William D'avenant, and in consideration of the good and faithful service which he the said Sir William D'avenant hath done unto us, and doth intend to do for the future; and in consideration of the said surrender, have given and granted, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, do give and grant, unto the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assignes, full power, licence, and authority, that he, they, and every one of them, by him and themselves, and by all and every such person and persons as he or they should depute or appoint, and his or their labourers, servants, and workmen, shall and may lawfully, peaceably, and quietly, frame, erect, new build, and set up, in any place within our cities of London and Westminster, or the suburbs thereof,

**To erect a theatre in London or Westmister, or the suburbs.**

where he or they shall find best accommodation for that purpose; to be assigned and allotted out by the surveyor of our works; one theatre or play-house, with necessary tiring and retiring rooms, and other places convenient, of such extent and dimention as the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs or assigns shall think fitting: wherein tragedies, comedies, plays, operas, musick, scenes, and all other entertainments of the stage whatsoever, may be shewed and presented.

And we do hereby, for us, our heirs and successors, grant unto the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs and assigns, full power, licence, and authority, from time to time, to gather together, entertain, govern, priviledge and keep, such and so many players and persons to exercise and act tragedies, comedies, plays, operas, and other performances of the stage, within the house to be built as aforesaid, or within the house in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, wherein the said Sir William D'avenant doth now exercise the premises; or within any other house, where he or they can best be fitted for that purpose, within our cities of London and Westminster, or the suburbs thereof; which said company shall be the servants of our dearly beloved brother, James Duke of York, and shall consist of such number as the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs or assigns, shall from time to time think meet. And such persons to permit and continue at and during the

And to entertain players, &c. to act without the impeachment of any person.

pleasure of the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs or assigns, from time to time, to act plays and entertainments of the stage, of all sorts, peaceably and quietly, without the impeachment or impediment of any person or persons whatsoever, for the honest recreation of such as shall desire to see the same.

And that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs and assigns, to take and receive of such our subjects as shall resort to see or hear any such plays, scenes and entertainments whatsoever, such sum or sums of money, as either have accustomedly been given and taken in the like kind, or as shall be thought reasonable by him or them, in regard of the great expences of scenes, musick, and such new decorations, as have not been formerly used.

And further, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do hereby give and grant unto the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs and assigns, full power to make such allowances out of that which he shall so receive, by the acting of plays and entertainments of the stage, as aforesaid, to the actors and other persons employed in acting, representing, or in any quality whatsoever, about the said theatre, as he or they shall think fit; and that the said company shall be under the sole government and authority of the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs and assigns. And all scandalous and mutinous persons shall from time to time be by him and them ejected and disabled from playing in the said theatre.

And for that we are informed that divers companies of players have taken upon them to act plays publicly in our said cities of London and Westminster, or the suburbs thereof, without any authority for that purpose; we do hereby declare our dislike of the same, and will and grant that only the said company erected and set up, or to be erected and set up by the said Sir William D'avenant, his heirs and assigns, by virtue of these presents, and one other company erected and set up, or to be erected and set up by Thomas Killigrew, Esq., his heirs or assigns, and none other, shall from henceforth act or represent comedies, tragedies, plays, or entertainments of the stage, within our said cities of London and Westminster, or the suburbs thereof; which said company to be erected by the said Thomas Killigrew, his heirs or assigns, shall be subject to his and their government and authority, and shall be stiled the Company of Us and our Royal Consort.

That no other company but this, and one other under Mr. Killigrew, be permitted to act within London or Westminster or the suburbs.

And the better to preserve amity and correspondence betwixt the said companies, and that the one may not inroach upon the other by any indirect means, we will and ordain, That no actor or other person employed about either of the said theatres, erected by the said Sir William D'avenant and Thomas Killigrew, or either of them, or deserting his company, shall be received by the governor or any of the said

No actor to go from one company to the other.

other company, or any other person or persons, to be employed in acting, or in any matter relating to the stage, without the consent and approbation of the governor of the company, whereof the said person so ejected or deserting was a member, signified under his hand and seal. And we do by these presents declare all other company and companies, saving the two companies before mentioned, to be silenced and suppressed.

And forasmuch as many plays, formerly acted, do contain several prophane, obscene, and scurrilous passages ; and the womens parts therein have been acted by men in the habits of women, at which some have taken offence : for the preventing of these abuses for the future, we do hereby straitly charge and command and enjoyn, that from henceforth no new play shall be acted by either of the said companies, containing any passages offensive to piety and good manners, nor any old or revived play, containing any such offensive passages as aforesaid, until the same shall be corrected and purged, by the said masters or governors of the said respective companies, from all such offensive and scandalous passages, as aforesaid. And we do likewise permit and give leave that all the womens parts to be acted in either of the said two companies for the time to come, may be performed by women, so long as these recreations, which, by reason of the abuses aforesaid, were scandalous and offensive, may by such reforma-

To correct plays,  
&c.



tion be esteemed, not only harmless delights, but useful and instructive representations of humane life, to such of our good subjects as shall resort to see the same.

And these our letters patents, or the inrolment thereof, shall be in all things good and effectual in the law, according to the true intent and meaning of the same, any thing in these presents contained, or any law, statute, act, ordinance, proclamation, provision, restriction, or any other matter, cause, or thing whatsoever to the contrary, in any wise notwithstanding; although express mention of the true yearly value, or certainty of the premises, or of any of them, or of any other gifts or grants by us, or by any of our progenitors or predecessors, heretofore made to the said Sir William D'avenant in these presents, is not made, or any other statute, act, ordinance, provision, proclamation, or restriction heretofore had, made, enacted, ordained, or provided, or any other matter, cause, or thing whatsoever to the contrary thereof, in any wise notwithstanding. In witness whereof, we have caused these our letters to be made patents. Witness our self at Westminster, the fifteenth day of January, in the fourteenth year of our reign.

These letters patents to be good and effectual in the law, according to the true meaning of the same, although, &c.

By the King.

HOWARD.



A N  
A P O L O G Y  
FOR THE  
L I F E  
O F

*Mr. COLLEY CIBBER, Comedian,*

A N D

Late PATENTEE of the *Theatre-Royal.*

*With an Historical View of the STAGE during  
his OWN TIME.*

---

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

---

*Hoc est  
Vivere bis, vitâ posse priore frui.* Mart. lib. 2.

*When Years no more of active Life retain,  
'Tis Youth renew'd, to laugh 'em o'er again.* Anonym.

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The SECOND EDITION.

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L O N D O N :

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*Convent - Garden.*

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MDCCXL.



TO A  
CERTAIN GENTLEMAN.<sup>1</sup>

SIR,

BECAUSE I know it would give you less Concern to find your Name in an impertinent Satyr, than before the daintiest Dedication of a modern Author, I conceal it.

Let me talk never so idly to you, this way ; you are, at least, under no necessity of taking it to yourself : Nor when I boast of your favours, need you blush to have bestow'd them. Or I may now give you

<sup>1</sup> The Right Honourable Henry Pelham. Davies ("Life of Garrick," ii. 377) says that the "Apology" was dedicated to "that wise and honest minister," Pelham. John Taylor ("Records of my Life," i. 263) writes : "The name of the person to whom the Dedication to the 'Apology' was addressed is not mentioned, but the late Mr. John Kemble assured me that he had authority for saying it was Mr. Pelham, brother to the Duke of Newcastle." From the internal evidence it seems quite clear that this is so. In the Verses to Cibber quoted in "The Egotist," p. 69, the authoress writes :—

*"Some praise a Patron and reveal him :  
You paint so true, you can't conceal him.  
Their gaudy Praise undue but shames him,  
While your's by Likeness only names him."*

e

all the Attributes that raise a wise and good-natur'd Man to Esteem and Happiness, and not be censured as a Flatterer by my own or your Enemies. — I place my own first ; because as they are the greater Number, I am afraid of not paying the greater Respect to them. Yours, if such there are, I imagine are too well-bred to declare themselves : But as there is no Hazard or visible Terror in an Attack upon my defenceless Station, my Censurers have generally been Persons of an intrepid Sincerity. Having therefore shut the Door against them while I am thus privately addressing you, I have little to apprehend from either of them.

Under this Shelter, then, I may safely tell you, That the greatest Encouragement I have had to publish this Work, has risen from the several Hours of Patience you have lent me at the Reading it. It is true, I took the Advantage of your Leisure in the Country, where moderate Matters serve for Amusement ; and there, indeed, how far your Good-nature for an old Acquaintance, or your Reluctance to put the Vanity of an Author out of countenance, may have carried you, I cannot be sure ; and yet Appearances give me stronger Hopes : For was not the Complaisance of a whole Evening's Attention as much as an Author of more Importance ought to have expected ? Why then was I desired the next Day to give you a second Lecture ? Or why was I kept a third Day with you, to tell you more of the same Story ? If these Circumstances have made

me vain, shall I say, Sir, you are accountable for them? No, Sir, I will rather so far flatter myself as to suppose it possible, That your having been a Lover of the Stage (and one of those few good Judges who know the Use and Value of it, under a right Regulation) might incline you to think so copious an Account of it a less tedious Amusement, than it may naturally be to others of different good Sense, who may have less Concern or Taste for it. But be all this as it may; the Brat is now born, and rather than see it starve upon the Bare Parish Provision, I chuse thus clandestinely to drop it at your Door, that it may exercise One of your Many Virtues, your Charity, in supporting it.

If the World were to know into whose Hands I have thrown it, their Regard to its Patron might incline them to treat it as one of his Family: But in the Consciousness of what I *am*, I chuse not, Sir, to say who you *are*. If your Equal in Rank were to do publick Justice to your Character, then, indeed, the Concealment of your Name might be an unnecessary Diffidence: But am I, Sir, of Consequence enough, in any Guise, to do Honour to Mr. ———? Were I to set him in the most laudable Lights that Truth and good Sense could give him, or his own Likeness would require, my officious Mite would be lost in that general Esteem and Regard which People of the first Consequence, even of different Parties, have a Pleasure in paying him. Encomiums to Superiors from Authors of lower Life, as

they are naturally liable to Suspicion, can add very little Lustre to what before was visible to the publick Eye : Such Offerings (to use the Stile they are generally dressed in) like *Pagan* Incense, evaporate on the Altar, and rather gratify the Priest than the Deity.

But you, Sir, are to be approached in Terms within the Reach of common Sense : The honest Oblation of a chearful Heart is as much as you desire or I am able to bring you : A Heart that has just Sense enough to mix Respect with Intimacy, and is never more delighted than when your rural Hours of Leisure admit me, with all my laughing Spirits, to be my idle self, and in the whole Day's Possession of you ! Then, indeed, I have Reason to be vain ; I am, then, distinguish'd by a Pleasure too great to be conceal'd, and could almost pity the Man of graver Merit that dares not receive it with the same unguarded Transport ! This Nakedness of Temper the World may place in what Rank of Folly or Weakness they please ; but 'till Wisdom can give me something that will make me more heartily happy, I am content to be gaz'd at as I am, without lessening my Respect for those whose Passions may be more soberly covered.

Yet, Sir, will I not deceive you ; 'tis not the Lustre of your publick Merit, the Affluence of your Fortune, your high Figure in Life, nor those honourable Distinctions, which you had rather deserve than be told of, that have so many Years made my plain



Heart hang after you: These are but incidental Ornaments, that, 'tis true, may be of Service to you in the World's Opinion; and though, as one among the Crowd, I may rejoice that Providence has so deservedly bestow'd them; yet my particular Attachment has risen from a meer natural and more engaging Charm, The Agreeable Companion! Nor is my Vanity half so much gratified in the *Honour*, as my Sense is in the *Delight* of your Society! When I see you lay aside the Advantages of Superiority, and by your own Chearfulness of Spirits call out all that Nature has given me to meet them; then 'tis I taste you! then Life runs high! I desire! I possess you!

Yet, Sir, in this distinguish'd Happiness I give not up my farther Share of that Pleasure, or of that Right I have to look upon you with the publick Eye, and to join in the general Regard so unanimously pay'd to that uncommon Virtue, your *Integrity*! This, Sir, the World allows so conspicuous a Part of your Character, that, however invidious the Merit, neither the rude License of Detraction, nor the Prejudice of Party, has ever once thrown on it the least Impeachment or Reproach. This is that commanding Power that, in publick Speaking, makes you heard with such Attention! This it is that discourages and keeps silent the Insinuations of Prejudice and Suspicion; and almost renders your Eloquence an unnecessary Aid to your Assertions: Even your Opponents, conscious of your *Inte-*

*grity*, hear you rather as a Witness than an Orator— But this, Sir, is drawing you too near the Light, *Integrity* is too particular a Virtue to be cover'd with a general Application. Let me therefore only talk to you, as at *Tusculum* (for so I will call that sweet Retreat, which your own Hands have rais'd) where like the fam'd Orator of old, when publick Cares permit, you pass so many rational, unbending Hours: There! and at such Times, to have been admitted, still plays in my Memory more like a fictitious than a real Enjoyment! How many golden Evenings, in that Theatrical Paradise of water'd Lawns and hanging Groves, have I walk'd and prated down the Sun in social Happiness! Whether the Retreat of *Cicero*, in Cost, Magnificence, or curious Luxury of Antiquities, might not out-blaze the *simplex Munditiis*, the modest Ornaments of your *Villa*, is not within my reading to determine: But that the united Power of Nature, Art, or Elegance of Taste, could have thrown so many varied Objects into a more delightful Harmony, is beyond my Conception.

When I consider you in this View, and as the Gentleman of Eminence surrounded with the general Benevolence of Mankind; I rejoice, Sir, for you and for myself; to see *You* in this particular Light of Merit, and myself sometimes admitted to my more than equal Share of you.

If this *Apology* for my past Life discourages you not from holding me in your usual Favour, let me

quit this greater Stage, the World, whenever I  
may, I shall think This the best-acted Part of any  
I have undertaken, since you first condescended to  
laugh with,

*SIR,*

*Your most obedient,*

*most obliged, and*

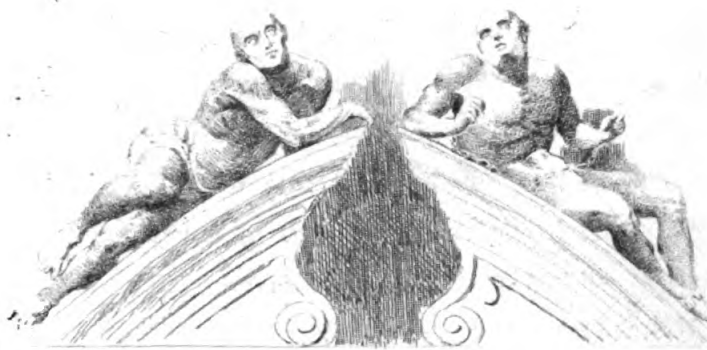
*most humble Servant,*

COLLEY CIBBER.

Novemb. 6.

1739.

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AN APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE OF  
MR. COLLEY CIBBER, &c.<sup>1</sup>

CHAPTER I.

*The Introduction. The Author's Birth. Various Fortune at School.  
Not lik'd by those he lov'd there. Why. A Digression upon  
Raillery. The Use and Abuse of it. The Comforts of Folly.  
Vanity of Greatness. Laughing, no bad Philosophy.*

**Y**OU know, Sir, I have often told you that one time or other I should give the Publick some Memoirs of my own Life; at which you have never fail'd to laugh, like a Friend, without saying a word to

<sup>1</sup> Cibber, in Chapter ix., mentions that he is writing his Apology at Bath, and Fielding, in the mock trial of "Col. Apol."

dissuade me from it ; concluding, I suppose, that such a wild Thought could not possibly require a serious Answer. But you see I was in earnest. And now you will say the World will find me, under my own Hand, a weaker Man than perhaps I may have pass'd for, even among my Enemies.—With all my Heart ! my Enemies will then read me with Pleasure, and you, perhaps, with Envy, when you find that Follies, without the Reproach of Guilt upon them, are not inconsistent with Happiness.—But why make my Follies publick ? Why not ? I have pass'd my Time very pleasantly with them, and I don't recollect that they have ever been hurtful to any other Man living. Even admitting they were injudiciously chosen, would it not be Vanity in me to take Shame to myself for not being found a Wise Man ? Really, Sir, my Appetites were in too much haste to be happy, to throw away my Time in pursuit of a Name I was sure I could never arrive at.

Now the Follies I frankly confess I look upon as in some measure discharged ; while those I conceal are still keeping the Account open between me and given in "The Champion" of 17th May, 1740, indicts the Prisoner "for that you, not having the Fear of Grammar before your Eyes, on the of at a certain Place, called the *Bath*, in the County of *Somerset*, in *Knights-Bridge*, in the County of *Middlesex*, in and upon the *English* Language an Assault did make, and then and there, with a certain Weapon called a Goose-quill, value one Farthing, which you in your left Hand then held, several very broad Wounds but of no Depth at all, on the said *English* Language did make, and so you the said Col. *Apol.* the said *English* Language did murder."

my Conscience. To me the Fatigue of being upon a continual Guard to hide them is more than the Reputation of being without them can repay. If this be Weakness, *defendit numerus*, I have such comfortable Numbers on my side, that were all Men to blush that are not Wise, I am afraid, in Ten, Nine Parts of the World ought to be out of Countenance:<sup>1</sup> But since that sort of Modesty is what they don't care to come into, why should I be afraid of being star'd at for not being particular? Or if the Particularity lies in owning my Weakness, will my wisest Reader be so inhuman as not to pardon it? But if there should be such a one, let me at least beg him to shew me that strange Man who is perfect! Is any one more unhappy, more ridiculous, than he who is always labouring to be thought so, or that is impatient when he is not thought so? Having brought myself to be easy under whatever the World may say of my Undertaking, you may still ask me why I give myself all this trouble? Is it for Fame, or Profit to myself,<sup>2</sup> or Use or Delight to others? For all these

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be a favourite argument of Cibber. In his "Letter" to Pope, 1742, he answers Pope's line, "And has not Colley still his Lord and Whore?" at great length, one of his arguments being that the latter accusation, "without some particular Circumstances to aggravate the Vice, is the flattest Piece of Satyr that ever fell from the formidable Pen of Mr. *Pope*: because (*defendit numerus*) take the first ten thousand Men you meet, and I believe, you would be no Loser, if you betted ten to one that every single Sinner of them, one with another, had been guilty of the same Frailty."—p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Cibber's "Apology" must have been a very profitable book.

Considerations I have neither Fondness nor Indifference: If I obtain none of them, the Amusement, at worst, will be a Reward that must constantly go along with the Labour. But behind all this there is something inwardly inciting, which I cannot express in few Words; I must therefore a little make bold with your Patience.

A Man who has pass'd above Forty Years of his Life upon a Theatre, where he has never appear'd to be Himself, may have naturally excited the Curiosity of his Spectators to know what he really was when in no body's Shape but his own; and whether he, who by his Profession had so long been ridiculing his Benefactors, might not, when the Coat

It was published in one volume quarto in 1740, and in the same year the second edition, one volume octavo, was issued. A third edition appeared in 1750, also in one volume octavo. Davies ("Dramatic Miscellanies," iii. 506) says: "Cibber must have raised considerable contributions on the public by his works. To say nothing of the sums accumulated by dedications, benefits, and the sale of his plays singly, his dramatic works, in quarto, by subscription, published 1721, produced him a considerable sum of money. It is computed that he gained, by the excellent Apology for his Life, no less than the sum of £1,500." "The Laureat" (1740) is perhaps Davies's authority for his computation. "*Ingenious indeed*, who from such a Pile of indigested incoherent Ideas huddled together by the *Misnomer* of a History, could raise a Contribution on the Town (if Fame says true) of Fifteen hundred Pounds."—"Laureat," p. 96.

Cibber no doubt kept the copyright of the first and second editions in his own hands. In 1750 he sold his copyright to Robert Dodsley for the sum of fifty guineas. The original assignment, which bears the date "March y<sup>e</sup> 24<sup>th</sup>, 1749/50," is in the collection of Mr. Julian Marshall.



of his Profession was off, deserve to be laugh'd at himself; or from his being often seen in the most flagrant and immoral Characters, whether he might not see as great a Rogue when he look'd into the Glass himself as when he held it to others.

It was doubtless from a Supposition that this sort of Curiosity wou'd compensate their Labours that so many hasty Writers have been encourag'd to publish the Lives of the late Mrs. *Oldfield*, Mr. *Wilks*, and Mr. *Booth*, in less time after their Deaths than one could suppose it cost to transcribe them.<sup>1</sup>

Now, Sir, when my Time comes, lest they shou'd think it worth while to handle my Memory with the same Freedom, I am willing to prevent its being so odly besmear'd (or at best but flatly white-wash'd) by taking upon me to give the Publick This, as true a Picture of myself as natural Vanity will permit me to draw: For to promise you that I shall never be vain, were a Promise that, like a Looking-glass too large, might break itself in the making: Nor am I sure I ought wholly to avoid that Imputation, because if Vanity be one of my natural Features, the

<sup>1</sup> Of Mrs. Oldfield there was a volume of "Authentick Memoirs" published in 1730, the year she died; and in 1731 appeared Egerton's "Faithful Memoirs," and "The Lover's Miscellany," in which latter are memoirs of Mrs. Oldfield's "Life and Amours." Three memoirs of Wilks immediately followed his death, the third of which was written by Curll, who denounces the other two as frauds. Benjamin Victor wrote a memoir of Booth which was published in the year of his death, and there was one unauthorized memoir issued in the same year. Bellchambers instances the Life of Congreve as another imposition.

Portrait wou'd not be like me without it. In a Word, I may palliate and soften as much as I please ; but upon an honest Examination of my Heart, I am afraid the same Vanity which makes even homely People employ Painters to preserve a flattering Record of their Persons, has seduced me to print off this *Chiaro Oscuro* of my Mind.

And when I have done it, you may reasonably ask me of what Importance can the History of my private Life be to the Publick ? To this, indeed, I can only make you a ludicrous Answer, which is, That the Publick very well knows my Life has not been a private one ; that I have been employ'd in their Service ever since many of their Grandfathers were young Men ; And tho' I have voluntarily laid down my Post, they have a sort of Right to enquire into my Conduct (for which they have so well paid me) and to call for the Account of it during my Share of Administration in the State of the Theatre. This Work, therefore, which I hope they will not expect a Man of hasty Head shou'd confine to any regular Method : (For I shall make no scruple of leaving my History when I think a Digression may make it lighter for my Reader's Digestion.) This Work, I say, shall not only contain the various Impressions of my Mind, (as in *Louis the Fourteenth* his Cabinet you have seen the growing Medals of his Person from Infancy to Old Age,) but shall likewise include with them the *Theatrical History of my Own Time*, from my first Appearance on the Stage to my last *Exit*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From this expression it appears that Cibber did not con-

If then what I shall advance on that Head may any ways contribute to the Prosperity or Improvement of the Stage in Being, the Publick must of consequence have a Share in its Utility.

This, Sir, is the best Apology I can make for being my own Biographer. Give me leave therefore to open the first Scene of my Life from the very Day I came into it; and tho' (considering my Profession) I have no reason to be ashamed of my Original; yet I am afraid a plain dry Account of it will scarce admit of a better Excuse than what my brother *Bays* makes for Prince *Prettyman* in the *Rehearsal*, viz. *I only do it for fear I should be thought to be no body's Son at all*;<sup>1</sup> for if I have led a worthless Life, the Weight of my Pedigree will not add an Ounce to my intrinsic Value. But be the Inference what it will, the simple Truth is this.

I was born in *London*, on the *6th* of *November* 1671,<sup>2</sup> in *Southampton-Street*, facing *Southampton-House*.<sup>3</sup>

template again returning to the stage. He did, however, make a few final appearances, his last being to support his own adaptation of Shakespeare's "King John," which he called "Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John," and which was produced at Covent Garden on 15th February, 1745.

<sup>1</sup> "The Rehearsal," act iii. sc. 4.

<sup>2</sup> The christening of Colley Cibber is recorded in the Baptismal Register of the Church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields. The entry reads:—

"November 1671                      Christnings

20. Colly sonne of Caius Gabriell Sibber and Jane ux"

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Laurence Hutton, in his "Literary Landmarks of London," page 52, says: "Southampton House, afterwards Bedford House, taken down in the beginning of the present century, occupied the north side of Bloomsbury Square. Evelyn speaks of it

My Father, *Caius Gabriel Cibber*,<sup>1</sup> was a Native of *Holstein*, who came into *England* some time before the Restoration of King *Charles II.* to follow his Profession, which was that of a Statuary, &c. The *Basso Relievo* on the Pedestal of the Great Column in the City, and the two Figures of the *Lunaticks*, the *Raving* and the *Melancholy*, over the Gates of *Bethlehem-Hospital*,<sup>2</sup> are no ill Monuments of his Fame as an artist. My Mother was the Daughter of *William Colley*, Esq; of a very ancient Family of *Glaiston* in *Rutlandshire*, where she was born. My Mother's Brother, *Edward Colley*, Esq; (who gave me my Christian Name) being the last Heir Male of it, the Family is now extinct. I shall only add, that in *Wright's History of Rutlandshire*, publish'd in 1684, the *Colley's* are recorded as Sheriffs

in his Diary, October, 1664, as in course of construction. Another and an earlier Southampton House in Holborn, 'a little above Holborn Bars,' was removed some twenty years before Cibber's birth. He was, therefore, probably born at the upper or north end of Southampton Street, facing Bloomsbury Square, where now are comparatively modern buildings, and not in Southampton Street, Strand, as is generally supposed."

<sup>1</sup> Caius Gabriel Cibber, born at Flensburg in Holstein in 1630; married, as his second wife, Jane Colley, on 24th November, 1670; died in 1700. He was, as Colley Cibber states, a sculptor of some note.

<sup>2</sup> "Where o'er the gates, by his fam'd father's hand,  
Great Cibber's brazen, brainless brothers stand."

(Final edition of "The Dunciad," i. verses 31-2.)

Bellchambers notes that these figures were removed to the New Hospital in St. George's Fields. They are now in South Kensington Museum.

and Members of Parliament from the Reign of *Henry VII.* to the latter End of *Charles I.*, in whose Cause chiefly Sir *Antony Colley*, my Mother's Grandfather, sunk his Estate from Three Thousand to about Three Hundred *per Annum*.<sup>1</sup>

In the Year 1682, at little more than Ten Years of Age, I was sent to the Free-School of *Grantham* in *Lincolnshire*, where I staid till I got through it, from the lowest Form to the uppermost. And such Learning as that School could give me is the most I pretend to (which, tho' I have not utterly forgot, I cannot say I have much improv'd by Study) but even there I remember I was the same inconsistent Creature I have been ever since! always in full Spirits, in some small Capacity to do right, but in a more frequent Alacrity to do wrong; and consequently often under a worse Character than I wholly deserv'd: A giddy Negligence always possess'd me, and so much, that I remember I was once whipp'd for my *Theme*, tho' my Master told me, at the same

<sup>1</sup> "It was found by office taken in the 13th year of H. 8. that *John Colly* deceased, held the Mannour and Advowson of *Glaiston* of *Edward* Duke of Buckingham, as of his Castle of *Okeham* by knights service."—Wright's "History and Antiquities of the County of *Rutland*," p. 64.

"In the 26. *Car.* 1. (1640) Sir *Anthony Colly* Knight, then Lord of this Mannor, joyned with his Son and Heir apparent, *William Colly* Esquire, in a Conveyance of divers parcels of Land in *Glaiston*, together with the Advowson of the Church there, to *Edward Andrews* of *Bisbroke* in this County, Esquire: Which Advowson is since conveyed over to *Peterhouse* in Cambridge."—*Ibid.* p. 65.

time, what was good of it was better than any Boy's in the Form. And (whatever Shame it may be to own it) I have observ'd the same odd Fate has frequently attended the course of my later Conduct in Life. The unskilful openness, or in plain Terms, the Indiscretion I have always acted with from my Youth, has drawn more ill-will towards me, than Men of worse Morals and more Wit might have met with. My Ignorance and want of Jealousy of Mankind has been so strong, that it is with Reluctance I even yet believe any Person I am acquainted with can be capable of Envy, Malice, or Ingratitude:<sup>1</sup> And to shew you what a Mortification it was to me, in my very boyish Days, to find myself mistaken, give me leave to tell you a School Story.

A great Boy, near the Head taller than myself, in some wrangle at Play had insulted me; upon which I was fool-hardy enough to give him a Box on the Ear; the Blow was soon return'd with another that brought me under him and at his Mercy. Another Lad, whom I really lov'd and thought a good-natur'd one, cry'd out with some warmth to my Antagonist (while I was down) Beat him, beat him soundly! This so amaz'd me that I lost all my Spirits to

<sup>1</sup> Fielding ("Joseph Andrews," chap. iii.), writing of Parson Adams, says: "Simplicity was his characteristic: he did, no more than Mr. Colley Cibber, apprehend any such passions as malice and envy to exist in mankind; which was indeed less remarkable in a country parson, than in a gentleman who has passed his life behind the scenes—a place which has been seldom thought the school of innocence."

resist, and burst into Tears! When the Fray was over I took my Friend aside, and ask'd him, How he came to be so earnestly against me? To which, with some glouting<sup>1</sup> Confusion, he reply'd, Because you are always jeering and making a Jest of me to every Boy in the School. Many a Mischief have I brought upon myself by the same Folly in riper Life. Whatever Reason I had to reproach my Companion's declaring against me, I had none to wonder at it while I was so often hurting him: Thus I deserv'd his Enmity by my not having Sense enough to know I *had* hurt him; and he hated me because he had not Sense enough to know that I never *intended* to hurt him.

As this is the first remarkable Error of my Life I can recollect, I cannot pass it by without throwing out some further Reflections upon it; whether flat or spirited, new or common, false or true, right or wrong, they will be still my own, and consequently like me; I will therefore boldly go on; for I am only oblig'd to give you my *own*, and not a *good* Picture, to shew as well the Weakness as the Strength of my Understanding. It is not on what I write, but on my Reader's Curiosity I relie to be read through: At worst, tho' the Impartial may be tir'd, the Ill-natur'd (no small number) I know will see the bottom of me.

What I observ'd then, upon my having undesignedly provok'd my School-Friend into an Enemy, is a common Case in Society; Errors of this kind

<sup>1</sup> Glout is an obsolete word signifying "to pout, to look sullen."

often sour the Blood of Acquaintance into an inconceivable Aversion, where it is little suspected. It is not enough to say of your Raillery that you intended no offence ; if the Person you offer it to has either a wrong Head, or wants a Capacity to make that distinction, it may have the same effect as the Intention of the grossest Injury : And in reality, if you know his Parts are too slow to return it in kind, it is a vain and idle Inhumanity, and sometimes draws the Aggressor into difficulties not easily got out of : Or to give the Case more scope, suppose your Friend may have a passive Indulgence for your Mirth, if you find him silent at it ; tho' you were as intrepid as *Cæsar*, there can be no excuse for your not leaving it off. When you are conscious that your Antagonist can give as well as take, then indeed the smarter the Hit the more agreeable the Party : A Man of chearful Sense among Friends will never be grave upon an Attack of this kind, but rather thank you that you have given him a Right to be even with you : There are few Men (tho' they may be Masters of both) that on such occasions had not rather shew their Parts than their Courage, and the Preference is just ; a Bull-Dog may have one, and only a Man can have the other. Thus it happens that in the coarse Merriment of common People, when the Jest begins to swell into earnest ; for want of this Election you may observe, he that has least wit generally gives the first Blow. Now, as among the Better sort, a readiness of Wit is not always a Sign of intrinsick Merit ;



so the want of that readiness is no Reproach to a Man of plain Sense and Civility, who therefore (methinks) should never have these lengths of Liberty taken with him. Wit there becomes absurd, if not insolent; ill-natur'd I am sure it is, which Imputation a generous Spirit will always avoid, for the same Reason that a Man of real Honour will never send a Challenge to a Cripple. The inward Wounds that are given by the inconsiderate Insults of Wit to those that want it, are as dangerous as those given by Oppression to Inferiors; as long in healing, and perhaps never forgiven. There is besides (and little worse than this) a mutual Grossness in Raillery that sometimes is more painful to the Hearers that are not concern'd in it than to the Persons engaged. I have seen a couple of these clumsy Combatants drub one another with as little Manners or Mercy as if they had two Flails in their Hands; Children at Play with Case-knives could not give you more Apprehension of their doing one another a Mischief. And yet, when the Contest has been over, the Boobys have look'd round them for Approbation, and upon being told they were admirably well match'd, have sat down (bedawb'd as they were) contented at making it a drawn Battle. After all that I have said, there is no clearer way of giving Rules for Raillery than by Example.

There are two Persons now living, who tho' very different in their manner, are, as far as my Judgment reaches, complete Masters of it; one of a more polite

and extensive Imagination, the other of a Knowledge more closely useful to the Business of Life: The one gives you perpetual Pleasure, and seems always to be taking it; the other seems to take none till his Business is over, and then gives you as much as if Pleasure were his only Business. The one enjoys his Fortune, the other thinks it first necessary to make it; though that he will enjoy it then I cannot be positive, because when a Man has once pick'd up more than he wants, he is apt to think it a Weakness to suppose he has enough. But as I don't remember ever to have seen these Gentlemen in the same Company, you must give me leave to take them separately.<sup>1</sup>

The first of them, then, has a Title, and — no matter what; I am not to speak of the great, but the happy part of his Character, and in this one single light; not of his being an illustrious, but a delightful Companion.

In Conversation he is seldom silent but when he is attentive, nor ever speaks without exciting the Attention of others; and tho' no Man might with less Displeasure to his Hearers engross the Talk of the Company, he has a Patience in his Vivacity that

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers suggests that these two persons were the Earl of Chesterfield and "Bubb Doddington." As to the former he is no doubt correct, but I cannot see a single feature of resemblance between the second portrait and Lord Melcombe. "The Laureat" says (p. 18) that the portraits were "L—d C—d and Mr. E—e" [probably Erskine]. Bellchambers seems to have supposed that "Bubb" was a nickname.

chuses to divide it, and rather gives more Freedom than he takes ; his sharpest Replies having a mixture of Politeness that few have the command of ; his Expression is easy, short, and clear ; a stiff or studied Word never comes from him ; it is in a simplicity of Style that he gives the highest Surprize, and his Ideas are always adapted to the Capacity and Taste of the Person he speaks to : Perhaps you will understand me better if I give you a particular Instance of it. A Person at the University, who from being a Man of Wit easily became his Acquaintance there, from that Acquaintance found no difficulty in being made one of his Chaplains : This Person afterwards leading a Life that did no great Honour to his Cloth, obliged his Patron to take some gentle notice of it ; but as his Patron knew the Patient was squeamish, he was induced to sweeten the Medicine to his Taste, and therefore with a smile of good humour told him, that if to the many Vices he had already, he would give himself the trouble to add one more, he did not doubt but his Reputation might still be set up again. Sir *Crape*, who could have no Aversion to so pleasant a Dose, desiring to know what it might be, was answered, *Hypocrisy, Doctor, only a little Hypocrisy !* This plain Reply can need no Comment ; but *ex pede Herculem*, he is every where proportionable. I think I have heard him since say, the Doctor thought Hypocrisy so detestable a Sin that he dy'd without committing it. In a word, this Gentleman gives Spirit to Society the Moment he comes into it, and

whenever he leaves it they who have Business have then leisure to go about it.

Having often had the Honour to be my self the But of his Raillery, I must own I have received more Pleasure from his lively manner of raising the Laugh against me, than I could have felt from the smoothest flattery of a serious Civility. Tho' Wit flows from him with as much ease as common Sense from another, he is so little elated with the Advantage he may have over you, that whenever your good Fortune gives it against him, he seems more pleas'd with it on your side than his own. The only advantage he makes of his Superiority of Rank is, that by always waving it himself, his inferior finds he is under the greater Obligation not to forget it.

When the Conduct of social Wit is under such Regulations, how delightful must those *Convivia*, those Meals of Conversation be, where such a Member presides ; who can with so much ease (as *Shakespeare* phrases it) *set the Table in a roar*.<sup>1</sup> I am in no pain that these imperfect Out-lines will be apply'd to the Person I mean, because every one who has the Happiness to know him must know how much more in this particular Attitude is wanting to be like him.

The other Gentleman, whose bare Interjections of Laughter have humour in them, is so far from having a Title that he has lost his real name, which some Years ago he suffer'd his Friends to railly him out

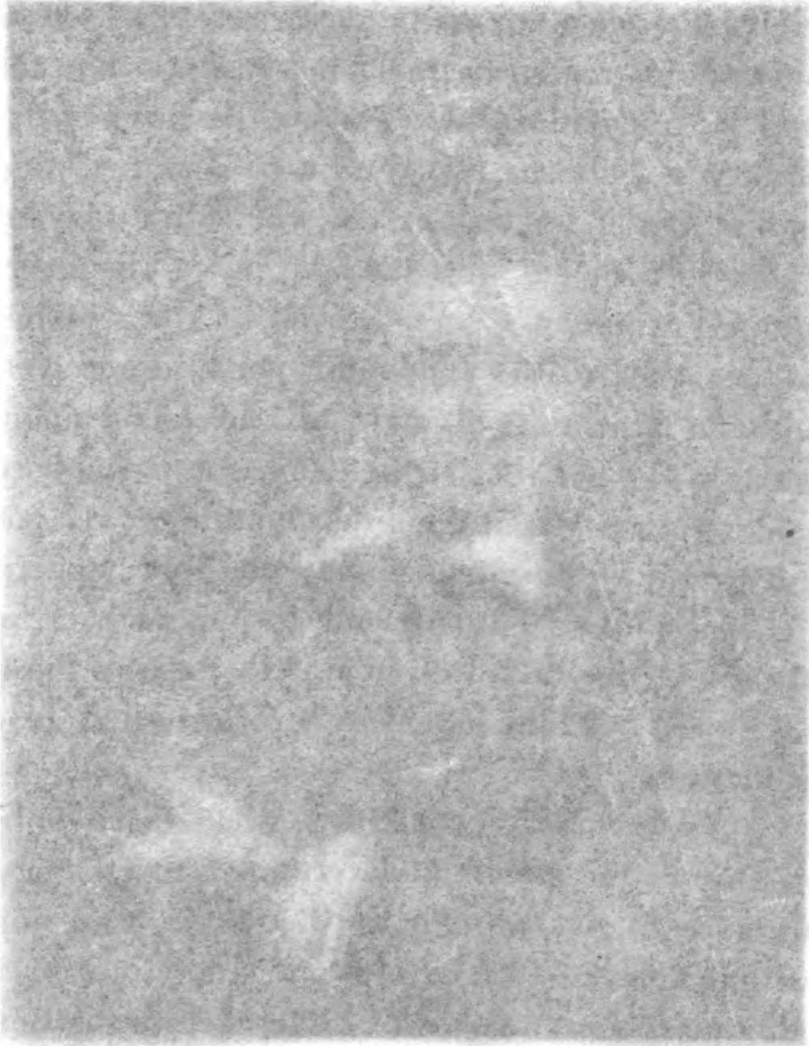
<sup>1</sup> "Set the table on a roar."—"Hamlet," act v. sc. 1.

of ; in lieu of which they have equipp'd him with one they thought had a better sound in good Company. He is the first Man of so sociable a Spirit that I ever knew capable of quitting the Allurements of Wit and Pleasure for a strong Application to Business ; in his Youth (for there was a Time when he was young) he set out in all the hey-day Expences of a modish Man of Fortune ; but finding himself over-weighted with Appetites, he grew restiff, kick'd up in the middle of the Course, and turn'd his back upon his Frolicks abroad, to think of improving his Estate at home : In order to which he clapt Collars upon his Coach-Horses, and that their Mettle might not run over other People, he ty'd a Plough to their Tails, which tho' it might give them a more slovenly Air, would enable him to keep them fatter in a foot pace, with a whistling Peasant beside them, than in a full trot, with a hot-headed Coachman behind them. In these unpolite Amusements he has laugh'd like a Rake and look'd about him like a Farmer for many Years. As his Rank and Station often find him in the best Company, his easy Humour, whenever he is called to it, can still make himself the Fiddle of it.

And tho' some say he looks upon the Follies of the World like too severe a Philosopher, yet he rather chuses to laugh than to grieve at them ; to pass his time therefore more easily in it, he often endeavours to conceal himself by assuming the Air and Taste of a Man in fashion ; so that his only Uneasiness seems to be, that he cannot quite prevail with his

Friends to think him a worse Manager than he really is; for they carry their Raillery to such a height that it sometimes rises to a Charge of downright Avarice against him. Upon which Head it is no easy matter to be more merry upon him than he will be upon himself. Thus while he sets that Infirmary in a pleasant Light, he so disarms your Prejudice, that if he has it not, you can't find in your Heart to wish he were without it. Whenever he is attack'd where he seems to lie so open, if his Wit happens not to be ready for you, he receives you with an assenting Laugh, till he has gain'd time enough to whet it sharp enough for a Reply, which seldom turns out to his disadvantage. If you are too strong for him (which may possibly happen from his being oblig'd to defend the weak side of the Question) his last Resource is to join in the Laugh till he has got himself off by an ironical Applause of your Superiority.

If I were capable of Envy, what I have observ'd of this Gentleman would certainly incline me to it; for sure to get through the necessary Cares of Life with a Train of Pleasures at our Heels in vain calling after us, to give a constant Preference to the Business of the Day, and yet be able to laugh while we are about it, to make even Society the subservient Reward of it, is a State of Happiness which the gravest Precepts of moral Wisdom will not easily teach us to exceed. When I speak of Happiness, I go no higher than that which is contain'd in the World we









CAIUS CIBBER



now tread upon ; and when I speak of Laughter, I don't simply mean that which every Oaf is capable of, but that which has its sensible Motive and proper Season, which is not more limited than recommended by that indulgent Philosophy,

*Cum ratione insanire.*<sup>1</sup>

When I look into my present Self, and afterwards cast my Eye round all my Hopes, I don't see any one Pursuit of them that should so reasonably rouze me out of a Nod in my Great Chair, as a call to those agreeable Parties I have sometimes the Happiness to mix with, where I always assert the equal Liberty of leaving them, when my Spirits have done their best with them.

Now, Sir, as I have been making my way for above Forty Years through a Crowd of Cares, (all which, by the Favour of Providence, I have honestly got rid of) is it a time of Day for me to leave off these Fooleries, and to set up a new Character? Can it be worth my while to waste my Spirits, to bake my Blood, with serious Contemplations, and perhaps impair my Health, in the fruitless Study of advancing myself into the better Opinion of those very—very few Wise Men that are as old as I am? No, the Part I have acted in real Life shall be all of a piece,

—*Servetur ad imum,*  
*Qualis ab incepto processerit.*      Hor.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ter. *Eun.* i. 1, 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ars Poetica*, 126.

I will not go out of my Character by straining to be wiser than I *can* be, or by being more affectedly pensive than I *need* be ; whatever I am, Men of Sense will know me to be, put on what Disguise I will ; I can no more put off my Follies than my Skin ; I have often try'd, but they stick too close to me ; nor am I sure my Friends are displeas'd with them ; for, besides that in this Light I afford them frequent matter of Mirth, they may possibly be less uneasy at their *own* Foibles when they have so old a Precedent to keep them in Countenance : Nay, there are some frank enough to confess they envy what they laugh at ; and when I have seen others, whose Rank and Fortune have laid a sort of Restraint upon their Liberty of pleasing their Company by pleasing themselves, I have said softly to myself,—Well, there is some Advantage in having neither Rank nor Fortune ! Not but there are among them a third Sort, who have the particular Happiness of unbending into the very Wantonness of Good-humour without depreciating their Dignity : He that is not Master of that Freedom, let his Condition be never so exalted, must still want something to come up to the Happiness of his Inferiors who enjoy it. If *Socrates* cou'd take pleasure in playing at *Even or Odd* with his Children, or *Agesilaus* divert himself in riding the Hobby-horse with them, am I oblig'd to be as eminent as either of them before I am as frolicsome ? If the Emperor *Adrian*, near his death, cou'd play with his very Soul, his *Animula*,

&c. and regret that it cou'd be no longer companionable ; if Greatness at the same time was not the Delight he was so loth to part with, sure then these chearful Amusements I am contending for must have no inconsiderable share in our Happiness ; he that does not chuse to live his own way, suffers others to chuse for him. Give me the Joy I always took in the End of an old Song,

*My Mind, my Mind is a Kingdom to me !<sup>1</sup>*

If I can please myself with my own Follies, have not I a plentiful Provision for Life ? If the World thinks me a Trifler, I don't desire to break in upon their Wisdom ; let them call me any Fool but an Unchearful one ; I live as I write ; while my Way amuses me, it's as well as I wish it ; when another writes better, I can like him too, tho' he shou'd not like me. Not our great Imitator of *Horace* himself can have more Pleasure in writing his Verses than I have in reading them, tho' I sometimes find myself there (as *Shakespear* terms it) *dispraisingly*<sup>2</sup> spoken of :<sup>3</sup> If he is a little free with me, I am generally in

<sup>1</sup> In William Byrd's collection, entitled "Psalmes, Sonets, & songs of sadnes and pietie," 1588, 4to., is the song to which Cibber probably refers :—

"My Minde to me a Kingdome is."

Mr. Bullen, in his "Lyrics from Elizabethan Song-books" (p. 78), quotes it.

<sup>2</sup>

"And so many a time,  
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,  
Hath ta'en your part."—"Othello," act iii. sc. 3.

<sup>3</sup> This is Cibber's first allusion to Pope's enmity. It was after

good Company, he is as blunt with my Betters ; so that even here I might laugh in my turn. My Superiors, perhaps, may be mended by him ; but, for my part, I own myself incorrigible : I look upon my Follies as the best part of my Fortune, and am more concern'd to be a good Husband of Them, than of That ; nor do I believe I shall ever be rhim'd out of them. And, if I don't mistake, I am supported in my way of thinking by *Horace* himself, who, in excuse of a loose Writer, says,

*Prætulerim scriptor delirus, inersque videri,  
Dum mea delectent mala me, vel denique fallant,  
Quam sapere, et ringi——<sup>1</sup>*

which, to speak of myself as a loose Philosopher, I have thus ventur'd to imitate :

*Me, while my laughing Follies can deceive,  
Blest in the dear Delirium let me live,  
Rather than wisely know my Wants and grieve.* }

We had once a merry Monarch of our own, who thought cheerfulness so valuable a Blessing, that he would have quitted one of his Kingdoms where he cou'd not enjoy it ; where, among many other Conditions they had ty'd him to, his sober Subjects wou'd not suffer him to laugh on a *Sunday* ; and tho' this might not be the avow'd Cause of his Elopement,<sup>2</sup> I am not the publication of the "Apology" that Pope's attacks became more bitter.

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Epis.* ii. 2, 126.

<sup>2</sup> Charles II.'s flight from his Scottish Presbyterian subjects, at

sure, had he had no other, that this alone might not have serv'd his turn; at least, he has my hearty Approbation either way; for had I been under the same Restriction, tho' my staying were to have made me his Successor, I shou'd rather have chosen to follow him.

How far his Subjects might be in the right is not my Affair to determine; perhaps they were wiser than the Frogs in the Fable, and rather chose to have a Log than a Stork for their King; yet I hope it will be no Offence to say that King *Log* himself must have made but a very simple Figure in History.

The Man who chuses never to laugh, or whose becalm'd Passions know no Motion, seems to me only in the quiet State of a green Tree; he vegetates, ✓ 'tis true, but shall we say he lives? Now, Sir, for Amusement.—Reader, take heed! for I find a strong impulse to talk impertinently; if therefore you are not as fond of seeing, as I am of shewing myself in all my Lights, you may turn over two Leaves together, and leave what follows to those who have more Curiosity, and less to do with their Time, than you have.—As I was saying then, let us, for Amusement, advance this, or any other Prince, to the most glorious Throne, mark out his Empire in what Clime

the end of 1650, to take refuge among his wild Highland supporters, was caused by the insolent invectives of the rigid Presbyterian clergymen, who preached long sermons at him, on his own wickedness and that of his father and mother, and made his life generally a burden.

you please, fix him on the highest Pinnacle of unbounded Power; and in that State let us enquire into his degree of Happiness; make him at once the Terror and the Envy of his Neighbours, send his Ambition out to War, and gratify it with extended Fame and Victories; bring him in triumph home, with great unhappy Captives behind him, through the Acclamations of his People, to repossess his Realms in Peace. Well, when the Dust has been brusht from his Purple, what will he do next? Why, this envy'd Monarch (who we will allow to have a more exalted Mind than to be delighted with the trifling Flatteries of a congratulating Circle) will chuse to retire, I presume, to enjoy in private the Contemplation of his Glory; an Amusement, you will say, that well becomes his Station! But there, in that pleasing Ruminaton, when he has made up his new Account of Happiness, how much, pray, will be added to the Balance more than as it stood before his last Expedition? From what one Article will the Improvement of it appear? Will it arise from the conscious Pride of having done his weaker Enemy an Injury? Are his Eyes so dazzled with false Glory that he thinks it a less Crime in him to break into the Palace of his Princely Neighbour, because he gave him time to defend it, than for a Subject feloniously to plunder the House of a private Man? Or is the Outrage of Hunger and Necessity more enormous than the Ravage of Ambition? Let us even suppose the wicked Usage of the World as to that Point may



keep his Conscience quiet ; still, what is he to do with the infinite Spoil that his imperial Rapine has brought home ? Is he to sit down and vainly deck himself with the Jewels which he has plunder'd from the Crown of another, whom Self-defence had compell'd to oppose him ? No, let us not debase his Glory into so low a Weakness. What Appetite, then, are these shining Treasures food for ? Is their vast Value in seeing his vulgar Subjects stare at them, wise Men smile at them, or his Children play with them ? Or can the new Extent of his Dominions add a Cubit to his Happiness ? Was not his Empire wide enough before to do good in ? And can it add to his Delight that now no Monarch has such room to do mischief in ? But farther ; if even the great *Augustus*, to whose Reign such Praises are given, cou'd not enjoy his Days of Peace free from the Terrors of repeated Conspiracies, which lost him more Quiet to suppress than his Ambition cost him to provoke them : What human Eminence is secure ? In what private Cabinet then must this wondrous Monarch lock up his Happiness that common Eyes are never to behold it ? Is it, like his Person, a Prisoner to its own Superiority ? Or does he at last poorly place it in the Triumph of his injurious Devastations ? One Moment's Search into himself will plainly shew him that real and reasonable Happiness can have no Existence without Innocence and Liberty. What a Mockery is Greatness without them ? How lonesome must be the Life of that

Monarch who, while he governs only by being fear'd, is restrain'd from letting down his Grandeur sometimes to forget himself and to humanize him into the Benevolence and Joy of Society? To throw off his cumbersome Robe of Majesty, to be a Man without disguise, to have a sensible Taste of Life in its Simplicity, till he confess from the sweet Experience that *dulce est desipere in loco*<sup>1</sup> was no Fool's Philosophy. Or if the gawdy Charms of Pre-eminence are so strong that they leave him no Sense of a less pompous, tho' a more rational Enjoyment, none sure can envy him but those who are the Dupes of an equally fantastick Ambition.

My Imagination is quite heated and fatigued in dressing up this Phantome of Felicity; but I hope it has not made me so far misunderstood, as not to have allow'd that in all the Dispensations of Providence the Exercise of a great and virtuous Mind is the most elevated State of Happiness: No, Sir, I am not for setting up Gaiety against Wisdom; nor for preferring the Man of Pleasure to the Philosopher; but for shewing that the Wisest or greatest Man is very near an unhappy Man, if the unbending Amusements I am contending for are not sometimes admitted to relieve him.

How far I may have over-rated these Amusements let graver Casuists decide; whether they affirm or reject what I have asserted hurts not my

<sup>1</sup> Hor. *Od.* iv. 12, 28.

Purpose; which is not to give Laws to others; but to shew by what Laws I govern myself: If I am misguided, 'tis Nature's Fault, and I follow her from this Persuasion; That as Nature has distinguish'd our Species from the mute Creation by our Risibility, her Design must have been by that Faculty as evidently to raise our Happiness, as by our *Os Sublime*<sup>1</sup> (our erected Faces) to lift the Dignity of our Form above them.

Notwithstanding all I have said, I am afraid there is an absolute Power in what is simply call'd our Constitution that will never admit of other Rules for Happiness than her own; from which (be we never so wise or weak) without Divine Assistance we only can receive it; So that all this my Parade and Grimace of Philosophy has been only making a mighty Merit of following my own Inclination. A very natural Vanity! Though it is some sort of Satisfaction to know it does not impose upon me. Vanity again! However, think It what you will that has drawn me into this copious Digression, 'tis now high time to drop it: I shall therefore in my next Chapter return to my School, from whence I fear I have too long been Truant.

<sup>1</sup> "Os homini sublime dedit."—Ovid, *Met.* i. 85.



## CHAPTER II.

*He that writes of himself not easily tir'd. Boys may give Men Lessons. The Author's Preferment at School attended with Misfortunes. The Danger of Merit among Equals. Of Satyrists and Backbiters. What effect they have had upon the Author. Stanzas publish'd by himself against himself.*

**I**T often makes me smile to think how contentedly I have set myself down to write my own Life; nay, and with less Concern for what may be said of it than I should feel were I to do the same for a deceased Acquaintance. This you will easily account for when you consider that nothing gives a Coxcomb more delight than when you suffer him to talk of himself; which sweet Liberty I here enjoy for a

whole Volume together! A Privilege which neither cou'd be allow'd me, nor wou'd become me to take, in the Company I am generally admitted to;<sup>1</sup> but here, when I have all the Talk to myself, and have no body to interrupt or contradict me, sure, to say whatever I have a mind other People shou'd know of me is a Pleasure which none but Authors as vain as myself can conceive.—But to my History.

However little worth notice the Life of a School-boy may be supposed to contain, yet, as the Passions of Men and Children have much the same Motives and differ very little in their Effects, unless where the elder Experience may be able to conceal them: As therefore what arises from the Boy may possibly be a Lesson to the Man, I shall venture to relate a Fact or two that happen'd while I was still at School.

In *February*, 1684-5, died King *Charles II.* who being the only King I had ever seen, I remember (young as I was) his Death made a strong Impression upon me, as it drew Tears from the Eyes of Multitudes, who looked no further into him than I

<sup>1</sup> Cibber is pardonably vain throughout at the society he moved in. His greatest social distinction was his election as a member of White's. His admission to such society was of course the subject of lampoons, such as the following:—

“*The BUFFOON, An EPIGRAM.*

Don't boast, prithee *Cibber*, so much of thy State,  
That like *Pope* you are blest with the smiles of the Great;  
With both they Converse, but for different Ends,  
And 'tis easy to know their Buffoons from their Friends.”

did: But it was, then, a sort of School-Doctrine to regard our Monarch as a Deity; as in the former Reign it was to insist he was accountable to this World as well as to that above him. But what, perhaps, gave King *Charles* II. this peculiar Possession of so many Hearts, was his affable and easy manner in conversing; which is a Quality that goes farther with the greater Part of Mankind than many higher Virtues, which, in a Prince, might more immediately regard the publick Prosperity. Even his indolent Amusement of playing with his Dogs and feeding his Ducks in *St. James's Park*, (which I have seen him do) made the common People adore him, and consequently overlook in him what, in a Prince of a different Temper, they might have been out of humour at.

I cannot help remembering one more Particular in those Times, tho' it be quite foreign to what will follow. I was carry'd by my Father to the Chapel in *Whitehall*; where I saw the King and his royal Brother the then Duke of *York*, with him in the Closet, and present during the whole Divine Service. Such Dispensation, it seems, for his Interest, had that unhappy Prince from his real Religion, to assist at another to which his Heart was so utterly averse. ———I now proceed to the Facts I promis'd to speak of.

King *Charles* his Death was judg'd by our Schoolmaster a proper Subject to lead the Form I was in into a higher kind of Exercise; he therefore enjoind

us severally to make his Funeral Oration : This sort of Task, so entirely new to us all, the Boys receiv'd with Astonishment as a Work above their Capacity ; and tho' the Master persisted in his Command, they one and all, except myself, resolved to decline it. But I, Sir, who was ever giddily forward and thoughtless of Consequences, set myself roundly to work, and got through it as well as I could. I remember to this Hour that single Topick of his Affability (which made me mention it before) was the chief Motive that warm'd me into the Undertaking ; and to shew how very childish a Notion I had of his Character at that time, I raised his Humanity, and Love of those who serv'd him, to such Height, that I imputed his Death to the Shock he receiv'd from the Lord *Arlington's* being at the point of Death about a Week before him.<sup>1</sup> This Oration, such as it was, I produc'd the next Morning : All the other Boys pleaded their Inability, which the Master taking rather as a mark of their Modesty than their Idleness, only seem'd to punish by setting me at the Head of the Form : A Preferment dearly bought ! Much happier had I been to have sunk my Performance in the general Modesty of declining it. A most uncomfortable Life I led among them for many a Day after ! I was so jeer'd, laugh'd at, and hated as a pragmatistical Bastard (School-boys Language) who had betray'd the whole Form, that

<sup>1</sup> Arlington did not, however, die till the 28th July, 1685, surviving Charles II. by nearly six months.

scarce any of 'em wou'd keep me company; and tho' it so far advanc'd me into the Master's Favour that he wou'd often take me from the School to give me an Airing with him on Horseback, while they were left to their Lessons; you may be sure such envy'd Happiness did not encrease their Good-will to me: Notwithstanding which my Stupidity cou'd take no warning from their Treatment. An Accident of the same nature happen'd soon after, that might have frighten'd a Boy of a meek Spirit from attempting any thing above the lowest Capacity. On the 23d of *April* following, being the Coronation-Day of the new King, the School petition'd the Master for leave to play; to which he agreed, provided any of the Boys would produce an *English* Ode upon that Occasion.—The very Word, *Ode*, I know makes you smile already; and so it does me; not only because it still makes so many poor Devils turn Wits upon it, but from a more agreeable Motive; from a Reflection of how little I then thought that, half a Century afterwards, I shou'd be call'd upon twice a year, by my Post,<sup>1</sup> to make the same kind of Oblations to an *unexceptionable* Prince, the serene Happiness of whose Reign my halting Rhimes are still so unequal to—This, I own, is Vanity without Disguise; but *Hæc olim meminisse juvat*:<sup>2</sup> The remembrance of the miserable prospect we had then before

<sup>1</sup> Cibber was appointed Poet-Laureate on the death of Eusden. His appointment was dated 3rd December, 1730.

<sup>2</sup> "Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit."—Virg. *Æneid*, i. 207.



us, and have since escaped by a Revolution, is now a Pleasure which, without that Remembrance, I could not so heartily have enjoy'd.<sup>1</sup> The Ode I was speaking of fell to my Lot, which in about half an Hour I produc'd. I cannot say it was much above the merry Style of *Sing! Sing the Day, and sing the Song*, in the Farce: Yet bad as it was, it serv'd to get the School a Play-day, and to make me not a little vain upon it; which last Effect so disgusted my Play-fellows that they left me out of the Party I had most a mind to be of in that Day's Recreation. But their Ingratitude serv'd only to increase my Vanity; for I consider'd them as so many beaten Tits that had just had the Mortification of seeing my Hack of a *Pegasus* come in before them. This low Passion is so rooted in our Nature that sometimes riper Heads cannot govern it. I have met with much the same silly sort of Coldness, even from my Contemporaries of the Theatre, from having the superfluous Capacity of writing myself the Characters I have acted.

Here, perhaps, I may again seem to be vain; but if all these Facts are true (as true they are) how can I help it? Why am I oblig'd to conceal them? The Merit of the best of them is not so extraordinary as to have warn'd me to be nice upon it; and the Praise due to them is so small a Fish, it was scarce worth while to throw my Line into the Water for it.

<sup>1</sup> As Laureate, and as author of "The Nonjuror," Cibber is bound to be extremely loyal to the Protestant dynasty.

If I confess my Vanity while a Boy, can it be Vanity, when a Man, to remember it? And if I have a tolerable Feature, will not that as much belong to my Picture as an Imperfection? In a word, from what I have mentioned, I wou'd observe only this; That when we are conscious of the least comparative Merit in ourselves, we shou'd take as much care to conceal the Value we set upon it, as if it were a real Defect: To be elated or vain upon it is shewing your Money before People in want; ten to one but some who may think you to have too much may borrow, or pick your Pocket before you get home. He who assumes Praise to himself, the World will think overpays himself. Even the Suspicion of being vain ought as much to be dreaded as the Guilt itself. *Cæsar* was of the same Opinion in regard to his Wife's Chastity. Praise, tho' it may be our due, is not like a *Bank-Bill*, to be paid upon Demand; to be valuable it must be voluntary. When we are dun'd for it, we have a Right and Privilege to refuse it. If Compulsion insists upon it, it can only be paid as Persecution in Points of Faith is, in a counterfeit Coin: And who ever believ'd Occasional Conformity to be sincere? *Nero*, the most vain Coxcomb of a Tyrant that ever breath'd, cou'd not raise an unfeigned Applause of his Harp by military Execution; even where Praise is deserv'd, Ill-nature and Self-conceit (Passions that poll a majority of Mankind) will with less reluctance part with their Mony than their Approbation. Men of the greatest

Merit are forced to stay 'till they die before the World will fairly make up their Account: Then indeed you have a Chance for your full Due, because it is less grudg'd when you are incapable of enjoying it: Then perhaps even Malice shall heap Praises upon your Memory; tho' not for your sake, but that your surviving Competitors may suffer by a Comparison.<sup>1</sup> 'Tis from the same Principle that *Satyr* shall have a thousand Readers where *Panegyric* has one. When I therefore find my Name at length in the Satyrical Works of our most celebrated living Author, I never look upon those Lines as Malice meant to me, (for he knows I never provok'd it) but Profit to himself: One of his Points must be, to have many Readers: He considers that my Face and Name are more known than those of many thousands of more consequence in the Kingdom: That therefore, right or wrong, a Lick at the *Laureat*<sup>2</sup> will

<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough, Cibber's praise of his deceased companion-actors has been attributed to something of this motive.

<sup>2</sup> Bellchambers prints these words thus: "Lick at the Laureat," as if Cibber had referred to the title of a book; and notes: "This is the title of a pamphlet in which some of Mr. Cibber's peculiarities have been severely handled." But I doubt this, for there is nothing in Cibber's arrangement of the words to denote that they represent the title of a book; and, besides, I know no work with such a title published before 1740. Bellchambers, in a note on page 114, represents that he quotes from "Lick at the Laureat, 1730;" but I find the quotation he gives in "The Laureat," 1740 (p. 31), almost *verbatim*. As it stands in the latter there is no hint that it is quoted from a previous work, nor, indeed, do the terms of it permit of such an interpretation. I can, therefore, only

always be a sure Bait, *ad captandum vulgus*, to catch him little Readers: And that to gratify the Unlearned, by now and then interspersing those merry Sacrifices of an old Acquaintance to their Taste, is a piece of quite right Poetical Craft.<sup>1</sup>

But as a little bad Poetry is the greatest Crime he lays to my charge, I am willing to subscribe to his opinion of *it*.<sup>2</sup> That this sort of Wit is one of the

suppose that Bellchambers is wrong in attributing the sentence to a work called "A Lick at the Laureat."

<sup>1</sup> The principal allusions to Cibber which, up to the time of the publication of the "Apology," Pope had made, were in the "Dunciad":—

"How, with less reading than makes felons 'scape,  
Less human genius than God gives an ape,  
Small thanks to France and none to Rome or Greece,  
A past, vamp'd, future, old, reviv'd, new piece,  
'Twi't Plautus, Fletcher, Congreve, and Corneille,  
Can make a Cibber, Johnson, or Ozell."

Second edition, Book i. 235-240.

"Beneath his reign, shall Eusden wear the bays,  
Cibber preside, Lord-Chancellor of Plays."

Second edition, Book iii. 319, 320.

In the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" there were one or two passing allusions to Cibber, one of them being the line:—

"And has not Colley still his Lord and whore?"

for which Cibber retaliated in his "Letter" of 1742.

In the "First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace" (1737), Cibber is scurvily treated. In it occur the lines:—

"And idle Cibber, how he breaks the laws,  
To make poor Pinkey eat with vast applause!"

<sup>2</sup> Cibber's Odes were a fruitful subject of banter. Fielding in "Pasquin," act ii. sc. 1, has the following passage:—

"*2nd Voter.* My Lord, I should like a Place at Court too; I

easiest ways too of pleasing the generality of Readers, is evident from the comfortable subsistence which our weekly Retailers of Politicks have been known to pick up, merely by making bold with a Government that had unfortunately neglected to find their Genius a better Employment.

Hence too arises all that flat Poverty of Censure and Invective that so often has a Run in our publick Papers upon the Success of a new Author; when, God knows, there is seldom above one Writer among hundreds in Being at the same time whose Satyr a Man of common Sense ought to be mov'd at. When a Master in the Art is angry, then indeed we ought to be alarm'd! How terrible a Weapon is Satyr in the Hand of a great Genius? Yet even

don't much care what it is, provided I wear fine Cloaths, and have something to do in the Kitchen, or the Cellar; I own I should like the Cellar, for I am a divilish Lover of Sack.

*Lord Place.* Sack, say you? Odso, you shall be Poet-Laureat.

*2nd Voter.* Poet! no, my Lord, I am no Poet, I can't make verses.

*Lord Place.* No Matter for that—you'll be able to make Odes.

*2nd Voter.* Odes, my Lord! what are those?

*Lord Place.* Faith, Sir, I can't tell well what they are; but I know you may be qualified for the Place without being a Poet."

Boswell ("Life of Johnson," i. 402) reports that Johnson said, "His [Cibber's] friends give out that he *intended* his birth-day *Odes* should be bad: but that was not the case, Sir; for he kept them many months by him, and a few years before he died he shewed me one of them, with great solicitude to render it as perfect as might be."

In "The Egotist" (p. 63) Cibber is made to say: "As bad Verses are the Devil, and good ones I can't get up to——"

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there, how liable is Prejudice to misuse it? How far, when general, it may reform our Morals, or what Cruelties it may inflict by being angrily particular,<sup>1</sup> is perhaps above my reach to determine. I shall therefore only beg leave to interpose what I feel for others whom it may personally have fallen upon. When I read those mortifying Lines of our most eminent Author, in his Character of *Atticus*<sup>2</sup> (*Atticus*, whose Genius in Verse and whose Morality in Prose has been so justly admir'd) though I am charm'd with the Poetry, my Imagination is hurt at the Severity of it; and tho' I allow the Satyrist to have had personal Provocation, yet, methinks, for that very Reason he ought not to have troubled the Publick with it: For, as it is observed in the 242d *Tatler*, "In all Terms of Reproof, when the Sentence appears to arise from Personal Hatred or Passion, it is not then made the Cause of Mankind, but a Misunderstanding between two Persons." But if such kind of Satyr has its incontestable Greatness; if its exemplary Brightness may not mislead inferior Wits into a barbarous Imitation of its Severity, then I have only admir'd the Verses, and expos'd myself by bringing them under so scrupulous a Reflexion: But the Pain which the Acrimony of those Verses gave me is, in some measure,

<sup>1</sup> "Champion," 29th April, 1740: "When he says (*Fol.* 23) Satire is *angrily* particular, every Dunce of a Reader knows that he means angry with a particular Person."

<sup>2</sup> Cibber's allusion to Pope's treatment of Addison is a fair hit.

allay'd in finding that this inimitable Writer, as he advances in Years, has since had Candour enough to celebrate the same Person for his visible Merit. Happy Genius! whose Verse, like the Eye of Beauty, can heal the deepest Wounds with the least Glance of Favour.

Since I am got so far into this Subject, you must give me leave to go thro' all I have a mind to say upon it; because I am not sure that in a more proper Place my Memory may be so full of it. I cannot find, therefore, from what Reason Satyr is allow'd more Licence than Comedy, or why either of them (to be admir'd) ought not to be limited by Decency and Justice. Let *Juvenal* and *Aristophanes* have taken what Liberties they please, if the Learned have nothing more than their Antiquity to justify their laying about them at that enormous rate, I shall wish they had a better excuse for them! The Personal Ridicule and Scurrility thrown upon *Socrates*, which *Plutarch* too condemns; and the Boldness of *Juvenal*, in writing real Names over guilty Characters, I cannot think are to be pleaded in right of our modern Liberties of the same kind. *Facit indignatio versum*<sup>1</sup> may be a very spirited Expression, and seems to give a Reader hopes of a lively Entertainment: But I am afraid Reproof is in unequal Hands when Anger is its Executioner; and tho' an outrageous Invective may carry some Truth in it, yet it will never have that natural, easy Credit

<sup>1</sup> *Juvenal*, i. 79.

with us which we give to the laughing Ironies of a cool Head. The Satyr that can smile *circum præcordia ludit*, and seldom fails to bring the Reader quite over to his Side whenever Ridicule and folly are at variance. But when a Person satyriſ'd is us'd with the extreamest Rigour, he may sometimes meet with Compassion instead of Contempt, and throw back the Odium that was designed for him, upon the Author. When I would therefore disarm the Satyrist of this Indignation, I mean little more than that I would take from him all private or personal Prejudice, and wou'd still leave him as much general Vice to scourge as he pleases, and that with as much Fire and Spirit as Art and Nature demand to enliven his Work and keep his Reader awake.

Against all this it may be objected, That these are Laws which none but phlegmatick Writers will observe, and only Men of Eminence should give. I grant it, and therefore only submit them to Writers of better Judgment. I pretend not to restrain others from chusing what I don't like; they are welcome (if they please too) to think I offer these Rules more from an Incapacity to break them than from a moral Humanity. Let it be so! still, That will not weaken the strength of what I have asserted, if my Assertion be true. And though I allow that Provocation is not apt to weigh out its Resentments by Drachms and Scruples, I shall still think that no publick Revenge can be honourable where it is not limited by Justice; and if Honour is insatiable in its Revenge it



loses what it contends for and sinks itself, if not into Cruelty, at least into Vain-glory.

This so singular Concern which I have shewn for others may naturally lead you to ask me what I feel for myself when I am unfavourably treated by the elaborate Authors of our daily Papers.<sup>1</sup> Shall I be sincere? and own my frailty? Its usual Effect is to make me vain! For I consider if I were quite good for nothing these Pidlors in Wit would not be concern'd to take me to pieces, or (not to be quite so vain) when they moderately charge me with only Ignorance or Dulness, I see nothing in That which an honest Man need be asham'd of:<sup>2</sup> There is many a good Soul who from those sweet Slumbers of the Brain are never awaken'd by the least harmful Thought; and I am

<sup>1</sup> Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 511) says: "If we except the remarks on plays and players by the authors of the Tatler and Spectator, the theatrical observations in those days were coarse and illiberal, when compared to what we read in our present daily and other periodical papers."

<sup>2</sup> "*Frankly*. Is it not commendable in a Man of Parts, to be warmly concerned for his Reputation?"

*Author [Cibber]*. In what regards his Honesty or Honour, I will make you some Allowances: But for the Reputation of his Parts, not onè Tittle!"—"The Egotist: or, Colley upon Cibber," p. 13.

Bellchambers notes here: "When Cibber was charged with moral offences of a deeper dye, he thought himself at liberty, I presume, to relinquish his indifference, and bring the libeller to account. On a future page will be found the public advertisement in which he offered a reward of ten pounds for the detection of Dennis."

sometimes tempted to think those Retailers of Wit may be of the same Class ; that what they write proceeds not from Malice, but Industry ; and that I ought no more to reproach them than I would a Lawyer that pleads against me for his Fee ; that their Detraction, like Dung thrown upon a Meadow, tho' it may seem at first to deform the Prospect, in a little time it will disappear of itself and leave an involuntary Crop of Praise behind it.

When they confine themselves to a sober Criticism upon what I write ; if their Censure is just, what answer can I make to it ? If it is unjust, why should I suppose that a sensible Reader will not see it, as well as myself ? Or, admit I were able to expose them by a laughing Reply, will not that Reply beget a Rejoinder ? And though they might be Gainers by having the worst on't in a Paper War, that is no Temptation for me to come into it. Or (to make both sides less considerable) would not my bearing Ill-language from a Chimney-sweeper do me less harm than it would be to box with him, tho' I were sure to beat him ? Nor indeed is the little Reputation I have as an Author worth the trouble of a Defence. Then, as no Criticism can possibly make me worse than I really am ; so nothing I can say of myself can possibly make me better : When therefore a determin'd Critick comes arm'd with Wit and Outrage to take from me that small Pittance I have, I wou'd no more dispute with him than I wou'd resist a Gentleman of the Road to save a little Pocket-

Money.<sup>1</sup> Men that are in want themselves seldom make a Conscience of taking it from others. Whoever thinks I have too much is welcome to what share of it he pleases : Nay, to make him more merciful (as I partly guess the worst he can say of what I now write) I will prevent even the Imputation of his doing me Injustice, and honestly say it myself, *viz.* That of all the Assurances I was ever guilty of, this of writing my own Life is the most hardy. I beg his Pardon ! ——— Impudent is what I should have said ! That through every Page there runs a Vein of Vanity and Impertinence which no *French Ensigns memoires* ever came up to ; but, as this is a common Error, I presume the Terms of *Doating Trifler, Old Fool, or Conceited Coxcomb* will carry Contempt enough for an impartial Censor to bestow on me ; that my style is unequal, pert, and frothy, patch'd and party-colour'd like the Coat of an *Harlequin* ; low and pompous, cramm'd with Epithets, strew'd with Scraps of second-hand *Latin* from common Quotations ; frequently aiming at Wit, without ever hitting the Mark ; a mere Ragoust toss'd up from the offals of other authors : My Subject below all Pens but my own, which, whenever I keep to, is flatly daub'd by one eternal Egotism : That I want

<sup>1</sup> “ *Frankly.* It will be always natural for Authors to defend their Works.

*Author [Cibber].* And would it not be as well, if their Works defended themselves ? ” — “ The Egotist : or, Colley upon Cibber,” p. 15.

nothing but Wit to be as accomplish'd a Coxcomb here as ever I attempted to expose on the Theatre: Nay, that this very Confession is no more a Sign of my Modesty than it is a Proof of my Judgment, that, in short, you may roundly tell me, that —  
*Cinna (or Cibber) vult videri Pauper, et est Pauper.*

*When humble Cinna cries, I'm poor and low,  
 You may believe him——he is really so.*

Well, Sir Critick! and what of all this? Now I have laid myself at your Feet, what will you do with me? Expose me? Why, dear Sir, does not every Man that writes expose himself? Can you make me more ridiculous than Nature has made me? You cou'd not sure suppose that I would lose the Pleasure of Writing because you might possibly judge me a Blockhead, or perhaps might pleasantly tell other People they ought to think me so too. Will not they judge as well from what *I* say as what *You* say? If then you attack me merely to divert yourself, your Excuse for writing will be no better than mine. But perhaps you may want Bread: If that be the Case, even go to Dinner, i' God's name!<sup>1</sup>

If our best Authors, when teiz'd by these Triflers, have not been Masters of this Indifference, I should not wonder if it were disbeliev'd in me; but when it is consider'd that I have allow'd my never having

<sup>1</sup> In his "Letter to Pope," 1742, p. 7, Cibber says: "After near twenty years having been libell'd by our Daily-paper Scriblers, I never was so hurt, as to give them one single Answer."

been disturb'd into a Reply has proceeded as much from Vanity as from Philosophy,<sup>1</sup> the Matter then may not seem so incredible : And tho' I confess the complete Revenge of making them Immortal Dunces in Immortal Verse might be glorious ; yet, if you will call it Insensibility in me never to have winc'd at them, even that Insensibility has its happiness, and what could Glory give me more ?<sup>2</sup> For my part, I have always had the 'comfort to think, whenever they design'd me a Disfavour, it generally flew back into their own Faces, as it happens to Children when they squirt at their Play-fellows against the Wind. If a Scribbler cannot be easy because he fancies I have too good an Opinion of my own Productions, let him write on and mortify ; I owe him not the Charity to be out of temper myself merely to keep him quiet or give him Joy : Nor, in reality, can I see why any thing misrepresented, tho' believ'd of me by Persons to whom I am unknown, ought to give me any more Concern than what may be thought of me in *Lapland* : 'Tis with those with whom I am to *live* only, where my Character can affect me ; and I will ven-

<sup>1</sup> "*Frankly*. I am afraid you will discover yourself ; and your Philosophical Air will come out at last meer Vanity in Masquerade.

*Author* [*Cibber*]. O ! if there be Vanity in keeping one's Temper ; with all my Heart."—"The Egotist : or, Colley upon Cibber," p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> In his "Letter to Pope," 1742, p. 9, Cibber says : "I would not have even your merited Fame in Poetry, if it were to be attended with half the fretful Solitude you seem to have lain under to maintain it."

ture to say, he must find out a new way of Writing that will make me pass my Time *there* less agreeably.

You see, Sir, how hard it is for a Man that is talking of himself to know when to give over; but if you are tired, lay me aside till you have a fresh Appetite; if not, I'll tell you a Story.

In the Year 1730 there were many Authors whose Merit wanted nothing but Interest to recommend them to the vacant *Laurel*, and who took it ill to see it at last conferred upon a Comedian; inso-much, that they were resolved at least to shew specimens of their superior Pretensions, and accordingly enliven'd the publick Papers with ingenious Epigrams and satirical Flirts at the unworthy Successor:<sup>1</sup> These Papers my Friends with a wicked Smile would often put into my Hands and desire me to read them fairly in Company: This was a Challenge which I never declin'd, and, to do my doughty Antagonists Justice, I always read them

<sup>1</sup> The best epigram is that which Cibber ("Letter," 1742, p. 39) attributes to Pope:—

"In merry Old England, it once was a Rule,  
The King had his Poet, and also his Fool.  
But now we're so frugal, I'd have you to know it,  
That Cibber can serve both for Fool and for Poet."

Dr. Johnson also wrote an epigram, of which he seems to have been somewhat proud:—

"Augustus still survives in Maro's strain,  
And Spenser's verse prolongs Eliza's reign;  
Great George's acts let tuneful Cibber sing;  
For Nature form'd the Poet for the King."

Boswell, i. 149.

with as much impartial Spirit as if I had writ them myself. While I was thus beset on all sides, there happen'd to step forth a poetical Knight-Errant to my Assistance, who was hardy enough to publish some compassionate Stanzas in my Favour. These, you may be sure, the Raillery of my Friends could do no less than say I had written to myself. To deny it I knew would but have confirmed their pretended Suspicion: I therefore told them, since it gave them such Joy to believe them my own, I would do my best to make the whole Town think so too. As the Oddness of this Reply was I knew what would not be easily comprehended, I desired them to have a Days patience, and I would print an Explanation to it: To conclude, in two Days after I sent this Letter, with some doggerel Rhimes at the Bottom,

*To the Author of the Whitehall Evening-Post.*

SIR,

*THE Verses to the Laureat in yours of Saturday last have occasion'd the following Reply, which I*

In "Certain Epigrams, in Laud and Praise of the Gentlemen of the Dunciad," p. 8, is:—

EPIGRAM XVI.

*A Question by ANONYMUS.*

"Tell, if you can, which did the worse,  
*Caligula*, or *Gr—n's* [Grafton's] *Gr—ce*?  
 That made a Consul of a *Horse*,  
 And this a Laureate of an *Ass*."

In "The Egotist: or, Colley upon Cibber," p. 49, Cibber is

*hope you'll give a Place in your next, to shew that we can be quick as well as smart upon a proper Occasion: And, as I think it the lowest Mark of a Scoundrel to make bold with any Man's Character in Print without subscribing the true Name of the Author; I therefore desire, if the Laureat is concern'd enough to ask the Question, that you will tell him my Name and where I live; till then, I beg leave to be known by no other than that of,*

Your Servant,

Monday, Jan. 11, 1730.

FRANCIS FAIRPLAY.

These were the Verses.<sup>1</sup>

I.

*Ah, hah! Sir Coll, is that thy Way,  
Thy own dull Praise to write?  
And wou'd'st thou stand so sure a Lay?  
No, that's too stale a Bite.*

II.

*Nature and Art in thee combine,  
Thy Talents here excel:  
All shining Brass thou dost outshine,  
To play the Cheat so well.*

III.

*Who sees thee in Iago's Part,  
But thinks thee such a Rogue?*

made to say: "An *Ode* is a Butt, that a whole Quiver of Wit is let fly at every Year!"

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat" says: "The Things he calls Verses, carry the most evident Marks of their Parent *Colley*."—p. 24.



*And is not glad, with all his Heart,  
To hang so sad a Dog?*

## IV.

*When Bays thou play'st, Thyself thou art ;  
For that by Nature fit,  
No Blockhead better suits the Part,  
Than such a Coxcomb Wit.*

## V.

*In Wronghead too, thy Brains we see,  
Who might do well at Plough ;  
As fit for Parliament was he,  
As for the Laurel, Thou.*

## VI.

*Bring thy protected Verse from Court,  
And try it on the Stage ;  
There it will make much better Sport,  
And set the Town in Rage.*

## VII:

*There Beaux and Wits and Cits and Smarts,  
Where Hissing's not uncivil,  
Will shew their Parts to thy Deserts,  
And send it to the Devil.*

## VIII.

*But, ah! in vain 'gainst Thee we write,  
In vain thy Verse we maul !  
Our sharpest Satyr's thy Delight,  
\* For——Blood! thou'lt stand it all.*

\* *A Line in the Epilogue to the Nonjuror.*

## IX.

*Thunder, 'tis said, the Laurel spares ;  
Nought but thy Brows could blast it :  
And yet——O curst, provoking Stars !  
Thy Comfort is, thou hast it.*

This, Sir, I offer as a Proof that I was seven Years ago<sup>1</sup> the same cold Candidate for Fame which I would still be thought ; you will not easily suppose I could have much Concern about it, while, to gratify the merry Pique of my Friends, I was capable of seeming to head the Poetical Cry then against me, and at the same Time of never letting the Publick know 'till this Hour that these Verses were written by myself : Nor do I give them you as an Entertainment, but merely to shew you this particular Cast of my Temper.

When I have said this, I would not have it thought Affectation in me when I grant that no Man worthy the Name of an Author is a more faulty Writer than myself ; that I am not Master of my own Language<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This allusion to time shows that Cibber began his "Apology" about 1737.

<sup>2</sup> Fielding has many extremely good attacks on Cibber's style and language. For instance:—

"I shall here only obviate a flying Report . . . that whatever Language it was writ in, it certainly could not be *English*. . . . Now I shall prove it to be *English* in the following Manner. Whatever Book is writ in no other Language, is writ in *English*. This Book is writ in no other Language, *Ergo*, It is writ in *English*."—"Champion," 22nd April, 1740.

Again ("Joseph Andrews," book iii. chap. vi.), addressing the

I too often feel when I am at a loss for Expression : I know too that I have too bold a Disregard for that Correctness which others set so just a Value upon : This I ought to be ashamed of, when I find that Persons, perhaps of colder Imaginations, are allowed to write better than myself. Whenever I speak of any thing that highly delights me, I find it very difficult to keep my Words within the Bounds of Common Sense : Even when I write too, the same Failing will sometimes get the better of me ; of which I cannot give you a stronger Instance than in that wild Expression I made use of in the first Edition of my Preface to the *Provok'd Husband* ; where, speaking of Mrs. *Oldfield's* excellent Performance in the Part of Lady *Townly*, my Words ran thus, *viz. It is not enough to say, that here she outdid her usual Out-doing.*<sup>1</sup>—A most vile Jingle, I grant it ! You may well ask me, How could I possibly commit such a Wantonness to Paper ? And I owe myself the Shame of confessing I have no Excuse for it but that, like a Lover in the Fulness of his Content, by endeavouring to be floridly grateful I talk'd Nonsense. Not but it makes me smile to remember how many flat Writers have made themselves brisk upon this single Expression ; wherever the Muse or Genius that presides over Biography, he says : “Thou, who, without the assistance of the least spice of literature, and even against his inclination, hast, in some pages of his book, forced Colley Cibber to write English.”

<sup>1</sup> In later editions the expression was changed to “She here out-did her usual excellence.”

Verb, *Outdo*, could come in, the pleasant Accusative, *Outdoing*, was sure to follow it. The provident Wags knew that *Decies repetita placeret* :<sup>1</sup> so delicious a Morsel could not be serv'd up too often! After it had held them nine times told for a Jest, the Publick has been pester'd with a tenth Skull thick enough to repeat it. Nay, the very learned in the Law have at last facetiously laid hold of it! Ten Years after it first came from me it served to enliven the eloquence of an eloquent Pleader before a House of Parliament! What Author would not envy me so frolicksome a Fault that had such publick Honours paid to it?

After this Consciousness of my real Defects, you will easily judge, Sir, how little I presume that my Poetical Labours may outlive those of my mortal *Cotemporaries*.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time that I am so humble in my Pretensions to Fame, I would not be thought to undervalue it; Nature will not suffer us to despise it, but she may sometimes make us too fond of it. I have known more than one good Writer very near ridiculous from being in too much Heat about it. Whoever intrinsically deserves it will always have a pro-

<sup>1</sup> "Decies repetita placebit."—Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 365.

<sup>2</sup> "For instance: when you rashly think,  
No rhymer can like Welsted sink,  
His merits balanc'd, you shall find,  
The laureat leaves him far behind."

Swift, *On Poetry: a Rhapsody*, l. 393.

portionable Right to it. It can neither be resign'd nor taken from you by Violence. Truth, which is unalterable, must (however his Fame may be contested) give every Man his Due : What a Poem weighs it will be worth ; nor is it in the Power of Human Eloquence, with Favour or Prejudice, to increase or diminish its Value. Prejudice, 'tis true, may a while discolour it ; but it will always have its Appeal to the Equity of good Sense, which will never fail in the End to reverse all false Judgment against it. Therefore when I see an eminent Author hurt, and impatient at an impotent Attack upon his Labours, he disturbs my Inclination to admire him ; I grow doubtful of the favourable Judgment I have made of him, and am quite uneasy to see him so tender in a Point he cannot but know he ought not himself to be judge of ; his Concern indeed at another's Prejudice or Disapprobation may be natural ; but to own it seems to me a natural Weakness. When a Work is apparently great it will go without Crutches ; all your Art and Anxiety to heighten the Fame of it then becomes low and little.<sup>1</sup> He that will bear no Censure must be often robb'd of his due Praise. Fools have as good a Right to be Readers as Men of Sense have, and why not to give

<sup>1</sup> "*Frankly*. Then for your Reputation, if you won't bustle about it, and now and then give it these little Helps of Art, how can you hope to raise it ?

*Author [Cibber]*. If it can't live upon simple Nature, let it die, and be damn'd ! I shall give myself no further Trouble about it."—"The Egotist : or, Colley upon Cibber," p. 9.

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their Judgments too? Methinks it would be a sort of Tyranny in Wit for an Author to be publicly putting every Argument to death that appear'd against him; so absolute a Demand for Approbation puts us upon our Right to dispute it; Praise is as much the Reader's Property as Wit is the Author's; Applause is not a Tax paid to him as a Prince, but rather a Benevolence given to him as a Beggar; and we have naturally more Charity for the dumb Beggar than the sturdy one. The Merit of a Writer and a fine Woman's Face are never mended by their talking of them: How amiable is she that seems not to know she is handsome!

To conclude; all I have said upon this Subject is much better contained in six Lines of a Reverend Author, which will be an Answer to all critical Censure for ever.

*Time is the Judge; Time has nor Friend nor Foe;  
False Fame must wither, and the True will grow.  
Arm'd with this Truth all Criticks I defy;  
For, if I fall, by my own Pen I die;  
While Snarlers strive with proud but fruitless Pain,  
To wound Immortals, or to slay the Slain.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Young's second "Epistle to Mr. Pope."



*N. P. Downing, sc.*

### CHAPTER III.

*The Author's several Chances for the Church, the Court, and the Army. Going to the University. Met the Revolution at Nottingham. Took Arms on that Side. What he saw of it. A few Political Thoughts. Fortune willing to do for him. His Neglect of her. The Stage prefer'd to all her Favours. The Profession of an Actor consider'd. The Misfortunes and Advantages of it.*

I AM now come to that Crisis of my Life when Fortune seem'd to be at a Loss what she should do with me. Had she favour'd my Father's first Designation of me, he might then, perhaps, have had as sanguine Hopes of my being a Bishop as I afterwards conceived of my being a General when I first took Arms at the Revolution. Nay, after that I

had a third Chance too, equally as good, of becoming an Under-propper of the State. How at last I came to be none of all these the Sequel will inform you.

About the Year 1687 I was taken from School to stand at the Election of Children into *Winchester* College; my being by my Mother's Side a Descendant<sup>1</sup> of *William of Wickam*, the Founder, my Father (who knew little how the World was to be dealt with) imagined my having that Advantage would be Security enough for my Success, and so sent me simply down thither, without the least favourable Recommendation or Interest, but that of my naked Merit and a pompous Pedigree in my Pocket. Had he tack'd a Direction to my Back, and sent me by the Carrier to the Mayor of the Town, to be chosen Member of Parliament there, I might have had just as much Chance to have succeeded in the one as the other. But I must not omit in this Place to let you know that the Experience which my Father then bought, at my Cost, taught him some Years after to take a more judicious Care of my younger Brother, *Lewis Cibber*, whom, with the Present of a Statue of the Founder, of his own making, he recommended to the same College. This Statue now stands (I think) over the School Door there,<sup>2</sup> and was so well

<sup>1</sup> Indirectly surely, William of Wykeham being a priest.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to the courtesy of the Head Master of Winchester College, the Rev. Dr. Fearon, for the information that this statue, a finely designed and well-executed work, still stands over the door of the big school. A Latin inscription states that it was presented by Caius Gabriel Cibber in 1697.



executed that it seem'd to speak——for its Kinsman. It was no sooner set up than the Door of Preferment was open to him.

Here one would think my Brother had the Advantage of me in the Favour of Fortune, by this his first laudable Step into the World. I own I was so proud of his Success that I even valued myself upon it; and yet it is but a melancholy Reflection to observe how unequally his Profession and mine were provided for; when I, who had been the Outcast of Fortune, could find means, from my Income of the Theatre, before I was my own Master there, to supply in his highest Preferment his common Necessities. I cannot part with his Memory without telling you I had as sincere a Concern for this Brother's Well-being as my own. He had lively Parts and more than ordinary Learning, with a good deal of natural Wit and Humour; but from too great a disregard to his Health he died a Fellow of *New College* in *Oxford* soon after he had been ordained by *Dr. Compton*, then Bishop of *London*. I now return to the State of my own Affair at *Winchester*.

After the Election, the Moment I was inform'd that I was one of the unsuccessful Candidates, I blest myself to think what a happy Reprieve I had got from the confin'd Life of a School-boy! and the same Day took Post back to *London*, that I might arrive time enough to see a Play (then my darling Delight) before my Mother might demand an Account of my travelling Charges. When I look back to that Time,

it almost makes me tremble to think what Miseries, in fifty Years farther in Life, such an unthinking Head was liable to! To ask why Providence afterwards took more Care of me than I did of myself, might be making too bold an Enquiry into its secret Will and Pleasure: All I can say to that Point is, that I am thankful and amazed at it!<sup>1</sup>

'Twas about this time I first imbib'd an Inclination, which I durst not reveal, for the Stage; for besides that I knew it would disoblige my Father, I had no Conception of any means practicable to make my way to it. I therefore suppress'd the bewitching Ideas of so sublime a Station, and compounded with my Ambition by laying a lower Scheme, of only getting the nearest way into the immediate Life of a Gentleman-Collegiate. My Father being at this time employ'd at *Chattsworth* in *Derbyshire* by the

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers finds in this sentence "a levity, which accords with the charges so often brought against Cibber of impiety and irreligion;" and he quotes from Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 506) two stories—one, that Cibber spat at a picture of our Saviour; and the other, that he endeavoured to enter into discussion with "honest Mr. William Whiston" with the intention of insulking him. Both anecdotes seem to me rather foolish. I do not suppose Cibber was in any sense a religious man, but his works are far from giving any offence to religion; and, as a paid supporter of a Protestant succession, I think he was too prudent to be an open scoffer. A sentence in one of Victor's "Letters" (i. 72), written from Tunbridge, would seem to show that Cibber at least preserved appearances. He says, "Every one complies with what is called the *fashion*—*Cibber* goes constantly to *prayers*—and the *Curate* (to return the compliment) as constantly, when prayers are over, to the *Gaming table!*"

(then) Earl of *Devonshire*, who was raising that Seat from a *Gothick* to a *Grecian* Magnificence, I made use of the Leisure I then had in *London* to open to him by Letter my Disinclination to wait another Year for an uncertain Preferment at *Winchester*, and to entreat him that he would send me, *per saltum*, by a shorter Cut, to the University. My Father, who was naturally indulgent to me, seem'd to comply with my Request, and wrote word that as soon as his Affairs would permit, he would carry me with him and settle me in some College, but rather at *Cambridge*, where (during his late Residence at that Place, in making some Statues that now stand upon *Trinity* College New Library) he had contracted some Acquaintance with the Heads of Houses, who might assist his Intentions for me.<sup>1</sup> This I lik'd

a hand  
saying?  
or does he  
refer  
to pre-  
ferment  
superior

<sup>1</sup> By the kindness of a friend at Cambridge I am enabled to give the following interesting extracts from a letter written by Mr. William White, of Trinity College Library, regarding the statues here referred to: "They occupy the four piers, subdividing the balustrade on the east side of the Library, overlooking Neville's Court. The four Statues represent Divinity, Law, Physic, and Mathematics. That these were executed by Mr. Gabriel Cibber our books will prove. I will give you two or three extracts from Grumbold's Account Book, kept in the Library. He was Foreman of the Works when the Library was built. I think Cibber cut the Statues here. It is quite certain he and his men were here some time: no doubt they superintended the placing of them in their positions, at so great a height.

'Payd for the Carridg of a Larg Block Stone Given by John Manning to y<sup>e</sup> Coll. for one of y<sup>e</sup> Figures 01 : 00 : 00.'

'May 7, 1681. P<sup>d</sup> to M<sup>r</sup> Gabriell Cibber for cutting four statues 80 : 00 : 00.'

better than to go discountenanc'd to *Oxford*, to which it would have been a sort of Reproach to me not to have come elected. After some Months were elaps'd, my Father, not being willing to let me lie too long idling in *London*, sent for me down to *Chattsworth*, to be under his Eye, till he cou'd be at leisure to carry me to *Cambridge*. Before I could set out on my Journey thither, the Nation fell in labour of the Revolution, the News being then just brought to *London* That the Prince of *Orange* at the Head of an Army was landed in the *West*.<sup>1</sup> When I came to *Nottingham*, I found my Father in Arms there, among those Forces which the Earl of *Devonshire* had rais'd for the Redress of our violated Laws and Liberties. My Father judg'd this a proper Season for a young Strippling to turn himself loose into the Bustle of the World; and being himself too advanc'd in Years to endure the Winter Fatigue which might possibly follow, entreated that noble Lord that he would be pleas'd to accept of his Son in his room, and that he would give him (my Father) leave to return and finish his Works at *Chattsworth*. This was so well receiv'd by his Lordship that he not only admitted of my Service, but promis'd my

' 27 June. P<sup>d</sup> to y<sup>e</sup> Widdo Bats for M<sup>r</sup> Gabriel Cibbers and his mens diatt 05 : 18 : 11. P<sup>d</sup> to M<sup>r</sup> Martin [for the same] 12 : 03 : 03.'

In connection with these statues an amusing practical joke was played while Byron was an undergraduate, which was attributed to him—unjustly, however, I believe.

<sup>1</sup> 5th November, 1688.

Father in return that when Affairs were settled he would provide for me. Upon this my Father return'd to *Derbyshire*, while I, not a little transported, jump'd into his Saddle. Thus in one Day all my Thoughts of the University were smother'd in Ambition! A slight Commission for a Horse-Officer was the least View I had before me. At this Crisis you cannot but observe that the Fate of King *James* and of the Prince of *Orange*, and that of so minute a Being as my self, were all at once upon the Anvil: In what shape they wou'd severally come out, tho' a good *Guess* might be made, was not then *demonstrable* to the deepest Foresight; but as my Fortune seem'd to be of small Importance to the Publick, Providence thought fit to postpone it 'till that of those great Rulers of Nations was justly perfected. Yet, had my Father's Business permitted him to have carried me one Month sooner (as he intended) to the University, who knows but by this time that purer Fountain might have wash'd my Imperfections into a Capacity of writing (instead of Plays and Annual Odes) Sermons and Pastoral Letters. But whatever Care of the Church might so have fallen to my share, as I dare say it may be now in better Hands, I ought not to repine at my being otherwise disposed of.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fielding, in "Joseph Andrews," book i. chap. 1: "How artfully does the former [Cibber] by insinuating that he escaped being promoted to the highest stations in the Church and State, teach us a contempt of worldly grandeur! how strongly does he inculcate an absolute submission to our Superiors!"

*Quoted?*

You must now consider me as one among those desperate Thousands, who, after a Patience sorely try'd, took Arms under the Banner of Necessity, the natural Parent of all Human Laws and Government. I question if in all the Histories of Empire there is one Instance of so bloodless a Revolution as that in *England* in 1688, wherein Whigs, Tories, Princes, Prelates, Nobles, Clergy, common People, and a Standing Army, were unanimous. To have seen all *England* of one Mind is to have liv'd at a very particular Juncture. Happy Nation! who are never divided among themselves but when they have least to complain of! Our greatest Grievance since that Time seems to have been that we cannot all govern; and 'till the Number of good Places are equal to those who think themselves qualified for them there must ever be a Cause of Contention among us. While Great Men want great Posts, the Nation will never want real or seeming Patriots; and while great Posts are fill'd with Persons whose Capacities are but Human, such Persons will never be allow'd to be without Errors; not even the Revolution, with all its Advantages, it seems, has been able to furnish us with unexceptionable Statesmen! for from that time I don't remember any one Set of Ministers that have not been heartily rail'd at; a Period long enough one would think (if all of them have been as bad as they have been call'd) to make a People despair of ever seeing a good one: But as it is possible that Envy, Prejudice, or Party may sometimes have a

share in what is generally thrown upon 'em, it is not easy for a private Man to know who is absolutely in the right from what is said against them, or from what their Friends or Dependants may say in their Favour: Tho' I can hardly forbear thinking that they who have been *longest* rail'd at, must from that Circumstance shew in some sort a Proof of Capacity. —But to my History.

It were almost incredible to tell you, at the latter end of King *James's* Time (though the Rod of Arbitrary Power was always shaking over us) with what Freedom and Contempt the common People in the open Streets talk'd of his wild Measures to make a whole Protestant Nation Papists; and yet, in the height of our secure and wanton Defiance of him, we of the Vulgar had no farther Notion of any Remedy for this Evil than a satisfy'd Presumption that our Numbers were too great to be master'd by his mere Will and Pleasure; that though he might be too hard for our Laws, he would never be able to get the better of our Nature; and that to drive all *England* into Popery and Slavery he would find would be teaching an old Lion to dance.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fielding ("Champion," 6th May, 1740): "Not to mention our Author's Comparisons of himself to King *James*, the Prince of *Orange*, *Alexander the Great*, *Charles the XIIth*, and *Harry IV. of France*, his favourite Simile is a Lion, thus *page* 39, we have a SATISFIED PRESUMPTION, that *to drive England into slavery is like teaching AN OLD LION TO DANCE.* 104. *Our new critics are like Lions Whelps that dash down the Bowls of Milk &c.* besides a third Allusion to the same Animal: and this brings into my Mind

But happy was it for the Nation that it had then wiser Heads in it, who knew how to lead a People so dispos'd into Measures for the Publick Preservation.

Here I cannot help reflecting on the very different Deliverances *England* met with at this Time and in the very same Year of the Century before : Then (in 1588) under a glorious Princess, who had at heart the Good and Happiness of her People, we scatter'd and destroy'd the most formidable Navy of Invaders that ever cover'd the Seas : And now (in 1688) under a Prince who had alienated the Hearts of his People by his absolute Measures to oppress them, a foreign Power is receiv'd with open Arms in defence of our Laws, Liberties, and Religion, which our native Prince had invaded ! How widely different were these two Monarchs in their Sentiments of Glory ! But, *Tantum religio potuit suadere maiorum.*<sup>1</sup>

When we consider in what height of the Nation's Prosperity the Successor of Queen *Elizabeth* came to this Throne, it seems amazing that such a Pile of *English* Fame and Glory, which her skilful Admini-

a Story which I once heard from *Booth*, that our Biographer had, in one of his Plays in a Local Simile, introduced this generous Beast in some Island or Country where Lions did not grow ; of which being informed by the learned *Booth*, the Biographer replied, *Prithee tell me then, where there is a Lion, for God's Curse, if there be a Lion in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, I will not lose my simile.*"

<sup>1</sup> Lucretius, i. 102.



stration had erected, should in every following Reign down to the Revolution so unhappily moulder away in one continual Gradation of Political Errors : All which must have been avoided, if the plain Rule which that wise Princess left behind her had been observed, *viz. That the Love of her People was the surest Support of her Throne.* This was the Principle by which she so happily govern'd herself and those she had the Care of. In this she found Strength to combat and struggle thro' more Difficulties and dangerous Conspiracies than ever *English* Monarch had to cope with. At the same time that she profess'd to *desire* the People's Love, she took care that her Actions shou'd *deserve* it, without the least Abatement of her Prerogative ; the Terror of which she so artfully covered that she sometimes seem'd to flatter those she was determin'd should obey. If the four following Princes had exercis'd their Regal Authority with so visible a Regard to the Publick Welfare, it were hard to know whether the People of *England* might have ever complain'd of them, or even felt the want of that Liberty they now so happily enjoy. 'Tis true that before her Time our Ancestors had many successful Contests with their Sovereigns for their *ancient Right and Claim* to it ; yet what did those Successes amount to ? little more than a Declaration that there was such a Right in being ; but who ever saw it enjoy'd ? Did not the Actions of almost every succeeding Reign shew there were still so many Doors of

Oppression left open to the Prerogative that (whatever Value our most eloquent Legislators may have set upon those ancient Liberties) I doubt it will be difficult to fix the Period of their having a real Being before the Revolution : Or if there ever was an elder Period of our unmolested enjoying them, I own my poor Judgment is at a loss where to place it. I will boldly say then, it is to the Revolution only we owe the full Possession of what, 'till then, we never had more than a perpetually contested Right to: And, from thence, from the Revolution it is that the Protestant Successors of King *William* have found their Paternal Care and Maintenance of that Right has been the surest Basis of their Glory.<sup>1</sup>

These, Sir, are a few of my Political Notions, which I have ventur'd to expose that you may see what sort of an *English* Subject I am ; how wise or weak they may have shewn me is not my Concern ; let the weight of these Matters have drawn me never so far out of my Depth, I still flatter myself that I have kept a simple, honest Head above Water. And it is a solid Comfort to me to consider that how insignificant soever my Life was at the Revolution, it had still the good Fortune to make one among the many who brought it about ; and that I now, with

<sup>1</sup> John Dennis, in an advertisement to "The Invader of his Country," 1720, says, "'tis as easy for Mr. *Cibber* at this time of Day to make a Bounce with his Loyalty, as 'tis for a Bully at Sea, who had lain hid in the Hold all the time of the Fight, to come up and swagger upon the Deck after the Danger is over."

my Coævals, as well as with the Millions since born, enjoy the happy Effects of it.

But I must now let you see how my particular Fortune went forward with this Change in the Government; of which I shall not pretend to give you any farther Account than what my simple Eyes saw of it.

We had not been many Days at *Nottingham* before we heard that the Prince of *Denmark*, with some other great Persons, were gone off from the King to the Prince of *Orange*, and that the Princess *Anne*, fearing the King her Father's Resentment might fall upon her for her Consort's Revolt, had withdrawn her self in the Night from *London*, and was then within half a Days Journey of *Nottingham*; on which very Morning we were suddenly alarm'd with the News that two thousand of the King's Dragoons were in close pursuit to bring her back Prisoner to *London*: But this Alarm it seems was all Stratagem, and was but a part of that general Terror which was thrown into many other Places about the Kingdom at the same time, with design to animate and unite the People in their common defence; it being then given out that the *Irish* were every where at our Heels to cut off all the Protestants within the Reach of their Fury. In this Alarm our Troops scrambled to Arms in as much Order as their Consternation would admit of, when, having advanc'd some few Miles on the *London* Road, they met the Princess in a Coach, attended only by the Lady *Churchill* (now

Dutchess Dowager of *Marlborough*) and the Lady *Fitzharding*, whom they conducted into *Nottingham* through the Acclamations of the People : The same Night all the Noblemen and the other Persons of Distinction then in Arms had the Honour to sup at her Royal Highness's Table ; which was then furnish'd (as all her necessary Accommodations were) by the Care and at the Charge of the Lord *Devonshire*. At this Entertainment, of which I was a Spectator, something very particular surpriz'd me : The noble Guests at the Table happening to be more in number than Attendants out of Liveries could be found for, I being well known in the Lord *Devonshire's* Family, was desired by his Lordship's *Maitre d'Hotel* to assist at it : The Post assign'd me was to observe what the Lady *Churchill* might call for. Being so near the Table, you may naturally ask me what I might have heard to have pass'd in Conversation at it ? which I should certainly tell you had I attended to above two Words that were utter'd there, and those were, *Some Wine and Water*. These I remember came distinguish'd and observ'd to my Ear, because they came from the fair Guest whom I took such Pleasure to wait on : Except at that single Sound, all my Senses were collected into my Eyes, which during the whole Entertainment wanted no better Amusement, than of stealing now and then the Delight of gazing on the fair Object so near me : If so clear an Emanation of Beauty, such a commanding Grace of Aspect struck me into a Regard that

had something softer than the most profound Respect in it, I cannot see why I may not without Offence remember it ; since Beauty, like the Sun, must sometimes lose its Power to chuse, and shine into equal Warmth the Peasant and the Courtier.<sup>1</sup> Now to give you, Sir, a farther Proof of how good a Taste my first hopeful Entrance into Manhood set out with, I remember above twenty Years after, when the same Lady had given the World four of the loveliest Daughters that ever were gaz'd on, even after they were all nobly married, and were become the reigning Toasts of every Party of Pleasure, their still lovely Mother had at the same time her Votaries, and her Health very often took the Lead in those involuntary Triumphs of Beauty. However presumptuous or impertinent these Thoughts might have appear'd at my first entertaining them, why may I not hope that my having kept them decently secret for full fifty Years may be now a good round Plea for their Pardon? Were I now qualify'd to say more of this celebrated Lady, I should conclude it thus: That she has liv'd (to all Appearance) a peculiar Favourite of Providence ; that few Examples can parallel the Profusion of Blessings which have attended so long a Life of Felicity. A Person so

<sup>1</sup> "Champion," 29th April, 1740: "When in *page 42*, we read, *Beauty SHINES into equal Warmth the Peasant and the Courtier*, do we not know what he means though he hath made a Verb active of SHINE, as in *Page 117*, he hath of REGRET, *nothing could more painfully regret a judicious Spectator.*"

attractive! a Husband so memorably great! an Offspring so beautiful! a Fortune so immense! and a Title which (when Royal Favour had no higher to bestow) she only could receive from the Author of Nature; a great Grandmother without grey Hairs! These are such consummate Indulgencies that we might think Heaven has center'd them all in one Person, to let us see how far, with a lively Understanding, the full Possession of them could contribute to human Happiness.—I now return to our Military Affairs.

From *Nottingham* our Troops march'd to *Oxford*; through every Town we pass'd the People came out, in some sort of Order, with such rural and rusty Weapons as they had, to meet us, in Acclamations of Welcome and good Wishes. This I thought promis'd a favourable End of our Civil War, when the Nation seem'd so willing to be all of a Side! At *Oxford* the Prince and Princess of *Denmark* met for the first time after their late Separation, and had all possible Honours paid them by the University. Here we rested in quiet Quarters for several Weeks, till the Flight of King *James* into *France*; when the Nation being left to take care of it self, the only Security that could be found for it was to advance the Prince and Princess of *Orange* to the vacant Throne. The publick Tranquillity being now settled, our Forces were remanded back to *Nottingham*. Here all our Officers who had commanded them from their first Rising receiv'd Commissions to con-

firm them in their several Posts ; and at the same time such private Men as chose to return to their proper Business or Habitations were offer'd their Discharges. Among the small number of those who receiv'd them, I was one ; for not hearing that my Name was in any of these new Commissions, I thought it time for me to take my leave of Ambition, as Ambition had before seduc'd me from the imaginary Honours of the Gown, and therefore resolv'd to hunt my Fortune in some other Field.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One of the commonest imputations made against Cibber was that he was of a cowardly temper. In "Common Sense" for 11th June, 1737, a paper attributed to Lord Chesterfield, there is a dissertation on kicking as a humorous incident on the stage. The writer adds : "Of all the Comedians who have appeared upon the Stage within my Memory, no one has taking (*sic*) a Kicking with so much Humour as our present most excellent Laureat, and I am inform'd his Son does not fall much short of him in this Excellence ; I am very glad of it, for as I have a Kindness for the young Man, I hope to see him as well kick'd as his Father was before him."

I confess that I am not quite sure how far this sentence is ironically meant, but Belchambers refers to it as conveying a serious accusation of cowardice. He also quotes from Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 487), who relates, on the authority of Victor, that Cibber, having reduced Bickerstaffe's salary by one-half, was waited upon by that actor, who "flatly told him, that as he could not subsist on the small sum to which he had reduced his salary, he must call the author of his distress to an account, for that it would be easier for him to lose his life than to starve. The affrighted Cibber told him, he should receive an answer from him on Saturday next. Bickerstaffe found, on that day, his usual income was continued." This story rests only on Victor's authority, but is, of course, not improbable. There is also a vague report that Gay, in revenge for Cibber's banter of "Three Hours

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From *Nottingham* I again return'd to my Father at *Chattsworth*, where I staid till my Lord came down, with the new Honours<sup>1</sup> of Lord Steward of his Majesty's Houshold and Knight of the Garter! a noble turn of Fortune! and a deep Stake he had play'd for! which calls to my Memory a Story we had then in the Family, which though too light for our graver Historians notice, may be of weight enough for my humble Memoirs. This noble Lord being in the Presence-Chamber in King *James's* time, and known to be no Friend to the Measures of his Administration, a certain Person in favour there, and desirous to be more so, took occasion to tread rudely upon his Lordship's Foot, which was return'd with a sudden Blow upon the Spot: For this Misdemeanour his Lordship was fin'd thirty thousand Pounds; but I think had some time allow'd him for the Payment.<sup>2</sup> In the Summer preceding the Revolution, when his Lordship was retir'd to *Chattsworth*, and had been there deeply engag'd with other Noblemen in the Measures which soon after brought it to bear, King *James* sent a Person down to him with Offers to mitigate his Fine upon Conditions of ready Payment, to which his Lordship reply'd, That if his Majesty pleas'd to allow him a little longer

after Marriage," personally chastised him, but I know no good authority for the story.

<sup>1</sup> Cibber (1st ed.) wrote: "new Honours of Duke of *Devonshire*, Lord Steward," &c. He corrected his blunder in 2nd ed.

<sup>2</sup> See Macaulay ("History," 1858, vol. ii. p. 251).



time, he would rather chuse to play *double* or *quit* with him : The time of the intended Rising being then so near at hand, the Demand, it seems, came too late for a more serious Answer.

However low my Pretensions to Preferment were at this time, my Father thought that a little Court-Favour added to them might give him a Chance for saving the Expence of maintaining me, as he had intended, at the University : He therefore order'd me to draw up a Petition to the Duke, and, to give it some Air of Merit, to put it into *Latin*, the Prayer of which was, That his Grace would be pleas'd to do something (I really forget what) for me.——However the Duke, upon receiving it, was so good as to desire my Father would send me to *London* in the Winter, where he would consider of some Provision for me. It might, indeed, well require time to consider it ; for I believe it was then harder to know what I was really fit for, than to have got me any thing I was not fit for : However, to *London* I came, where I enter'd into my first State of Attendance and Dependance for about five Months, till the *February* following. But alas ! in my Intervals of Leisure, by frequently seeing Plays, my wise Head was turn'd to higher Views, I saw no Joy in any other Life than that of an Actor, so that (as before, when a Candidate at *Winchester*) I was even afraid of succeeding to the Preferment I sought for : 'Twas on the Stage alone I had form'd a Happiness preferable to all that Camps or Courts could offer me ! and

there was I determin'd, let Father and Mother take it as they pleas'd, to fix my *non ultra*.<sup>1</sup> Here I think my self oblig'd, in respect to the Honour of that noble Lord, to acknowledge that I believe his real Intentions to do well for me were prevented by my own inconsiderate Folly; so that if my Life did not then take a more laudable Turn, I have no one but my self to reproach for it; for I was credibly inform'd by the Gentlemen of his Houshold, that his Grace had, in their hearing, talk'd of recommending me to the Lord *Shrewsbury*, then Secretary of State, for the first proper Vacancy in that Office. But the distant Hope of a Reversion was too cold a Temptation for a Spirit impatient as mine, that wanted immediate Possession of what my Heart was so differently set upon. The Allurements of a Theatre are still so strong in my Memory, that perhaps few, except those who have felt them, can conceive: And I am yet so far willing to excuse my Folly, that I am convinc'd, were it possible to take off that Disgrace and Prejudice which Custom has thrown upon the Profession of an Actor, many a well-born younger Brother and Beauty of low Fortune would gladly have adorn'd the Theatre, who by their not being able to brook such Dishonour to their Birth, have

<sup>1</sup> Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 444) says: "Cibber and Verbruggen were two dissipated young fellows, who determined, in opposition to the advice of friends, to become great actors. Much about the same time, they were constant attendants upon Downes, the prompter of Drury-Lane, in expectation of employment."

pass'd away their Lives decently unheeded and forgotten.

Many Years ago, when I was first in the Management of the Theatre, I remember a strong Instance, which will shew you what degree of Ignominy the Profession of an Actor was then held at.—A Lady, with a real Title, whose female Indiscretions had occasion'd her Family to abandon her, being willing, in her Distress, to make an honest Penny of what Beauty she had left, desired to be admitted as an Actress ; when before she could receive our Answer, a Gentleman (probably by her Relation's Permission) advis'd us not to entertain her, for Reasons easy to be guess'd. You may imagine we cou'd not be so blind to our Interest as to make an honourable Family our unnecessary Enemies by not taking his Advice ; which the Lady, too, being sensible of, saw the Affair had its Difficulties, and therefore pursu'd it no farther. Now, is it not hard that it should be a doubt whether this Lady's Condition or ours were the more melancholy ? For here you find her honest Endeavour to get Bread from the Stage was look'd upon as an Addition of new Scandal to her former Dishonour ! so that I am afraid, according to this way of thinking, had the same Lady stoop'd to have sold Patches and Pomatum in a Band-box from Door to Door, she might in that Occupation have starv'd with less Infamy than had she reliev'd her Necessities by being famous on the Theatre. Whether this Prejudice may have arisen from the

Abuses that so often have crept in upon the Stage, I am not clear in; tho' when that is grossly the Case, I will allow there ought to be no Limits set to the Contempt of it; yet in its lowest Condition in my time, methinks there could have been no Pretence of preferring the Band-box to the Buskin. But this severe Opinion, whether merited or not, is not the greatest Distress that this Profession is liable to.

I shall now give you another Anecdote, quite the reverse of what I have instanc'd, wherein you will see an Actress as hardly us'd for an Act of Modesty (which without being a Prude, a Woman, even upon the Stage, may sometimes think it necessary not to throw off.) This too I am forc'd to premise, that the Truth of what I am going to tell you may not be sneer'd at before it be known. About the Year 1717, a young Actress of a desirable Person, sitting in an upper Box at the Opera, a military Gentleman thought this a proper Opportunity to secure a little Conversation with her, the Particulars of which were probably no more worth repeating than it seems the *Damoiselle* then thought them worth listening to; for, notwithstanding the fine Things he said to her, she rather chose to give the Musick the Preference of her Attention: This Indifference was so offensive to his high Heart, that he began to change the Tender into the Terrible, and, in short, proceeded at last to treat her in a Style too grosly insulting for the meanest Female Ear to endure unresented: Upon which, being beaten too far out of her Discre-

tion, she turn'd hastily upon him with an angry Look, and a Reply which seem'd to set his Merit in so low a Regard, that he thought himself oblig'd in Honour to take his time to resent it: This was the full Extent of her Crime, which his Glory delay'd no longer to punish than 'till the next time she was to appear upon the Stage: There, in one of her best Parts, wherein she drew a favourable Regard and Approbation from the Audience, he, dispensing with the Respect which some People think due to a polite Assembly, began to interrupt her Performance with such loud and various Notes of Mockery, as other young Men of Honour in the same Place have sometimes made themselves undauntedly merry with: Thus, deaf to all Murmurs or Entreaties of those about him, he pursued his Point, even to throwing near her such Trash as no Person can be suppos'd to carry about him unless to use on so particular an Occasion.

A Gentleman then behind the Scenes, being shock'd at his unmanly Behaviour, was warm enough to say, That no Man but a Fool or a Bully cou'd be capable of insulting an Audience or a Woman in so monstrous a manner. The former valiant Gentleman, to whose Ear the Words were soon brought by his Spies, whom he had plac'd behind the Scenes to observe how the Action was taken there, came immediately from the Pit in a Heat, and demanded to know of the Author of those Words if he was the Person that spoke them? to which he calmly reply'd,

That though he had never seen him before, yet, since he seem'd so earnest to be satisfy'd, he would do him the favour to own, That indeed the Words were his, and that they would be the last Words he should chuse to deny, whoever they might fall upon. To conclude, their Dispute was ended the next Morning in *Hyde-Park*, where the determin'd Combatant who first ask'd for Satisfaction was oblig'd afterwards to ask his Life too; whether he mended it or not, I have not yet heard; but his Antagonist in a few Years after died in one of the principal Posts of the Government.<sup>1</sup>

Now, though I have sometimes known these gallant Insulters of Audiences draw themselves into Scrapes which they have less honourably got out of, yet, alas! what has that avail'd? This generous publick-spirited Method of silencing a few was but repelling the Disease in one Part to make it break out in another: All Endeavours at Protection are new Provocations to those who pride themselves in pushing their Courage to a Defiance of Humanity. Even when a Royal Resentment has shewn itself in the behalf of an injur'd Actor, it has been unable to defend him from farther Insults! an Instance of which happen'd in the late King *James's* time. Mr. *Smith*<sup>2</sup> (whose Character as a Gentleman could have

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat" states that Miss Santlow (afterwards Mrs. Barton Booth) was the actress referred to; that Captain Montague was her assailant, and Mr. Secretary Craggs her defender.

<sup>2</sup> See memoir of William Smith at end of second volume.

been no way impeach'd had he not degraded it by being a celebrated Actor) had the Misfortune, in a Dispute with a Gentleman behind the Scenes, to receive a Blow from him : The same Night an Account of this Action was carry'd to the King, to whom the Gentleman was represented so grosly in the wrong, that the next Day his Majesty sent to forbid him the Court upon it. This Indignity cast upon a Gentleman only for having maltreated a Player, was look'd upon as the Concern of every Gentleman ; and a Party was soon form'd to assert and vindicate their Honour, by humbling this favour'd Actor, whose slight Injury had been judg'd equal to so severe a Notice. Accordingly, the next time *Smith* acted he was receiv'd with a Chorus of Cat-calls, that soon convinc'd him he should not be suffer'd to proceed in his Part ; upon which, without the least Discomposure, he order'd the Curtain to be dropp'd ; and, having a competent Fortune of his own, thought the Conditions of adding to it by his remaining upon the Stage were too dear, and from that Day entirely quitted it.<sup>1</sup> I shall make no Observation upon the King's Resentment, or on that of his good Subjects ; how far either was or was not right, is not the Point I dispute for : Be that as it may, the unhappy Condition of the Actor was so far from being reliev'd by this Royal Interposition in his favour, that it was the worse for it.

While these sort of real Distresses on the Stage

<sup>1</sup> See memoir.

are so unavoidable, it is no wonder that young People of Sense (though of low Fortune) should be so rarely found to supply a Succession of good Actors. Why then may we not, in some measure, impute the Scarcity of them to the wanton Inhumanity of those Spectators, who have made it so terribly mean to appear there? Were there no ground for this Question, where could be the Disgrace of entering into a Society whose Institution, when not abus'd, is a delightful School of Morality; and where to excel requires as ample Endowments of Nature as any one Profession (that of holy Institution excepted) whatsoever? But, alas! as *Shakespear* says,

*Where's that Palace, whereinto, sometimes  
Foul things intrude not?*<sup>1</sup>

Look into St. *Peter's* at *Rome*, and see what a profitable Farce is made of Religion there! Why then is an Actor more blemish'd than a Cardinal? While the Excellence of the one arises from his innocently seeming what he is not, and the Eminence of the other from the most impious Fallacies that can be impos'd upon human Understanding? If the best things, therefore, are most liable to Corruption, the Corruption of the Theatre is no Disproof of its innate and primitive Utility.

In this Light, therefore, all the Abuses of the Stage, all the low, loose, or immoral Supplements to

<sup>1</sup> "As where's that palace whereinto foul things  
Sometimes intrude not?"—"Othello," act iii. sc. 3.



wit, whether in making Virtue ridiculous or Vice agreeable, or in the decorated Nonsense and Absurdities of Pantomimical Trumpery, I give up to the Contempt of every sensible Spectator, as so much rank Theatrical Popery. But cannot still allow these Enormities to impeach the Profession, while they are so palpably owing to the deprav'd Taste of the Multitude. While Vice and Farcical Folly are the most profitable Commodities, why should we wonder that, time out of mind, the poor Comedian, when real Wit would bear no Price, should deal in what would bring him most ready Money? But this, you will say, is making the Stage a Nursery of Vice and Folly, or at least keeping an open Shop for it.— I grant it: But who do you expect should reform it? The Actors? Why so? If People are permitted to buy it without blushing, the Theatrical Merchant seems to have an equal Right to the Liberty of selling it without Reproach. That this Evil wants a Remedy is not to be contested; nor can it be denied that the Theatre is as capable of being preserv'd by a Reformation as Matters of more Importance; which, for the Honour of our National Taste, I could wish were attempted; and then, if it could not subsist under decent Regulations, by not being permitted to present any thing there but what were *worthy* to be there, it would be time enough to consider, whether it were necessary to let it totally fall, or effectually support it.

Notwithstanding all my best Endeavours to re-

commend the Profession of an Actor to a more general Favour, I doubt, while it is liable to such Corruptions, and the Actor himself to such unlimited Insults as I have already mention'd, I doubt, I say, we must still leave him a-drift, with his intrinsick Merit, to ride out the Storm as well as he is able.

However, let us now turn to the other side of this Account, and see what Advantages stand there to balance the Misfortunes I have laid before you. There we shall still find some valuable Articles of Credit, that sometimes overpay his incidental Disgraces.

First, if he has Sense, he will consider that as these Indignities are seldom or never offer'd him by People that are remarkable for any one good Quality, he ought not to lay them too close to his Heart: He will know too, that when Malice, Envy, or a brutal Nature, can securely hide or fence themselves in a Multitude, Virtue, Merit, Innocence, and even sovereign Superiority, have been, and must be equally liable to their Insults; that therefore, when they fall upon him in the same manner, his intrinsick Value cannot be diminish'd by them: On the contrary, if, with a decent and unruffled Temper, he lets them pass, the Disgrace will return upon his Aggressor, and perhaps warm the generous Spectator into a Partiality in his Favour.

That while he is conscious, That, as an Actor, he must be always in the Hands of Injustice, it does him at least this involuntary Good, that it keeps him in a settled Resolution to avoid all Occasions of provoking it, or of even offending the lowest Enemy,



CAVE UNDERHILL.



who, at the Expence of a Shilling, may publicly revenge it.

That, if he excells on the Stage, and is irreproachable in his Personal Morals and Behaviour, his Profession is so far from being an Impediment, that it will be oftner a just Reason for his being receiv'd among People of condition with Favour; and sometimes with a more social Distinction, than the best, though more profitable Trade he might have follow'd, could have recommended him to.

That this is a Happiness to which several Actors within my Memory, as *Betterton, Smith, Montfort, Captain Griffin*,<sup>1</sup> and Mrs. *Bracegirdle* (yet living) have arriv'd at; to which I may add the late cele-

<sup>1</sup> Captain Griffin was, no doubt, the Griffin who is mentioned by Downes as entering the King's Company "after they had begun at Drury Lane." This is of course very indefinite as regards time. Drury Lane was opened in 1663, but the first character for which we can find Griffin's name mentioned, is that of Varnish in "The Plain-Dealer," which was produced in 1674. At the Union in 1682, Griffin took a good position in the amalgamated company, and continued on the stage till about 1688, when his name disappears from the bills. During this time he is not called *Captain*, but in 1701 the name of Captain Griffin appears among the Drury Lane actors. Genest says it is more probable that this should be Griffin returned to the stage after thirteen years spent in the army, than that Captain Griffin should have gone on the stage without having previously been connected with it. In this Genest is quite correct, for the anecdote of Goodman and Griffin, which Cibber tells in Chap. XII. shows conclusively that *Captain* Griffin was an actor during Goodman's stage-career, which ended certainly before 1690. He appears to have finally retired about the beginning of 1708. Downes says "*Mr. Griffin so Excell'd in Surly. Sir Edward Belfond, The Plain Dealer, none succeeding in the 2 former have Equall'd him,*

brated Mrs. *Oldfield*. Now let us suppose these Persons, the Men, for example, to have been all eminent Mercers, and the Women as famous Milliners, can we imagine that merely as such, though endow'd with the same natural Understanding, they could have been call'd into the same honourable Parties of Conversation? People of Sense and Condition could not but know it was impossible they could have had such various Excellencies on the Stage, without having something naturally valuable in them: And I will take upon me to affirm, who knew them all living, that there was not one of the Number who were not capable of supporting a variety of Spirited Conversation, tho' the Stage were never to have been the Subject of it.

That to have trod the Stage has not always been thought a Disqualification from more honourable Employments; several have had military Commissions; *Carlisle*<sup>1</sup> and *Wiltshire*<sup>2</sup> were both kill'd Cap-

[nor any] *except his Predecessor Mr. Hart in the latter*" (p. 40). I have ventured to supply the two words "nor any" to make clear what Downes must have meant.

<sup>1</sup> The "Biographia Dramatica" (i. 87) gives an account of James Carlile. He was a native of Lancashire, and in his youth was an actor; but he left the stage for the army, and was killed at the battle of Aughrim, 11th July, 1691. Nothing practically is known of his stage career. Downes (p. 39) notes that at the Union of the Patents in 1682, "Mr. *Monfort* and Mr. *Carlile*, were grown to the Maturity of good *Actors*." I cannot trace Carlile's name in the bills any later than 1685.

<sup>2</sup> Wiltshire seems to have been a very useful actor of the second rank. In 1685 he also appears for the last time.

tains ; one in King *William's* Reduction of *Ireland* ; and the other in his first War in *Flanders* ; and the famous *Ben. Johnson*, tho' an unsuccessful Actor, was afterwards made Poet-Laureat.<sup>1</sup>

To these laudable Distinctions let me add one more ; that of Publick Applause, which, when truly merited, is perhaps one of the most agreeable Grati- fications that venial Vanity can feel. A Happiness almost peculiar to the Actor, insomuch that the best Tragick Writer, however numerous his separate Ad- mirers may be, yet, to unite them into one general Act of Praise, to receive at once those thundring Peals of Approbation which a crouded Theatre throws out, he must still call in the Assistance of the skilful Actor to raise and partake of them.

In a Word, 'twas in this flattering Light only, though not perhaps so thoroughly consider'd, I look'd upon the Life of an Actor when but eighteen Years of Age ; nor can you wonder if the Temptations were too strong for so warm a Vanity as mine to resist ; but whether excusable or not, to the Stage at length I came, and it is from thence, chiefly, your Curiosity, if you have any left, is to expect a farther Account of me.

<sup>1</sup> That Ben Jonson was an unsuccessful actor is gravely doubted by Gifford and by his latest editor, Lieut.-Col. Cunningham, who give excellent reasons in support of their view. See memoir pre- fixed to edition of Jonson, 1870, i. xi.



## CHAPTER IV.

*A short View of the Stage, from the Year 1660 to the Revolution.  
The King's and Duke's Company united, composed the best Set of  
English Actors yet known. Their several Theatrical Characters.*

THO' I have only promis'd you an Account of all the material Occurrences of the Theatre during my own Time, yet there was one which happen'd not above seven Years before my Admission to it, which may be as well worth notice as the first great Revolution of it, in which, among numbers, I was involv'd. And as the one will lead you into a clearer View of the other, it may therefore be previously necessary to let you know that



King *Charles II.* at his Restoration granted two Patents, one to Sir *William Davenant*,<sup>1</sup> and the other to *Thomas Killigrew, Esq.*,<sup>2</sup> and their several Heirs and Assigns, for ever, for the forming of two distinct Companies of Comedians: The first were

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Davenant was the son of a vintner and innkeeper at Oxford. It was said that Shakespeare used frequently to stay at the inn, and a story accordingly was manufactured that William Davenant was in fact the son of the poet through an amour with Mrs. Davenant. But of this there is no shadow of proof. Davenant went to Oxford, but made no special figure as a scholar, winning fame, however, as a poet and dramatist. On the death of Ben Jonson in 1637 he was appointed Poet-Laureate, and in 1639 received a licence from Charles I. to get together a company of players. In the Civil War he greatly distinguished himself, and was knighted by the King for his bravery. Before the Restoration Davenant was permitted by Cromwell to perform some sort of theatrical pieces at Rutland House, in Charter-House Yard, where "The Siege of Rhodes" was played about 1656. At the Restoration a Patent was granted to him in August, 1660, and he engaged Rhodes's company of Players, including Betterton, Kynaston, Underhill, and Nokes. Another Patent was granted to him, dated 15th January, 1663, (see copy of Patent given *ante*,) under which he managed the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields till his death in 1668. Davenant's company were called the Duke's Players. The changes which were made in the conduct of the stage during Davenant's career, such as the introduction of elaborate scenery and the first appearance of women in plays, make it one of the first interest and importance. (See Mr. Joseph Knight's Preface to his recent edition of the "Roscius Anglicanus.")

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Killigrew (not "Henry" Killigrew, as Cibber erroneously writes) was a very noted and daring humorist. He was a faithful adherent of King Charles I., and at the Restoration was made a Groom of the Bedchamber. He also received a Patent, dated 25th April, 1662, to raise a company of actors to be called the King's Players. These acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. Killigrew survived the Union of the two Companies

call'd the *King's Servants*, and acted at the Theatre-Royal in *Drury-Lane*; <sup>1</sup> and the other the *Duke's Company*, who acted at the Duke's Theatre in *Dorset-Garden*.<sup>2</sup> About ten of the King's Company were on the Royal Houshold-Establishment, having each ten Yards of Scarlet Cloth, with a proper quantity of Lace allow'd them for Liveries; and in their Warrants from the Lord Chamberlain were stiled *Gentlemen of the Great Chamber*.<sup>3</sup> Whether the like Appointments were extended to the Duke's Company, I am not certain; but they were both in high Estimation with the Publick, and so much the

in 1682, dying on the 19th of March, 1683. He cannot be said to have made much mark in theatrical history. The best anecdote of Killigrew is that related by Granger, how he waited on Charles II. one day dressed like a Pilgrim bound on a long journey. When the King asked him whither he was going, he replied, "To Hell, to fetch back Oliver Cromwell to take care of England, for his successor takes none at all."

<sup>1</sup> It is curious to note that this theatre, which occupied the same site as the present Drury Lane, was sometimes described as Drury Lane, sometimes as Covent Garden.

<sup>2</sup> Should be Lincoln's Inn Fields. Dorset Garden, which was situated in Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, was not opened till 1671.

<sup>3</sup> Genest (ii. 302) remarks on this: "How long this lasted does not appear—it appears however that it lasted to Queen Anne's time, as the alteration of 'Wit without Money' is dedicated to Thomas Newman, Servant to her Majesty, one of the Gentlemen of the Great Chamber, and Book-keeper and Prompter to her Majesty's Company of Comedians in the Haymarket." Dr. Doran in his "Their Majesties' Servants" (1888 edition, iii. 419), says that he was informed by Benjamin Webster that Baddeley was the last actor who wore the uniform of scarlet and gold prescribed for the Gentlemen of the Household, who were patented actors.

Delight and Concern of the Court, that they were not only supported by its being frequently present at their publick *Presentations*, but by its taking cognizance even of their private Government, insomuch that their particular Differences, Pretentions, or Complaints were generally ended by the *King* or *Duke's* Personal Command or Decision. Besides their being thorough Masters of their Art, these Actors set forwards with two critical Advantages, which perhaps may never happen again in many Ages. The one was, their immediate opening after the so long Interdiction of Plays during the Civil War and the Anarchy that followed it. What eager Appetites from so long a Fast must the Guests of those Times have had to that high and fresh variety of Entertainments which *Shakespear* had left prepared for them? Never was a Stage so provided! A hundred Years are wasted, and another silent Century well advanced, and yet what unborn Age shall say *Shakespear* has his equal! How many shining Actors have the warm Scenes of his Genius given to Posterity? without being himself in his Action equal to his Writing! A strong Proof that Actors, like Poets, must be born such. Eloquence and Elocution are quite different Talents: *Shakespear* could write *Hamlet*, but Tradition tells us That the *Ghost*, in the same Play, was one of his best Performances as an Actor: Nor is it within the reach of Rule or Precept to complete either of them. Instruction, 'tis true, may guard them equally against Faults or Ab-

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surditities, but there it stops; Nature must do the rest: To excel in either Art is a self-born Happiness which something more than good Sense must be the Mother of.

The other Advantage I was speaking of is, that before the Restoration no Actresses had ever been seen upon the *English Stage*.<sup>1</sup> The Characters of Women on former Theatres were perform'd by Boys, or young Men of the most effeminate Aspect. And what Grace or Master-strokes of Action can we conceive such ungain Hoydens to have been capable of? This Defect was so well considered by *Shakespear*, that in few of his Plays he has any greater Dependance upon the Ladies than in the Innocence and Simplicity of a *Desdemona*, an *Ophelia*, or in the short Specimen of a fond and virtuous *Portia*. The additional Objects then of real, beautiful Women

<sup>1</sup> The question of the identity of the first English actress is a very intricate one. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, in his "New History of the English Stage," seems to incline to favour Anne Marshall, while Mr. Joseph Knight, in his edition of the "Roscius Anglicanus," pronounces for Mrs. Coleman. Davies says positively that "the first woman actress was the mother of Norris, commonly called Jubilee Dicky." Thomas Jordan wrote a Prologue "to introduce the first woman that came to act on the stage," but as the lady's name is not given, this does not help us. The distinction is also claimed for Mrs. Saunderson (afterwards Mrs. Betterton) and Margaret Hughes. But since Mr. Knight has shown that the performances in 1656 at Rutland House, where Mrs. Coleman appeared, were for money, I do not see that we can escape from the conclusion that this lady was the first English professional actress. Who the first actress after the Restoration was is as yet unsettled.

could not but draw a Proportion of new Admirers to the Theatre. We may imagine, too, that these Actresses were not ill chosen, when it is well known that more than one of them had Charms sufficient at their leisure Hours to calm and mollify the Cares of Empire.<sup>1</sup> Besides these peculiar Advantages, they had a private Rule or Agreement, which both Houses were happily ty'd down to, which was, that no Play acted at one House should ever be attempted at the other. All the capital Plays therefore of *Shakespear*, *Fletcher*, and *Ben. Johnson* were divided between them by the Approbation of the Court and their own alternate Choice.<sup>2</sup> So that when *Hart*<sup>3</sup> was famous for *Othello*, *Betterton* had no less a Reputation for *Hamlet*. By this Order the Stage was supply'd with a greater Variety of Plays than could possibly have been shewn had both Companies been employ'd at the same time upon the same Play; which Liberty, too, must have occasion'd such frequent Repetitions of 'em, by their opposite Endeavours to forestall and anticipate one another, that the best Actors in the World must have grown tedious and tasteless to the Spectator: For what Pleasure is not languid to Satiety?<sup>4</sup> It was therefore one of our

<sup>1</sup> Meaning, no doubt, Nell Gwyn and Moll Davis.

<sup>2</sup> Genest points out (i. 404) that Cibber is not quite accurate here. Shakespeare's and Fletcher's plays *may* have been shared; Jonson's certainly were not.

<sup>3</sup> See memoir of Hart at end of second volume.

<sup>4</sup> Genest says that this regulation "might be very proper at the first restoration of the stage; but as a perpetual rule it was absurd.

greatest Happinesses (during my time of being in the Management of the Stage) that we had a certain Number of select Plays which no other Company had the good Fortune to make a tolerable Figure in, and consequently could find little or no Account by acting them against us. These Plays therefore for many Years, by not being too often seen, never fail'd to bring us crowded Audiences ; and it was to this Conduct we ow'd no little Share of our Prosperity. But when four Houses<sup>1</sup> are at once (as very lately they were) all permitted to act the same Pieces, let three of them perform never so ill, when Plays come to be so harrass'd and hackney'd out to the common People (half of which too, perhaps, would as lieve see them at one House as another) the best Actors will soon feel that the Town has enough of them.

I know it is the common Opinion, That the more Play-houses the more Emulation ; I grant it ; but what has this Emulation ended in ? Why, a daily

Cibber approves of it, not considering that Betterton could never have acted Othello, Brutus, or Hotspur (the very parts for which Cibber praises him so much) if there had not been a junction of the companies." Bellchambers, in a long note, also contests Cibber's opinion.

<sup>1</sup> In the season 1735-6, in addition to the two Patent Theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, Giffard was playing at Goodman's Fields Theatre, and Fielding, with his Great Mogul's Company of Comedians, occupied the Haymarket. In 1736-7 Giffard played at the Lincoln's-Inn-Fields Theatre, and Goodman's Fields was unused. The Licensing Act of 1737 closed the two irregular houses, leaving only Drury Lane and Covent Garden open.

Contention which shall soonest surfeit you with the best Plays; so that when what *ought* to please can no *longer* please, your Appetite is again to be raised by such monstrous Presentations as dishonour the Taste of a civiliz'd People.<sup>1</sup> If, indeed, to our several Theatres we could raise a proportionable Number of good Authors to give them all different Employment, then perhaps the Publick might profit from their Emulation: But while good Writers are so scarce, and undaunted Criticks so plenty, I am afraid a good Play and a blazing Star will be equal Rarities. This voluptuous Expedient, therefore, of indulging the Taste with several Theatres, will amount to much the same variety as that of a certain Oeconomist, who, to enlarge his Hospitality, would have two Puddings and two Legs of Mutton for the same Dinner.<sup>2</sup>—But to resume the Thread of my History.

These two excellent Companies were both prosperous for some few Years, 'till their Variety of Plays began to be exhausted: Then of course the better Actors (which the King's seem to have been

<sup>1</sup> Cibber here refers to the Pantomimes, which he deals with at some length in Chapter XV.

<sup>2</sup> Fielding ("Champion," 6th May, 1740): "Another Observation which I have made on our Author's Similies is, that they generally have an Eye towards the Kitchen. Thus, *page 56, Two Play-Houses are like two PUDDINGS or two LEGS OF MUTTON. 224. To plant young Actors is not so easy as to plant CABBAGES.* To which let me add a Metaphor in *page 57, where unprofitable Praise can hardly give Truth a SOUP MAIGRE.*"

allowed) could not fail of drawing the greater Audiences. Sir *William Davenant*, therefore, Master of the Duke's Company, to make Head against their Success, was forced to add Spectacle and Musick to Action; and to introduce a new Species of Plays, since call'd Dramatick Opera's, of which kind were the *Tempest*, *Psyche*, *Circe*, and others, all set off with the most expensive Decorations of Scenes and Habits, with the best Voices and Dancers.<sup>1</sup>

This sensual Supply of Sight and Sound coming in to the Assistance of the weaker Party, it was no Wonder they should grow too hard for Sense and simple Nature, when it is consider'd how many more People there are, that can see and hear, than think and judge. So wanton a Change of the publick Taste, therefore, began to fall as heavy upon the King's Company as their greater Excellence in Action had before fallen upon their Competitors: Of which Encroachment upon Wit several good Prologues in those Days frequently complain'd.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Dramatic Operas" seem to have been first produced about 1672. In 1673 "The Tempest," made into an opera by Shadwell, was played at Dorset Garden; "Pysche" followed in the next year, and "Circe" in 1677. "Macbeth," as altered by Davenant, was produced in 1672, "in the nature of an Opera," as Downes phrases it.

<sup>2</sup> Dryden, in his "Prologue on the Opening of the New House" in 1674, writes:—

"'Twere folly now a stately pile to raise,  
To build a playhouse while you throw down plays;  
While scenes, machines, and empty operas reign——"



But alas! what can Truth avail, when its Dependence is much more upon the Ignorant than the sensible Auditor? a poor Satisfaction, that the due Praise given to it must at last sink into the cold Comfort of—*Laudatur & Alget*.<sup>1</sup> Unprofitable Praise can hardly give it a *Soup maigre*. Taste and Fashion with us have always had Wings, and fly from one publick Spectacle to another so wantonly, that I have been inform'd by those who remember it, that a famous Puppet-shew<sup>2</sup> in *Salisbury Change* (then standing where *Cecil-Street* now is) so far distressed these two celebrated Companies, that they were reduced to petition the King for Relief against it: Nor ought we perhaps to think this strange, when, if I mistake not, *Terence* himself reproaches the *Roman Auditors* of his Time with the like Fondness for the *Funambuli*, the Rope-dancers.<sup>3</sup> Not to dwell too long therefore upon that Part of my History which I have only collected from oral Tradition, I and the Prologue concludes with the lines:—

“Tis to be feared—  
That, as a fire the former house o'erthrew,  
Machines and Tempests will destroy the new.”

The allusion in the last line is to the opera of “The Tempest,” which I have mentioned in the previous note.

<sup>1</sup> “Probitas laudatur et alget.”

Juvenal, i. 74.

<sup>2</sup> In the Prologue to “The Emperor of the Moon,” 1687, the line occurred: “There's nothing lasting but the Puppet-show.”

<sup>3</sup> “Ita populus studio stupidus in funambulo  
Animum occuparat.”

Terence, *Prolog. to “Hecyra,”* line 4.

shall content myself with telling you that *Mohun*<sup>1</sup> and *Hart* now growing old (for, above thirty Years before this Time, they had severally born the King's Commission of Major and Captain in the Civil Wars), and the younger Actors, as *Goodman*,<sup>2</sup> *Clark*,<sup>3</sup> and others, being impatient to get into their Parts, and growing intractable,<sup>4</sup> the Audiences too of both Houses then falling off, the Patentees of each, by the King's Advice, which perhaps amounted to a Command, united their Interests and both Companies into one, exclusive of all others, in the Year 1682.<sup>5</sup> This Union was, however, so much in favour of the Duke's Company, that *Hart* left the Stage upon it, and *Mohun* survived not long after.

One only Theatre being now in Possession of the whole Town, the united Patentees imposed their own

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of Michael Mohun at end of second volume.

<sup>2</sup> See memoir of Cardell Goodman at end of second volume.

<sup>3</sup> Of Clark very little is known. The earliest play in which his name is given by Downes is "The Plain-Dealer," which was produced at the Theatre Royal in 1674, Clark playing Novel, a part of secondary importance. His name appears to Massina in "Sophonisba," Hephestion in "Alexander the Great," Dolabella in "All for Love," Aquitius in "Mythridates," and (his last recorded part) the Earl of Essex, the principal character in "The Unhappy Favourite," Theatre Royal, 1682. After the Union of the Companies in 1682 his name does not occur. Bellchambers has several trifling errors in the memoir he gives of this actor.

<sup>4</sup> Curll ("History of the English Stage," p. 9) says: "The Feuds and Animosities of the KING's *Company* were so well improved, as to produce an Union betwixt the two Patents."

<sup>5</sup> Cibber gives the year as 1684, but this is so obviously a slip that I venture to correct the text.

Terms upon the Actors ; for the Profits of acting were then divided into twenty Shares, ten of which went to the Proprietors, and the other Moiety to the principal Actors, in such Sub-divisions as their different Merit might pretend to. These Shares of the Patentees were promiscuously sold out to Money-making Persons, call'd Adventurers,<sup>1</sup> who, tho' utterly ignorant of Theatrical Affairs, were still admitted to a proportionate Vote in the Menagement of them ; all particular Encouragements to Actors were by them, of Consequence, look'd upon as so many Sums deducted from their private Dividends. While therefore the Theatrical Hive had so many Drones in it, the labouring Actors, sure, were under the highest Discouragement, if not a direct State of Oppression. Their Hardship will at least appear in a much stronger Light when compar'd to our later Situation, who with scarce half their Merit succeeded to be Sharers under a Patent upon five times easier Conditions : For as they had but half the Profits divided among ten or more of them ; we had three fourths of the whole Profits divided only among three of us : And as they might be said to have ten Taskmasters over them, we never had but one Assistant Menager (not an Actor) join'd with us ;<sup>2</sup> who, by the

<sup>1</sup> Genest (ii. 62) remarks : "The theatre in Dorset Garden had been built by subscription—the subscribers were called Adventurers—of this Cibber seems totally ignorant—that there were any new Adventurers, added to the original number, rests solely on his authority, and in all probability he is not correct."

<sup>2</sup> Cibber afterwards relates the connection of Owen Swiney,

Crown's Indulgence, was sometimes too of our own chusing. Under this heavy Establishment then groan'd this United Company when I was first admitted into the lowest Rank of it. How they came to be relieved by King *William's* Licence in 1695, how they were again dispersed early in Queen *Anne's* Reign, and from what Accidents Fortune took better care of Us, their unequal Successors, will be told in its Place: But to prepare you for the opening so large a Scene of their History, methinks I ought (in Justice to their Memory too) to give you such particular Characters of their Theatrical Merit as in my plain Judgment they seem'd to deserve. Presuming then that this Attempt may not be disagreeable to the Curious or the true Lovers of the Theatre, take it without farther Preface.

In the Year 1690, when I first came into this Company, the principal Actors then at the Head of it were,

Of Men.	Of Women.
Mr. <i>Betterton</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Betterton</i> ,
Mr. <i>Monfort</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Barry</i> ,
Mr. <i>Kynaston</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Leigh</i> ,
Mr. <i>Sandford</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Butler</i> ,
Mr. <i>Nokes</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Monfort</i> , and
Mr. <i>Underhil</i> , and	Mrs. <i>Bracegirdle</i> .
Mr. <i>Leigh</i> .	

These Actors whom I have selected from their William Collier, M.P., and Sir Richard Steele, with himself and his actor-partners.

Contemporaries were all original Masters in their different Stile, not meer auricular Imitators of one another, which commonly is the highest Merit of the middle Rank, but Self-judges of Nature, from whose various Lights they only took their true Instruction. If in the following Account of them I may be obliged to hint at the Faults of others, I never mean such Observations should extend to those who are now in Possession of the Stage; for as I design not my Memoirs shall come down to their Time, I would not lie under the Imputation of speaking in their Disfavour to the Publick, whose Approbation they must depend upon for Support.<sup>1</sup> But to my Purpose.

*Betterton* was an Actor, as *Shakespear* was an Author, both without Competitors! form'd for the mutual Assistance and Illustration of each others Genius! How *Shakespear* wrote, all Men who have a Taste for Nature may read and know—but with what higher Rapture would he still be *read* could they conceive how *Betterton* *play'd* him! Then might they know the one was born alone to speak what the other only knew to write! Pity it is that the momentary Beauties flowing from an harmonious Elocution cannot, like those of Poetry, be their own Record! That the animated Graces of the Player can live no longer than the instant Breath and

<sup>1</sup> The only one of Cibber's contemporaries of any note who was alive when the "Apology" was published, was Benjamin Johnson. This admirable comedian died in August, 1742, in his seventy-seventh year, having played as late as the end of May of that year.

Motion that presents them, or at best can but faintly glimmer through the Memory or imperfect Attestation of a few surviving Spectators. Could *how Betterton* spoke be as easily known as *what* he spoke, then might you see the Muse of *Shakespear* in her Triumph, with all her Beauties in their best Array rising into real Life and charming her Beholders. But alas! since all this is so far out of the reach of Description, how shall I shew you *Betterton*? Should I therefore tell you that all the *Othellos*, *Hamlets*, *Hotspurs*, *Mackbeths*, and *Brutus's* whom you may have seen since his Time, have fallen far short of him; this still would give you no Idea of his particular Excellence. Let us see then what a particular Comparison may do! whether that may yet draw him nearer to you?

You have seen a *Hamlet* perhaps, who, on the first Appearance of his Father's Spirit, has thrown himself into all the straining Vociferation requisite to express Rage and Fury, and the House has thunder'd with Applause; tho' the mis-guided Actor was all the while (as *Shakespear* terms it) tearing a Passion into Rags<sup>1</sup>—I am the more bold to offer you this particular Instance, because the late Mr. *Addison*, while I sate by him to see this Scene acted, made

<sup>1</sup> The actor pointed at is, no doubt, Wilks. In the last chapter of this work Cibber, in giving the theatrical character of Wilks, says of his *Hamlet*: "I own the Half of what he spoke was as painful to my Ear, as every Line that came from *Betterton* was charming."

the same Observation, asking me, with some Surprise, if I thought *Hamlet* should be in so violent a Passion with the Ghost, which, tho' it might have astonish'd, it had not provok'd him? for you may observe that in this beautiful Speech the Passion never rises beyond an almost breathless Astonishment, or an Impatience, limited by filial Reverence, to enquire into the suspected Wrongs that may have rais'd him from his peaceful Tomb! and a Desire to know what a Spirit so seemingly distress might wish or enjoin a sorrowful Son to execute towards his future Quiet in the Grave? This was the Light into which *Betterton* threw this Scene; which he open'd with a Pause of mute Amazement! then rising slowly to a solemn, trembling Voice, he made the Ghost equally terrible to the Spectator as to himself!<sup>1</sup> and in the descriptive Part of the natural Emotions which the ghastly Vision gave him, the boldness of his Expostulation was still govern'd by Decency, manly, but not braving; his Voice never rising into that seeming Outrage or wild Defiance of what he naturally rever'd.<sup>2</sup> But alas! to preserve this medium, between mouthing

<sup>1</sup> Barton Booth, who was probably as great in the part of the Ghost as Betterton was in *Hamlet*, said, "When I acted the Ghost with Betterton, instead of my awing him, he terrified me. But divinity hung round that man!"—"Dram. Misc.," iii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> "The Laureat" repeats the eulogium of a gentleman who had seen Betterton play *Hamlet*, and adds: "And yet, the same Gentleman assured me, he has seen Mr. *Betterton*, more than once, play this Character to an Audience of twenty Pounds, or under" (p. 32).

and meaning too little, to keep the Attention more pleasingly awake by a temper'd Spirit than by meer Vehemence of Voice, is of all the Master-strokes of an Actor the most difficult to reach. In this none yet have equall'd *Betterton*. But I am unwilling to shew his Superiority only by recounting the Errors of those who now cannot answer to them, let their farther Failings therefore be forgotten! or rather, shall I in some measure excuse them? For I am not yet sure that they might not be as much owing to the false Judgment of the Spectator as the Actor. While the Million are so apt to be transported when the Drum of their Ear is so roundly rattled; while they take the Life of Elocution to lie in the Strength of the Lungs, it is no wonder the Actor, whose end is Applause, should be also tempted at this easy rate to excite it. Shall I go a little farther? and allow that this Extreme is more pardonable than its opposite Error? I mean that dangerous Affectation of the Monotone, or solemn Sameness of Pronunciation, which, to my Ear, is insupportable; for of all Faults that so frequently pass upon the Vulgar, that of Flatness will have the fewest Admirers. That this is an Error of ancient standing seems evident by what *Hamlet* says, in his Instructions to the Players, *viz.*

*Be not too tame, neither, &c.*

The Actor, doubtless, is as strongly ty'd down to the Rules of *Horace* as the Writer.



*Si vis me flere, dolendum est  
Primum ipsi tibi*———<sup>1</sup>

He that feels not himself the Passion he would raise, will talk to a sleeping Audience : But this never was the Fault of *Betterton* ; and it has often amaz'd me to see those who soon came after him throw out, in some Parts of a Character, a just and graceful Spirit which *Betterton* himself could not but have applauded. And yet in the equally shining Passages of the same Character have heavily dragg'd the Sentiment along like a dead Weight, with a long-ton'd Voice and absent Eye, as if they had fairly forgot what they were about : If you have never made this Observation, I am contented you should not know where to apply it.<sup>2</sup>

A farther Excellence in *Betterton* was, that he could vary his Spirit to the different Characters he acted. Those wild impatient Starts, that fierce and flashing Fire, which he threw into *Hotspur*, never came from the unruffled Temper of his *Brutus* (for I have more than once seen a *Brutus* as warm as *Hotspur*) : when the *Betterton Brutus* was provok'd in his Dispute with *Cassius*, his Spirit flew only to his Eye ; his steady Look alone supply'd that Terror

<sup>1</sup> *Ars Poetica*, 102. This is the much discussed question of Diderot's "Paradoxe sur le Comédien," which has recently been revived by Mr. Henry Irving and M. Coquelin, and has formed the subject of some interesting studies by Mr. William Archer.

<sup>2</sup> This is doubtless directed at Booth, who was naturally of an indolent disposition, and seems to have been, on occasions, apt to drag through a part.

which he disdain'd an Intemperance in his Voice should rise to. Thus, with a settled Dignity of Contempt, like an unheeding Rock he repelled upon himself the Foam of *Cassius*. Perhaps the very Words of *Shakespear* will better let you into my Meaning :

*Must I give way and room to your rash Choler?  
Shall I be frighted when a Madman stares?*

And a little after,

*There is no Terror, Cassius, in your Looks ! &c.*

Not but in some part of this Scene, where he reproaches *Cassius*, his Temper is not under this Suppression, but opens into that Warmth which becomes a Man of Virtue; yet this is that *Hasty Spark* of Anger which *Brutus* himself endeavours to excuse.

But with whatever strength of Nature we see the Poet shew at once the Philosopher and the Heroe, yet the Image of the Actor's Excellence will be still imperfect to you unless Language could put Colours in our Words to paint the Voice with.

*Et, si vis similem pingere, pingere sonum,*<sup>1</sup> is enjoying an impossibility. [The most that a *Vandyke* can arrive at, is to make his Portraits of great Persons seem to *think*; a *Shakespear* goes farther yet, and tells you *what* his Pictures thought; a *Betterton* steps beyond 'em both, and calls them from the Grave to breathe and be themselves again in Feature, Speech,

<sup>1</sup> Ausonius, II, 8 (*Epigram. xi.*).







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and Motion. When the skilful Actor shews you all these Powers at once united, and gratifies at once your Eye, your Ear, your Understanding : To conceive the Pleasure rising from such Harmony, you must have been present at it! 'tis not to be told you! ]

There cannot be a stronger Proof of the Charms of harmonious Elocution than the many even unnatural Scenes and Flights of the false Sublime it has lifted into Applause. In what Raptures have I seen an Audience at the furious Fustian and turgid Rants in *Nat. Lee's Alexander the Great!* For though I can allow this Play a few great Beauties, yet it is not without its extravagant Blemishes. Every Play of the same Author has more or less of them. Let me give you a Sample from this. *Alexander*, in a full crowd of Courtiers, without being occasionally call'd or provok'd to it, falls into this Rhapsody of Vain-glory.

*Can none remember? Yes, I know all must!*

And therefore they shall know it agen.

*When Glory, like the dazzling Eagle, stood  
Perch'd on my Beaver, in the Granic Flood,  
When Fortune's Self my Standard trembling bore,  
And the pale Fates stood frighted on the Shore,  
When the Immortals on the Billows rode,  
And I myself appear'd the leading God.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> "Alexander the Great; or, the Rival Queens," act ii. sc. 1.

When these flowing Numbers came from the Mouth of a *Betterton* the Multitude no more desired Sense to them than our musical *Connoisseurs* think it essential in the celebrate *Airs* of an *Italian Opera*. Does not this prove that there is very near as much Enchantment in the well-govern'd Voice of an Actor as in the sweet Pipe of an Eunuch? If I tell you there was no one Tragedy, for many Years, more in favour with the Town than *Alexander*, to what must we impute this its command of publick Admiration? Not to its intrinsick Merit, surely, if it swarms with passages like this I have shewn you! If this Passage has Merit, let us see what Figure it would make upon Canvas, what sort of Picture would rise from it. If *Le Brun*, who was famous for painting the Battles of this Heroe, had seen this lofty Description, what one Image could he have possibly taken from it? In what Colours would he have shewn us *Glory perch'd upon a Beaver*? How would he have drawn *Fortune trembling*? Or, indeed, what use could he have made of *pale Fates* or *Immortals* riding upon *Billows*, with this blustering *God* of his own making at the head of them?<sup>1</sup> Where, then, must have lain the Charm that once made the Publick so partial to this

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers notes on this passage: "The criticisms of Cibber upon a literary subject are hardly worth the trouble of confuting, and yet it may be mentioned that Bishop Warburton adduced these lines as containing not only the most sublime, but the most judicious imagery that poetry can conceive. If *Le Brun*, or any other artist, could not succeed in pourtraying the terrors of fortune, it conveys, perhaps, the highest possible compliment to



Tragedy? Why plainly, in the Grace and Harmony of the Actor's Utterance. For the Actor himself is not accountable for the false Poetry of his Author; That the Hearer is to judge of; if it passes upon him, the Actor can have no Quarrel to it; who, if the Periods given him are round, smooth, spirited, and high-sounding, even in a false Passion, must throw out the same Fire and Grace as may be required in one justly rising from Nature; where those his Excellencies will then be only more pleasing in proportion to the Taste of his Hearer. And I am of opinion that to the extraordinary Success of this very Play we may impute the Corruption of so many Actors and Tragick Writers, as were immediately misled by it. The unskilful Actor who imagin'd all the Merit of delivering those blazing Rants lay only in the Strength and strain'd Exertion of the Voice, began to tear his Lungs upon every false or slight Occasion to arrive at the same Applause. And it is from hence I date our having seen the same Reason prevalent for above fifty Years. Thus equally misguided, too, many a barren-brain'd Author has stream'd into a frothy flowing Style, pompously rolling into sounding Periods signifying—roundly nothing; of which Number, in some of my former

the powers of Lee, to admit that he has mastered a difficulty beyond the most daring aspirations of an accomplished painter." With all respect to Warburton and Belchambers, I cannot help remarking that this last sentence seems to me perilously like nonsense.

Labours, I am something more than suspicious that I may myself have made one. But to keep a little closer to *Betterton*.

When this favourite Play I am speaking of, from its being too frequently acted, was worn out, and came to be deserted by the Town, upon the sudden Death of *Monfort*, who had play'd *Alexander* with Success for several Years, the Part was given to *Betterton*, which, under this great Disadvantage of the Satiety it had given, he immediately reviv'd with so new a Lustre that for three Days together it fill'd the House;<sup>1</sup> and had his then declining Strength been equal to the Fatigue the Action gave him, it probably might have doubled its Success; an uncommon Instance of the Power and intrinsick Merit of an Actor. This I mention not only to prove what irresistable Pleasure may arise from a judicious Elocution, with scarce Sense to assist it; but to shew you too, that tho' *Betterton* never wanted Fire and Force when his Character demanded it; yet, where it was not demanded, he never prostituted his Power to the low Ambition of a false Applause. And further, that when, from a too advanced Age, he resigned that toilsome Part of *Alexander*, the Play for many Years after never was able to impose upon the Publick;<sup>2</sup> and I look upon his so particularly support-

<sup>1</sup> I can find no record of this revival, nor am I aware that any other authority than Cibber mentions it. I am unable therefore even to guess at a date.

<sup>2</sup> In 1706, in *Betterton's* own company at the Haymarket

ing the false Fire and Extravagancies of that Character to be a more surprizing Proof of his Skill than his being eminent in those of *Shakespear*; because there, Truth and Nature coming to his Assistance, he had not the same Difficulties to combat, and consequently we must be less amaz'd at his Success where we are more able to account for it.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary Power he shew'd in blowing *Alexander* once more into a blaze of Admiration, *Betterton* had so just a sense of what was true or false Applause, that I have heard him say, he never thought any kind of it equal to an attentive Silence; that there were many ways of deceiving an Audience into a loud one; but to keep them husht and quiet was an Applause which only Truth and Merit could arrive at: Of which Art there never was an equal Master to himself. From these various Excellencies, he had so full a Possession of the Esteem and Regard of his Auditors, that upon his Entrance into every Scene he seem'd to seize upon the Eyes and Ears of the Giddy and Inadvertent! To have talk'd or look'd another way would then have been thought Insensibility or Ignorance.<sup>1</sup> In all his Soliloquies of moment, the strong Intelligence of his Attitude and Aspect drew you into such an impatient Gaze and eager Expectation, that you

Verbruggen played *Alexander*. At Drury Lane, in 1704, Wilks had played the part.

<sup>1</sup> Anthony Aston says that his voice "enforced universal attention even from the Fops and Orange girls."

almost imbib'd the Sentiment with your Eye before the Ear could reach it.

As *Betterton* is the Centre to which all my Observations upon Action tend, you will give me leave, under his Character, to enlarge upon that Head. In the just Delivery of Poetical Numbers, particularly where the Sentiments are pathetick, it is scarce credible upon how minute an Article of Sound depends their greatest Beauty or Inaffection. The Voice of a Singer is not more strictly ty'd to Time and Tune, than that of an Actor in Theatrical Elocution:<sup>1</sup> The least Syllable too long or too slightly dwelt upon in a Period depreciates it to nothing; which very Syllable if rightly touch'd shall, like the heightening Stroke of Light from a Master's Pencil, give Life

<sup>1</sup> Anthony Aston says of Mrs. Barry: "Neither she, nor any of the Actors of those Times, had any Tone in their Speaking, (too much, lately, in Use.)" But the line of criticism which Cibber takes up here would lead to the conclusion that Aston is not strictly accurate; and, moreover, I can scarcely imagine how, if these older actors used no "tone," the employment of it should have been so general as it certainly was a few years after Betterton's death. Victor ("History," ii. 164) writes of "the good old Manner of singing and quavering out their tragic Notes," and on the same page mentions Cibber's "quavering Tragedy Tones." My view, also, is confirmed by the facts that in the preface to "The Fairy Queen," 1692, it is said: "he must be a very ignorant Player, who knows not there is a Musical Cadence in speaking; and that a Man may as well speak out of Tune, as sing out of Tune;" and that Aaron Hill, in his dedication of "The Fatal Vision," 1716, reprobates the "affected, vicious, and unnatural tone of voice, so common on the stage at that time." See Genest, iv. 16-17. An admirable description of this method of reciting is given

and Spirit to the whole. I never heard a Line in Tragedy come from *Betterton* wherein my Judgment, my Ear, and my Imagination were not fully satisfy'd; which, since his Time, I cannot equally say of any one Actor whatsoever: Not but it is possible to be much his Inferior, with great Excellencies; which I shall observe in another Place. Had it been practicable to have ty'd down the clattering Hands of all the ill judges who were commonly the Majority of an Audience, to what amazing Perfection might the *English* Theatre have arrived with so just an Actor as *Betterton* at the Head of it! If what was Truth only could have been applauded, how many noisy Actors had shook their Plumes with shame, who, from the injudicious Approbation of the Multitude, have bawl'd and strutted in the place of Merit? If therefore the bare speaking Voice has such Allurements in it, how much less ought we to wonder, however we may lament, that the sweeter Notes of Vocal Musick should so have captivated even the

by Cumberland ("Memoirs," 2nd edition, i. 80): "Mrs. Cibber in a key, high-pitched but sweet withal, sung, or rather recitivated Rowe's harmonious strain, something in the manner of the Improvisatories: it was so extremely wanting in contrast, that, though it did not wound the ear, it wearied it." Cumberland is writing of Mrs. Cibber in the earlier part of her career (1746), when the teaching of her husband's father, Colley Cibber, influenced her acting: no doubt Garrick, who exploded the old way of speaking, made her ultimately modify her style. Yet as she was, even in 1746, a very distinguished pathetic actress, we are forced to the conclusion that the old style must have been more effective than we are disposed to believe.

politer World into an Apostacy from Sense to an Idolatry of Sound. Let us enquire from whence this Enchantment rises. I am afraid it may be too naturally accounted for : For when we complain that the finest Musick, purchas'd at such vast Expence, is so often thrown away upon the most miserable Poetry, we seem not to consider, that when the Movement of the Air and Tone of the Voice are exquisitely harmonious, tho' we regard not one *Word* of what we hear, yet the Power of the Melody is so busy in the Heart, that we naturally annex Ideas to it of our own Creation, and, in some sort, become our selves the Poet to the Composer ; and what Poet is so dull as not to be charm'd with the Child of his own Fancy ? So that there is even a kind of Language in agreeable Sounds, which, like the Aspect of Beauty, without Words speaks and plays with the Imagination. While this Taste therefore is so naturally prevalent, I doubt to propose Remedies for it were but giving Laws to the Winds or Advice to Inamorato's : And however gravely we may assert that Profit ought always to be inseparable from the Delight of the Theatre ; nay, admitting that the Pleasure would be heighten'd by the uniting them ; yet, while Instruction is so little the Concern of the Auditor, how can we hope that so choice a Commodity will come to a Market where there is so seldom a Demand for it ?

It is not to the Actor, therefore, but to the vitiated and low Taste of the Spectator, that the Corruptions of the Stage (of what kind soever) have been owing.

If the Publick, by whom they must live, had Spirit enough to discountenance and declare against all the Trash and Fopperies they have been so frequently fond of, both the Actors and the Authors, to the best of their Power, must naturally have serv'd their daily Table with sound and wholesome Diet.<sup>1</sup>— But I have not yet done with my Article of Elocution.

As we have sometimes great Composers of Musick who cannot sing, we have as frequently great Writers that cannot read ; and though without the nicest Ear no Man can be Master of Poetical Numbers, yet the best Ear in the World will not always enable him to pronounce them. Of this Truth *Dryden*, our first great Master of Verse and Harmony, was a strong Instance : When he brought his Play of *Amphytrion* to the Stage,<sup>2</sup> I heard him give it his first Reading to the Actors, in which, though it is true he deliver'd the plain Sense of every Period, yet the whole was in so cold, so flat, and unaffecting a manner, that I am afraid of not being believ'd when I affirm it.

On the contrary, *Lee*, far his inferior in Poetry, was so pathetick a Reader of his own Scenes, that I have been inform'd by an Actor who was present,

<sup>1</sup> As Dr. Johnson puts it in his famous Prologue (1747) :—

“ Ah ! let no Censure term our Fate our Choice,  
The Stage but echoes back the public Voice ;  
The Drama's Laws the Drama's Patrons give,  
For we, that live to please, must please to live.”

<sup>2</sup> “ *Amphytrion* ” was played in 1690. The Dedication is dated 24th October, 1690.

that while *Lee* was reading to Major *Mohun* at a Rehearsal, *Mohun*, in the Warmth of his Admiration, threw down his Part and said, Unless I were able to *play* it as well as you *read* it, to what purpose should I undertake it? And yet this very Author, whose Elocution rais'd such Admiration in so capital an Actor, when he attempted to be an Actor himself, soon quitted the Stage in an honest Despair of ever making any profitable Figure there.<sup>1</sup> From all this I would infer, That let our Conception of what we are to speak be ever so just, and the Ear ever so true, yet, when we are to deliver it to an Audience (I will leave Fear out of the question) there must go along with the whole a natural Freedom and becoming Grace, which is easier to conceive than to describe : For without this inexpressible Somewhat the Performance will come out oddly disguis'd, or somewhere defectively unsurprising to the Hearer. Of this Defect, too, I will give you yet a stranger Instance, which you will allow Fear could not be the Occasion of : If you remember *Estcourt*,<sup>2</sup> you must have known that he was long enough upon the Stage not to be under the least Restraint from Fear in his Performance : This Man was so amazing and extra-

<sup>1</sup> Downes ("Roscius Anglicanus," p. 34) relates *Lee's* misadventure, which he attributes to stage-fright. He says of Otway the poet, that on his first appearance "*the full House put him to such a Sweat and Tremendous Agony, being dash't, spoilt him for an Actor. Mr. Nat. Lee, had the same Fate in Acting Duncan in Macbeth, ruin'd him for an Actor too.*"

<sup>2</sup> See memoir of *Estcourt* at end of second volume.



ordinary a Mimick, that no Man or Woman, from the Coquette to the Privy-Counsellor, ever mov'd or spoke before him, but he could carry their Voice, Look, Mien, and Motion, instantly into another Company : I have heard him make long Harangues and form various Arguments, even in the manner of thinking of an eminent Pleader at the Bar,<sup>1</sup> with every the least Article and Singularity of his Utterance so perfectly imitated, that he was the very *alter ipse*, scarce to be distinguish'd from his Original. Yet more ; I have seen upon the Margin of the written Part of *Falstaff* which he acted, his own Notes and Observations upon almost every Speech of it, describing the true Spirit of the Humour, and with what Tone of Voice, Look, and Gesture, each of them ought to be delivered. Yet in his Execution upon the Stage he seem'd to have lost all those just Ideas he had form'd of it, and almost thro' the Character labour'd under a heavy Load of Flatness : In a word, with all his Skill in Mimickry and Knowledge of what ought to be done, he never upon the Stage could bring it truly into Practice, but was upon the whole a languid, unaffecting Actor.<sup>2</sup> After I

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that the Elder Mathews, the most extraordinary mimic of modern times, had this same power in great perfection. See his "Memoirs," iii. 153-156.

<sup>2</sup> Cibber has been charged with gross unfairness to Estcourt, and his unfavourable estimate of him has been attributed to envy; but Estcourt's ability seems to have been at least questionable. This matter will be found treated at some length in the memoir of Estcourt in the Appendix to this work.

have shewn you so many necessary Qualifications, not one of which can be spar'd in true Theatrical Elocution, and have at the same time prov'd that with the Assistance of them all united, the whole may still come forth defective; what Talents shall we say will infallibly form an Actor? This I confess is one of Nature's Secrets, too deep for me to dive into; let us content our selves therefore with affirming, That *Genius*, which Nature only gives, only can complete him. This *Genius* then was so strong in *Betterton*, that it shone out in every Speech and Motion of him. Yet Voice and Person are such necessary Supports to it, that by the Multitude they have been preferr'd to *Genius* itself, or at least often mistaken for it. *Betterton* had a Voice of that kind which gave more Spirit to Terror than to the softer Passions; of more Strength than Melody.<sup>1</sup> The Rage and Jealousy of *Othello* became him better than the Sighs and Tenderness of *Castalio*:<sup>2</sup> For though in *Castalio* he only excell'd others, in *Othello* he excell'd himself; which you will easily believe when you consider that, in spite of his Complexion, *Othello* has more natural Beauties than the best Actor can find in all the Magazine of Poetry to animate his Power and delight his Judgment with.

The Person of this excellent Actor was suitable to his Voice, more manly than sweet, not exceeding the

<sup>1</sup> "His voice was low and grumbling."—Anthony Aston.

<sup>2</sup> In Otway's tragedy of "The Orphan," produced at Dorset Garden in 1680, *Betterton* was the original *Castalio*.

middle Stature, inclining to the corpulent; of a serious and penetrating Aspect; his Limbs nearer the athletick than the delicate Proportion; yet however form'd, there arose from the Harmony of the whole a commanding Mien of Majesty, which the fairer-fac'd or (as *Shakespear* calls 'em) the *curled Darlings* of his Time ever wanted something to be equal Masters of. There was some Years ago to be had, almost in every Print-shop, a *Metzotinto* from *Kneller*, extremely like him.<sup>1</sup>

In all I have said of *Betterton*, I confine myself to the Time of his Strength and highest Power in Action, that you may make Allowances from what he was able to execute at Fifty, to what you might have seen of him at past Seventy; for tho' to the last he was without his Equal, he might not then be equal to his former Self; yet so far was he from being ever overtaken, that for many Years after his Decease I seldom saw any of his Parts in *Shakespear* supply'd by others, but it drew from me the Lamentation of *Ophelia* upon *Hamlet's* being unlike what she had seen him.

———*Ah! woe is me!*

*T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see!*

The last Part this great Master of his Profession acted was *Melantius* in the *Maid's Tragedy*, for his own Benefit;<sup>2</sup> when being suddenly seiz'd by the

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of *Betterton* at end of second volume.

<sup>2</sup> 13th April, 1710.

Gout, he submitted, by extraordinary Applications, to have his Foot so far reliev'd that he might be able to walk on the Stage in a Slipper, rather than wholly disappoint his Auditors. He was observ'd that Day to have exerted a more than ordinary Spirit, and met with suitable Applause ; but the unhappy Consequence of tampering with his Distemper was, that it flew into his Head, and kill'd him in three Days, (I think) in the seventy-fourth Year of his Age.<sup>1</sup>

I once thought to have fill'd up my Work with a select Dissertation upon Theatrical Action,<sup>2</sup> but I find, by the Digressions I have been tempted to make in this Account of *Betterton*, that all I can say upon that Head will naturally fall in, and possibly be less tedious if dispers'd among the various Characters of the particular Actors I have promis'd to treat of ; I shall therefore make use of those several Vehicles, which you will find waiting in the next Chapter, to carry you thro' the rest of the Journey at your Leisure.

<sup>1</sup> In the "Tatler," No. 167, in which the famous criticism of Betterton's excellencies is given, his funeral is stated to have taken place on 2nd May, 1710.

<sup>2</sup> I do not know whether Cibber in making this remark had in view Gildon's Life of Betterton, in which there are twenty pages of memoir to one hundred and fifty of dissertation on acting.



## CHAPTER V.

*The Theatrical Characters of the Principal Actors in the Year 1690,  
continu'd.*

*A few Words to Critical Auditors.*

**T**HO', as I have before observ'd, Women were not admitted to the Stage 'till the Return of King *Charles*, yet it could not be so suddenly supply'd with them but that there was still a Necessity, for some time, to put the handsomest young Men into Petticoats;<sup>1</sup> which *Kynaston* was then said to have

<sup>1</sup> This seems to have been done to a very limited extent. The first unquestionable date on which, after 1660, women appeared is 3rd January, 1661, when Pepys saw "The Beggar's Bush" at the Theatre, that is, Killigrew's house, and notes, "and here the

worn with Success ; particularly in the Part of *Evadne* in the *Maid's Tragedy*, which I have heard him speak of, and which calls to my Mind a ridiculous Distress that arose from these sort of Shifts which the Stage was then put to.—The King coming a little before his usual time to a Tragedy, found the Actors not ready to begin, when his Majesty, not chusing to have as much Patience as his good Subjects, sent to them to know the Meaning of it ; upon which the Master of the Company came to the Box, and rightly judging that the best Excuse for their Default would be the true one, fairly told his Majesty that the Queen was not *shav'd* yet : The King, whose good Humour lov'd to laugh at a Jest as well as to make one, accepted the Excuse, which serv'd to divert him till the male Queen cou'd be effeminated. In a word, *Kynaston* at that time was so beautiful a Youth that the Ladies of Quality prided themselves first time that ever I saw women come upon the stage." At the same theatre he had seen the same play on 20th November, 1660, the female parts being then played by men. Thomas Jordan wrote "*A Prologue, to introduce the first woman that came to act on the stage, in the tragedy called The Moor of Venice*" (quoted by Malone, "Shakespeare," 1821, iii. 128), and Malone supposes justly as I think, that this was on 8th December, 1660 ; on which date, in all probability, the first woman appeared on the stage after the Restoration. Who she was we do not know. See *ante*, p. 90. On 7th January, 1661, Kynaston played Epicœne in "The Silent Woman," and on 12th January, 1661, Pepys saw "The Scornful Lady," "now done by a woman." On the 4th of the same month Pepys had seen the latter play with a man in the chief part, so that it is almost certain that the "boy-actresses" disappeared about the beginning of 1661.

in taking him with them in their Coaches to *Hyde-Park* in his Theatrical Habit, after the Play; which in those Days they might have sufficient time to do, because Plays then were us'd to begin at four a-Clock : The Hour that People of the same Rank are now going to Dinner.—Of this Truth I had the Curiosity to enquire, and had it confirm'd from his own Mouth in his advanc'd Age : And indeed, to the last of him, his Handsomeness was very little abated ; even at past Sixty his Teeth were all sound, white, and even, as one would wish to see in a reigning Toast of Twenty. He had something of a formal Gravity in his Mien, which was attributed to the stately Step he had been so early confin'd to, in a female Decency. But even that in Characters of Superiority had its proper Graces ; it misbecame him not in the Part of *Leon*, in *Fletcher's Rule a Wife, &c.* which he executed with a determin'd Manliness and honest Authority well worth the best Actor's Imitation. He had a piercing Eye, and in Characters of heroick Life a quick imperious Vivacity in his Tone of Voice that painted the Tyrant truly terrible. There were two Plays of *Dryden* in which he shone with uncommon Lustre ; in *Aurenge-Zebe* he play'd *Morat*, and in *Don Sebastian*, *Muley Moloch* ; in both these Parts he had a fierce, Lion-like Majesty in his Port and Utterance that gave the Spectator a kind of trembling Admiration !

Here I cannot help observing upon a modest Mistake which I thought the late Mr. *Booth* committed

in his acting the Part of *Morat*. There are in this fierce Character so many Sentiments of avow'd Barbarity, Insolence, and Vain-glory, that they blaze even to a ludicrous Lustre, and doubtless the Poet intended those to make his Spectators laugh while they admir'd them ; but *Booth* thought it depreciated the Dignity of Tragedy to raise a Smile in any part of it, and therefore cover'd these kind of Sentiments with a scrupulous Coldness and unmov'd Delivery, as if he had fear'd the Audience might take too familiar a notice of them.<sup>1</sup> In Mr. *Addison's Cato*, *Syphax*<sup>2</sup> has some Sentiments of near the same nature,

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat" (p. 33) : "I am of Opinion, *Booth* was not wrong in this. There are many of the Sentiments in this Character, where Nature and common Sense are outraged ; and an Actor, who shou'd give the full comic Utterance to them in his Delivery, would raise what they call a *Horse-Laugh*, and turn it into Burlesque."

On the other hand, Theophilus Cibber, in his Life of Booth, p. 72, supports his father's opinion, saying :—

"The Remark is just—Mr. *Booth* would sometimes slur over such bold Sentiments, so flightily delivered by the Poet. As he was good-natured—and would 'hear each Man's Censure, yet reserve his Judgment,'—I once took the Liberty of observing, that he had neglected (as I thought) giving that kind of spirited Turn in the afore-mentioned Character—He told me I was mistaken ; it was not Negligence, but Design made him so slightly pass them over :—For though, added he, in these places one might raise a Laugh of Approbation in a few,—yet there is nothing more unsafe than exciting the Laugh of Simpletons, who never know when or where to stop ; and, as the Majority are not always the wisest Part of an Audience,—I don't chuse to run the hazard."

<sup>2</sup> A long account of the production of "Cato" is given by Cibber in Chap. XIV. From the cast quoted in a note, it will be seen that Cibber himself was the original Syphax.



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KYNASTON.



which I ventur'd to speak as I imagin'd *Kynaston* would have done had he been then living to have stood in the same Character. Mr. *Addison*, who had something of Mr. *Booth's* Diffidence at the Rehearsal of his Play, after it was acted came into my Opinion, and own'd that even Tragedy on such particular Occasions might admit of a *Laugh of Approbation*.<sup>1</sup> In *Shakespear* Instances of them are frequent, as in *Mackbeth*, *Hotspur*, *Richard the Third*, and *Harry the Eighth*,<sup>2</sup> all which Characters, tho' of a tragical

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat" (p. 33): "I have seen the Original *Syphax* in *Cato*, use many ridiculous Distortions, crack in his Voice, and wreathe his Muscles and his Limbs, which created not a Smile of Approbation, but a loud Laugh of Contempt and Ridicule on the Actor." On page 34: "In my Opinion, the Part of *Syphax*, as it was originally play'd, was the only Part in *Cato* not tolerably executed."

<sup>2</sup> Bellchambers on this passage has one of those aggravating notes, in which he seems to try to blacken Cibber as much as possible. I confess that I can see nothing of the "venom" he resents so vigorously. He says:—

"Theophilus Cibber, in the tract already quoted, expressly states, that Booth 'was not so scrupulously nice or timerous' in this character, as in that to which our author has invidiously referred. I shall give the passage, for its powerful antidote to Colley's venom:—

'Mr. *Booth*, in this part, though he gave full Scope to the Humour, never dropped the Dignity of the Character—You laughed at *Henry*, but lost not your Respect for him.—When he appeared most familiar, he was by no means vulgar.—The People most about him felt the Ease they enjoyed was owing to his Condescension.—He maintained the Monarch.—*Hans Holbein* never gave a higher Picture of him than did the actor (*Booth*) in his Representation. When angry, his Eye spoke majestic Terror; the noblest and the bravest of his Courtiers were awe-struck—He

Cast, have sometimes familiar Strokes in them so highly natural to each particular Disposition, that it is impossible not to be transported into an honest Laughter at them: And these are those happy Liberties which, tho' few Authors are qualify'd to take, yet, when justly taken, may challenge a Place among their greatest Beauties. Now, whether *Dryden*, in his *Morat, feliciter Audet*,<sup>1</sup>—or may be allow'd the Happiness of having hit this Mark, seems not necessary to be determin'd by the Actor, whose Business, sure, is to make the best of his Author's Intention, as in this Part *Kynaston* did, doubtless not without *Dryden's* Approbation. For these Reasons then, I thought my good Friend, Mr. *Booth* (who certainly had many Excellencies) carry'd his Reverence for the Buskin too far, in not following the bold Flights of the Author with that Wantonness of Spirit which the Nature of those Sentiments demanded: For Example! *Morat* having a criminal Passion for *Indamora*, promises, at her Request, for one Day to spare the Life of her Lover *Aurenge-Zebe*: But not chusing to make known the real Motive of his Mercy, when *Nourmahal* says to him,

*'Twill not be safe to let him live an Hour!*

gave you the full Idea of that arbitrary Prince, who thought himself born to be obeyed;—the boldest dared not to dispute his Commands:—He appeared to claim a Right Divine to exert the Power he imperiously assumed.' (p. 75)."

<sup>1</sup> "Spirat Tragicum satis et feliciter audet."

Hor. *Epis.* ii. 1, 166.

*Morat* silences her with this heroical *Rhodomontade*,  
*I'll do't, to shew my Arbitrary Power.*<sup>1</sup>

*Risum teneatis?* It was impossible not to laugh and reasonably too, when this Line came out of the Mouth of *Kynaston*,<sup>2</sup> with the stern and haughty Look that attended it. But above this tyrannical, tumid Superiority of Character there is a grave and rational Majesty in *Shakespear's Harry the Fourth*, which, tho' not so glaring to the vulgar Eye, requires thrice the Skill and Grace to become and support. Of this real Majesty *Kynaston* was entirely Master; here every Sentiment came from him as if it had been his own, as if he had himself that instant conceiv'd it, as if he had lost the Player and were the real King he personated! a Perfection so rarely found, that very often, in Actors of good Repute, a certain Vacancy of Look, Inanity of Voice, or superfluous Gesture, shall unmask the Man to the judicious Spectator, who, from the least of those Errors, plainly sees the whole but a Lesson given him to be got by Heart from some great Author whose Sense is deeper than the Repeater's Understanding. This true Majesty *Kynaston* had so entire a Command of, that when he whisper'd the following plain Line to *Hotspur*,

*Send us your Prisoners, or you'll hear of it!*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Aurenge-Zebe; or, the Great Mogul," act iv.

<sup>2</sup> *Kynaston* was the original *Morat* at the Theatre Royal in 1675; Hart the *Aurenge-Zebe*.

<sup>3</sup> "King Henry IV.," First Part, act i. sc. 3.

He convey'd a more terrible Menace in it than the loudest Intemperance of Voice could swell to. But let the bold Imitator beware, for without the Look and just Elocution that waited on it an Attempt of the same nature may fall to nothing.

But the Dignity of this Character appear'd in *Kynaston* still more shining in the private Scene between the King and Prince his Son: There you saw Majesty in that sort of Grief which only Majesty could feel! there the paternal Concern for the Errors of the Son made the Monarch more rever'd and dreaded: His Reproaches so just, yet so unmix'd with Anger (and therefore the more piercing) opening as it were the Arms of Nature with a secret Wish, that filial Duty and Penitence awak'd, might fall into them with Grace and Honour. In this affecting Scene I thought *Kynaston* shew'd his most masterly Strokes of Nature; expressing all the various Motions of the Heart with the same Force, Dignity and Feeling, they are written; adding to the whole that peculiar and becoming Grace which the best Writer cannot inspire into any Actor that is not born with it. What made the Merit of this Actor and that of *Betterton* more surprizing, was that though they both observ'd the Rules of Truth and Nature, they were each as different in their manner of acting as in their personal Form and Features. But *Kynaston* staid too long upon the Stage, till his Memory and Spirit began to fail him. I shall not therefore say any thing of his Imperfec-



tions, which, at that time, were visibly not his own, but the Effects of decaying Nature.<sup>1</sup>

*Monfort*,<sup>2</sup> a younger Man by twenty Years, and at this time in his highest Reputation, was an Actor of a very different Style: Of Person he was tall, well made, fair, and of an agreeable Aspect: His Voice clear, full, and melodious: In Tragedy he was the most affecting Lover within my Memory. His Addresses had a resistless Recommendation from the very Tone of his Voice, which gave his Words such Softness that, as *Dryden* says,

— Like Flakes of feather'd Snow,  
They melted as they fell!<sup>3</sup>

All this he particularly verify'd in that Scene of *Alexander*, where the Heroe throws himself at the Feet of *Statira* for Pardon of his past Infidelities. There we saw the Great, the Tender, the Penitent, the Despairing, the Transported, and the Amiable, in the highest Perfection. In Comedy he gave the truest Life to what we call the *Fine Gentleman*; his Spirit shone the brighter for being polish'd with Decency: In Scenes of Gaiety he never broke into the Regard that was due to the Presence of equal or superior Characters, tho' inferior Actors play'd them; he fill'd the Stage, not by elbowing and crossing it before others, or disconcerting their Action, but by surpassing them in true masterly Touches of

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of Kynaston at end of second volume.

<sup>2</sup> Downes spells Mountfort's name Monfort and Mounfort.

<sup>3</sup> "Spanish Friar," act ii. sc. 1.

Nature. He never laugh'd at his own Jest, unless the Point of his Raillery upon another requir'd it.— He had a particular Talent in giving Life to *bons Mots* and *Repartees*: The Wit of the Poet seem'd always to come from him *extempore*, and sharpen'd into more Wit from his brilliant manner of delivering it; he had himself a good Share of it, or what is equal to it, so lively a Pleasantness of Humour, that when either of these fell into his Hands upon the Stage, he wantoned with them to the highest Delight of his Auditors. The *agreeable* was so natural to him, that even in that dissolute Character of the *Rover*<sup>1</sup> he seem'd to wash off the Guilt from Vice, and gave it Charms and Merit. For tho' it may be a Reproach to the Poet to draw such Characters not only unpunish'd but rewarded, the Actor may still be allow'd his due Praise in his excellent Performance. And this is a Distinction which, when this Comedy was acted at *Whitehall*, King *William's* Queen *Mary* was pleas'd to make in favour of *Monfort*, notwithstanding her Disapprobation of the Play.

He had, besides all this, a Variety in his Genius which few capital Actors have shewn, or perhaps have thought it any Addition to their Merit to arrive at; he could entirely change himself; could at once throw off the Man of Sense for the brisk, vain, rude, and lively Coxcomb, the false, flashy Pretender to Wit, and the Dupe of his own Sufficiency: Of

<sup>1</sup> Willmore, in Mrs. Behn's "Rover," of which Smith was the original representative.

this he gave a delightful Instance in the Character of *Sparkish* in *Wycherly's Country Wife*. In that of *Sir Courtly Nice*<sup>1</sup> his Excellence was still greater : There his whole Man, Voice, Mien, and Gesture was no longer *Monfort*, but another Person. There, the insipid, soft Civility, the elegant and formal Mien, the drawling Delicacy of Voice, the stately Flatness of his Address, and the empty Eminence of his Attitudes were so nicely observ'd and guarded by him, that he had not been an entire Master of Nature had he not kept his Judgment, as it were, a Centinel upon himself, not to admit the least Likeness of what he us'd to be to enter into any Part of his Performãnce, he could not possibly have so completely finish'd it. If, some Years after the Death of *Monfort*, I my self had any Success in either of these Characters, I must pay the Debt I owe to his Memory, in confessing the Advantages I receiv'd from the just Idea and strong Impression he had given me from his acting them. Had he been remember'd when I first attempted them my Defects would have been more easily discover'd, and consequently my favourable Reception in them must have been very much and justly abated. If it could be remembred how much he had the Advantage of me in Voice and Person, I could not here be suspected of an affected Modesty or of over-valuing his Excellence : For he sung a clear Counter-tenour, and had

<sup>1</sup> In Crowne's "Sir Courtly Nice," produced at the Theatre Royal in 1685.

a melodious, warbling Throat, which could not but set off the last Scene of *Sir Courtly* with an uncommon Happiness; which I, alas! could only struggle thro' with the faint Excuses and real Confidence of a fine Singer under the Imperfection of a feign'd and screaming Treble, which at best could only shew you what I would have done had Nature been more favourable to me.

This excellent Actor was cut off by a tragical Death in the 33d Year of his Age, generally lamented by his Friends and all Lovers of the Theatre. The particular Accidents that attended his Fall are to be found at large in the Trial of the Lord *Mohun*, printed among those of the State, in *Folio*.<sup>1</sup>

*Sandford* might properly be term'd the *Spagnolet* of the Theatre, an excellent Actor in disagreeable

<sup>1</sup> William Mountfort was born in 1659 or 1660. He became a member of the Duke's Company as a boy, and Downes says that in 1682 he had grown to the maturity of a good actor. In the "Counterfeits," licensed 29th August, 1678, the Boy is played by Young *Mumford*, and in "The Revenge," produced in 1680, the same name stands to the part of Jack, the Barber's Boy. After the Union in 1682 he made rapid progress, for he played his great character of Sir Courtly Nice as early as 1685. In this Cibber gives him the highest praise; and Downes says, "Sir Courtly was so nicely Perform'd, that not any succeeding, but Mr. *Cyber* has Equall'd him." Mountfort was killed by one Captain Hill, aided, it is supposed, by the Lord Mohun who died in that terrible duel with the Duke of Hamilton, in 1712, in which they hacked each other to death. Whether Hill murdered Mountfort or killed him in fair fight is a doubtful point. (See Doran's "Their Majesties' Servants," 1888 edition, i. 169-172; see also memoir at end of second volume.)

Characters : For as the chief Pieces of that famous Painter were of Human Nature in Pain and Agony, so *Sandford* upon the Stage was generally as flagitious as a *Creon*, a *Maligni*, an *Iago*, or a *Machiavil*<sup>1</sup> could make him. The Painter, 'tis true, from the Fire of his Genius might think the quiet Objects of Nature too tame for his Pencil, and therefore chose to indulge it in its full Power upon those of Violence and Horror : But poor *Sandford* was not the Stage-Villain by Choice, but from Necessity ; for having a low and crooked Person, such bodily Defects were too strong to be admitted into great or amiable Characters ; so that whenever in any new or revived Play there was a hateful or mischievous Person, *Sandford* was sure to have no Competitor for it : Nor indeed (as we are not to suppose a Villain or Traitor can be shewn for our Imitation, or not for our Abhorrence) can it be doubted but the less comely the Actor's Person the fitter he may be to perform them. The Spectator too, by not being misled by a tempting Form, may be less inclin'd to excuse the wicked or immoral Views or Sentiments of them. And though the hard Fate of an *Oedipus* might naturally give the Humanity of an Audience thrice the Pleasure that could arise from the wilful Wickedness of the best acted *Creon*, yet who could say that *Sandford* in such a Part was not Master of as true and just Action as the best Tragedian could

<sup>1</sup> Creon (Dryden and Lee's "Edipus") ; Malignii (Porter's "Villain") ; Machiavil (Lee's "Cæsar Borgia").

be whose happier Person had recommended him to the virtuous Heroe, or any other more pleasing Favourite of the Imagination? In this disadvantageous Light, then, stood *Sandford* as an Actor; admir'd by the Judicious, while the Crowd only prais'd him by their Prejudice.<sup>1</sup> And so unusual had it been to see *Sandford* an innocent Man in a Play, that whenever he was so, the Spectators would hardly give him credit in so gross an Improbability. Let me give you an odd Instance of it, which I heard *Monfort* say was a real Fact. A new Play (the Name of it I have forgot) was brought upon the Stage, wherein *Sandford* happen'd to perform the Part of an honest Statesman: The Pit, after they had sate three or four Acts in a quiet Expectation that the well-dissembled Honesty of *Sandford* (for such of course they concluded it) would soon be discover'd, or at least, from its Security, involve the Actors in the Play in some surprizing Distress or Confusion, which might raise and animate the Scenes to come; when, at last, finding no such matter, but that the Catastrophe had taken quite another Turn, and that

<sup>1</sup> The "Tatler," No. 134: "I must own, there is something very horrid in the publick Executions of an *English* Tragedy. Stabbing and Poisoning, which are performed behind the Scenes in other Nations, must be done openly among us to gratify the Audience.

When poor *Sandford* was upon the Stage, I have seen him groaning upon a Wheel, stuck with Daggers, impaled alive, calling his Executioners, with a dying Voice, Cruel Dogs, and Villains! And all this to please his judicious Spectators, who were wonderfully delighted with seeing a Man in Torment so well acted."

*Sandford* was really an honest Man to the end of the Play, they fairly damn'd it, as if the Author had impos'd upon them the most frontless or incredible Absurdity.<sup>1</sup>

It is not improbable but that from *Sandford's* so masterly personating Characters of Guilt, the inferior Actors might think his Success chiefly owing to the Defects of his Person; and from thence might take occasion, whenever they appear'd as Bravo's or Murtherers, to make themselves as frightful and as inhuman Figures as possible. In King *Charles's* time, this low Skill was carry'd to such an Extravagance, that the King himself, who was black-brow'd and of a swarthy Complexion, pass'd a pleasant Remark upon his observing the grim Looks of the Murtherers in *Mackbeth*; when, turning to his People in the Box about him, *Pray, what is the Meaning, said he, that we never see a Rogue in a Play, but, Godsfish! they always clap him on a black Perriwig? when it is well known one of the greatest Rogues in England always wears a fair one?* Now, whether or no Dr. *Oates* at that time wore his own Hair I

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers notes: "This anecdote has more vivacity than truth, for the audience were too much accustomed to see Sandford in parts of even a comic nature, to testify the impatience or disappointment which Mr. Cibber has described." I may add that I have been unable to discover any play to which the circumstances mentioned by Cibber would apply. But it must not be forgotten that, if the play were damned as completely as Cibber says, it would probably not be printed, and we should thus in all probability have no record of it.

cannot be positive: Or, if his Majesty pointed at some greater Man then out of Power, I leave those to guess at him who may yet remember the changing Complexion of his Ministers.<sup>1</sup> This Story I had from *Betterton*, who was a Man of Veracity: And I confess I should have thought the King's Observation a very just one, though he himself had been fair as *Adonis*. Nor can I in this Question help voting with the Court; for were it not too gross a Weakness to employ in wicked Purposes Men whose very suspected Looks might be enough to betray them? Or are we to suppose it unnatural that a Murther should be thoroughly committed out of an old red Coat and a black Perriwig?

For my own part, I profess myself to have been an Admirer of *Sandford*, and have often lamented that his masterly Performance could not be rewarded with that Applause which I saw much inferior Actors met with, merely because they stood in more laudable Characters. For, tho' it may be a Merit in an Audience to applaud Sentiments of Virtue and Honour; yet there seems to be an equal Justice that no Distinction should be made as to the Excellence of an Actor, whether in a good or evil Character; since neither the Vice nor the Virtue of it is his own, but given him by the Poet: Therefore, why is not the Actor who shines in either equally commendable?—No, Sir; this may be Reason, but that is not always a Rule with us; the Spectator will tell you, that when

<sup>1</sup> Probably the Earl of Shaftesbury.



Virtue is applauded he gives part of it to himself; because his Applause at the same time lets others about him see that he himself admires it. But when a wicked Action is going forward; when an *Iago* is meditating Revenge and Mischief; tho' Art and Nature may be equally strong in the Actor, the Spectator is shy of his Applause, lest he should in some sort be look'd upon as an Aider or an Abettor of the Wickedness in view; and therefore rather chuses to rob the Actor of the Praise he may merit, than give it him in a Character which he would have you see his Silence modestly discourages. From the same fond Principle many Actors have made it a Point to be seen in Parts sometimes even flatly written, only because they stood in the favourable Light of Honour and Virtue.<sup>1</sup>

I have formerly known an Actress carry this Theatrical Prudery to such a height, that she was very near keeping herself chaste by it: Her Fondness for Virtue on the Stage she began to think might perswade the World that it had made an Impression on her private Life; and the Appearances of it actually went so far that, in an Epilogue to an obscure Play, the Profits of which were given to her, and wherein she acted a Part of impregnable Chas-

<sup>1</sup> Macready seems to have held something like this view regarding "villains." At the present time we have no such prejudices, for one of the most popular of English actors, Mr. E. S. Willard, owes his reputation chiefly to his wonderfully vivid presentation of villainy.

tity, she bespoke the Favour of the Ladies by a Pro-  
testation that in Honour of their Goodness and  
Virtue she would dedicate her unblemish'd Life to  
their Example. Part of this Vestal Vow, I remem-  
ber, was contain'd in the following Verse :

*Study to live the Character I play.*<sup>1</sup>

But alas! how weak are the strongest Works of Art  
when Nature besieges it? for though this good  
Creature so far held out her Distaste to Mankind  
that they could never reduce her to marry any one  
of 'em; yet we must own she grew, like *Cæsar*,  
greater by her Fall! Her first heroick Motive to a  
Surrender was to save the Life of a Lover who in  
his Despair had vow'd to destroy himself, with  
which Act of Mercy (in a jealous Dispute once in my  
Hearing) she was provoked to reproach him in these  
very Words: *Villain! did not I save your Life?*  
The generous Lover, in return to that first tender  
Obligation, gave Life to her First-born,<sup>2</sup> and that  
pious Offspring has since raised to her Memory  
several innocent Grandchildren.

<sup>1</sup> The play in question is "The Triumphs of Virtue," produced  
at Drury Lane in 1697, and the actress is Mrs. Rogers, who after-  
wards lived with Wilks. The lines in the Epilogue are:—

"I'll pay this duteous gratitude; I'll do  
That which the play has done—I'll copy you.  
At your own virtue's shrine my vows I'll pay,  
Study to live the character I play."

<sup>2</sup> Chetwood gives a short memoir of this "first-born," who be-  
came the wife of Christopher Bullock, and died in 1739. Mrs.  
Dyer was the only child of Mrs. Bullock's mentioned by Chetwood.

So that, as we see, it is not the Hood that makes the Monk, nor the Veil the Vestal ; I am apt to think that if the personal Morals of an Actor were to be weighed by his Appearance on the Stage, the Advantage and Favour (if any were due to either side) might rather incline to the Traitor than the Heroe, to the *Sempronius* than the *Cato*, or to the *Syphax* than the *Juba* : Because no Man can naturally desire to cover his Honesty with a wicked Appearance ; but an ill Man might possibly incline to cover his Guilt with the Appearance of Virtue, which was the Case of the frail Fair One now mentioned. But be this Question decided as it may, *Sandford* always appear'd to me the honestest Man in proportion to the Spirit wherewith he exposed the wicked and immoral Characters he acted : For had his Heart been unsound, or tainted with the least Guilt of them, his Conscience must, in spite of him, in any too near a Resemblance of himself, have been a Check upon the Vivacity of his Action. *Sandford* therefore might be said to have contributed his equal Share with the foremost Actors to the true and laudable Use of the Stage : And in this Light too, of being so frequently the Object of common Distaste, we may honestly stile him a Theatrical Martyr to Poetical Justice : For in making Vice odious or Virtue amiable, where does the Merit differ ? To hate the one or love the other are but leading Steps to the same Temple of Fame, tho' at different Portals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of Sandford at end of second volume.

This Actor, in his manner of Speaking, varied very much from those I have already mentioned. His Voice had an acute and piercing Tone, which struck every Syllable of his Words distinctly upon the Ear. He had likewise a peculiar Skill in his Look of marking out to an Audience whatever he judg'd worth their more than ordinary Notice. When he deliver'd a Command, he would sometimes give it more Force by seeming to slight the Ornament of Harmony. In *Dryden's* Plays of Rhime, he as little as possible glutted the Ear with the Jingle of it, rather chusing, when the Sense would permit him, to lose it, than to value it.

Had *Sandford* liv'd in *Shakespear's* Time, I am confident his Judgment must have chose him above all other Actors to have play'd his *Richard the Third*: I leave his Person out of the Question, which, tho' naturally made for it, yet that would have been the the least Part of his Recommendation; *Sandford* had stronger Claims to it; he had sometimes an uncouth Stateliness in his Motion, a harsh and sullen Pride of Speech, a meditating Brow, a stern Aspect, occasionally changing into an almost ludicrous Triumph over all Goodness and Virtue: From thence falling into the most asswasive Gentleness and soothing Candour of a designing Heart. These, I say, must have preferr'd him to it; these would have been Colours so essentially shining in that Character, that it will be no Dispraise to that great Author to say, *Sandford* must have shewn as many masterly

Strokes in it (had he ever acted it) as are visible in the Writing it.<sup>1</sup>

When I first brought *Richard the Third*<sup>2</sup> (with such Alterations as I thought not improper) to the Stage, *Sandford* was engaged in the Company then acting under King *William's* Licence in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*; otherwise you cannot but suppose my Interest must have offer'd him that Part. What encouraged me, therefore, to attempt it myself at the *Theatre-Royal*, was that I imagined I knew how *Sandford* would have spoken every Line of it: If, therefore, in any Part of it I succeeded, let the Merit be given to him: And how far I succeeded in that Light, those only can be Judges who remember him. In order, therefore, to give you a nearer Idea of *Sandford*, you must give me leave (compell'd as I am to be vain) to tell you that the late Sir *John Vanbrugh*, who was an Admirer of *Sandford*, after

<sup>1</sup> It is a very common mistake to state that Cibber founded his playing of Richard III. on that of Sandford. He merely says that he tried to act the part as he knew Sandford *would* have played it.

<sup>2</sup> Cibber's adaptation, which has held the stage ever since its production, was first played at Drury Lane in 1700. Genest (ii. 195-219) gives an exhaustive account of Cibber's mutilation. His opinion of it may be gathered from these sentences: "One has no wish to disturb Cibber's own Tragedies in their tranquil graves, but while our indignation continues to be excited by the frequent representation of Richard the 3d in so disgraceful a state, there can be no peace between the friends of unsophisticated Shakspeare and Cibber." "To the advocates for Cibber's Richard I only wish to make one request—that they would never say a syllable in favour of Shakspeare."

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he had seen me act it, assur'd me That he never knew any one Actor so particularly profit by another as I had done by *Sandford* in *Richard the Third*: *You have*, said he, *his very Look, Gesture, Gait, Speech, and every Motion of him, and have borrow'd them all only to serve you in that Character.* If, therefore, Sir *John Vanbrugh's* Observation was just, they who remember me in *Richard the Third* may have a nearer Conception of *Sandford* than from all the critical Account I can give of him.<sup>1</sup>

I come now to those other Men Actors, who at this time were equally famous in the lower Life of Comedy. But I find myself more at a loss to give you them in their true and proper Light, than those I have already set before you. Why the Tragedian warms us into Joy or Admiration, or sets our Eyes on flow with Pity, we can easily explain to another's Apprehension: But it may sometimes puzzle the

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat" (p. 35): "This same Mender of *Shakespear* chose the principal Part, *viz. the King*, for himself; and accordingly being invested with the purple Robe, he screamed thro' four Acts without Dignity or Decency. The Audience ill-pleas'd with the Farce, accompany'd him with a smile of Contempt, but in the fifth Act, he degenerated all at once into Sir *Novelty*; and when in the Heat of the Battle at *Bosworth Field*, the King is dismounted, our Comic-Tragedian came on the Stage, really breathless, and in a seeming Panick, screaming out this Line thus—*A Harse, a Harse, my Kingdom for a Harse.* This highly delighted some, and disgusted others of his Auditors; and when he was kill'd by *Richmond*, one might plainly perceive that the good People were not better pleas'd that so *execrable a Tyrant* was destroy'd, than that so *execrable an Actor* was silent."









THOMAS BETTERTON.



gravest Spectator to account for that familiar Violence of Laughter that shall seize him at some particular Strokes of a true Comedian. How then shall I describe what a better Judge might not be able to express? The Rules to please the Fancy cannot so easily be laid down as those that ought to govern the Judgment. The Decency, too, that must be observed in Tragedy, reduces, by the manner of speaking it, one Actor to be much more like another than they can or need be supposed to be in Comedy: There the Laws of Action give them such free and almost unlimited Liberties to play and wanton with Nature, that the Voice, Look, and Gesture of a Comedian may be as various as the Manners and Faces of the whole Mankind are different from one another. These are the Difficulties I lie under. Where I want Words, therefore, to describe what I may commend, I can only hope you will give credit to my Opinion: And this Credit I shall most stand in need of, when I tell you, that

*Nokes*<sup>1</sup> was an Actor of a quite different Genius from any I have ever read, heard of, or seen, since or before his Time; and yet his general Excellence may be comprehended in one Article, *viz.* a plain

<sup>1</sup> James Noke, or Nokes—not *Robert*, as Bellchambers states. Of Robert Nokes little is known. Downes mentions both actors among Rhodes's original Company, Robert playing male characters, and James being one of the "boy-actresses." Downes does not distinguish between them at all, simply mentioning "Mr. Nokes" as playing particular parts. Robert Nokes died about 1673, so that we are certain that the famous brother was James.

and palpable Simplicity of Nature, which was so utterly his own, that he was often as unaccountably diverting in his common Speech as on the Stage. I saw him once giving an Account of some Table-talk to another Actor behind the Scenes, which a Man of Quality accidentally listening to, was so deceived by his Manner, that he ask'd him if that was a new Play he was rehearsing? It seems almost amazing that this Simplicity, so easy to *Nokes*, should never be caught by any one of his Successors. *Leigh* and *Underhil* have been well copied, tho' not equall'd by others. But not all the mimical Skill of *Estcourt* (fam'd as he was for it) tho' he had often seen *Nokes*, could scarce give us an Idea of him. After this perhaps it will be saying less of him, when I own, that though I have still the Sound of every Line he spoke in my Ear, (which us'd not to be thought a bad one) yet I have often try'd by myself, but in vain, to reach the least distant Likeness of the *Vis Comica* of *Nokes*. Though this may seem little to his Praise, it may be negatively saying a good deal to it, because I have never seen any one Actor, except himself, whom I could not at least so far imitate as to give you a more than tolerable Notion of his manner. But *Nokes* was so singular a Species, and was so form'd by Nature for the Stage, that I question if (beyond the trouble of getting Words by Heart) it ever cost him an Hour's Labour to arrive at that high Reputation he had, and deserved.

The Characters he particularly shone in, were Sir

*Martin Marr-all, Gomez in the Spanish Friar, Sir Nicolas Cully in Love in a Tub,<sup>1</sup> Barnaby Brittle in the Wanton Wife, Sir Davy Duncce in the Soldier's Fortune, Sosia in Amphytrion,<sup>2</sup> &c. &c. &c.* To tell you how he acted them is beyond the reach of Criticism: But to tell you what Effect his Action had upon the Spectator is not impossible: This then is all you will expect from me, and from hence I must leave you to guess at him.

He scarce ever made his first Entrance in a Play but he was received with an involuntary Applause, not of Hands only, for those may be, and have often been partially prostituted and bespoken, but by a General Laughter which the very Sight of him provoked and Nature cou'd not resist; yet the louder the Laugh the graver was his Look upon it; and sure, the ridiculous Solemnity of his Features were enough to have set a whole Bench of Bishops into a Titter, cou'd he have been honour'd (may it be no Offence to suppose it) with such grave and right reverend Auditors. In the ludicrous Distresses which, by the Laws of Comedy, Folly is often involv'd in, he sunk into such a mixture of piteous Pusillanimity and a Consternation so ruefully ridiculous and inconsolable, that when he had shook you to a Fatigue of Laughter it became a moot point whether you ought not to have pity'd him. When he debated

<sup>1</sup> "The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub."

<sup>2</sup> Of these plays, "The Spanish Friar," "The Soldier's Fortune," and "Amphytrion" were produced after Robert Nokes's death.

any matter by himself, he would shut up his Mouth with a dumb studious Powt, and roll his full Eye into such a vacant Amazement, such a palpable Ignorance of what to think of it, that his silent Perplexity (which would sometimes hold him several Minutes) gave your Imagination as full Content as the most absurd thing he could say upon it. In the Character of Sir *Martin Marr-all*, who is always committing Blunders to the Prejudice of his own Interest, when he had brought himself to a Dilemma in his Affairs by vainly proceeding upon his own Head, and was afterwards afraid to look his governing Servant and Counsellor in the Face, what a copious and distressful Harangue have I seen him make with his Looks (while the House has been in one continued Roar for several Minutes) before he could prevail with his Courage to speak a Word to him! Then might you have at once read in his Face *Vexation*—that his own Measures, which he had piqued himself upon, had fail'd. *Envy*—of his Servant's superior Wit—*Distress*—to retrieve the Occasion he had lost. *Shame*—to confess his Folly; and yet a sullen Desire to be reconciled and better advised for the future! What Tragedy ever shew'd us such a Tumult of Passions rising at once in one Bosom! or what buskin'd Heroe standing under the Load of them could have more effectually mov'd his Spectators by the most pathetick Speech, than poor miserable *Nokes* did by this silent Eloquence and piteous Plight of his Features?

His Person was of the middle size, his Voice clear and audible; his natural Countenance grave and sober; but the Moment he spoke the settled Seriousness of his Features was utterly discharg'd, and a dry, drolling, or laughing Levity took such full Possession of him that I can only refer the Idea of him to your Imagination. In some of his low Characters, that became it, he had a shuffling Shamble in his Gait, with so contented an Ignorance in his Aspect and an aukward Absurdity in his Gesture, that had you not known him, you could not have believ'd that naturally he could have had a Grain of common Sense. In a Word, I am tempted to sum up the Character of *Nokes*, as a Comedian, in a Parodie of what *Shakespear's Mark Antony* says of *Brutus* as a Hero.

*His Life was Laughter, and the Ludicrous  
So mixt in him, that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the World—This was an Actor.*<sup>1</sup>

*Leigh* was of the mercurial kind, and though not so strict an Observer of Nature, yet never so wanton in his Performance as to be wholly out of her Sight. In Humour he lov'd to take a full Career, but was careful enough to stop short when just upon the Precipice: He had great Variety in his manner, and was famous in very different Characters: In the canting, grave Hypocrisy of the *Spanish Friar* he stretcht the Veil of Piety so thinly over him, that in

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of James Nokes at end of second volume.

every Look, Word, and Motion you saw a palpable, wicked Slyness shine through it—Here he kept his Vivacity demurely confin'd till the pretended Duty of his Function demanded it, and then he exerted it with a cholerick sacerdotal Insolence. But the Friar is a Character of such glaring Vice and so strongly drawn, that a very indifferent Actor cannot but hit upon the broad Jest's that are remarkable in every Scene of it. Though I have never yet seen any one that has fill'd them with half the Truth and Spirit of *Leigh*—*Leigh* rais'd the Character as much above the Poet's Imagination as the Character has sometimes rais'd other Actors above themselves! and I do not doubt but the Poet's Knowledge of *Leigh's* Genius help'd him to many a pleasant Stroke of Nature, which without that Knowledge never might have enter'd into his Conception. *Leigh* was so eminent in this Character that the late Earl of *Dorset* (who was equally an Admirer and a Judge of Theatrical Merit) had a whole Length of him, in the Friar's Habit, drawn by *Kneller*: The whole Portrait is highly painted, and extremely like him. But no wonder *Leigh* arriv'd to such Fame in what was so compleatly written for him, when Characters that would make the Reader yawn in the Closet, have, by the Strength of his Action, been lifted into the lowest Laughter on the Stage. Of this kind was the Scrivener's great boobily Son in the *Villain*;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “*Coligni*, the character alluded to, at the original representation of this play, was sustained, says Downs, ‘by that inimitable





“I have been a student of the  
of the great and noble old man  
and I have learned much from  
him. He has been my teacher  
and my friend. He has been  
my guide and my strength.  
He has shown me the way  
and he has helped me  
through all my difficulties.  
I have never seen any  
other man who has done  
as much for me. He has  
given me the character I  
need. He has given me the  
strength I need. He has  
given me the knowledge  
I need. He has helped  
me in every way that  
he could. I will never  
forget him. I will  
never forget his  
teaching. I will never  
forget his love. I  
will never forget his  
example.”

Readers of the life of  
his father, even the  
of the state. Of the Man  
the only Son of the *E.*

By  
by that



ANTHONY LEIGH.



*Ralph*, a stupid, staring Under-servant, in *Sir Solomon Single*.<sup>1</sup> Quite opposite to those were *Sir Jolly Jumble* in the *Soldier's Fortune*,<sup>2</sup> and his old *Belfond* in the *Squire of Alsatia*.<sup>3</sup> In *Sir Jolly* he was all Life and laughing Humour, and when *Nokes* acted

sprightly actor, Mr. Price,—especially in this part.' Joseph Price joined D'Avenant's company on Rhodes's resignation, being one of 'the new actors,' according to the 'Roscius Anglicanus,' who were 'taken in to complete' it. He is first mentioned for *Guildenstern*, in 'Hamlet;' and, in succession, for *Leonel*, in D'Avenant's 'Love and Honour,' on which occasion the Earl of Oxford gave him his coronation-suit; for *Paris*, in 'Romeo and Juliet;' the *Corregidor*, in Tuke's 'Adventures of five hours;' and *Coligni*, as already recorded. In the year 1663, by speaking a 'short comical prologue' to the 'Rivals,' introducing some 'very diverting dances,' Mr. Price 'gained him an universal applause of the town.' The versatility of this actor must have been great, or the necessities of the company imperious, as we next find him set down for *Lord Sands*, in 'King Henry the Eighth.' He then performed *Will*, in the 'Cutter of Coleman-street,' and is mentioned by Downs as being dead, in the year 1673."

The above is Bellchambers's note. He is wrong in stating that Price played the *Corregidor* in Tuke's "Adventures of Five Hours;" his part was *Silvio*. He omits, too, to mention one of Price's best parts, *Dufoy*, in "Love in a Tub," in which Downes specially commends him in this queer couplet:—

"Sir Nich'las, Sir Fred'rick; Widow and Dufoy,  
Were not by any so well done, Mafoy."

Price does not seem to have acted after May, 1665, when the theatres closed for the Plague, for his name is never mentioned by Downes after the theatres re-opened in November, 1666, after the Plague and Fire.

<sup>1</sup> "Sir Solomon; or, the Cautious Coxcomb," by John Caryl.

<sup>2</sup> By Otway.

<sup>3</sup> By Shadwell.

with him in the same Play, they returned the Ball so dexterously upon one another, that every Scene between them seem'd but one continued Rest<sup>1</sup> of Excellence——But alas! when those Actors were gone, that Comedy and many others, for the same Reason, were rarely known to stand upon their own Legs; by seeing no more of *Leigh* or *Nokes* in them, the Characters were quite sunk and alter'd. In his *Sir William Belfond*, *Leigh* shew'd a more spirited Variety than ever I saw any Actor, in any one Character, come up to: The Poet, 'tis true, had here exactly chalked for him the Out-lines of Nature; but the high Colouring, the strong Lights and Shades of Humour that enliven'd the whole and struck our Admiration with Surprize and Delight, were wholly owing to the Actor. The easy Reader might, per-

<sup>1</sup> “Rest” is a term used in tennis, and seems to have meant a quick and continued returning of the ball from one player to the other—what is in lawn tennis called a “rally.”

Cibber uses the word in his “Careless Husband,” act iv. sc. 1.

“*Lady Betty* [to Lord Morelove]. Nay, my lord, there's no standing against two of you.

*Lord Foppington*. No, faith, that's odds at tennis, my lord: not but if your ladyship pleases, I'll endeavour to keep your back-hand a little; though upon my soul you may safely set me up at the line: for, knock me down, if ever I saw a rest of wit better played, than that last, in my life.”

In the only dictionary in which I have found this word “Rest,” it is given as “A match, a game;” but, as I think I have shown, this is a defective explanation. I may add that, since writing the above, I have been favoured with the opinion of Mr. Julian Marshall, the distinguished authority on tennis, who confirms my view.

haps, have been pleased with the Author without discomposing a Feature, but the Spectator must have heartily held his Sides, or the Actor would have heartily made them ach for it.

Now, though I observ'd before that *Nokes* never was tolerably touch'd by any of his Successors, yet in this Character I must own I have seen *Leigh* extremely well imitated by my late facetious Friend *Penkethman*, who, tho' far short of what was inimitable in the Original, yet, as to the general Resemblance, was a very valuable Copy of him: And, as I know *Penkethman* cannot yet be out of your Memory, I have chosen to mention him here, to give you the nearest Idea I can of the Excellence of *Leigh* in that particular Light: For *Leigh* had many masterly Variations which the other cou'd not, nor ever pretended to reach, particularly in the Dotage and Follies of extreme old Age, in the Characters of *Fumble* in the *Fond Husband*,<sup>1</sup> and the Toothless Lawyer<sup>2</sup> in the *City Politicks*, both which Plays liv'd only by the extraordinary Performance of *Nokes* and *Leigh*.

There were two other Characters of the farcical kind, *Geta* in the *Prophetess*, and *Crack* in *Sir Courtly Nice*, which, as they are less confin'd to Nature, the Imitation of them was less difficult to

<sup>1</sup> By Durfey.

<sup>2</sup> Bartoline. Genest suggests that this character was intended for the Whig lawyer, Serjeant Maynard. The play was written by Crowne.

*Penkethman*,<sup>1</sup> who, to say the Truth, delighted more in the whimsical than the natural ; therefore, when I say he sometimes resembled *Leigh*, I reserve this Distinction on his Master's side, that the pleasant Extravagancies of *Leigh* were all the Flowers of his own Fancy, while the less fertile Brain of my Friend was contented to make use of the Stock his Predecessor had left him. What I have said, therefore, is not to detract from honest *Pinky's* Merit, but to do Justice to his Predecessor—And though, 'tis true, we as seldom see a good Actor as a great Poet arise from the bare *Imitation* of another's Genius, yet if this be a general Rule, *Penkethman* was the nearest to an Exception from it; for with those who never knew *Leigh* he might very well have pass'd for a more than common Original. Yet again, as my Partiality for *Penkethman* ought not to lead me from Truth, I must beg leave (though out of its Place) to tell you fairly what was the best of him, that the superiority of *Leigh* may stand in its due Light—*Penkethman* had certainly from Nature a great deal of comic Power about him, but his Judgment was by no means equal to it ; for he would make frequent Deviations into the Whimsies of an *Harlequin*. By the way, (let me digress a little farther) whatever Allowances are made for the Licence of that Character, I mean of an *Harlequin*, whatever Pretences may be urged, from the Practice of the ancient Comedy, for its being play'd in a Mask, resembling

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of Pinkethman at end of second volume.



no part of the human Species, I am apt to think the best Excuse a modern Actor can plead for his continuing it, is that the low, senseless, and monstrous things he says and does in it no theatrical Assurance could get through with a bare Face: Let me give you an Instance of even *Penkethman's* being out of Countenance for want of it: When he first play'd *Harlequin* in the *Emperor of the Moon*,<sup>1</sup> several Gentlemen (who inadvertently judg'd by the Rules of Nature) fancied that a great deal of the Drollery and Spirit of his Grimace was lost by his wearing that useless, unmeaning Masque of a black Cat, and therefore insisted that the next time of his acting that Part he should play without it: Their Desire was accordingly comply'd with—but, alas! in vain—*Penkethman* could not take to himself the Shame of the Character without being concealed—he was no more *Harlequin*—his Humour was quite disconcerted! his Conscience could not with the same *Effronterie* declare against Nature without the cover of that unchanging Face, which he was sure would never blush for it! no! it was quite another Case!

<sup>1</sup> In this farce, written by Mrs. Behn, and produced in 1687, Jevon was the original Harlequin. Pinkethman played the part in 1702, and played it without the mask on 18th September, 1702. The "Daily Courant" of that date contains an advertisement in which it is stated that "At the Desire of some Persons of Quality . . . will be presented a Comedy, call'd, *The Emperor of the Moon*, wherein Mr. *Penkethman* acts the part of *Harlequin* without a Masque, for the Entertainment of an *African* Prince lately arrived here."

without that Armour his Courage could not come up to the bold Strokes that were necessary to get the better of common Sense. Now if this Circumstance will justify the Modesty of *Penkethman*, it cannot but throw a wholesome Contempt on the low Merit of an *Harlequin*. But how farther necessary the Masque is to that Fool's Coat, we have lately had a stronger Proof in the Favour that the *Harlequin Sauvage* met with at *Paris*, and the ill Fate that followed the same *Sauvage* when he pull'd off his Masque in *London*.<sup>1</sup> So that it seems what was Wit from an *Harlequin* was something too extravagant from a human Creature. If, therefore, *Penkethman* in Characters drawn from Nature might sometimes launch out into a few gamesome Liberties which would not have been excused from a more correct Comedian, yet, in his manner of taking them, he always seem'd to me in a kind of Consciousness of the Hazard he was running, as if he fairly confess'd that what he did was only as well as he *could* do——That he was willing to take his Chance for Success, but if he did not meet with it a Rebuke should break no Squares ;

<sup>1</sup> This refers to "Art and Nature," a comedy by James Miller, produced at Drury Lane 16th February, 1738. The principal character in "Harlequin Sauvage" was introduced into it and played by Theophilus Cibber. The piece was damned the first night, but it must not be forgotten that the Templars damned everything of Miller's on account of his supposed insult to them in his farce of "The Coffee House." Bellchambers says the piece referred to by Cibber was "The Savage," 8vo, 1736 ; but this does not seem ever to have been acted.

he would mend it another time, and would take whatever pleas'd his Judges to think of him in good part; and I have often thought that a good deal of the Favour he met with was owing to this seeming humble way of waving all Pretences to Merit but what the Town would please to allow him. What confirms me in this Opinion is, that when it has been his ill Fortune to meet with a *Disgraccia*, I have known him say apart to himself, yet loud enough to be heard—*Odso!* I believe I *am a little wrong here!* which once was so well receiv'd by the Audience that they turn'd their Reproof into Applause.<sup>1</sup>

Now, the Judgment of *Leigh* always guarded the happier Sallies of his Fancy from the least Hazard of Disapprobation: he seem'd not to court, but to

<sup>1</sup> This probably refers to the incident related by Davies in his "Dramatic Miscellanies":—"In the play of the 'Recruiting Officer,' Wilks was the Captain *Plume*, and Pinkethman one of the recruits. The captain, when he enlisted him, asked his name: instead of answering as he ought, Pinkey replied, 'Why! don't you know my name, Bob? I thought every fool had known that!' Wilks, in rage, whispered to him the name of the recruit, *Thomas Appletree*. The other retorted aloud, '*Thomas Appletree?* Thomas Devil! my name is Will Pinkethman:' and, immediately addressing an inhabitant of the upper regions, he said 'Hark you, friend; don't you know my name?'—'Yes, Master Pinkey,' said a respondent, 'we know it very well.' The play-house was now in an uproar: the audience, at first, enjoyed the petulant folly of Pinkethman, and the distress of Wilks; but, in the progress of the joke, it grew tiresome, and Pinkey met with his deserts, a very severe reprimand in a hiss; and this mark of displeasure he changed into applause, by crying out, with a countenance as melancholy as he could make it, in a loud and nasal twang, '*Odso! I fear I am wrong*'" (iii. 89).

attack your Applause, and always came off victorious; nor did his highest Assurance amount to any more than that just Confidence without which the commendable Spirit of every good Actor must be abated; and of this Spirit *Leigh* was a most perfect Master. He was much admir'd by King *Charles*, who us'd to distinguish him when spoke of by the Title of *his Actor*: Which however makes me imagine that in his Exile that Prince might have receiv'd his first Impression of good Actors from the *French Stage*; for *Leigh* had more of that farcical Vivacity than *Nokes*; but *Nokes* was never languid by his more strict Adherence to Nature, and as far as my Judgment is worth taking, if their intrinsick Merit could be justly weigh'd, *Nokes* must have had the better in the Balance. Upon the unfortunate Death of *Monfort*, *Leigh* fell ill of a Fever, and dy'd in a Week after him, in *December* 1692.<sup>1</sup>

*Underhil* was a correct and natural Comedian, his particular Excellence was in Characters that may be called Still-life, I mean the Stiff, the Heavy, and the Stupid; to these he gave the exactest and most expressive Colours, and in some of them look'd as if it were not in the Power of human Passions to alter a Feature of him. In the solemn Formality of *Obadiah* in the *Committee*, and in the boobily Heaviness of *Lolpoop* in the *Squire of Alsatia*, he seem'd the immoveable Log he stood for! a Countenance of Wood could not be more fixt than his, when the

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of Leigh at end of second volume.

Blockhead of a Character required it: His Face was full and long; from his Crown to the end of his Nose was the shorter half of it, so that the Disproportion of his lower Features, when soberly compos'd, with an unwandering Eye hanging over them, threw him into the most lumpish, moping Mortal that ever made Beholders merry! not but at other times he could be wakened into Spirit equally ridiculous—In the course, rustick Humour of Justice *Ciodpate*, in *Epsome Wells*,<sup>1</sup> he was a delightful Brute! and in the blunt Vivacity of Sir *Sampson*, in *Love for Love*, he shew'd all that true perverse Spirit that is commonly seen in much Wit and Ill-nature. This Character is one of those few so well written, with so much Wit and Humour, that an Actor must be the grossest Dunce that does not appear with an unusual Life in it: But it will still shew as great a Proportion of Skill to come near *Underhil* in the acting it, which (not to undervalue those who soon came after him) I have not yet seen. He was particularly admir'd too for the Grave-digger in *Hamlet*. The Author of the *Tatler* recommends him to the Favour of the Town upon that Play's being acted for his Benefit, wherein, after his Age had some Years oblig'd him to leave the Stage, he came on again, for that Day, to perform his old Part;<sup>2</sup> but,

<sup>1</sup> By Shadwell.

<sup>2</sup> Underhill seems to have partially retired about the beginning of 1707. He played Sir Joslin Jolley on 5th December, 1706, but Bullock played it on 9th January, 1707, and, two days after,

alas ! so worn and disabled, as if himself was to have lain in the Grave he was digging ; when he could no more excite Laughter, his Infirmities were dismiss'd with Pity : He dy'd soon after, a superannuated Pensioner in the List of those who were supported by the joint Sharers under the first Patent granted to Sir *Richard Steele*.

The deep Impressions of these excellent Actors which I receiv'd in my Youth, I am afraid may have drawn me into the common Foible of us old Fellows ; which is a Fondness, and perhaps a tedious Partiality, for the Pleasures we have formerly tasted, and think are now fallen off because we can no longer enjoy them. If therefore I lie under that Suspicion, tho' I have related nothing incredible or out of the reach of a good Judge's Conception, I

Johnson played Underhill's part of the First Gravedigger. Underhill, however, played in "The Rover" on 20th January, 1707. The benefit Cibber refers to took place on 3rd June, 1709. Underhill played the Gravedigger again on 23rd February, 1710, and on 12th May, 1710, for his benefit, he played Trincalo in "The Tempest." Genest says he acted at Greenwich on 26th August, 1710. The advertisement in the "Tatler" (26th May, 1709) runs : "Mr. Cave Underhill, the famous Comedian in the Reigns of K. Charles ii. K. James ii. K. William and Q. Mary, and her present Majesty Q. Anne ; but now not able to perform so often as heretofore in the Play-house, and having had losses to the value of near £2,500, is to have the Tragedy of Hamlet acted for his Benefit, on Friday the third of June next, at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, in which he is to perform his Original Part, the Grave-Maker. Tickets may be had at the Mitre-Tavern in Fleet-Street." See also memoir of Underhill at end of second volume.

must appeal to those Few who are about my own Age for the Truth and Likeness of these Theatrical Portraits.

There were at this time several others in some degree of Favour with the Publick, *Powel*,<sup>1</sup> *Verbruggen*,<sup>2</sup> *Williams*,<sup>3</sup> &c. But as I cannot think their best Improvements made them in any wise equal to those I have spoke of, I ought not to range them in the same Class. Neither were *Wilks* or *Dogget* yet come to the Stage; nor was *Booth* initiated till about six Years after them; or Mrs. *Oldfield* known till the Year 1700. I must therefore reserve the four last for their proper Period, and proceed to the Actresses that were famous

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of Powel at end of second volume.

<sup>2</sup> John Verbruggen, whose name Downes spells "Vanbruggen," "Vantbrugg," and "Verbruggen," is first recorded as having played Termagant in "The Squire of Alsatia," at the Theatre Royal, in 1688. His name last appears in August, 1707, and he must have died not long after. On 26th April, 1708, a benefit was announced for "a young orphan child of the late Mr. and Mrs. Verbruggen." He seems to have been an actor of great natural power, but inartistic in method. See what Anthony Aston says of him. Cibber unfairly, as we must think, seems carefully to avoid mentioning him as of any importance. "The Laureat," p. 58, says: "I wonder, considering our Author's Particularity of Memory, that he hardly ever mentions Mr. *Verbruggen*, who was in many Characters an excellent Actor. . . . I cannot conceive why *Verbruggen* is left out of the Number of his excellent Actors; whether some latent Grudge, *alta Mente repostum*, has robb'd him of his Immortality in this Work." See also memoir of Verbruggen at end of second volume.

<sup>3</sup> See memoir of Williams at end of second volume.

with *Betterton* at the latter end of the last Century.

Mrs. *Barry* was then in possession of almost all the chief Parts in Tragedy: With what Skill she gave Life to them you will judge from the Words of *Dryden* in his Preface to *Cleomenes*,<sup>1</sup> where he says,

*Mrs. Barry, always excellent, has in this Tragedy excell'd herself, and gain'd a Reputation beyond any Woman I have ever seen on the Theatre.*

I very perfectly remember her acting that Part; and however unnecessary it may seem to give my Judgment after *Dryden's*, I cannot help saying I do not only close with his Opinion, but will venture to add that (tho' *Dryden* has been dead these Thirty Eight Years) the same Compliment to this Hour may be due to her Excellence. And tho' she was then not a little past her Youth, she was not till that time fully arriv'd to her maturity of Power and Judgment: From whence I would observe, That the short Life of Beauty is not long enough to form a complete Actress. In Men the Delicacy of Person is not so absolutely necessary, nor the Decline of it so soon taken notice of. The Fame Mrs. *Barry* arriv'd to is a particular Proof of the Difficulty there is in judging with Certainty, from their first Trials, whether young People will ever make

<sup>1</sup> Produced at the Theatre Royal in 1692.



any great Figure on a Theatre. There was, it seems, so little Hope of Mrs. *Barry* at her first setting out, that she was at the end of the first Year discharg'd the Company, among others that were thought to be a useless Expence to it. I take it for granted that the Objection to Mrs. *Barry* at that time must have been a defective Ear, or some unskilful Dissonance in her manner of pronouncing: But where there is a proper Voice and Person, with the Addition of a good Understanding, Experience tells us that such Defect is not always invincible; of which not only Mrs. *Barry*, but the late Mrs. *Oldfield* are eminent Instances. Mrs. *Oldfield* had been a Year in the Theatre-Royal before she was observ'd to give any tolerable Hope of her being an Actress; so unlike to all manner of Propriety was her Speaking!<sup>1</sup> How unaccountably, then, does a Genius for the Stage make its way towards Perfection? For, notwithstanding these equal Disadvantages, both these Actresses, tho' of different Excellence, made themselves complete Mistresses of their Art by the Prevalence of their Understanding. If this Observation may be of any use to the Masters of future Theatres, I shall not then have made it to no purpose.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter IX. of this work Cibber gives an elaborate account of Mrs. Oldfield. He remarks there that, after her joining the company, "she remain'd about a Twelvemonth almost a Mute, and unheeded."

<sup>2</sup> See memoir of Mrs. Barry at end of second volume.

Mrs. *Barry*, in *Characters of Greatness*, had a Presence of elevated Dignity, her Mien and Motion superb and gracefully majestick; her Voice full, clear, and strong, so that no Violence of Passion could be too much for her: And when Distress or Tenderness possess'd her, she subsided into the most affecting Melody and Softness. In the Art of exciting Pity she had a Power beyond all the Actresses I have yet seen, or what your Imagination can conceive. Of the former of these two great Excellencies she gave the most delightful Proofs in almost all the Heroic Plays of *Dryden* and *Lee*; and of the latter, in the softer Passions of *Otway's Monimia* and *Belvidera*.<sup>1</sup> In Scenes of Anger, Defiance, or Resentment, while she was impetuous and terrible, she pour'd out the Sentiment with an enchanting Harmony; and it was this particular Excellence for which *Dryden* made her the above-recited Compliment upon her acting *Cassandra* in his *Cleomenes*. But here I am apt to think his Partiality for that Character may have tempted his Judgment to let it pass for her Master-piece, when he could not but know there were several other Characters in which her Action might have given her a fairer Pretence to the Praise he has bestow'd on her for *Cassandra*; for in no Part of that is there the least ground for Compassion, as in *Monimia*, nor equal cause for Admiration, as in the nobler Love of *Cleopatra*, or the

<sup>1</sup> In "The Orphan," produced at Dorset Garden in 1680, and in "Venice Preserved," produced at the same theatre in 1682







ELIZABETH BARRY



tempestuous Jealousy of *Roxana*.<sup>1</sup> 'Twas in these Lights I thought Mrs. *Barry* shone with a much brighter Excellence than in *Cassandra*. She was the first Person whose Merit was distinguish'd by the Indulgence of having an annual Benefit-Play, which was granted to her alone, if I mistake not, first in King *James's* time,<sup>2</sup> and which became not common to others 'till the Division of this Company after the Death of King *William's* Queen *Mary*. This great Actress dy'd of a Fever towards the latter end of Queen *Anne*; the Year I have forgot; but perhaps you will recollect it by an Expression that fell from her in blank Verse, in her last Hours, when she was delirious, *viz.*

*Ha, ha! and so they make us Lords, by Dozens!*<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. *Betterton*, tho' far advanc'd in Years, was so

<sup>1</sup> In "The Rival Queens." Mrs. Marshall was the original Roxana, at the Theatre Royal in 1677. So far as we know, Mrs. Barry had not played Cleopatra (Dryden's "All for Love") when Dryden wrote the eulogy Cibber quotes. Mrs. Boutell originally acted the part, Theatre Royal, 1678.

<sup>2</sup> Bellchambers contradicts Cibber, saying that the Agreement of 14th October, 1681 [see Memoir of Hart], shows that benefits existed then. The words referred to are, "the day the young men or young women play for their own profit only." But this day set aside for the young people playing was, I think, quite a different matter from a benefit to a particular performer. Pepys (21st March, 1667) says, "The young men and women of the house . . . having liberty to act for their own profit on Wednesdays and Fridays this Lent." These were evidently "scratch" performances on "off" nights; and it is to these, I think, that the agreement quoted refers.

<sup>3</sup> As Dr. Doran points out ("Their Majesties' Servants," 1888

great a Mistress of Nature that even Mrs. *Barry*, who acted the Lady *Macbeth* after her, could not in that Part, with all her superior Strength and Melody of Voice, throw out those quick and careless Strokes of Terror from the Disorder of a guilty Mind, which the other gave us with a Facility in her Manner that render'd them at once tremendous and delightful. Time could not impair her Skill, tho' he had brought her Person to decay. She was, to the last, the Admiration of all true Judges of Nature and Lovers of *Shakespear*, in whose Plays she chiefly excell'd, and without a Rival. When she quitted the Stage several good Actresses were the better for her Instruction. She was a Woman of an unblemish'd and sober life, and had the Honour to teach Queen *Anne*, when Princess, the Part of *Semandra* in *Mithridates*, which she acted at Court in King *Charles's* time. After the Death of Mr. *Betterton*, her Husband, that Princess, when Queen, order'd her a Pension for Life, but she liv'd not to receive more than the first half Year of it.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. *Leigh*, the Wife of *Leigh* already mention'd, had a very droll way of dressing the pretty Foibles of superannuated Beauties. She had in her self a good deal of Humour, and knew how to infuse it

edition, i. 160) this does not settle the question so easily as Cibber supposes. Twelve Tory peers were created by Queen Anne in the last few days of 1711, and Mrs. Barry did not die till the end of 1713.

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of Mrs. Betterton at end of second volume.



into the affected Mothers, Aunts, and modest stale Maids that had miss'd their Market; of this sort were the Modish Mother in the *Chances*, affecting to be politely comode for her own Daughter; the Coquette Prude of an Aunt in *Sir Courtly Nice*, who prides herself in being chaste and cruel at Fifty; and the languishing Lady *Wishfort* in *The Way of the World*: In all these, with many others, she was extremely entertaining, and painted in a lively manner the blind Side of Nature.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. *Butler*, who had her Christian Name of *Charlotte* given her by King *Charles*, was the Daughter of a decay'd Knight, and had the Honour of that Prince's Recommendation to the Theatre; a provident Restitution, giving to the Stage in kind what he had sometimes taken from it: The Publick at least was oblig'd by it; for she prov'd not only a good Actress, but was allow'd in those Days to sing and dance to great Perfection. In the Dramatick Operas of *Dioclesian* and that of *King Arthur*, she

<sup>1</sup> Downes includes Mrs. Leigh among the recruits to the Duke's Company about 1670. He does not give her maiden name, but Genest supposes she may have been the daughter of Dixon, one of Rhodes's Company. As there are two actresses of the name of Mrs. Leigh, and one Mrs. Lee, and as no reliance can be placed on the spelling of names in the casts of plays, it is practically impossible to decide accurately the parts each played. This Mrs. Leigh seems to have been Elizabeth, and her name does not appear after 1707, the Eli. Leigh who signed the petition to Queen Anne in 1709 being probably a younger woman. Bellchambers has a most inaccurate note regarding Mrs. Leigh, stating that she "is probably not a distinct person from Mrs. Mary Lee."

was a capital and admired Performer. In speaking, too, she had a sweet-ton'd Voice, which, with her naturally genteel Air and sensible Pronunciation, render'd her wholly Mistress of the Amiable in many serious Characters. In Parts of Humour, too, she had a manner of blending her assuasive Softness even with the Gay, the Lively, and the Alluring. Of this she gave an agreeable Instance in her Action of the (*Villiers*) Duke of *Buckingham's* second *Constantia* in the *Chances*. In which, if I should say I have never seen her exceeded, I might still do no wrong to the late Mrs. *Oldfield's* lively Performance of the same Character. Mrs. *Oldfield's* Fame may spare Mrs. *Butler's* Action this Compliment, without the least Diminution or Dispute of her Superiority in Characters of more moment.<sup>1</sup>

Here I cannot help observing, when there was but one Theatre in *London*, at what unequal Sallaries, compar'd to those of later Days, the hired Actors were then held by the absolute Authority of their frugal Masters the Patentees; for Mrs. *Butler* had then but Forty Shillings a Week, and could she have

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Charlotte Butler is mentioned by Downes as entering the Duke's Company about the year 1673. By 1691 she occupied an important position as an actress, and in 1692 her name appears to the part of La Pupsey in Durfey's "Marriage-Hater Matched." This piece must have been produced early in the year, for Ashbury, by whom, as Cibber relates, she was engaged for Dublin, opened his season on 23rd March, 1692. Hitchcock, in his "View of the Irish Stage," describes her as "an actress of great repute, and a prodigious favourite with King Charles the Second" (i. 21).

obtain'd an Addition of Ten Shillings more (which was refus'd her) would never have left their Service ; but being offer'd her own Conditions to go with Mr. *Ashbury*<sup>1</sup> to *Dublin* (who was then raising a Company of Actors for that Theatre, where there had been none since the Revolution) her Discontent here prevail'd with her to accept of his Offer, and he found his Account in her Value. Were not those Patentees most sagacious Oeconomists that could lay hold on so notable an Expedient to lessen their Charge? How gladly, in my time of being a Sharer, would we have given four times her Income to an Actress of equal Merit?

Mrs. *Monfort*, whose second Marriage gave her the Name of *Verbruggen*, was Mistress of more variety of Humour than I ever knew in any one Woman Actress. This variety, too, was attended with an equal Vivacity, which made her excellent in Characters extremely different. As she was naturally a pleasant Mimick, she had the Skill to make

<sup>1</sup> Chetwood gives a long account of Joseph Ashbury. He was born in 1638, and served for some years in the army. By the favour of the Duke of Ormond, then Lord Lieutenant, Ashbury was appointed successively Deputy-Master and Master of the Revels in Ireland. The latter appointment he seems to have received in 1682, though Hitchcock says "1672." Ashbury managed the Dublin Theatre with propriety and success, and was considered not only the principal actor in his time there, but the best teacher of acting in the three kingdoms. Chetwood, who saw him in his extreme old age, pronounced him admirable both in Tragedy and Comedy. He died in 1720, at the great age of eighty-two.

that Talent useful on the Stage, a Talent which may be surprising in a Conversation and yet be lost when brought to the Theatre, which was the Case of *Estcourt* already mention'd : But where the Elocution is round, distinct, voluble, and various, as Mrs. *Monfort's* was, the Mimick there is a great Assistant to the Actor. Nothing, tho' ever so barren, if within the Bounds of Nature, could be flat in her Hands. She gave many heightening Touches to Characters but coldly written, and often made an Author vain of his Work that in it self had but little Merit. She was so fond of Humour, in what low Part soever to be found, that she would make no scruple of defacing her fair Form to come heartily into it ;<sup>1</sup> for when she was eminent in several desirable Characters of Wit and Humour in higher Life, she would be in as much Fancy when descending into the antiquated *Abigail*<sup>2</sup> of *Fletcher*, as when triumphing in all the Airs and vain Graces of a fine Lady ; a Merit that few Actresses care for. In a Play of *D'urfey's*, now forgotten, call'd *The Western Lass*,<sup>3</sup> which Part she acted, she transform'd her whole Being, Body, Shape, Voice, Language, Look, and Features, into almost

<sup>1</sup> This artistic sense was shown also by Margaret Woffington. Davies ("Life of Garrick," 4th edition, i. 315) writes : "in Mrs. Day, in the Committee, she made no scruple to disguise her beautiful countenance, by drawing on it the lines of deformity and the wrinkles of old age, and to put on the tawdry habiliments and vulgar manners of an old hypocritical city vixen."

<sup>2</sup> In "The Scornful Lady."

<sup>3</sup> "The Bath ; or, the Western Lass," produced at Drury Lane in 1701.

another Animal, with a strong *Devonshire* Dialect, a broad laughing Voice, a poking Head, round Shoulders, an unconceiving Eye, and the most be-diz'ning, dowdy Dress that ever cover'd the untrain'd Limbs of a *Joan Trot*. To have seen her here you would have thought it impossible the same Creature could ever have been recover'd to what was as easy to her, the Gay, the Lively, and the Desirable. Nor was her Humour limited to her Sex; for, while her Shape permitted, she was a more adroit pretty Fellow than is usually seen upon the Stage: Her easy Air, Action, Mien, and Gesture quite chang'd from the Quoif to the cock'd Hat and Cavalier in fashion.<sup>1</sup> People were so fond of seeing her a Man, that when the Part of *Bays* in the *Rehearsal* had for some time lain dormant, she was desired to take it up, which I have seen her act with all the true coxcomby Spirit and Humour that the Sufficiency of the Character required.

But what found most Employment for her whole various Excellence at once, was the Part of *Melantha* in *Marriage-Alamode*.<sup>2</sup> *Melantha* is as finish'd an Impertinent as ever flutter'd in a Drawing-Room, and seems to contain the most compleat System of Female Foppery that could possibly be crowded into

<sup>1</sup> It is curious to compare with this Anthony Aston's outspoken criticism on Mrs. Mountfort's personal appearance.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Aston says "Melantha was her Masterpiece." Dryden's comedy was produced at the Theatre Royal in 1672, when Mrs. Boutell played Melantha.

the tortured Form of a Fine Lady. Her Language, Dress, Motion, Manners, Soul, and Body, are in a continual Hurry to be something more than is necessary or commendable. And though I doubt it will be a vain Labour to offer you a just Likeness of Mrs. *Monfort's* Action, yet the fantastick Impression is still so strong in my Memory that I cannot help saying something, tho' fantastically, about it. The first ridiculous Airs that break from her are upon a Gallant never seen before, who delivers her a Letter from her Father recommending him to her good Graces as an honourable Lover.<sup>1</sup> Here now, one would think, she might naturally shew a little of the Sexe's decent Reserve, tho' never so slightly cover'd! No, Sir; not a Tittle of it; Modesty is the Virtue of a poor-soul'd Country Gentlewoman; she is too much a Court Lady to be under so vulgar a Confusion; she reads the Letter, therefore, with a careless, dropping Lip and an erected Brow, humming it hastily over as if she were impatient to outgo her Father's Commands by making a compleat Conquest of him at once; and that the Letter might not embarrass her Attack, crack! she crumbles it at once into her Palm and pours upon him her whole Artillery of Airs, Eyes, and Motion; down goes her dainty, diving Body to the Ground, as if she were sinking under the conscious Load of her own Attractions; then launches into a Flood of fine Language

<sup>1</sup> Act ii. scene 1.

and Compliment, still playing her Chest forward in fifty Falls and Risings, like a Swan upon waving Water; and, to complete her Impertinence, she is so rapidly fond of her own Wit that she will not give her Lover Leave to praise it: Silent assenting Bows and vain Endeavours to speak are all the share of the Conversation he is admitted to, which at last he is relieved from by her Engagement to half a Score Visits, which she *swims* from him to make, with a Promise to return in a Twinkling.

If this Sketch has Colour enough to give you any near Conception of her, I then need only tell you that throughout the whole Character her variety of Humour was every way proportionable; as, indeed, in most Parts that she thought worth her care or that had the least Matter for her Fancy to work upon, I may justly say, That no Actress, from her own Conception, could have heighten'd them with more lively Strokes of Nature.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Mountfort, originally Mrs. (that is Miss) Percival, and afterwards Mrs. Verbruggen, is first mentioned as the representative of Winifrid, a young Welsh jilt, in "Sir Barnaby Whigg," a comedy produced at the Theatre Royal in 1681. As Diana, in "The Lucky Chance" (1687), Genest gives her name as Mrs. Mountfort, late Mrs. Percival; so that her marriage with Mountfort must have taken place about the end of 1686 or beginning of 1687. Mountfort was killed in 1692, and in 1694 the part of Mary the Buxom, in "Don Quixote," part first, is recorded by Genest as played by Mrs. Verbruggen, late Mrs. Mountfort. In 1702, in the "Comparison between the Two Stages," Gildon pronounces her "a miracle." In 1703 she died. She was the original representative of, among other characters, Nell, in "Devil

I come now to the last, and only living Person, of all those whose Theatrical Characters I have promised you, Mrs. *Bracegirdle*; who, I know, would rather pass her remaining Days forgotten as an Actress, than to have her Youth recollected in the most favourable Light I am able to place it; yet, as she is essentially necessary to my Theatrical History, and as I only bring her back to the Company of those with whom she pass'd the Spring and Summer of her Life, I hope it will excuse the Liberty I take in commemorating the Delight which the Publick received from her Appearance while she was an Ornament to the Theatre.

Mrs. *Bracegirdle* was now but just blooming to her Maturity; her Reputation as an Actress gradually rising with that of her Person; never any Woman was in such general Favour of her Spectators, which, to the last Scene of her Dramatick Life, she maintain'd by not being unguarded in her private Character.<sup>1</sup> This Discretion contributed not a little to

of a Wife;" Belinda, in "The Old Bachelor;" Lady Froth, in "The Double Dealer;" Charlott Welldon, in "Oroonoko;" Berinthia, in "Relapse;" Lady Lurewell; Lady Brumpton, in "The Funeral;" Hypolita, in "She Would and She Would Not;" and Hillaria, in "Tunbridge Walks."

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers has here a most uncharitable note, which I quote as curious, though I must add that there is not a shadow of proof of the truth of it.

"Mrs. *Bracegirdle* was decidedly not 'unguarded' in her conduct, for though the object of general suspicion, no proof of positive unchastity was ever brought against her. Her intrigue with Mountfort, who lost his life in consequence of it, (1) is hardly to



make her the *Cara*, the Darling of the Theatre : For it will be no extravagant thing to say, Scarce an Audience saw her that were less than half of them Lovers, without a suspected Favourite among them :

be disputed, and there is pretty ample evidence that Congreve was honoured with a gratification of his amorous desires. (2)

(1) “ ‘ We had not parted with him as many minutes as a man may beget his likeness in, but who should we meet but Mountfort the player, looking as pale as a ghost, sailing forward as gently as a caterpillar ’cross a sycamore leaf, gaping for a little air, like a sinner just come out of the powdering-tub, crying out as he crept towards us, “ O my back ! Confound ’em for a pack of brimstones : O my back ! ” — “ How now, *Sir Courtly*,” said I, “ what the devil makes thee in this pickle ? ” — “ O, gentlemen,” says he, “ I am glad to see you ; but I am troubled with such a weakness in my back, that it makes me bend like a superannuated fornicator. ” “ Some strain,” said I, “ got in the other world, with overheaving yourself. ” — “ What matters it how ’twas got,” says he ; “ can you tell me anything that’s good for it ? ” “ Yes,” said I ; “ get a warm girdle and tie round you ; ’tis an excellent corroborative to strengthen the loins. ” — “ Pox on you,” says he, “ for a bantering dog ! how can a single *girdle* do me good, when a *Brace* was my destruction ? ” — Brown’s ‘ Letters from the Dead to the Living ’ [1744, ii. 186].

(2) “ In one of those infamous collections known by the name of ‘ Poems on State Affairs ’ [iv. 49], there are several obvious, though coarse and detestable, hints of this connexion. Collier’s severity against the stage is thus sarcastically deprecated, in a short piece called the ‘ Benefits of a Theatre. ’

Shall a place be put down, when we see it affords  
*Fit wives for great poets*, and whores for great lords ?  
 Since *Angelica*, bless’d with a singular grace,  
 Had, by her fine acting, preserv’d all his plays,  
 In an amorous rapture, young *Valentine* said,  
 One so fit for his plays might be fit for his bed.

M

And tho' she might be said to have been the Universal Passion, and under the highest Temptations, her Constancy in resisting them served but to increase the number of her Admirers : And this perhaps you will more easily believe when I extend not my Encomiums on her Person beyond a Sincerity that can be suspected; for she had no greater Claim to Beauty than what the most desirable *Brunette* might pretend to. But her Youth and lively Aspect threw out such a Glow of Health and Chearfulness, that on the Stage few Spectators that were not past it could behold her without Desire. It was even a Fashion among the Gay and Young to have a Taste or *Tendre* for Mrs. *Bracegirdle*. She inspired the best Authors to write for her, and two of them,<sup>1</sup> when they gave her a Lover in a Play, seem'd palpably to plead their own Passions, and make their private Court to her in

“The allusion to Congreve and Mrs. Bracegirdle wants, of course, no corroboration; but the hint at their marriage, broached in the half line I have italicised, is a curious though unauthorized fact. From the verses I shall continue to quote, it will appear that this marriage between the parties, though thought to be private, was currently believed; it is an expedient that has often been used, in similar cases, to cover the nakedness of outrageous lust.

He warmly pursues her, she yielded her charms,  
And bless'd the kind youngster in her kinder arms :  
But at length the poor nymph did for justice implore,  
And *he's married her now*, though he'd — her before.

“On a subsequent page of the same precious miscellany, there is a most offensive statement of the cause which detached our great comic writer from the object of his passion. The thing is too filthy to be even described.”

<sup>1</sup> Rowe and Congreve.

fictitious Characters. In all the chief Parts she acted, the Desirable was so predominant, that no Judge could be cold enough to consider from what other particular Excellence she became delightful. To speak critically of an Actress that was extremely good were as hazardous as to be positive in one's Opinion of the best Opera Singer. People often judge by Comparison where there is no Similitude in the Performance. So that, in this case, we have only Taste to appeal to, and of Taste there can be no disputing. I shall therefore only say of Mrs. *Bracegirdle*, That the most eminent Authors always chose her for their favourite Character, and shall leave that uncontestable Proof of her Merit to its own Value. Yet let me say, there were two very different Characters in which she acquitted herself with uncommon Applause: If any thing could excuse that desperate Extravagance of Love, that almost frantick Passion of *Lee's Alexander the Great*, it must have been when Mrs. *Bracegirdle* was his *Statira*: As when she acted *Millamant*<sup>1</sup> all the Faults, Follies, and Affectations of that agreeable Tyrant were venially melted down into so many Charms and Attractions of a conscious Beauty. In other Characters, where Singing was a necessary Part of them, her Voice and Action gave a Pleasure which good Sense, in those Days, was not asham'd to give Praise to.

She retir'd from the Stage in the Height of her

<sup>1</sup> In Congreve's "Way of the World."

Favour from the Publick, when most of her Cotemporaries whom she had been bred up with were declining, in the Year 1710,<sup>1</sup> nor could she be persuaded to return to it under new Masters upon the most advantageous Terms that were offered her; excepting one Day, about a Year after, to assist her good Friend Mr. *Betterton*, when she play'd *Angelica* in *Love for Love* for his Benefit. She has still the Happiness to retain her usual Chearfulness, and to be, without the transitory Charm of Youth, agreeable.<sup>2</sup>

If, in my Account of these memorable Actors, I

<sup>1</sup> Cibber's chronology is a little shaky here. Mrs. Bracegirdle's name appeared for the last time in the bill of 20th February, 1707. Betterton's benefit, for which she returned to the stage for one night, took place on 7th April, 1709.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Anne Bracegirdle made her first appearance on the stage as a very young child. In the cast of Otway's "Orphan," 1680, the part of Cordelio, Polydore's Page, is said to be played by "the little girl," who, Curll ("History," p. 26) informs us, was Anne Bracegirdle, then less than six years of age. In 1688 her name appears to the part of Lucia in "The Squire of Alsatia;" but it is not till 1691 that she can be said to have regularly entered upon her career as an actress. She was the original representative of some of the most famous heroines in comedy: Araminta, in "The Old Bachelor;" Cynthia, in "The Double Dealer;" Angelica, in "Love for Love;" Belinda, in "The Provoked Wife;" Millamant; Flippanta, in "The Confederacy," and many others. Mrs. Bracegirdle appears to have been a good and excellent woman, as well as a great actress. All the scandal about her seems to have had no further foundation than, to quote Genest, "the extreme difficulty with which an actress at this period of the stage must have preserved her chastity." Genest goes on to remark, with delicious *naïveté*, "Mrs. Bracegirdle was perhaps a woman of a cold constitution." Her retirement from the stage

have not deviated from Truth, which, in the least Article, I am not conscious of, may we not venture to say, They had not their Equals, at any one Time, upon any Theatre in *Europe*? Or, if we confine the Comparison to that of *France* alone, I believe no other Stage can be much disparag'd by being left out of the question; which cannot properly be decided by the single Merit of any one Actor; whether their *Baron* or our *Betterton* might be the Superior, (take which Side you please) that Point reaches, either way, but to a thirteenth part of what I contend for, *viz.* That no Stage, at any one Period, could shew thirteen Actors, standing all in equal Lights of Excellence in their Profession: And I am the bolder, in this Challenge to any other Nation, because no Theatre having so extended a

when not much over thirty is accounted for by Curll, by a story of a competition between her and Mrs. Oldfield in the part of Mrs. Brittle in "The Amorous Widow," in which the latter was the more applauded. He says that they played the part on two successive nights; but I have carefully examined Dr. Burney's MSS. in the British Museum for the season 1706-7, and "The Amorous Widow" was certainly not played twice successively. I doubt the story altogether. That Mrs. Bracegirdle retired because Mrs. Oldfield was excelling her in popular estimation is most likely, but I can find no confirmation whatever for Curll's story. "The Laureat," p. 36, attributes her retirement to Mrs. Oldfield's being "preferr'd to some Parts before her, by our very *Apologist*"; but though the reason thus given is probably accurate, the person blamed is as probably guiltless; for I do not think Cibber could have sufficient authority to distribute parts in 1706-7. Mrs. Bracegirdle died September, 1748, but was dead to the stage from 1709. Cibber's remark on p. 99 had therefore no reference to her.

Variety of natural Characters as the *English*, can have a Demand for Actors of such various Capacities; why then, where they could not be equally wanted, should we suppose them, at any one time, to have existed?

How imperfect soever this copious Account of them may be, I am not without Hope, at least, it may in some degree shew what Talents are requisite to make Actors valuable: And if that may any ways inform or assist the Judgment of future Spectators, it may as often be of service to their publick Entertainments; for as their Hearers are, so will Actors be; worse, or better, as the false or true Taste applauds or discommends them. Hence only can our Theatres improve or must degenerate.

There is another Point, relating to the hard Condition of those who write for the Stage, which I would recommend to the Consideration of their Hearers; which is, that the extreme Severity with which they damn a bad Play seems too terrible a Warning to those whose untried Genius might hereafter give them a good one: Whereas it might be a Temptation to a latent Author to make the Experiment, could he be sure that, though not approved, his Muse might at least be dismiss'd with Decency: But the Vivacity of our modern Criticks is of late grown so riotous, that an unsuccessful Author has no more Mercy shewn him than a notorious Cheat in a Pillory; every Fool, the lowest Member of the Mob, becomes a Wit, and will have a fling at him. They

come now to a new Play like Hounds to a Carcase, and are all in a full Cry, sometimes for an Hour together, before the Curtain rises to throw it amongst them. Sure those Gentlemen cannot but allow that a Play condemned after a fair Hearing falls with thrice the Ignominy as when it is refused that common Justice.

But when their critical Interruptions grow so loud, and of so long a Continuance, that the Attention of quiet People (though not so complete Criticks) is terrify'd, and the Skill of the Actors quite disconcerted by the Tumult, the Play then seems rather to fall by Assassins than by a Lawful Sentence.<sup>1</sup> Is it possible that such Auditors can receive Delight, or think it any Praise to them, to prosecute so injurious, so unmanly a Treatment? And tho' perhaps the Compassionate, on the other side (who know they have as good a Right to clap and support, as others have to catcall, damn, and destroy,) may oppose this Oppression; their Good-nature, alas! contributes little to the Redress; for in this sort of Civil War the unhappy Author, like a good Prince, while his Subjects are at mortal Variance, is sure to be a Loser by a Victory on either Side; for still the Commonwealth, his Play, is, during the Conflict, torn to pieces. While this is the Case, while the Theatre is so turbulent a Sea and so infested with Pirates, what

<sup>1</sup> Cibber writes here with feeling; for, after his "Nonjuror" abused the Jacobites and Nonjurors, that party took every opportunity of revenging themselves on him by maltreating his plays.

Poetical Merchant of any Substance will venture to trade in it? If these valiant Gentlemen pretend to be Lovers of Plays, why will they deter Gentlemen from giving them such as are fit for Gentlemen to see? In a word, this new Race of Criticks seem to me like the Lion-Whelps in the *Tower*, who are so boisterously gamesome at their Meals that they dash down the Bowls of Milk brought for their own Breakfast.<sup>1</sup>

As a good Play is certainly the most rational and the highest Entertainment that Human Invention can produce, let that be my Apology (if I need any) for having thus freely deliver'd my Mind in behalf of those Gentlemen who, under such calamitous Hazards, may hereafter be reduced to write for the Stage, whose Case I shall compassionate from the same Motive that prevail'd on *Dido* to assist the *Trojans* in Distress.

*Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.* Virg.<sup>2</sup>

Or, as *Dryden* has it,

*I learn to pity Woes so like my own.*

If those particular Gentlemen have sometimes made me the humbled Object of their Wit and Humour, their Triumph at least has done me this involuntary Service, that it has driven me a Year or two sooner into a quiet Life than otherwise my own

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 63, for an allusion to this passage by Fielding in "The Champion."

<sup>2</sup> *Æneid*, i. 630.



want of Judgment might have led me to :<sup>1</sup> I left the Stage before my Strength left me, and tho' I came to it again for some few Days a Year or two after, my Reception there not only turn'd to my Account, but seem'd a fair Invitation that I would make my Visits more frequent: But to give over a Winner can be no very imprudent Resolution.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is a curious statement, and has never, so far as I know, been commented on; the cause of Cibber's retirement having always been considered mysterious. I suppose this reference to ill-treatment must be held as confirming Davies's statement that the public lost patience at Cibber's continually playing tragic parts, and fairly hissed him off the stage. Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 471) relates the following incident: "When Thomson's *Sophonisba* was read to the actors, Cibber laid his hand upon Scipio, a character, which, though it appears only in the last act, is of great dignity and importance. For two nights successively, Cibber was as much exploded as any bad actor could be. Williams, by desire of Wilks, made himself master of the part; but he, marching slowly, in great military distinction, from the upper part of the stage, and wearing the same dress as Cibber, was mistaken for him, and met with repeated hisses, joined to the music of cat-cals; but, as soon as the audience were undeceived, they converted their groans and hisses to loud and long continued applause."

<sup>2</sup> Cibber retired in May, 1733. The reappearance he refers to was not that he made in 1738, as Bellchambers states. He no doubt alludes to his performances in 1734-35, when he played Bayes, Lord Foppington, Sir John Brute, and other comedy parts. On the nights he played, the compliment was paid him of putting no name in the bill but his own.



## CHAPTER VI.

*The Author's first Step upon the Stage. His Discouragements. The best Actors in Europe ill us'd. A Revolution in their Favour. King William grants them a Licence to act in Lincoln's-Inn Fields. The Author's Distress in being thought a worse Actor than a Poet. Reduc'd to write a Part for himself. His Success. More Remarks upon Theatrical Action. Some upon himself.*

**H**AVING given you the State of the Theatre at my first Admission to it, I am now drawing towards the several Revolutions it suffer'd in my own Time. But (as you find by the setting out of my History) that I always intended myself the Heroe of it, it may be necessary to let you know me in my Obscurity, as well as in my higher Light, when I became one of the Theatrical Triumvirat.

The Patentees,<sup>1</sup> who were now Masters of this united and only Company of Comedians, seem'd to make it a Rule that no young Persons desirous to be Actors should be admitted into Pay under at least half a Year's Probation, wisely knowing that how early soever they might be approv'd of, there could be no great fear of losing them while they had then no other Market to go to. But, alas! Pay was the least of my Concern; the Joy and Privilege of every Day seeing Plays for nothing I thought was a sufficient Consideration for the best of my Services. So that it was no Pain to my Patience that I waited full three Quarters of a Year before I was taken into a Salary of Ten Shillings *per* Week;<sup>2</sup> which, with the Assistance of Food and Raiment at my Father's

<sup>1</sup> The original holders of the Patents, Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew, were dead in 1690; and their successors, Alexander Davenant, to whom Charles Davenant had assigned his interest, and Charles Killigrew, seem to have taken little active interest in the management; for Christopher Rich, who acquired Davenant's share in 1691, seems at once to have become managing proprietor.

<sup>2</sup> Davies ("Dramatic Miscellanies," iii. 444) gives the following account of Cibber's first salary: "But Mr. Richard Cross, late prompter of Drury-lane theatre, gave me the following history of Colley Cibber's first establishment as a hired actor. He was known only, for some years, by the name of Master Colley. After waiting impatiently a long time for the prompter's notice, by good fortune he obtained the honour of carrying a message on the stage, in some play, to Betterton. Whatever was the cause, Master Colley was so terrified, that the scene was disconcerted by him. Betterton asked, in some anger, who the young fellow was that had committed the blunder. Downes replied, 'Master Colley.'—'Master Colley! then forfeit him.'—'Why, sir,' said the prompter,

House, I then thought a most plentiful Accession, and myself the happiest of Mortals.

The first Thing that enters into the Head of a young Actor is that of being a Heroe: In this Ambition I was soon snubb'd by the Insufficiency of my Voice; to which might be added an uninform'd meagre Person, (tho' then not ill made) with a dismal pale Complexion.<sup>1</sup> Under these Disadvantages,<sup>2</sup> I had but a melancholy Prospect of ever playing a Lover with Mrs. *Bracegirdle*, which I had flatter'd my Hopes that my Youth might one Day have recommended me to. What was most promising in me, then, was the Aptness of my Ear; for I was soon allow'd to speak

'he has no salary.'—'No!' said the old man; 'why then put him down ten shillings a week, and forfeit him 5s.'"

<sup>1</sup> Complexion is a point of no importance now, and this allusion suggests a theory to me which I give with all diffidence. We know that actresses painted in Pepys's time ("1667, Oct. 5. But, Lord! To see how they [Nell Gwynne and Mrs. Knipp] were both painted would make a man mad, and did make me loathe them"), and we also know that Dogget was famous for the painting of his face to represent old age. If, then, complexion was a point of importance for a lover, as Cibber states, it suggests that young actors playing juvenile parts did not use any "make-up" or paint, but went on the stage in their natural complexion. The lighting of the stage was of course much less brilliant than it afterwards became, so that "make-up" was not so necessary.

<sup>2</sup> "The Laureat" (p. 103) describes Cibber's person thus:—"He was in Stature of the middle Size, his Complexion fair, inclinable to the Sandy, his Legs somewhat of the thickest, his Shape a little clumsy, not irregular, and his Voice rather shrill than loud or articulate, and crack'd extremely, when he endeavour'd to raise it. He was in his younger Days so lean, as to be known by the Name of *Hatchet Face*."

justly, tho' what was grave and serious did not equally become me. The first Part, therefore, in which I appear'd with any glimpse of Success, was the Chaplain<sup>1</sup> in the *Orphan of Otway*. There is in this Character (of one Scene only) a decent Pleasantry, and Sense enough to shew an Audience whether the Actor has any himself. Here was the first Applause I ever receiv'd, which, you may be sure, made my Heart leap with a higher Joy than may be necessary to describe; and yet my Transport was not then half so high as at what *Goodman* (who had now left the Stage) said of me the next Day in my hearing. *Goodman* often came to a Rehearsal for Amusement, and having sate out the *Orphan* the Day before, in a Conversation with some of the principal Actors enquir'd what new young Fellow that was whom he had seen in the Chaplain? Upon which *Monfort* reply'd, *That's he, behind you*. *Goodman* then turning about, look'd earnestly at me, and, after some Pause, clapping me on the Shoulder, rejoin'd, *If he does not make a good Actor, I'll be d—'d!* The Surprize of being commended by one who had been himself so eminent on the Stage, and in so positive a manner, was more than I could support; in a Word, it almost took away my Breath, and (laugh, if you please) fairly drew Tears from my Eyes! And, tho' it may be as ridiculous as incredible to tell you what a full Vanity and

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers notes that this part was originally played by Percival, who came into the Duke's Company about 1673.

Content at that time possess'd me, I will still make it a Question whether *Alexander* himself, or *Charles the Twelfth* of *Sweden*, when at the Head of their first victorious Armies, could feel a greater Transport in their Bosoms than I did then in mine, when but in the Rear of this Troop of Comedians. You see to what low Particulars I am forc'd to descend to give you a true Resemblance of the early and lively Follies of my Mind. Let me give you another Instance of my Discretion, more desperate than that of preferring the Stage to any other Views of Life. One might think that the Madness of breaking from the Advice and Care of Parents to turn Player could not easily be exceeded: But what think you, Sir, of—Matrimony? which, before I was Two-and-twenty, I actually committed,<sup>1</sup> when I had but Twenty Pounds a Year, which my Father had assur'd to me, and Twenty Shillings a Week from my Theatrical Labours, to maintain, as I then thought, the happiest young Couple that ever took a Leap in the Dark! If after this, to complete my Fortune, I

<sup>1</sup> Of Cibber's wife there is little record. In 1695 the name of "Mrs. Cibbars" appears to the part of Galatea in "Philaster," and she was the original Hilaria in Cibber's "Love's Last Shift" in 1696; but she never made any great name or played any famous part. She was a Miss Shore, sister of John Shore, "Sergeant-trumpet" of England. The "Biographia Dramatica" (i. 117) says that Miss Shore's father was extremely angry at her marriage, and spent that portion of his fortune which he had intended for her in building a retreat on the Thames which was called Shore's Folly.

turn'd Poet too, this last Folly indeed had something a better Excuse—Necessity: Had it never been my Lot to have come on the Stage, 'tis probable I might never have been inclin'd or reduc'd to have wrote for it: But having once expos'd my Person there, I thought it could be no additional Dishonour to let my Parts, whatever they were, take their Fortune along with it.—But to return to the Progress I made as an Actor.

Queen *Mary* having commanded the *Double Dealer* to be acted, *Kynaston* happen'd to be so ill that he could not hope to be able next Day to perform his Part of the Lord *Touchwood*. In this Exigence, the Author, Mr. *Congreve*, advis'd that it might be given to me, if at so short a Warning I would undertake it.<sup>1</sup> The Flattery of being thus distinguish'd by so celebrated an Author, and the Honour to act before a Queen, you may be sure made me blind to whatever Difficulties might attend it. I accepted the Part, and was ready in it before I slept; next Day the Queen was present at the Play, and was receiv'd with a new Prologue from the Author, spoken by Mrs. *Barry*, humbly acknowledging the great Honour done to the Stage, and to his Play in particular: Two Lines of it, which tho' I have not since read, I still remember.

*But never were in Rome nor Athens seen,  
So fair a Circle, or so bright a Queen.*

<sup>1</sup> "The Double Dealer," 1693, was not very successful, and

After the Play, Mr. *Congreve* made me the Compliment of saying, That I had not only answer'd, but had exceeded his Expectations, and that he would shew me he was sincere by his saying more of me to the Masters.—He was as good as his Word, and the next Pay-day I found my Sallery of fifteen was then advanc'd to twenty Shillings a Week. But alas! this favourable Opinion of Mr. *Congreve* made no farther Impression upon the Judgment of my good Masters; it only serv'd to heighten my own Vanity, but could not recommend me to any new Trials of my Capacity; not a Step farther could I get 'till the Company was again divided, when the Desertion of the best Actors left a clear Stage for younger Champions to mount and shew their best Pretensions to Favour. But it is now time to enter upon those Facts that immediately preceded this remarkable Revolution of the Theatre.

You have seen how complete a Set of Actors were under the Government of the united Patents in 1690; if their Gains were not extraordinary, what shall we impute it to but some extraordinary ill Menagement? I was then too young to be in their Secrets, and therefore can only observe upon what I saw and have since thought visibly wrong.

when played at Lincoln's Inn Fields, 18th October, 1718, was announced as not having been acted for fifteen years; so that this incident no doubt occurred in the course of the first few nights of the play, which, Malone says, was produced in November, 1693.



Though the Success of the *Prophetess*<sup>1</sup> and *King Arthur*<sup>2</sup> (two dramatic Operas, in which the Patentees had embark'd all their Hopes) was in Appearance very great, yet their whole Receipts did not so far balance their Expence as to keep them out of a large Debt, which it was publickly known was about this time contracted, and which found Work for the Court of Chancery for about twenty Years following, till one side of the Cause grew weary. But this was not all that was wrong; every Branch of the Theatrical Trade had been sacrific'd to the necessary fitting out those tall Ships of Burthen that were to bring home the *Indies*. Plays of course were neglected, Actors held cheap, and slightly dress'd, while Singers and Dancers were better paid, and embroider'd. These Measures, of course, created Murmurings on one side, and Ill-humour and Contempt on the other. When it became necessary therefore to lessen the Charge, a Resolution was

<sup>1</sup> "The Prophetess," now supposed to be mostly Fletcher's work (see Ward's "English Dramatic Literature," ii. 218), was made into an opera by Betterton, the music by Purcell. It was produced in 1690, with a Prologue written by Dryden, which, for political reasons, was forbidden by the Lord Chamberlain after the first night.

<sup>2</sup> "King Arthur; or, the British Worthy," a Dramatic Opera, as Dryden entitles it, was produced in 1691. In his Dedication to the Marquis of Halifax, Dryden says: "This Poem was the last Piece of Service, which I had the Honour to do, for my Gracious Master, King Charles the Second." Downes says "'twas very Gainful to the Company," but Cibber declares it was not so successful as it appeared to be.

taken to begin with the Sallaries of the Actors ; and what seem'd to make this Resolution more necessary at this time was the Loss of *Nokes*, *Monfort*, and *Leigh*, who all dy'd about the same Year : <sup>1</sup> No wonder then, if when these great Pillars were at once remov'd, the Building grew weaker and the Audiences very much abated. Now in this Distress, what more natural Remedy could be found than to incite and encourage (tho' with some Hazard) the Industry of the surviving Actors ? But the Patentees, it seems, thought the surer way was to bring down their Pay in proportion to the Fall of their Audiences. To make this Project more feasible they propos'd to begin at the Head of 'em, rightly judging that if the Principals acquiesc'd, their Inferiors would murmur in vain. To bring this about with a better Grace, they, under Pretence of bringing younger Actors forward, order'd several of *Betterton's* and *Mrs. Barry's* chief Parts to be given to young *Powel* and *Mrs. Bracegirdle*. In this they committed two palpable Errors ; for while the best Actors are in Health, and still on the Stage, the Publick is always apt to be out of Humour when those of a lower Class pretend to stand in their Places ; or admitting at this time they might have been accepted, this Project might very probably have lessen'd, but could not possibly mend an Audience, and was a sure Loss of that Time, in studying, which might have

<sup>1</sup> End of 1692.







MRS BRACEGIRDLE AS "THE INDIAN QUEEN"



been better employ'd in giving the Auditor Variety, the only Temptation to a pall'd Appetite; and Variety is only to be given by Industry: But Industry will always be lame when the Actor has Reason to be discontented. This the Patentees did not consider, or pretended not to value, while they thought their Power secure and uncontrollable: But farther their first Project did not succeed; for tho' the giddy Head of *Powel* accepted the Parts of *Betterton*, Mrs. *Bracegirdle* had a different way of thinking, and desir'd to be excus'd from those of Mrs. *Barry*; her good Sense was not to be misled by the insidious Favour of the Patentees; she knew the Stage was wide enough for her Success, without entering into any such rash and invidious Competition with Mrs. *Barry*, and therefore wholly refus'd acting any Part that properly belong'd to her. But this Proceeding, however, was Warning enough to make *Betterton* be upon his Guard, and to alarm others with Apprehensions of their own Safety, from the Design that was laid against him: *Betterton* upon this drew into his Party most of the valuable Actors, who, to secure their Unity, enter'd with him into a sort of Association to stand or fall together.<sup>1</sup> All this the Patentees for some time slighted; but when Matters drew towards a Crisis, they found it

<sup>1</sup> Betterton seems to have been a very politic person. In the "Comparison between the two Stages" (p. 41) he is called, though not in reference to this particular matter, "a cunning old Fox."

adviseable to take the same Measures, and accordingly open'd an Association on their part; both which were severally sign'd, as the Interest or Inclination of either Side led them.

During these Contentions which the impolitick Patentees had rais'd against themselves (not only by this I have mentioned, but by many other Grievances which my Memory retains not) the Actors offer'd a Treaty of Peace; but their Masters imagining no Consequence could shake the Right of their Authority, refus'd all Terms of Accommodation. In the mean time this Dissention was so prejudicial to their daily Affairs, that I remember it was allow'd by both Parties that before *Christmas* the Patent had lost the getting of at least a thousand Pounds by it.

My having been a Witness of this unnecessary Rupture was of great use to me when, many Years after, I came to be a Menager my self. I laid it down as a settled Maxim, that no Company could flourish while the chief Actors and the Undertakers were at variance. I therefore made it a Point, while it was possible upon tolerable Terms, to keep the valuable Actors in humour with their Station; and tho' I was as jealous of their Encroachments as any of my Co-partners could be, I always guarded against the least Warmth in my Expostulations with them; not but at the same time they might see I was perhaps more determin'd in the Question than those that gave a loose to their Resentment, and



when they were cool were as apt to recede.<sup>1</sup> I do not remember that ever I made a Promise to any that I did not keep, and therefore was cautious how I made them. This Coldness, tho' it might not please, at least left them nothing to reproach me with ; and if Temper and fair Words could prevent a Disobligation, I was sure never to give Offence or receive it.<sup>2</sup> But as I was but one of three, I could not oblige others to observe the same Conduct. However, by this means I kept many an unreasonable Discontent from breaking out, and both Sides found their Account in it.

How a contemptuous and overbearing manner of treating Actors had like to have ruin'd us in our early Prosperity shall be shewn in its Place.<sup>3</sup> If future Menagers should chance to think my way right, I suppose they will follow it ; if not, when they find what happen'd to the Patentees (who chose to disagree with their People) perhaps they may think better of it.

The Patentees then, who by their united Powers

<sup>1</sup> This is no doubt a hit at Wilks, whose temper was extremely impetuous.

<sup>2</sup> "The Laureat," p. 39: "He (Cibber) was always against raising, or rewarding, or by any means encouraging Merit of any kind." He had "many Disputes with *Wilks* on this Account, who was impatient, when Justice required it, to reward the Meritorious."

<sup>3</sup> This is a reference to the secession of seven or eight actors in 1714, caused, according to Cibber, by Wilks's overbearing temper. See Chapter XV.

had made a Monopoly of the Stage, and consequently presum'd they might impose what Conditions they pleased upon their People, did not consider that they were all this while endeavouring to enslave a Set of Actors whom the Publick (more arbitrary than themselves) were inclined to support; nor did they reflect that the Spectator naturally wish'd that the Actor who gave him Delight might enjoy the Profits arising from his Labour, without regard of what pretended Damage or Injustice might fall upon his Owners, whose personal Merit the Publick was not so well acquainted with. From this Consideration, then, several Persons of the highest Distinction espous'd their Cause, and sometimes in the Circle entertain'd the King with the State of the Theatre. At length their Grievances were laid before the Earl of *Dorset*, then Lord Chamberlain, who took the most effectual Method for their Relief.<sup>1</sup> The Learned of the Law were

<sup>1</sup> Downes and Davies give the following accounts of the transaction:—

“Some time after, a difference happening between the United Patentees, and the chief *Actors*: As Mr. *Betterton*; Mrs. *Barry* and Mrs. *Bracegirdle*; the latter complaining of Oppression from the former; they for Redress, Appeal'd to my Lord of *Dorset*, then Lord Chamberlain, for Justice; who Espousing the Cause of the Actors, with the assistance of Sir *Robert Howard*, finding their Complaints just, procur'd from King *William*, a Seperate License for Mr. *Congreve*, Mr. *Betterton*, Mrs. *Bracegirdle* and Mrs. *Barry*, and others, to set up a new Company, calling it the New Theatre in *Lincolns-Inn-Fields*.”—“*Roscius Anglicanus*,” p. 43.

“The nobility, and all persons of eminence, favoured the cause

advised with, and they gave their Opinion that no Patent for acting Plays, &c. could tie up the Hands of a succeeding Prince from granting the like Authority where it might be thought proper to trust it. But while this Affair was in Agitation, Queen *Mary* dy'd,<sup>1</sup> which of course occasion'd a Cessation of all publick Diversions. In this melancholy Interim, *Betterton* and his Adherents had more Leisure to solicit their Redress; and the Patentees now finding that the Party against them was gathering Strength, were reduced to make sure of as good a Company as the Leavings of *Betterton's* Interest could form; and these, you may be sure, would not lose this Occasion of setting a Price upon their Merit equal to their own Opinion of it, which was but just double to what they had before. *Powel* and *Verbruggen*, who had then but forty Shillings a Week, were now raised each of them to four Pounds, and others in Proportion: As for myself, I was then too insignificant to be taken into their Councils, and consequently stood among those of little Importance, like Cattle in a Market, to be sold to the first Bidder. But the Patentees seeming in the greater Distress for Actors, condescended to purchase me. Thus,

of the comedians; the generous Dorset introduced *Betterton*, *Mrs. Barry*, *Mrs. Bracegirdle*, and others, to the King, who granted them an audience. . . . William, who had freed all the subjects of England from slavery, except the inhabitants of the mimical world, rescued them also from the insolence and tyranny of their oppressors."—"Dram. Miscellanies," iii. 419.

<sup>1</sup> 28th December, 1694.

without any farther Merit than that of being a scarce Commodity, I was advanc'd to thirty Shillings a Week : Yet our Company was so far from being full,<sup>1</sup> that our Commanders were forced to beat up for Volunteers in several distant Counties ; it was this Occasion that first brought *Johnson*<sup>2</sup> and *Bullock*<sup>3</sup> to the Service of the Theatre-Royal.

Forces being thus raised, and the War declared on both Sides, *Betterton* and his Chiefs had the Honour of an Audience of the *King*, who consider'd them as the only Subjects whom he had not yet deliver'd from arbitrary Power, and graciously dismiss'd them with an Assurance of Relief and Support—Accordingly a select number of them were empower'd by his Royal Licence<sup>4</sup> to act in a separate Theatre for themselves. This great Point being obtain'd, many People of Quality came into a voluntary Subscription of twenty, and some of forty Guineas a-piece, for erecting a Theatre within the Walls of the Tennis-Court in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*.<sup>5</sup> But as

<sup>1</sup> The "Comparison between the two Stages" says (p. 7): "'twas almost impossible in *Drury-Lane*, to muster up a sufficient number to take in all the Parts of any Play."

<sup>2</sup> See memoir of Johnson at end of second volume.

<sup>3</sup> See memoir of Bullock at end of second volume.

<sup>4</sup> I do not think that the date of this Licence has ever been stated. It was 25th March, 1695.

<sup>5</sup> "Comparison between the two Stages," p. 12: "We know what importuning and dunning the Noblemen there was, what flattering, and what promising there was, till at length, the encouragement they received by liberal Contributions set 'em in a

it required Time to fit it up, it gave the Patentees more Leisure to muster their Forces, who notwithstanding were not able to take the Field till the *Easter-Monday* in *April* following. Their first Attempt was a reviv'd Play call'd *Abdelazar*, or the *Moor's Revenge*, poorly written, by Mrs. *Behn*. The House was very full, but whether it was the Play or the Actors that were not approved, the next Day's Audience sunk to nothing. However, we were assured that let the Audiences be never so low, our Masters would make good all Deficiencies, and so indeed they did, 'till towards the End of the Season, when Dues to Ballance came too thick upon 'em. But that I may go gradually on with my own Fortune, I must take this Occasion to let you know, by the following Circumstance, how very low my Capacity as an Actor was then rated : It was thought necessary at our Opening that the Town should be address'd in a new Prologue ; but to our great Distress, among several that were offer'd, not one was judg'd fit to be spoken. This I thought a favourable Occasion to do my self some remarkable Service, if I should have the good Fortune to produce one that might be accepted. The next (memorable) Day my Muse brought forth her first Fruit that was ever made publick ; how good or bad imports not ; my Prologue was accepted, and resolv'd on to be spoken. This Point being gain'd, I began to stand upon Condition to go on." This theatre was the theatre in *Little Lincoln's Inn Fields*. See further details in Chap. XIII.

Terms, you will say, not unreasonable; which were, that if I might speak it my self I would expect no farther Reward for my Labour: This was judg'd as bad as having no Prologue at all! You may imagine how hard I thought it, that they durst not trust my poor poetical Brat to my own Care. But since I found it was to be given into other Hands, I insisted that two Guineas should be the Price of my parting with it; which with a Sigh I received, and *Powel* spoke the Prologue: But every Line that was applauded went sorely to my Heart when I reflected that the same Praise might have been given to my own speaking; nor could the Success of the Author compensate the Distress of the Actor. However, in the End, it serv'd in some sort to mend our People's Opinion of me; and whatever the Criticks might think of it, one of the Patentees<sup>1</sup> (who, it is true, knew no Difference between *Dryden* and *D'urfey*) said, upon the Success of it, that insooth! I was an ingenious young Man. This sober Compliment (tho' I could have no Reason to be vain upon it) I thought was a fair Promise to my being in favour. But to Matters of more Moment: Now let us reconnoitre the Enemy.

After we had stolen some few Days March upon them, the Forces of *Betterton* came up with us in terrible Order: In about three Weeks following, the new Theatre was open'd against us with a veteran Company and a new Train of Artillery; or in plainer

<sup>1</sup> No doubt, Rich.

*English*, the old Actors in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields* began with a new Comedy of Mr. *Congreve's*, call'd *Love for Love*;<sup>1</sup> which ran on with such extraordinary Success that they had seldom occasion to act any other Play 'till the End of the Season. This valuable Play had a narrow Escape from falling into the Hands of the Patentees; for before the Division of the Company it had been read and accepted of at the Theatre-Royal: But while the Articles of Agreement for it were preparing, the Rupture in the Theatrical State was so far advanced that the Author took time to pause before he sign'd them; when finding that all Hopes of Accommodation were impracticable, he thought it advisable to let it take its Fortune with those Actors for whom he had first intended the Parts.

Mr. *Congreve* was then in such high Reputation as an Author, that besides his Profits from this Play, they offered him a whole Share with them, which he accepted;<sup>2</sup> in Consideration of which he oblig'd himself, if his Health permitted, to give them one new Play every Year.<sup>3</sup> *Dryden*, in *King Charles's*

<sup>1</sup> Downes says (p. 43), "the House being fitted up from a Tennis-Court, they Open'd it the last Day of *April*, 1695."

<sup>2</sup> It will be noticed that Downes in the passage quoted by me (p. 192, note 1) mentions *Congreve* as if he had been an original sharer in the Licence; but the statement is probably loosely made.

<sup>3</sup> *Bellchambers* has here the following notes, the entire substance of which will be found in *Malone* ("Shakespeare," 1821, iii. 170, *et seq.*): "In Shakspeare's time the nightly expenses for lights, supernumeraries, etc., was but forty-five shillings, and having

Time, had the same Share with the King's Company, but he bound himself to give them two Plays every Season. This you may imagine he could not hold long, and I am apt to think he might have

deducted this charge, the clear emoluments were divided into shares, (supposed to be forty in number,) between the proprietors, and principal actors. In the year 1666, the whole profit arising from acting plays, masques, etc., at the King's theatre, was divided into twelve shares and three quarters, of which Mr. Killgrew, the manager, had two shares and three quarters, each share computed to produce about £250, net, per annum. In Sir William D'Avenant's company, from the time their new theatre was opened in Portugal-row, the total receipt, after deducting the nightly expenses, was divided into fifteen shares, of which it was agreed that ten should belong to D'Avenant, for various purposes, and the remainder be divided among the male members of his troops according to their rank and merit. I cannot relate the arrangement adopted by Betterton in Lincoln's-inn-fields, but the share accepted by Congreve was, doubtless, presumed to be of considerable value.

“Dryden had a share and a quarter in the king's company, for which he bound himself to furnish not two, but three plays every season. The following paper, which, after remaining long in the Killgrew family, came into the hands of the late Mr. Reed, and was published by Mr. Malone in his ‘Historical Account of the English Stage,’ incontestably proves the practice alluded to. The superscription is lost, but it was probably addressed to the lord-chamberlain, or the king, about the year 1678, ‘Ædipus,’ the ground of complaint, being printed in 1679 :

“‘Whereas upon Mr. Dryden's binding himself to write three playes a yeere, hee the said Mr. Dryden was admitted and continued as a sharer in the king's playhouse for diverse years, and received for his share and a quarter three or four hundred pounds, communibus annis ; but though he received the moneys, we received not the playes, not one in a yeare. After which, the house being burnt, the company in building another, contracted great debts, so that shares fell much short of what they were formerly.



serv'd them better with one in a Year, not so hastily written. Mr. *Congreve*, whatever Impediment he met with, was three Years before, in pursuance to his Agreement, he produced the *Mourning Bride*;<sup>1</sup>

Thereupon Mr. Dryden complaining to the company of his want of proffit, the company was so kind to him that they not only did not presse him for the playes which he so engaged to write for them, and for which he was paid beforehand, but they did also at his earnest request give him a third day for his last new play called *All for Love*; and at the receipt of the money of the said third day, he acknowledged it as a guift, and a particular kindnesse of the company. Yet notwithstanding this kind proceeding, Mr. Dryden has now, jointly with Mr. Lee, (who was in pension with us to the last day of our playing, and shall continue,) written a play called *Oedipus*, and given it to the Duke's company, contrary to his said agreement, his promise, and all gratitude, to the great prejudice and almost undoing of the company, they being the only poets remaining to us. Mr. Crowne, being under the like agreement with the duke's house, writt a play called *The Destruction of Jerusalem*, and being forced by their refusall of it, to bring it to us, the said company compelled us, after the studying of it, and a vast expence in scenes and cloaths, to buy off their clayme, by paying all the pension he had received from them, amounting to one hundred and twelve pounds paid by the king's company, besides near forty pounds he the said Mr. Crowne paid out of his owne pocket.

“‘These things considered, if notwithstanding Mr. Dryden's said agreement, promise, and moneys freely giving him for his said last new play, and the many titles we have to his writings, this play be judged away from us, we must submit.

(Signed) “‘ Charles Killigrew.

“‘ Charles Hart.

“‘ Rich. Burt.

“‘ Cardell Goodman.

“‘ Mic. Mohun.’”

<sup>1</sup> The interval between the two plays cannot have been quite

and if I mistake not, the Interval had been much the same when he gave them the *Way of the World*.<sup>1</sup> But it came out the stronger for the Time it cost him, and to their better support when they sorely wanted it: For though they went on with Success for a Year or two, and even when their Affairs were declining stood in much higher Estimation of the Publick than their Opponents; yet in the End both Sides were great Sufferers by their Separation; the natural Consequence of two Houses, which I have already mention'd in a former Chapter.

The first Error this new Colony of Actors fell into was their inconsiderately parting with *Williams* and Mrs. *Monfort*<sup>2</sup> upon a too nice (not to say severe) Punctilio; in not allowing them to be equal Sharers with the rest; which before they had acted one Play occasioned their Return to the Service of the Patentees. As I have call'd this an Error, I ought to give my Reasons for it. Though the Industry of *Williams* was not equal to his Capacity; for he lov'd his Bottle better than his Business; and though Mrs. *Monfort* was only excellent in Comedy, yet their Merit was too great almost on any Scruples to be added to the Enemy; and at worst, they were certainly much more above those they would have ranked them with than they could possibly be under

three years. The first was produced in April, 1695, the second some time in 1697.

<sup>1</sup> Produced early in 1700.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Mountfort was now Mrs. Verbruggen.

those they were not admitted to be equal to. Of this Fact there is a poetical Record in the Prologue to *Love for Love*, where the Author, speaking of the then happy State of the Stage, observes that if, in Paradise, when two only were there, they both fell; the Surprize was less, if from so numerous a Body as theirs, there had been any Deserters.

*Abate the Wonder, and the Fault forgive,  
If, in our larger Family, we grieve  
One falling Adam, and one tempted Eve.<sup>1</sup>*

These Lines alluded to the Revolt of the Persons above mention'd.

Notwithstanding the Acquisition of these two Actors, who were of more Importance than any of those to whose Assistance they came, the Affairs of the Patentees were still in a very creeping Condition;<sup>2</sup> they were now, too late, convinced of their Error in having provok'd their People to this Civil

<sup>1</sup> The passage is :—

“The Freedom man was born to, you've restor'd,  
And to our World such Plenty you afford,  
It seems, like Eden, fruitful of its own accord.  
But since, in Paradise, frail Flesh gave Way,  
And when but two were made, both went astray;  
Forbear your Wonder, and the Fault forgive,  
If, in our larger Family, we grieve  
One falling Adam, and one tempted Eve.”

<sup>2</sup> In his Preface to “Woman's Wit,” Cibber says, “But however a Fort is in a very poor Condition, that (in a Time of General War) has but a Handful of raw young Fellows to maintain it.” He also talks of himself and his companions as “an uncertain Company.”

War of the Theatre! quite changed and dismal now was the Prospect before them! their Houses thin, and the Town crowding into a new one! Actors at double Sallaries, and not half the usual Audiences to pay them! And all this brought upon them by those whom their full Security had contemn'd, and who were now in a fair way of making their Fortunes upon the ruined Interest of their Oppressors.

Here, tho' at this time my Fortune depended on the Success of the Patentees, I cannot help in regard to Truth remembering the rude and riotous Havock we made of all the late dramatic Honours of the Theatre! all became at once the Spoil of Ignorance and Self-conceit! *Shakespear* was defac'd and tortured in every signal Character—*Hamlet* and *Othello* lost in one Hour all their good Sense, their Dignity and Fame. *Brutus* and *Cassius* became noisy Blusterers, with bold unmeaning Eyes, mistaken Sentiments, and turgid Elocution! Nothing, sure, could more painfully regret<sup>1</sup> a judicious Spectator than to see, at our first setting out, with what rude Confidence those Habits which actors of real Merit had left behind them were worn by giddy Pretenders that so vulgarly disgraced them! Not young Lawyers in hir'd Robes and Plumes at a Masquerade could be

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers has here this note: "Mr. Cibber's usage of the verb *regret* here, may be said to confirm the censure of Fielding, who urged, in reviewing some other of his inadvertencies, that it was 'needless for a great writer to understand his grammar.'" See note 1 on page 69.

less what they would seem, or more awkwardly personate the Characters they belong'd to. If, in all these Acts of wanton Waste, these Insults upon injur'd Nature, you observe I have not yet charged one of them upon myself, it is not from an imaginary Vanity that I could have avoided them; but that I was rather safe, by being too low at that time to be admitted even to my Chance of falling into the same eminent Errors: So that as none of those great Parts ever fell to my Share, I could not be accountable for the Execution of them: Nor indeed could I get one good Part of any kind 'till many Months after; unless it were of that sort which no body else car'd for, or would venture to expose themselves in.<sup>1</sup> The first unintended Favour, therefore, of a Part of any Value, Necessity threw upon me on the following Occasion.

As it has been always judg'd their natural Interest, where there are two Theatres, to do one another as

<sup>1</sup> Genest (ii. 65) has the following criticism of Cibber's statement: "There can be no doubt but that the acting at the Theatre Royal was miserably inferiour to what it had been—but perhaps Cibber's account is a little exaggerated—he had evidently a personal dislike to Powell—everything therefore that he says, directly or indirectly, against him must be received with some grains of allowance—Powell seems to have been eager to exhibit himself in some of Betterton's best parts, whereas a more diffident actor would have wished to avoid comparisons—we know from the Spectator that Powell was too apt to tear a passion to tatters, but still he must have been an actor of considerable reputation at this time, or he would not have been cast for several good parts before the division of the Company."

much Mischief as they can, you may imagine it could not be long before this hostile Policy shew'd itself in Action. It happen'd, upon our having Information on a *Saturday* Morning that the *Tuesday* after *Hamlet* was intended to be acted at the other House, where it had not yet been seen, our merry menaging Actors, (for they were now in a manner left to govern themselves) resolv'd at any rate to steal a March upon the Enemy, and take Possession of the same Play the Day before them: Accordingly, *Hamlet* was given out that Night to be Acted with us on *Monday*. The Notice of this sudden Enterprize soon reach'd the other House, who in my Opinion too much regarded it; for they shorten'd their first Orders, and resolv'd that *Hamlet* should to *Hamlet* be opposed on the same Day; whereas, had they given notice in their Bills that the same Play would have been acted by them the Day after, the Town would have been in no Doubt which House they should have reserved themselves for; ours must certainly have been empty, and theirs, with more Honour, have been crowded: Experience, many Years after, in like Cases, has convinced me that this would have been the more laudable Conduct. But be that as it may; when in their *Monday's* Bills it was seen that *Hamlet* was up against us, our Consternation was terrible, to find that so hopeful a Project was frustrated. In this Distress, *Powel*, who was our commanding Officer, and whose enterprising Head wanted nothing but Skill to carry him through









WILLIAM BULLOCK .



the most desperate Attempts; for, like others of his Cast, he had murder'd many a Hero only to get into his Cloaths. This *Powel*, I say, immediately called a Council of War, where the Question was, Whether he should fairly face the Enemy, or make a Retreat to some other Play of more probable Safety? It was soon resolved that to act *Hamlet* against *Hamlet* would be certainly throwing away the Play, and disgracing themselves to little or no Audience; to conclude, *Powel*, who was vain enough to envy *Betterton* as his Rival, proposed to change Plays with them, and that as they had given out the *Old Batchelor*, and had chang'd it for *Hamlet* against us, we should give up our *Hamlet* and turn the *Old Batchelor* upon them. This Motion was agreed to, *Nemine contradicente*; but upon Enquiry, it was found that there were not two Persons among them who had ever acted in that Play: But that Objection, it seems, (though all the Parts were to be study'd in six Hours) was soon got over; *Powel* had an Equivalent, *in petto*, that would ballance any Deficiency on that Score, which was, that he would play the *Old Batchelor* himself, and mimick *Betterton* throughout the whole Part. This happy Thought was approv'd with Delight and Applause, as whatever can be suppos'd to ridicule Merit generally gives joy to those that want it: Accordingly the Bills were chang'd, and at the Bottom inserted,

*The Part of the Old Batchelor to be perform'd  
in Imitation of the Original.*

O

Printed Books of the Play were sent for in haste, and every Actor had one to pick out of it the Part he had chosen : Thus, while they were each of them chewing the Morsel they had most mind to, some one happening to cast his Eye over the *Dramatis Personæ*, found that the main Matter was still forgot, that no body had yet been thought of for the Part of Alderman *Fondlewife*. Here we were all aground agen ! nor was it to be conceiv'd who could make the least tolerable Shift with it. This Character had been so admirably acted by *Dogget*, that though it is only seen in the Fourth Act, it may be no Dispraise to the Play to say it probably ow'd the greatest Part of its Success to his Performance. But, as the Case was now desperate, any Resource was better than none. Somebody must swallow the bitter Pill, or the Play must die. At last it was recollected that I had been heard to say in my wild way of talking, what a vast mind I had to play *Nykin*, by which Name the Character was more frequently call'd.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding they were thus distress'd about the Disposal of this Part, most of them shook their Heads at my being mention'd for it; yet *Powel*, who was resolv'd at all Hazards to fall upon *Betterton*, and

<sup>1</sup> "Old Bachelor," act iv. sc. 4 :—

"*Fondlewife*. Come kiss *Nykin* once more, and then get you in—  
—So—Get you in, get you in. By by.

*Latitia*. By, *Nykin*.

*Fondlewife*. By, Cocky.

*Latitia*. By, *Nykin*.

*Fondlewife*. By, Cocky, by, by."

having no concern for what might become of any one that serv'd his Ends or Purpose, order'd me to be sent for; and, as he naturally lov'd to set other People wrong, honestly said before I came, *If the Fool has a mind to blow himself up at once, let us ev'n give him a clear Stage for it.* Accordingly the Part was put into my Hands between Eleven and Twelve that Morning, which I durst not refuse, because others were as much straitned in time for Study as myself. But I had this casual Advantage of most of them; that having so constantly observ'd *Dogget's* Performance, I wanted but little Trouble to make me perfect in the Words; so that when it came to my turn to rehearse, while others read their Parts from their Books, I had put mine in my Pocket, and went thro' the first Scene without it; and though I was more abash'd to rehearse so remarkable a Part before the Actors (which is natural to most young People) than to act before an Audience, yet some of the better-natur'd encouraged me so far as to say they did not think I should make an ill Figure in it: To conclude, the Curiosity to see *Betterton* mimick'd drew us a pretty good Audience, and *Powel* (as far as Applause is a Proof of it) was allow'd to have burlesqu'd him very well.<sup>1</sup> As I have question'd

<sup>1</sup> Regarding Powell's playing in imitation of Betterton, Chetwood ("History of the Stage," p. 155) says: "Mr. *George Powel*, a reputable Actor, with many Excellencies, gave out, that he would perform the part of Sir *John Falstaff* in the manner of that very excellent *English Roscius*, Mr. *Betterton*. He certainly hit his Manner, and Tone of Voice, yet to make the Picture more like,

the certain Value of Applause, I hope I may venture with less Vanity to say how particular a Share I had of it in the same Play. At my first Appearance one might have imagin'd by the various Murmurs of the Audience, that they were in doubt whether *Dogget* himself were not return'd, or that they could not conceive what strange Face it could be that so nearly resembled him; for I had laid the Tint of forty Years more than my real Age upon my Features, and, to the most minute placing of an Hair, was dressed exactly like him: When I spoke, the Surprize was still greater, as if I had not only borrow'd his Cloaths, but his Voice too. But tho' that was the least difficult Part of him to be imitated, they seem'd to allow I had so much of him in every other Requisite, that my Applause was, perhaps, more than proportionable: For, whether I had done so much where so little was expected, or that the Generosity of my Hearers were more than usually zealous upon so unexpected an Occasion, or from what other Motive such Favour might be pour'd upon me, I cannot say; but in plain and honest Truth, upon my going off from the first Scene, a much better Actor might have been proud of the Applause that followed me; after one loud *Plaudit* was ended and sunk into a general Whisper that seem'd still to continue their private Approbation, it reviv'd to a second, and again to a third, still louder than the he mimic'd the Infirmities of Distemper, old Age, and the afflicting Pains of the Gout, which that great Man was often seiz'd with."

former. If to all this I add, that *Dogget* himself was in the Pit at the same time, it would be too rank Affectation if I should not confess that to see him there a Witness of my Reception, was to me as consummate a Triumph as the Heart of Vanity could be indulg'd with. But whatever Vanity I might set upon my self from this unexpected Success, I found that was no Rule to other People's Judgment of me. There were few or no Parts of the same kind to be had ; nor could they conceive, from what I had done in this, what other sort of Characters I could be fit for. If I solicited for any thing of a different Nature, I was answered, *That was not in my Way*. And what *was* in my Way it seems was not as yet resolv'd upon. And though I reply'd, *That I thought any thing naturally written ought to be in every one's Way that pretended to be an Actor* ; this was looked upon as a vain, impracticable Conceit of my own. Yet it is a Conceit that, in forty Years farther Experience, I have not yet given up ; I still think that a Painter who can draw but one sort of Object, or an Actor that shines but in one Light, can neither of them boast of that ample Genius which is necessary to form a thorough Master of his Art : For tho' Genius may have a particular Inclination, yet a good History-Painter, or a good Actor, will, without being at a loss, give you upon Demand a proper Likeness of whatever nature produces. If he cannot do this, he is only an Actor as the Shoemaker was allow'd a limited Judge of *Apelles's* Paint-

ing, but *not beyond his Last*. Now, tho' to do any one thing well may have more Merit than we often meet with, and may be enough to procure a Man the Name of a good Actor from the Publick; yet, in my Opinion, it is but still the Name without the Substance. If his Talent is in such narrow Bounds that he dares not step out of them to look upon the Singularities of Mankind, and cannot catch them in whatever Form they present themselves; if he is not Master of the *Quicquid agunt homines*,<sup>1</sup> &c. in any Shape Human Nature is fit to be seen in; if he cannot change himself into several distinct Persons, so as to vary his whole Tone of Voice, his Motion, his Look and Gesture, whether in high or lower Life, and, at the same time, keep close to those Variations without leaving the Character they singly belong to; if his best Skill falls short of this Capacity, what Pretence have we to call him a complete Master of his Art? And tho' I do not insist that he ought always to shew himself in these various Lights, yet, before we compliment him with that Title, he ought at least, by some few Proofs, to let us see that he has them all in his Power. If I am ask'd, who, ever, arriv'd at this imaginary Excellence, I confess the Instances are very few; but I will venture to name *Monfort* as one of them, whose Theatrical Character I have

<sup>1</sup> "Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,  
Gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli."

Juvenal, i. 85.



given in my last Chapter: For in his Youth he had acted Low Humour with great Success, even down to *Tallboy* in the *Jovial Crew*; and when he was in great Esteem as a Tragedian, he was, in Comedy, the most complete Gentleman that I ever saw upon the Stage. Let me add, too, that *Betterton*, in his declining Age, was as eminent in *Sir John Falstaff*, as in the Vigour of it, in his *Othello*.

While I thus measure the Value of an Actor by the Variety of Shapes he is able to throw himself into, you may naturally suspect that I am all this while leading my own Theatrical Character into your Favour: Why really, to speak as an honest Man, I cannot wholly deny it: But in this I shall endeavour to be no farther partial to myself than known Facts will make me; from the good or bad Evidence of which your better Judgment will condemn or acquit me. And to shew you that I will conceal no Truth that is against me, I frankly own that had I been always left to my own choice of Characters, I am doubtful whether I might ever have deserv'd an equal Share of that Estimation which the Publick seem'd to have held me in: Nor am I sure' that it was not Vanity in me often to have suspected that I was kept out of the Parts I had most mind to by the Jealousy or Prejudice of my Cotemporaries; some Instances of which I could give you, were they not too slight to be remember'd: In the mean time, be pleas'd to observe how slowly, in my younger Days, my Good-fortune came forward.

My early Success in the *Old Batchelor*, of which I have given so full an Account, having open'd no farther way to my Advancement, was enough, perhaps, to have made a young Fellow of more Modesty despair; but being of a Temper not easily dishearten'd, I resolv'd to leave nothing unattempted that might shew me in some new Rank of Distinction. Having then no other Resource, I was at last reduc'd to write a Character for myself; but as that was not finish'd till about a Year after, I could not, in the Interim, procure any one Part that gave me the least Inclination to act it; and consequently such as I got I perform'd with a proportionable Negligence. But this Misfortune, if it were one, you are not to wonder at; for the same Fate attended me, more or less, to the last Days of my remaining on the Stage. What Defect in me this may have been owing to, I have not yet had Sense enough to find out; but I soon found out as good a thing, which was, never to be mortify'd at it: Though I am afraid this seeming Philosophy was rather owing to my Inclination to Pleasure than Business. But to my Point. The next Year I produc'd the Comedy of *Love's last Shift*; yet the Difficulty of getting it to the Stage was not easily surmounted; for, at that time, as little was expected from me, as an Author, as had been from my Pretensions to be an Actor. However, Mr. *Southern*, the Author of *Oroonoko*, having had the Patience to hear me read it to him, happened to like it so well that he immediately recommended it to the Patentees,

and it was accordingly acted in *January* 1695.<sup>1</sup> In this Play I gave myself the Part of Sir *Novelty*, which was thought a good Portrait of the Foppery then in fashion. Here, too, Mr. *Southern*, though he had approv'd my Play, came into the common Diffidence of me as an Actor: For, when on the first Day of it I was standing, myself, to prompt the *Prologue*, he took me by the Hand and said, *Young Man! I pronounce thy Play a good one; I will answer for its Success,<sup>2</sup> if thou dost not spoil it by thy own Action.* Though this might be a fair *Salvo* for his favourable Judgment of the Play, yet, if it were his real Opinion of me as an Actor, I had the good Fortune to deceive him: I succeeded so well in both, that People seem'd at a loss which they should give

<sup>1</sup> That is, January, 1696. The cast was:—

“Love’s last Shift; or, the Fool in Fashion.”

SIR WILLIAM WISEWOUND . . . . .	Mr. Johnson.
LOVELESS . . . . .	Mr. Verbruggen.
SIR NOVELTY FASHION . . . . .	Mr. Cibber.
ELDER WORTHY . . . . .	Mr. Williams.
YOUNG WORTHY . . . . .	Mr. Horden.
SNAP . . . . .	Mr. Penkethman.
SLY . . . . .	Mr. Bullock.
LAWYER . . . . .	Mr. Mills.
AMANDA . . . . .	Mrs. Rogers.
NARCISSA . . . . .	Mrs. Verbruggen.
HILLARIA . . . . .	Mrs. Cibber.
MRS. FLAREIT . . . . .	Mrs. Kent.
AMANDA’S WOMAN . . . . .	Mrs. Lucas.

<sup>2</sup> In the Dedication to this play Cibber says that “Mr. *Southern’s* Good-nature (whose own Works best recommend his Judgment) engaged his Reputation for the Success.”

the Preference to.<sup>1</sup> But (now let me shew a little more Vanity, and my Apology for it shall come after) the Compliment which my Lord *Dorset* (then Lord-Chamberlain) made me upon it is, I own, what I had rather not suppress, *viz. That it was the best First Play that any Author in his Memory had produc'd; and that for a young Fellow to shew himself such an Actor and such a Writer in one Day, was something extraordinary.* But as this noble Lord has been celebrated for his Good-nature, I am contented that as much of this Compliment should be suppos'd to exceed my Deserts as may be imagin'd to have been heighten'd by his generous Inclination to encourage a young Beginner. If this Excuse cannot soften the Vanity of telling a Truth so much in my own Favour, I must lie at the Mercy of my Reader. But there was a still higher Compliment pass'd upon me which I may publish without Vanity, because it was not a design'd one, and apparently came from my Enemies, *viz. That, to their certain Knowledge, it was not my own:* This Report is taken notice of in my Dedication to the Play.<sup>2</sup> If they spoke Truth, if they knew

<sup>1</sup> Gildon praises this play highly in the "Comparison between the two Stages," p. 25:—

"*Ramble.* Ay, marry, that Play was the Philosopher's Stone; I think it did wonders.

*Sullen.* It did so, and very deservedly; there being few Comedies that came up to't for purity of Plot, Manners and Moral: It's often acted now a daies, and by the help of the Author's own good action, it pleases to this Day."

<sup>2</sup> Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 437) says: "So little was hoped

what other Person it really belong'd to, I will at least allow them true to their Trust ; for above forty Years have since past, and they have not yet reveal'd the Secret.<sup>1</sup>

The new Light in which the Character of Sir *Novelty* had shewn me, one might have thought were enough to have dissipated the Doubts of what I might now be possibly good for. But to whatever Chance my Ill-fortune was due ; whether I had still but little Merit, or that the Menagers, if I had any, were not competent Judges of it ; or whether I was not generally elbow'd by other Actors (which I am most inclin'd to think the true Cause) when any fresh Parts were to be dispos'd of, not one Part of any consequence was I preferr'd to 'till the Year following: Then, indeed, from Sir *John Vanbrugh's* favour-

from the genius of Cibber, that the critics reproached him with stealing his play. To his censors he makes a serious defence of himself, in his dedication to Richard Norton, Esq., of Southwick, a gentleman who was so fond of stage-plays and players, that he has been accused of turning his chapel into a theatre. The furious John Dennis, who hated Cibber for obstructing, as he imagined, the progress of his tragedy called the *Invader of his Country*, in very passionate terms denies his claim to this comedy: 'When the *Fool in Fashion* was first acted (says the critic) Cibber was hardly twenty years of age—how could he, at the age of twenty, write a comedy with a just design, distinguished characters, and a proper dialogue, who now, at forty, treats us with Hibernian sense and Hibernian English?'"

<sup>1</sup> This same accusation was made against Cibber on other occasions. Dr. Johnson, referring to one of these, said: "There was no reason to believe that the *Careless Husband* was not written by himself."—Boswell's Johnson, ii. 340.

able Opinion of me, I began, with others, to have a better of myself: For he not only did me Honour as an Author by writing his *Relapse* as a Sequel or Second Part to *Love's last Shift*, but as an Actor too, by preferring me to the chief Character in his own Play, (which from Sir *Novelty*) he had ennobled by the Style of Baron of *Foppington*. This Play (the *Relapse*) from its new and easy Turn of Wit, had great Success, and gave me, as a Comedian, a second Flight of Reputation along with it.<sup>1</sup>

As the Matter I write must be very flat or impertinent to those who have no Taste or Concern for the Stage, and may to those who delight in it, too, be equally tedious when I talk of no body but myself, I shall endeavour to relieve your Patience by a Word or two more of this Gentleman, so far as he lent his Pen to the Support of the Theatre.

Though the *Relapse* was the first Play this agreeable Author produc'd, yet it was not, it seems, the first he had written; for he had at that time by him (more than) all the Scenes that were acted of the *Provok'd Wife*; but being then doubtful whether he should ever trust them to the Stage, he thought no more of it: But after the Success of the *Relapse* he was more strongly importun'd than able to refuse it

<sup>1</sup> "The *Relapse*; or, *Virtue in Danger*," was produced at Drury Lane in 1697. Cibber's part in it, Lord Foppington, became one of his most famous characters. The "Comparison between the two Stages," p. 32, says: "*Oronoko*, *Æsop*, and *Relapse* are Master-pieces, and subsisted *Drury-lane* House, the first two or three Years."

to the Publick. Why the last-written Play was first acted, and for what Reason they were given to different Stages, what follows will explain.

In his first Step into publick Life, when he was but an Ensign and had a Heart above his Income, he happen'd somewhere at his Winter-Quarters, upon a very slender Acquaintance with Sir *Thomas Skipwith*, to receive a particular Obligation from him which he had not forgot at the Time I am speaking of: When Sir *Thomas's* Interest in the Theatrical Patent (for he had a large Share in it, though he little concern'd himself in the Conduct of it) was rising but very slowly, he thought that to give it a Lift by a new Comedy, if it succeeded, might be the handsomest Return he could make to those his former Favours; and having observ'd that in *Love's last Shift* most of the Actors had acquitted themselves beyond what was expected of them, he took a sudden Hint from what he lik'd in that Play, and in less than three Months, in the beginning of *April* following, brought us the *Relapse* finish'd; but the Season being then too far advanc'd, it was not acted 'till the succeeding Winter. Upon the Success of the *Relapse* the late Lord *Hallifax*, who was a great Favourer of *Betterton's* Company, having formerly, by way of Family-Amusement, heard the *Provok'd Wife* read to him in its looser Sheets, engag'd Sir *John Vanbrugh* to revise it and gave it to the Theatre in *Lincoln's-Inn Fields*. This was a Request not to be refus'd to so eminent a Patron of the Muses as the

Lord *Hallifax*, who was equally a Friend and Admirer of Sir *John* himself.<sup>1</sup> Nor was Sir *Thomas Skipwith* in the least disobliged by so reasonable a Compliance: After which, Sir *John* was agen at liberty to repeat his Civilities to his Friend Sir *Thomas*, and about the same time, or not long after, gave us the Comedy of *Æsop*, for his Inclination always led him to serve Sir *Thomas*. Besides, our Company about this time began to be look'd upon in another Light; the late Contempt we had lain under was now wearing off, and from the Success of two or three new Plays, our Actors, by being Originals in a few good Parts where they had not the Disadvantage of Comparison against them, sometimes found new Favour in those old Plays where others had exceeded them.<sup>2</sup>

Of this Good-fortune perhaps I had more than my Share from the two very different chief Characters I had succeeded in; for I was equally approv'd in *Æsop* as the *Lord Foppington*, allowing the Difference to be no less than as Wisdom in a Person deform'd may be less entertaining to the general Taste than

<sup>1</sup> "The Provoked Wife" was produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1697; and, as Cibber states, "Æsop" was played at Drury Lane in the same year. It seems (see Prologue to "The Confederacy") that Vanbrugh gave his first three plays as presents to the Companies.

<sup>2</sup> "Comparison between the two Stages," p. 12: "In the meantime the Mushrooms in *Drury-Lane* shoot up from such a desolate Fortune into a considerable Name; and not only grappled with their Rivals, but almost eclips'd 'em."



Folly and Foppery finely drest : For the Character that delivers Precepts of Wisdom is, in some sort, severe upon the Auditor by shewing him one wiser than himself. But when Folly is his Object he applauds himself for being wiser than the Coxcomb he laughs at : And who is not more pleas'd with an Occasion to commend than accuse himself ?

Though to write much in a little time is no Excuse for writing ill ; yet Sir *John Vanbrugh's* Pen is not to be a little admir'd for its Spirit, Ease, and Readiness in producing Plays so fast upon the Neck of one another ; for, notwithstanding this quick Dispatch, there is a clear and lively Simplicity in his Wit that neither wants the Ornament of Learning nor has the least Smell of the Lamp in it. As the Face of a fine Woman, with only her Locks loose about her, may be then in its greatest Beauty ; such were his Productions, only adorn'd by Nature. There is something so catching to the Ear, so easy to the Memory, in all he writ, that it has been observ'd by all the Actors of my Time, that the Style of no Author whatsoever gave their Memory less trouble than that of Sir *John Vanbrugh* ; which I myself, who have been charg'd with several of his strongest Characters, can confirm by a pleasing Experience. And indeed his Wit and Humour was so little laboured, that his most entertaining Scenes seem'd to be no more than his common Conversation committed to Paper. Here I confess my Judgment at a Loss, whether in this I give him more or less

than his due Praise? For may it not be more laudable to raise an Estate (whether in Wealth or Fame) by Pains and honest Industry than to be born to it? Yet if his Scenes really were, as to me they always seem'd, delightful, are they not, thus expeditiously written, the more surprising? let the Wit and Merit of them then be weigh'd by wiser Criticks than I pretend to be: But no wonder, while his Conceptions were so full of Life and Humour, his Muse should be sometimes too warm to wait the slow Pace of Judgment, or to endure the Drudgery of forming a regular Fable to them: Yet we see the *Relapse*, however imperfect in the Conduct, by the mere Force of its agreeable Wit, ran away with the Hearts of its Hearers; while *Love's last Shift*, which (as Mr. Congreve justly said of it) had only in it a great many things that were *like* Wit, that in reality were *not* Wit: And what is still less pardonable (as I say of it myself) has a great deal of Puerility and frothy Stage-Language in it, yet by the mere moral Delight receiv'd from its Fable, it has been, with the other, in a continued and equal Possession of the Stage for more than forty Years.<sup>1</sup> |

As I have already promis'd you to refer your Judgment of me as an Actor rather to known Facts than my own Opinion (which I could not be sure would keep clear of Self-Partiality) I must a little farther risque my being tedious to be as good as my Word.

<sup>1</sup> The last performance of this comedy which Genest indexes was at Covent Garden, 14th February, 1763.

I have elsewhere allow'd that my want of a strong and full Voice soon cut short my Hopes of making any valuable Figure in Tragedy; and I have been many Years since convinced, that whatever Opinion I might have of my own Judgment or Capacity to amend the palpable Errors that I saw our Tragedians most in favour commit; yet the Auditors who would have been sensible of any such Amendments (could I have made them) were so very few, that my best Endeavour would have been but an unavailing Labour, or, what is yet worse, might have appeared both to our Actors and to many Auditors the vain Mistake of my own Self-Conceit: For so strong, so very near indispensable, is that one Article of Voice in the forming a good Tragedian, that an Actor may want any other Qualification whatsoever, and yet have a better chance for Applause than he will ever have, with all the Skill in the World, if his Voice is not equal to it. Mistake me not; I say, for *Applause* only—but Applause does not always stay for, nor always follow intrinsic Merit; Applause will frequently open, like a young Hound, upon a wrong Scent; and the Majority of Auditors, you know, are generally compos'd of Babblers that are profuse of their Voices before there is any thing on foot that calls for them. Not but, I grant, to lead or mislead the Many will always stand in some Rank of a necessary Merit; yet when I say a good Tragedian, I mean one in Opinion of whose *real* Merit the best Judges would agree.

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Having so far given up my Pretensions to the Buskin, I ought now to account for my having been, notwithstanding, so often seen in some particular Characters in Tragedy, as *Jago*,<sup>1</sup> *Wolsey*, *Syphax*, *Richard the Third*, &c. If in any of this kind I have succeeded, perhaps it has been a Merit dearly purchas'd; for, from the Delight I seem'd to take in my performing them, half my Auditors have been persuaded that a great Share of the Wickedness of them must have been in my own Nature: If this is true, as true I fear (I had almost said hope) it is, I look upon it rather as a Praise than Censure of my Performance. Aversion there is an involuntary Commendation, where we are only hated for being like the thing we *ought* to be like; a sort of Praise, however, which few Actors besides my self could endure: Had it been equal to the usual Praise given to Virtue, my Cotemporaries would have thought themselves injur'd if I had pretended to any Share of it: So that you see it has been as much the Dislike others had to them, as Choice that has thrown me sometimes into these Characters. But it may be farther observ'd, that in the Characters I have nam'd, where there is so much close meditated

<sup>1</sup> Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 469) says: "The truth is, Cibber was endured, in this and other tragic parts, on account of his general merit in comedy;" and the author of "The Laureat," p. 41, remarks: "I have often heard him blamed as a Trifler in that Part; he was rarely perfect, and, abating for the Badness of his Voice and the Insignificancy and Meanness of his Action, he did not seem to understand either what he said or what he was about."

Mischief, Deceit, Pride, Insolence, or Cruelty, they cannot have the least Cast or Profer of the Amiable in them; consequently, there can be no great Demand for that harmonious Sound, or pleasing round Melody of Voice, which in the softer Sentiments of Love, the Wailings of distressful Virtue, or in the Throws and Swellings of Honour and Ambition, may be needful to recommend them to our Pity or Admiration: So that, again, my want of that requisite Voice might less disqualify me for the vicious than the virtuous Character. This too may have been a more favourable Reason for my having been chosen for them—a yet farther Consideration that inclin'd me to them was that they are generally better written, thicker sown with sensible Reflections, and come by so much nearer to common Life and Nature than Characters of Admiration, as Vice is more the Practice of Mankind than Virtue: Nor could I sometimes help smiling at those dainty Actors that were too squeamish to swallow them! as if they were one Jot the better Men for acting a good Man well, or another Man the worse for doing equal Justice to a bad one! 'Tis not, sure, *what* we act, but *how* we act what is allotted us, that speaks our intrinsick Value! as in real Life, the wise Man or the Fool, be he Prince or Peasant, will in either State be equally the Fool or the wise Man—but alas! in personated Life this is no Rule to the Vulgar! they are apt to think all before them real, and rate the Actor according to his borrow'd Vice or Virtue.

If then I had always too careless a Concern for false or vulgar Applause, I ought not to complain if I have had less of it than others of my time, or not less of it than I desired: Yet I will venture to say, that from the common weak Appetite of false Applause, many Actors have run into more Errors and Absurdities, than their greatest Ignorance could otherwise have committed: <sup>1</sup> If this Charge is true, it will lie chiefly upon the better Judgment of the Spectator to reform it.

But not to make too great a Merit of my avoiding this common Road to Applause, perhaps I was vain enough to think I had more ways than one to come at it. That, in the Variety of Characters I acted, the Chances to win it were the stronger on my Side—That, if the Multitude were not in a Roar to see me in *Cardinal Wolsey*, I could be sure of them in *Alderman Fondlewife*. If they hated me in *Jago*, in *Sir Fopling* they took me for a fine Gentleman; if they were silent at *Syphax*, no *Italian Eunuch* was more applauded than when I sung in *Sir Courtly*. If the *Morals of Æsop* were too grave for them, *Justice Shallow* was as simple and as merry an old Rake as the wisest of our young ones could wish me.<sup>2</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat," p. 44: "Whatever the Actors appear'd upon the Stage, they were most of them *Barbarians* off on't, few of them having had the Education, or whose Fortunes could admit them to the Conversation of Gentlemen."

<sup>2</sup> Davies praises Cibber in *Fondlewife*, saying that he "was much and justly admired and applauded" ("Dram. Misc.," iii.

though the Terror and Detestation raised by King *Richard* might be too severe a Delight for them, yet the more gentle and modern Vanities of a Poet *Bays*, or the well-bred Vices of a Lord *Foppington*, were not at all more than their merry Hearts or nicer Morals could bear.

These few Instances out of fifty more I could give you, may serve to explain what sort of Merit I at most pretended to; which was, that I supplied with Variety whatever I might want of that particular

391); and in the same work (i. 306) he gives an admirable sketch of Cibber as Justice Shallow:—

“Whether he was a copy or an original in Shallow, it is certain no audience was ever more fixed in deep attention, at his first appearance, or more shaken with laughter in the progress of the scene, than at Colley Cibber’s exhibition of this ridiculous justice of peace. Some years after he had left the stage, he acted Shallow for his son’s benefit. I believe in 1737, when Quin was the Falstaff, and Milward the King. Whether it was owing to the pleasure the spectators felt on seeing their old friend return to them again, *though for that night only*, after an absence of some years, I know not; but, surely, no actor or audience were better pleased with each other. His manner was so perfectly simple, his look so vacant, when he questioned his cousin Silence about the price of ewes, and lamented, in the same breath, with silly surprise, the death of Old Double, that it will be impossible for any surviving spectator not to smile at the remembrance of it. The want of ideas occasions Shallow to repeat almost every thing he says. Cibber’s transition, from asking the price of bullocks, to trite, but grave reflections on mortality, was so natural, and attended with such an unmeaning roll of his small pigs-eyes, accompanied with an important utterance of tick! tick! tick! not much louder than the balance of a watch, that I question if any actor was ever superior in the conception or expression of such solemn insignificance.”

Skill wherein others went before me. How this Variety was executed (for by that only is its value to be rated) you who have so often been my Spectator are the proper Judge: If you pronounce my Performance to have been defective, I am condemn'd by my own Evidence; if you acquit me, these Out-lines may serve for a Sketch of my Theatrical Character.





## CHAPTER VII.

*The State of the Stage continued. The Occasion of Wilks's commencing Actor. His Success. Facts relating to his Theatrical Talent. Actors more or less esteem'd from their private Characters.*

THE *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields* Company were now, in 1693,<sup>1</sup> a Common-wealth, like that of *Holland*, divided from the Tyranny of *Spain*: But the Similitude goes very little farther; short was the Duration of the Theatrical Power! for tho' Success pour'd in so fast upon them at their first Opening

<sup>1</sup> I presume Cibber means 1695. The Company was self-governed from its commencement in 1695, and the disintegration seems to have begun in the next season. See what Cibber says of Dogget's defection a few pages on.

that every thing seem'd to support it self, yet Experience in a Year or two shew'd them that they had never been worse govern'd than when they govern'd themselves! Many of them began to make their particular Interest more their Point than that of the general: and tho' some Deference might be had to the Measures and Advice of *Betterton*, several of them wanted to govern in their Turn, and were often out of Humour that their Opinion was not equally regarded—But have we not seen the same Infirmary in Senates? The Tragedians seem'd to think their Rank as much above the Comedians as in the Characters they severally acted; when the first were in their Finery, the latter were impatient at the Expence, and look'd upon it as rather laid out upon the real than the fictitious Person of the Actor; nay, I have known in our own Company this ridiculous sort of Regret carried so far, that the Tragedian has thought himself injured when the *Comedian* pretended to wear a fine Coat! I remember *Powel*, upon surveying my first Dress in the *Relapse*, was out of all temper, and reproach'd our Master in very rude Terms that he had not so good a Suit to play *Cæsar Borgia*<sup>1</sup> in! tho' he knew, at the same time, my Lord *Foppington* fill'd the House, when his bouncing *Borgia* would do little more than pay Fiddles and Candles to it: And though a Character of Vanity

<sup>1</sup> In Lee's tragedy of "Cæsar Borgia," originally played at Dorset Garden in 1680. Borgia was Betterton's part, and was evidently one of those which Powell laid violent hands on.

might be supposed more expensive in Dress than possibly one of Ambition, yet the high Heart of this heroical Actor could not bear that a Comedian should ever pretend to be as well dress'd as himself. Thus again, on the contrary, when *Betterton* proposed to set off a Tragedy, the Comedians were sure to murmur at the Charge of it: And the late Reputation which *Dogget* had acquired from acting his *Ben in Love for Love*, made him a more declared Male-content on such Occasions; he over-valued Comedy for its being nearer to Nature than Tragedy, which is allow'd to say many fine things that Nature never spoke in the same Words; and supposing his Opinion were just, yet he should have consider'd that the Publick had a Taste as well as himself, which in Policy he ought to have complied with. *Dogget*, however, could not with Patience look upon the costly Trains and Plumes of Tragedy, in which knowing himself to be useless, he thought were all a vain Extravagance: And when he found his Singularity could no longer oppose that Expence, he so obstinately adhered to his own Opinion, that he left the Society of his old Friends, and came over to us at the *Theatre-Royal*: And yet this Actor always set up for a Theatrical Patriot. This happened in the Winter following the first Division of the (only) Company.<sup>1</sup> He came time enough to the *Theatre-Royal* to act the Part of *Lory* in the *Relapse*,

<sup>1</sup> Among the Lord Chamberlain's Papers is a curious Decision, dated 26 Oct. 1696, regarding this desertion. By it, *Dogget*, who

an arch Valet, quite after the *French* cast, pert and familiar. But it suited so ill with *Dogget's* dry and closely-natural Manner of acting, that upon the second Day he desired it might be disposed of to another ; which the Author complying with, gave it to *Penkethman*, who, tho' in other Lights much his Inferior, yet this Part he seem'd better to become. *Dogget* was so immovable in his Opinion of whatever he thought was right or wrong, that he could never be easy under any kind of Theatrical Government, and was generally so warm in pursuit of his Interest that he often out-ran it; I remember him three times, for some Years, unemploy'd in any Theatre, from his not being able to bear, in common with others, the disagreeable Accidents that in such Societies are unavoidable.<sup>1</sup> But whatever Pretences he had form'd for this first deserting from *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*, I always thought his best Reason for it was, that he look'd upon it as a sinking Ship; not only from the melancholy Abatement of their Profits, but likewise from the Neglect and Disorder in their Government: He plainly saw that their extraordinary Success at first had made them too confident of its Duration, and from thence had slacken'd their Industry—by which he observ'd, at the same time, the old House, where is stated to have been seduced from *Lincoln's Inn Fields*, is permitted to act where he likes.

<sup>1</sup> Genest's list of *Dogget's* characters shows that he was apparently not engaged 1698 to 1700, both inclusive; for the seasons 1706-7 and 1707-8; and for the season 1708-9. This would make the three occasions mentioned by Cibber.

there was scarce any other Merit than Industry, began to flourish. And indeed they seem'd not enough to consider that the Appetite of the Publick, like that of a fine Gentleman, could only be kept warm by Variety; that let their Merit be never so high, yet the Taste of a Town was not always constant, nor infallible: That it was dangerous to hold their Rivals in too much Contempt;<sup>1</sup> for they found that a young industrious Company were soon a Match for the best Actors when too securely negligent: And negligent they certainly were, and fondly fancied that had each of their different Schemes been follow'd, their Audiences would not so suddenly have fallen off.<sup>2</sup>

But alas! the Vanity of applauded Actors, when they are not crowded to as they may have been, makes them naturally impute the Change to any Cause rather than the true one, Satiety: They are mighty loath to think a Town, once so fond of them, could ever be tired; and yet, at one time or other, more or less thin Houses have been the certain Fate

<sup>1</sup> Dryden, in his Address to Granville on his tragedy of "Heroic Love" in 1698, says of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Company:—

"Their setting sun still shoots a glimmering ray,  
Like ancient Rome, majestic in decay;  
And better gleanings their worn soil can boast,  
Than the crab-vintage of the neighbouring coast."

<sup>2</sup> "Comparison between the two Stages," p. 13: "But this [the success of 'Love for Love'] like other things of that kind, being only nine Days wonder, and the Audiences, being in a little time sated with the Novelty of the *New-house*, return in Shoals to the Old."

of the most prosperous Actors ever since I remember the Stage! But against this Evil the provident Patentees had found out a Relief which the new House were not yet Masters of, *viz.* Never to pay their People when the Money did not come in; nor then neither, but in such Proportions as suited their Conveniency. I my self was one of the many who for six acting Weeks together never received one Day's Pay; and for some Years after seldom had above half our nominal Sallaries: But to the best of my Memory, the Finances of the other House held it not above one Season more, before they were reduced to the same Expedient of making the like scanty Payments.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the Distress and Fortune of both these Companies since their Division from the *Theatre-Royal*; either working at half Wages, or by alternate Successes intercepting the Bread from one another's Mouths;<sup>2</sup> irreconcilable Enemies, yet without Hope

<sup>1</sup> Cibber says nothing of his having been a member of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Company. But he was, for he writes in his Preface to "Woman's Wit": "during the Time of my writing the two first Acts I was entertain'd at the New Theatre. . . . In the Middle of my Writing the Third Act, not liking my Station there, I return'd again to the Theatre Royal." Cibber must have joined Betterton, I should think, about the end of 1696. It is curious that he should in his "Apology" have entirely suppressed this incident. It almost suggests that there was something in it of which he was in later years somewhat ashamed.

<sup>2</sup> "Comparison between the two Stages," p. 14: "The Town . . . chang'd their Inclinations for the two Houses, as they found 'emselves inclin'd to Comedy or Tragedy: If they desir'd a

of Relief from a Victory on either Side ; sometimes both Parties reduced, and yet each supporting their Spirits by seeing the other under the same Calamity.

During this State of the Stage it was that the lowest Expedient was made use of to ingratiate our Company in the Publick Favour : Our Master, who had sometime practised the Law,<sup>1</sup> and therefore loved a Storm better than fair Weather (for it was his own Conduct chiefly that had brought the Patent into these Dangers) took nothing so much to Heart as that Partiality wherewith he imagined the People of Quality had preferr'd the Actors of the other House to those of his own : To ballance this Misfortune, he was resolv'd, at least, to be well with their Domes-ticks, and therefore cunningly open'd the upper Gallery to them *gratis* : For before this time no Footman was ever admitted, or had presum'd to come into it, till after the fourth Act was ended : This additional Privilege (the greatest Plague that ever Play-house had to complain of) he conceived would not only incline them to give us a good Word in the respective Families they belong'd to, but would naturally incite them to come all Hands aloft in the Crack

Tragedy, they went to *Lincolns-Inn-Fields* ; if to Comedy, they flockt to *Drury-lane*."

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Rich, of whom the " Comparison between the two Stages " says (p. 15) : "*Critick*. In the other House there's an old snarling Lawyer Master and Sovereign ; a waspish, ignorant, pettifogger in Law and Poetry ; one who understands Poetry no more than Algebra ; he wou'd sooner have the Grace of God than do everybody Justice."

of our Applauses : And indeed it so far succeeded, that it often thunder'd from the full Gallery above, while our thin Pit and Boxes below were in the utmost Serenity. This riotous Privilege, so craftily given, and which from Custom was at last ripen'd into Right, became the most disgraceful Nuisance that ever depreciated the Theatre.<sup>1</sup> How often have the most polite Audiences, in the most affecting Scenes of the best Plays, been disturb'd and insulted by the Noise and Clamour of these savage Spectators? From the same narrow way of thinking, too, were so many ordinary People and unlick'd Cubs of Condition admitted behind our Scenes for Money, and sometimes without it: The Plagues and Inconveniences of which Custom we found so intolerable, when we afterwards had the Stage in our Hands, that at the Hazard of our Lives we were forced to get rid of them; and our only Expedient was by refusing Money from all Persons without Distinction at the Stage-Door; by this means we preserved to ourselves the Right and Liberty of chusing our own Company there: And by a strict Observance of this Order we brought what had been before debas'd into all the Licenses of a Lobby into the Decencies of a Drawing-Room.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This privilege seems to have been granted about 1697 or 1698. It was not abolished till 1737. On 5th May, 1737, footmen having been deprived of their privilege, 300 of them broke into Drury Lane and did great damage. Many were, however, arrested, and no attempt was made to renew hostilities.

<sup>2</sup> Queen Anne issued several Edicts forbidding persons to be



About the distressful Time I was speaking of, in the Year 1696,<sup>1</sup> *Wilks*, who now had been five Years in great Esteem on the *Dublin* Theatre, return'd to that of *Drury-Lane*; in which last he had first set out, and had continued to act some small Parts for one Winter only. The considerable Figure which he so lately made upon the Stage in *London*, makes me imagine that a particular Account of his first commencing Actor may not be unacceptable to the Curious; I shall, therefore, give it them as I had it from his own Mouth.

In King *James's* Reign he had been some time employ'd in the Secretary's Office in *Ireland* (his native Country) and remain'd in it till after the Battle of the *Boyn*, which completed the Revolution. Upon that happy and unexpected Deliverance, the People of *Dublin*, among the various Expressions of their Joy, had a mind to have a Play; but the Actors being dispersed during the War, some private Persons agreed in the best Manner they were able to give one to the Publick *gratis* at the *Theatre*. The Play was *Othello*, in which *Wilks* acted the *Moor*; and the Applause he received in it warm'd him to so strong an Inclination for the Stage, that he imme-

admitted behind the scenes, and in the advertisements of both theatres there appeared the announcement, "By Her Majesty's Command no Persons are to be admitted behind the Scenes." Cibber here, no doubt, refers to the Sign Manual of 13 Nov. 1711, a copy of which is among the Chamberlain's Papers.

<sup>1</sup> Cibber is probably incorrect here. It seems certain from the bills that *Wilks* did not re-appear in London before 1698.

diately prefer'd it to all his other Views in Life : for he quitted his Post, and with the first fair Occasion came over to try his Fortune in the (then only) Company of Actors in *London*. The Person who supply'd his Post in *Dublin*, he told me, raised to himself from thence a Fortune of fifty thousand Pounds. Here you have a much stronger Instance of an extravagant Passion for the Stage than that which I have elsewhere shewn in my self ; I only quitted my *Hopes* of being preferr'd to the like Post for it ; but *Wilks* quitted his actual *Possession* for the imaginary Happiness which the Life of an Actor presented to him. And, though possibly we might both have better'd our Fortunes in a more honourable Station, yet whether better Fortunes might have equally gratify'd our Vanity (the universal Passion of Mankind) may admit of a Question.

Upon his being formerly received into the *Theatre-Royal* (which was in the Winter after I had been initiated) his Station there was much upon the same Class with my own ; our Parts were generally of an equal Insignificancy, not of consequence enough to give either a Preference : But *Wilks* being more impatient of his low Condition than I was, (and, indeed, the Company was then so well stock'd with good Actors that there was very little hope of getting forward) laid hold of a more expeditious way for his Advancement, and returned agen to *Dublin* with Mr. *Ashbury*, the Patentee of that Theatre, to act in his new Company there : There went with him at the same time

Mrs. *Butler*, whose Character I have already given, and *Estcourt*, who had not appeared on any Stage, and was yet only known as an excellent Mimick: *Wilks* having no Competitor in *Dublin*, was immediately preferr'd to whatever parts his Inclination led him, and his early Reputation on that Stage as soon raised in him an Ambition to shew himself on a better. And I have heard him say (in Raillery of the Vanity which young Actors are liable to) that when the News of *Monfort's* Death came to *Ireland*, he from that time thought his Fortune was made, and took a Resolution to return a second time to *England* with the first Opportunity; but as his Engagements to the Stage where he was were too strong to be suddenly broke from, he return'd not to the *Theatre-Royal* 'till the Year 1696.<sup>1</sup>

Upon his first Arrival, *Powel*, who was now in Possession of all the chief Parts of *Monfort*, and the only Actor that stood in *Wilks's* way, in seeming Civility offer'd him his choice of whatever he thought fit to make his first Appearance in; though, in reality, the Favour was intended to hurt him. But *Wilks* rightly judg'd it more modest to accept only of a Part of *Powel's*, and which *Monfort* had never acted, that of *Palamede* in *Dryden's Marriage A-la-mode*. Here, too, he had the Advantage of having the Ball play'd into his Hand by the inimitable Mrs. *Monfort*, who was then his *Melantha* in the same Play: Whatever Fame *Wilks* had brought

<sup>1</sup> See note on page 235.

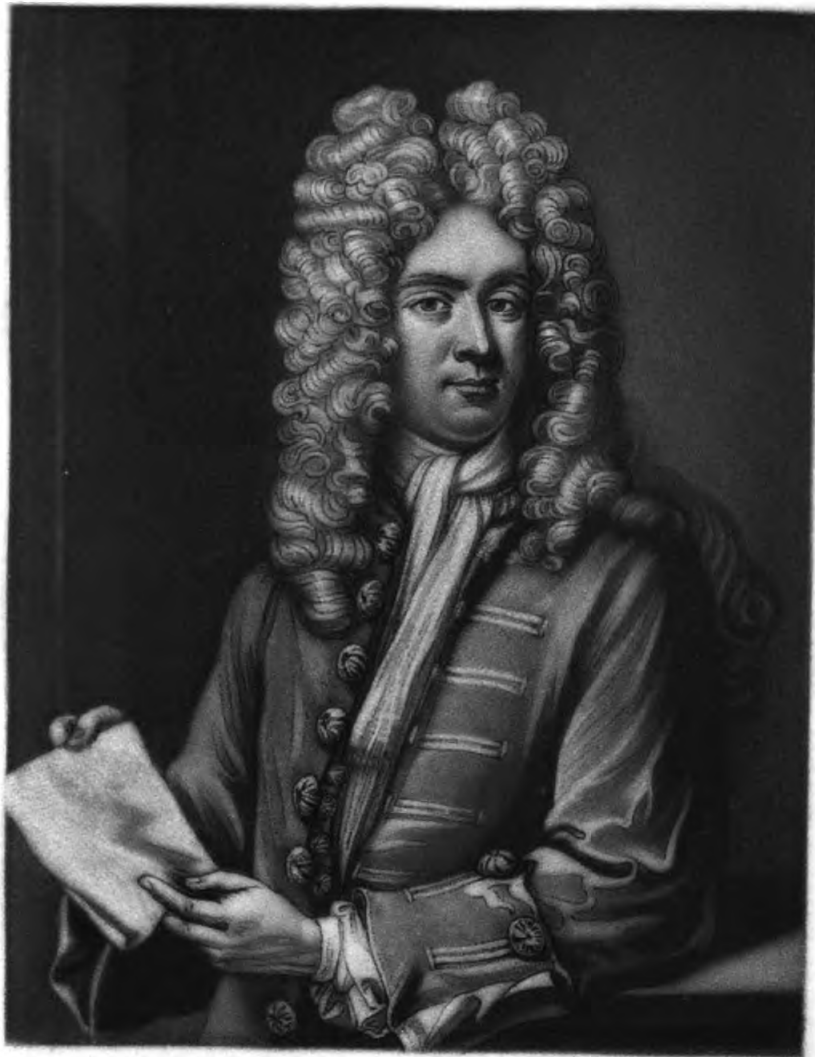
with him from *Ireland*, he as yet appear'd but a very raw Actor to what he was afterwards allow'd to be : His Faults, however, I shall rather leave to the Judgments of those who then may remember him, than to take upon me the disagreeable Office of being particular upon them, farther than by saying, that in this Part of *Palamede* he was short of *Powel*, and miss'd a good deal of the loose Humour of the Character, which the other more happily hit.<sup>1</sup> But however he was young, erect, of a pleasing Aspect, and, in the whole, gave the Town and the Stage sufficient Hopes of him. I ought to make some Allowances, too, for the Restraint he must naturally have been under from his first Appearance upon a new Stage. But from that he soon recovered, and grew daily more in Favour, not only of the Town, but likewise of the Patentee, whom *Powel*, before *Wilks's* Arrival, had treated in almost what manner he pleas'd.

Upon this visible Success of *Wilks*, the pretended Contempt which *Powel* had held him in began to sour into an open Jealousy ; he now plainly saw he was a formidable Rival, and (which more hurt him) saw, too, that other People saw it ; and therefore found it high time to oppose and be troublesome to him. But *Wilks* happening to be as jealous of his

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat," p. 44 : "*Wilks*, in this Part of *Palamede*, behav'd with a modest Diffidence, and yet maintain'd the Spirit of his Part." The author says, on the same page, that *Powel* never could appear a Gentleman. "His Conversation, his Manners, his Dress, neither on nor off the Stage, bore any Similitude to that Character."







WILLIAM PENKETHMAN





Fame as the other, you may imagine such clashing Candidates could not be long without a Rupture : In short, a Challenge, I very well remember, came from *Powel*, when he was hot-headed ; but the next Morning he was cool enough to let it end in favour of *Wilks*. Yet however the Magnanimity on either Part might subside, the Animosity was as deep in the Heart as ever, tho' it was not afterwards so openly avow'd : For when *Powel* found that intimidating would not carry his Point ; but that *Wilks*, when provok'd, would really give Battle,<sup>1</sup> he (*Powel*) grew so out of Humour that he cock'd his Hat, and in his Passion walk'd off to the Service of the Company in *Lincoln's-Inn Fields*. But there finding more Competitors, and that he made a worse Figure among them than in the Company he came from, he stay'd but one Winter with them<sup>2</sup> before he return'd to his old Quarters in *Drury-Lane* ; where, after these unsuccessful Pushes of his Ambition, he at last became a Martyr to Negligence, and quietly submitted to the Advantages and Superiority which (during his late Desertion) *Wilks* had more easily got over him.

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat," p. 44 : "I believe he (*Wilks*) was obliged to fight the Heroic *George Powel*, as well as one or two others, who were piqued at his being so highly encouraged by the Town, and their Rival, before he cou'd be quiet."

<sup>2</sup> Powell seems to have been at Lincoln's Inn Fields for two seasons, those of 1702 and 1703, and for part of a third, 1703-4. He returned to Drury Lane about June, 1704. For the arbitrary conduct of the Lord Chamberlain, in allowing him to desert to Lincoln's Inn Fields (or the Haymarket), but arresting him when he deserted back again to Drury Lane, see after, in Chap. X.

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However trifling these Theatrical Anecdotes may seem to a sensible Reader, yet, as the different Conduct of these rival Actors may be of use to others of the same Profession, and from thence may contribute to the Pleasure of the Publick, let that be my Excuse for pursuing them. I must therefore let it be known that, though in Voice and Ear Nature had been more kind to *Powel*, yet he so often lost the Value of them by an unheedful Confidence, that the constant wakeful Care and Decency of *Wilks* left the other far behind in the publick Esteem and Approbation. Nor was his Memory less tenacious than that of *Wilks*; but *Powel* put too much Trust in it, and idly deferr'd the Studying of his Parts, as School-boys do their Exercise, to the last Day, which commonly brings them out proportionably defective. But *Wilks* never lost an Hour of precious Time, and was, in all his Parts, perfect to such an Exactitude, that I question if in forty Years he ever five times chang'd or misplac'd an Article in any one of them. To be Master of this uncommon Diligence is adding to the Gift of Nature all that is in an Actor's Power; and this Duty of Studying perfect whatever Actor is remiss in, he will proportionably find that Nature may have been kind to him in vain, for though *Powel* had an Assurance that cover'd this Neglect much better than a Man of more Modesty might have done, yet, with all his Intrepidity, very often the Diffidence and Concern for what he was to *say* made him lose the Look of what he was to *be*: While, therefore, *Powel*

presided, his idle Example made this Fault so common to others, that I cannot but confess, in the general Infection, I had my Share of it; nor was my too critical Excuse for it a good one, *viz.* That scarce one Part in five that fell to my Lot was worth the Labour. But to shew Respect to an Audience is worth the best Actor's Labour, and, his Business consider'd, he must be a very impudent one that comes before them with a conscious Negligence of what he is about.<sup>1</sup> But *Wilks* was never known to make any of these venial Distinctions, nor, however barren his Part might be, could bear even the Self-Reproach of favouring his Memory: And I have been astonished to see him swallow a Volume of Froth and Insipidity in a new Play that we were

<sup>1</sup> Cibber is here somewhat in the position of Satan reproving sin, if Davies's statements ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 480) are accurate. He says:—

"This attention to the gaming-table would not, we may be assured, render him [Cibber] fitter for his business of the stage. After many an unlucky run at Tom's Coffee-house [in Russell Street], he has arrived at the playhouse in great tranquillity; and then, humming over an opera-tune, he has walked on the stage not well prepared in the part he was to act. Cibber should not have reprehended Powell so severely for neglect and imperfect representation: I have seen him at fault where it was least expected; in parts which he had acted a hundred times, and particularly in *Sir Courtly Nice*; but Colley dexterously supplied the deficiency of his memory by prolonging his ceremonious bow to the lady, and drawing out 'Your humble servant, madam,' to an extraordinary length; then taking a pinch of snuff, and strutting deliberately across the stage, he has gravely asked the prompter, what is next?"

sure could not live above three Days, tho' favour'd and recommended to the Stage by some good person of Quality. Upon such Occasions, in Compassion to his fruitless Toil and Labour, I have sometimes cry'd out with *Cato*—*Painful Præminence!* So insupportable, in my Sense, was the Task, when the bare Praise of not having been negligent was sure to be the only Reward of it. But so indefatigable was the Diligence of *Wilks*, that he seem'd to love it, as a good Man does Virtue, for its own sake; of which the following Instance will give you an extraordinary Proof.

In some new Comedy he happen'd to complain of a crabbed Speech in his Part, which, he said, gave him more trouble to study than all the rest of it had done; upon which he apply'd to the Author either to soften or shorten it. The Author, that he might make the Matter quite easy to him, fairly cut it all out. But when he got home from the Rehearsal, *Wilks* thought it such an Indignity to his Memory that any thing should be thought too hard for it, that he actually made himself perfect in that Speech, though he knew it was never to be made use of. From this singular Act of Supererogation you may judge how indefatigable the Labour of his Memory must have been when his Profit and Honour were more concern'd to make use of it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat," p. 45: "I have known him (*Wilks*) lay a Wager and win it, that he wou'd repeat the Part of *Truewitt* in the *Silent Woman*, which consists of thirty Lengths of Paper, as

But besides this indispensable Quality of Diligence, *Wilks* had the Advantage of a sober Character in private Life, which *Powel*, not having the least Regard to, labour'd under the unhappy Disfavour, not to say Contempt, of the Publick, to whom his licentious Courses were no Secret: Even when he did well that natural Prejudice pursu'd him; neither the Heroe nor the Gentleman, the young *Ammon*<sup>1</sup> nor the *Dorimant*,<sup>2</sup> could conceal from the conscious Spectator the True *George Powel*. And this sort of Disesteem or Favour every Actor will feel, and, more or less, have his Share of, as he *has*, or has *not*, a due Regard to his private Life and Reputation. Nay, even false Reports shall affect him, and become the Cause, or Pretence at least, of undervaluing or treating him injuriously. Let me give a known Instance of it, and at the same time a Justification of myself from an Imputation that was laid upon me not many Years before I quitted the Theatre, of which you will see the Consequence.

After the vast Success of that new Species of Dramatick Poetry, the *Beggars Opera*,<sup>3</sup> The Year following I was so stupid as to attempt something of the same Kind, upon a quite different Foundation, that

they call 'em, (that is, one Quarter of a Sheet on both Sides to a Length) without misplacing a single Word, or missing an (*and*) or an (*or*)."

<sup>1</sup> Alexander in "The Rival Queens."

<sup>2</sup> In "The Man of the Mode; or, Sir Fopling Flutter."

<sup>3</sup> Produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields, 29th January, 1728.

of recommending Virtue and Innocence; which I ignorantly thought might not have a less Pretence to Favour than setting Greatness and Authority in a contemptible, and the most vulgar Vice and Wickedness, in an amiable Light. But behold how fondly I was mistaken! *Love in a Riddle*<sup>1</sup> (for so my new-fangled Performance was called) was as vilely damn'd and hooted at as so vain a Presumption in the idle Cause of Virtue could deserve. Yet this

<sup>1</sup> "Love in a Riddle." A Pastoral. Produced at Drury Lane, 7th January, 1729.

ARCAS . . . . .	Mr. Mills.
ÆGON . . . . .	Mr. Harper.
AMYNTAS . . . . .	Mr. Williams.
IPHIS . . . . .	Mrs. Thurmond.
PHILAÛTUS, a conceited Corinthian courtier	Mr. Cibber.
CORYDON . . . . .	Mr. Griffin.
CIMON . . . . .	Mr. Miller.
MOPSUS . . . . .	Mr. Oates.
DAMON . . . . .	Mr. Ray.
IANTHE, daughter to Arcas . . . . .	Mrs. Cibber.
PASTORA, daughter to Ægon . . . . .	Mrs. Lindar.
PHILLIDA, daughter to Corydon . . . . .	Mrs. Raftor.

*Mrs. Raftor* (at this time *Miss* was not generally used) was afterwards the famous *Mrs. Clive*. Chetwood, in his "History of the Stage," 1749 (p. 128), says: "I remember the first night of *Love in a Riddle* (which was murder'd in the same Year) a Pastoral Opera wrote by the *Laureat*, which the Hydra-headed Multitude resolv'd to worry without hearing, a Custom with Authors of Merit, when *Miss Raftor* came on in the part of *Phillida*, the monstrous Roar subsided. A Person in the Stage-Box, next to my Post, called out to his Companion in the following elegant Style—'Zounds! *Tom!* take Care! or this charming little Devil will save all.'" Chetwood's "Post" was that of Prompter.

is not what I complain of; I will allow my Poetry to be as much below the other as Taste or Criticism can sink it: I will grant likewise that [the applauded Author of the *Beggars Opera* (whom I knew to be an honest good-natur'd Man, and who, when he had descended to write more like one, in the Cause of Virtue, had been as unfortunate as others of that Class;)] I will grant, I say, that in his *Beggars Opera* he had more skilfully gratify'd the Publick Taste than all the brightest Authors that ever writ before him; and I have sometimes thought, from the Modesty of his Motto, *Nos hæc novimus esse nihil*,<sup>1</sup> that he gave them that Performance as a Satyr upon the Depravity of their Judgment (as *Ben. Johnson* of old was said to give his *Bartholomew-Fair* in Ridicule of the vulgar Taste which had disliked his *Sejanus*<sup>2</sup>) and that, by artfully seducing them to be the Champions of the Immoralities he himself detested, he should be amply reveng'd on their former Severity and Ignorance. This were indeed a Triumph! which even the Author of *Cato* might have envy'd, *Cato!* 'tis true, succeeded, but reach'd not, by full forty Days, the Progress and Applauses of the *Beggars Opera*. Will it, however, admit of a Question, which of the two Compositions a good Writer would rather wish to have been the Author of? Yet, on the other side, must we not allow that to have taken a whole Nation, High and Low, into a general Applause,

<sup>1</sup> Martial, xiii. 2, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Cibber should have written *Catiline*.

has shown a Power in Poetry which, though often attempted in the same kind, none but this one Author could ever yet arrive at? By what Rule, then, are we to judge of our true National Taste? But to keep a little closer to my Point,

The same Author the next Year had, according to the Laws of the Land, transported his Heroe to the *West-Indies* in a Second Part to the *Beggars Opera*;<sup>1</sup> but so it happen'd, to the Surprize of the Publick, this Second Part was forbid to come upon the Stage! Various were the Speculations upon this act of Power: Some thought that the Author, others that the Town, was hardly dealt with; a third sort, who perhaps had envy'd him the Success of his first Part, affirm'd, when it was printed, that whatever the Intention might be, the Fact was in his Favour, that he had been a greater Gainer by Subscriptions to his Copy than he could have been by a bare Theatrical Presentation. Whether any Part of these Opinions were true I am not concerned to determine or consider. But how they affected me I am going to tell you. Soon after this Prohibition,<sup>2</sup> my Performance was to come upon the Stage, at a time when many

<sup>1</sup> This second part was called "Polly." In his Preface Gay gives an account of its being vetoed. The prohibition undoubtedly was in revenge for the political satire in "The Beggar's Opera." "Polly" was published by subscription, and probably brought the author more in that way than its production would have done. It was played for the first time at the Haymarket, 19th June, 1777. It is, as Genest says, miserably inferior to the first part.

<sup>2</sup> "Polly" was officially prohibited on 12th December, 1728.



People were out of Humour at the late Disappointment, and seem'd willing to lay hold of any Pretence of making a Reprizal. Great Umbrage was taken that I was permitted to have the whole Town to my self, by this absolute Forbiddance of what they had more mind to have been entertain'd with. And, some few Days before my Bawble was acted, I was inform'd that a strong Party would be made against it: This Report I slighted, as not conceiving why it should be true; and when I was afterwards told what was the pretended Provocation of this Party, I slighted it still more, as having less Reason to suppose any Persons could believe me capable (had I had the Power) of giving such a Provocation. The Report, it seems, that had run against me was this: That, to make way for the Success of my own Play, I had privately found means, or made Interest, that the Second Part of the *Beggars Opera* might be suppressed. What an involuntary Compliment did the Reporters of this falshood make me? to suppose me of Consideration enough to Influence a great Officer of State to gratify the Spleen or Envy of a Comedian so far as to rob the Publick of an innocent Diversion (if it were such) that none but that cunning Comedian might be suffered to give it them.<sup>1</sup> This is so very gross a Supposition that it

<sup>1</sup> I know only one case in which a new piece is said to have been prohibited because the other house was going to play one on the same subject. This is Swiney's "Quacks; or, Love's the Physician," produced at Drury Lane on 18th March, 1705, after

needs only its own senseless Face to confound it ; let that alone, then, be my Defence against it. But against blind Malice and staring inhumanity whatever is upon the Stage has no Defence ! There they knew I stood helpless and expos'd to whatever they might please to load or asperse me with. I had not considered, poor Devil ! that from the Security of a full Pit Dunces might be Criticks, Cowards valiant, and 'Prentices Gentlemen ! Whether any such were concern'd in the Murder of my Play I am not certain, for I never endeavour'd to discover any one of its Assassins ; I cannot afford them a milder Name, from their unmanly manner of destroying it. Had it been heard, they might have left me nothing to say to them : 'Tis true it faintly held up its wounded Head a second Day, and would have spoke for Mercy, but was not suffer'd. Not even the Presence of a Royal Heir apparent could protect it. But then I was reduced to be serious with them ; their Clamour then became an Insolence, which I thought it my Duty by the Sacrifice of any Interest of my own to put an end to. I therefore quitted the Actor for the Author, and, stepping forward to the Pit, told them, *That since I found they were not inclin'd that this Play should go forward, I gave them my Word that after this Night it should never be acted agen : But that, in the mean time, I hop'd they would consider in whose Presence they were, and for being twice vetoed.* Swiney in his Preface gives the above as the reason for the prohibition.

*that Reason at least would suspend what farther Marks of their Displeasure they might imagine I had deserved.* At this there was a dead Silence; and after some little Pause, a few civiliz'd Hands signify'd their Approbation. When the Play went on, I observ'd about a Dozen Persons of no extraordinary Appearance sullenly walk'd out of the Pit. After which, every Scene of it, while uninterrupted, met with more Applause than my best Hopes had expected. But it came too late: Peace to its *Manes!* I had given my Word it should fall, and I kept it by giving out another Play for the next Day, though I knew the Boxes were all lett for the same again. Such, then, was the Treatment I met with: How much of it the Errors of the Play might deserve I refer to the Judgment of those who may have Curiosity and idle time enough to read it.<sup>1</sup> But if I had no occasion to complain of the Reception it met with from its *quieted* Audience, sure it can be no great Vanity to impute its Disgraces chiefly to that severe Resentment which a groundless Report of me had inflam'd: Yet those Disgraces have left me something to boast of, an Honour preferable even to the Applause of my Enemies: A noble Lord came behind the Scenes, and told me, from the Box, where he was in waiting, *That what I said to quiet the Audience was extremely well taken there; and that I had been commended for it in a very obliging manner.*

<sup>1</sup> Cibber afterwards formed the best scenes of "Love in a Riddle" into a Ballad Opera, called "Damon and Phillida."

Now, though this was the only Tumult that I have known to have been so effectually appeas'd these fifty Years by any thing that could be said to an Audience in the same Humour, I will not take any great Merit to myself upon it ; because when, like me, you will but humbly submit to their doing you all the Mischief they can, they will at any time be satisfy'd.

I have mention'd this particular Fact to inforce what I before observ'd, That the private Character of an Actor will always more or less affect his Publick Performance. And if I suffer'd so much from the bare *Suspicion* of my having been guilty of a base Action, what should not an Actor expect that is hardy enough to think his whole private Character of no consequence ? I could offer many more, tho' less severe Instances of the same Nature. I have seen the most tender Sentiment of Love in Tragedy create Laughter, instead of Compassion, when it has been applicable to the real Engagements of the Person that utter'd it. I have known good Parts thrown up, from an humble Consciousness that something in them might put an Audience in mind of—what was rather wish'd might be forgotten : Those remarkable Words of *Evadne*, in the *Maid's Tragedy*—*A Maidenhead, Amintor, at my Years ?*—have sometimes been a much stronger Jest for being a true one. But these are Reproaches which in all Nations the Theatre must have been us'd to, unless we could suppose Actors something more than Human Crea-

tures, void of Faults or Frailties. 'Tis a Misfortune at least not limited to the *English* Stage. I have seen the better-bred Audience in *Paris* made merry even with a modest Expression, when it has come from the Mouth of an Actress whose private Character it seem'd not to belong to. The Apprehension of these kind of Fleers from the Witlings of a Pit has been carry'd so far in our own Country, that a late valuable Actress<sup>1</sup> (who was conscious her Beauty was not her greatest Merit) desired the Warmth of some Lines might be abated when they have made her too remarkably handsome: But in this Discretion she was alone, few others were afraid of undeserving the finest things that could be said to them. But to consider this Matter seriously, I cannot but think, at a Play, a sensible Auditor would contribute all he could to his being well deceiv'd, and not suffer his Imagination so far to wander from the well-acted Character before him, as to gratify a frivolous Spleen by Mocks or personal Sneers on the Performer, at the Expence of his better Entertainment. But I must now take up *Wilks* and *Powel* again where I left them.

Though the Contention for Superiority between

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers notes that this was probably Mrs. Oldfield. But I think this more than doubtful, for this lady not only was fair, but also, as Touchstone says, "had the gift to know it." It is, of course, impossible to say decidedly to whom Cibber referred; but I fancy that Mrs. Barry is the actress who best fulfils the conditions, though, of course, I must admit that her having been dead for a quarter of a century weakens my case.

them seem'd about this time to end in favour of the former, yet the Distress of the Patentee (in having his Servant his Master, as *Powel* had lately been), was not much reliev'd by the Victory ; he had only chang'd the Man, but not the Malady : For *Wilks*, by being in Possession of so many good Parts, fell into the common Error of most Actors, that of over-rating their Merit, or never thinking it is so thoroughly consider'd as it ought to be, which generally makes them proportionably troublesome to the Master, who they might consider only pays them to profit by them. The Patentee therefore found it as difficult to satisfy the continual Demands of *Wilks* as it was dangerous to refuse them ; very few were made that were not granted, and as few were granted as were not grudg'd him : Not but our good Master was as sly a Tyrant as ever was at the Head of a Theatre ; for he gave the Actors more Liberty, and fewer Days Pay, than any of his Predecessors : He would laugh with them over a Bottle, and bite<sup>1</sup> them in their Bargains: He kept them poor, that they might not be able to rebel ; and sometimes merry, that they might not think of it : All their Articles of Agreement had a Clause in them that he was sure to creep out at, *viz.* Their respective Sallaries were to be paid in such manner and proportion as others of the same

<sup>1</sup> A "bite" is what we now term a "sell." In "The Spectator," Nos. 47 and 504, some account of "Biters" is given : "a Race of Men that are perpetually employed in laughing at those Mistakes which are of their own Production."

Company were paid ; which in effect made them all, when he pleas'd, but limited Sharers of Loss, and himself sole Proprietor of Profits ; and this Loss or Profit they only had such verbal Accounts of as he thought proper to give them. 'Tis true, he would sometimes advance them Money (but not more than he knew at most could be due to them) upon their Bonds ; upon which, whenever they were mutinous, he would threaten to sue them. This was the Net we danc'd in for several Years : But no wonder we were Dupes, while our Master was a Lawyer. This Grievance, however, *Wilks* was resolv'd, for himself at least, to remedy at any rate ; and grew daily more intractable, for every Day his Redress was delay'd. Here our Master found himself under a Difficulty he knew not well how to get out of : For as he was a close subtle Man, he seldom made use of a Confident in his Schemes of Government :<sup>1</sup> But here the old Expedient of Delay would stand him in no longer stead ; *Wilks* must instantly be comply'd with, or *Powel* come again into Power ! In a word, he was push'd so home, that he was reduc'd even to take my Opinion into his Assistance : For he knew I was a Rival to neither of them ; perhaps, too, he had fancy'd that, from the Success of my first Play, I might know as much of the Stage, and what made an Actor valuable, as either of them : He saw, too, that tho' they had each of them five good Parts to my one, yet the Applause which in my few I had

<sup>1</sup> This is a capital sketch of Christopher Rich.

met with, was given me by better Judges than as yet had approv'd of the best they had done. They generally measured the goodness of a Part by the Quantity or Length of it: I thought none bad for being short that were closely-natural; nor any the better for being long, without that valuable Quality. But in this, I doubt, as to their Interest, they judg'd better than myself; for I have generally observ'd that those who do a great deal not ill, have been preferr'd to those who do but little, though never so masterly. And therefore I allow that, while there were so few good Parts, and as few good Judges of them, it ought to have been no Wonder to me, that as an Actor I was less valued by the Master or the common People than either of them: All the Advantage I had of them was, that by not being troublesome I had more of our Master's personal Inclination than any Actor of the male Sex;<sup>1</sup> and so much of it, that I was almost the only one whom at that time he us'd to take into his Parties of Pleasure; very often *tete à tete*, and sometimes in a *Partie quarrée*. These then were the Qualifications, however good or bad, to which may be imputed our Master's having made choice of me to assist him in the Difficulty under which he now labour'd. He

<sup>1</sup> Cibber's hint of Rich's weakness for the fair sex is corroborated by the "Comparison between the two Stages," page 16: "*Critick*. He is Monarch of the Stage, tho' he knows not how to govern one Province in his Dominion, but that of Signing, Sealing, and something else, that shall be nameless."



was himself sometimes inclin'd to set up *Powel* again as a Check upon the over-bearing Temper of *Wilks*: Tho' to say truth, he lik'd neither of them, but was still under a Necessity that one of them should preside, tho' he scarce knew which of the two Evils to chuse. This Question, when I happen'd to be alone with him, was often debated in our Evening Conversation; nor, indeed, did I find it an easy matter to know which Party I ought to recommend to his Election. I knew they were neither of them Well-wishers to me, as in common they were Enemies to most Actors in proportion to the Merit that seem'd to be rising in them. But as I had the Prosperity of the Stage more at Heart than any other Consideration, I could not be long undetermined in my Opinion, and therefore gave it to our Master at once in Favour of *Wilks*. I, with all the Force I could muster, insisted, "That if *Powel* were "preferr'd, the ill Example of his Negligence and "abandon'd Character (whatever his Merit on the "Stage might be) would reduce our Company to "Contempt and Beggary; observing, at the same "time, in how much better Order our Affairs went "forward since *Wilks* came among us, of which I "recounted several Instances that are not so necessary to tire my Reader with. All this, though he "allow'd to be true, yet *Powel*, he said, was a better "Actor than *Wilks* when he minded his Business " (that is to say, when he was, what he seldom was, "sober). But *Powel*, it seems, had a still greater

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“ Merit to him, which was, (as he observ’d) that  
 “ when Affairs were in his Hands, he had kept the  
 “ Actors quiet, without one Day’s Pay, for six  
 “ Weeks together, and it was not every body could  
 “ do that; for you see, said he, *Wilks* will never be  
 “ easy unless I give him his whole Pay, when others  
 “ have it not, and what an Injustice would that be  
 “ to the rest if I were to comply with him? How  
 “ do I know but then they may be all in a Mutiny,  
 “ and *mayhap* (that was his Expression) with *Powel*  
 “ at the Head of ’em?” By this Specimen of our  
 Debate, it may be judg’d under how particular and  
 merry a Government the Theatre then labour’d.  
 To conclude, this Matter ended in a Resolution to  
 sign a new Agreement with *Wilks*, which entitled  
 him to his full Pay of four Pounds a Week without  
 any conditional Deductions. How far soever my  
 Advice might have contributed to our Master’s settling  
 his Affairs upon this Foot, I never durst make the  
 least Merit of it to *Wilks*, well knowing that his  
 great Heart would have taken it as a mortal Affront  
 had I (tho’ never so distantly) hinted that his  
 Demands had needed any Assistance but the Jus-  
 tice of them. From this time, then, *Wilks* became  
 first Minister, or Bustle-master-general of the Com-  
 pany.<sup>1</sup> He now seem’d to take new Delight in

<sup>1</sup> “The Laureat,” p. 48: “If *Minister Wilks* was now alive to  
 hear thee prate thus, Mr. *Bayes*, I would not give one Half-penny  
 for thy Ears; but if he were alive, thou durst not for thy Ears  
 rattle on in this affected *Matchiavilian* stile.”

keeping the Actors close to their Business, and got every Play reviv'd with Care in which he had acted the chief Part in *Dublin*: 'Tis true, this might be done with a particular View of setting off himself to Advantage; but if at the same time it served the Company, he ought not to want our Commendation: Now, tho' my own Conduct neither had the Appearance of his Merit, nor the Reward that follow'd his Industry, I cannot help observing that it shew'd me, to the best of my Power, a more cordial Commonwealth's Man: His first Views in serving himself made his Service to the whole but an incidental Merit; whereas, by my prosecuting the Means to make him easy in his Pay, unknown to him, or without asking any Favour for my self at the same time, I gave a more unquestionable Proof of my preferring the Publick to my Private Interest: From the same Principle I never murmur'd at whatever little Parts fell to my Share, and though I knew it would not recommend me to the Favour of the common People, I often submitted to play wicked Characters rather than they should be worse done by weaker Actors than my self: But perhaps, in all this Patience under my Situation, I supported my Spirits by a conscious Vanity: For I fancied I had more Reason to value myself upon being sometimes the Confident and Companion of our Master, than *Wilks* had in all the more publick Favours he had extorted from him. I imagined, too, there was sometimes as much Skill to be shewn in a short Part, as in the

most voluminous, which he generally made choice of; that even the coxcomby Follies of a Sir *John Daw* might as well distinguish the Capacity of an Actor, as all the dry Enterprizes and busy Conduct of a *Truewit*.<sup>1</sup> Nor could I have any Reason to repine at the Superiority he enjoy'd, when I consider'd at how dear a Rate it was purchased, at the continual Expence of a restless Jealousy and fretful Impatience—These were the Passions that, in the height of his Successes, kept him lean to his last Hour, while what I wanted in Rank or Glory was amply made up to me in Ease and Chearfulness. But let not this Observation either lessen his Merit or lift up my own; since our different Tempers were not in our Choice, but equally natural to both of us. To be employ'd on the Stage was the Delight of his Life; to be justly excused from it was the Joy of mine: I lov'd Ease, and he Pre-eminence: In that, he might be more commendable. Tho' he often disturb'd me, he seldom could do it without more disordering himself:<sup>2</sup> In our Disputes, his Warmth could less bear Truth than I could support manifest Injuries: He would hazard our Undoing to gratify his Passions, tho' otherwise an honest

<sup>1</sup> Characters in Ben Jonson's "Silent Woman."

<sup>2</sup> "The Laureat," p. 49: "Did you not, by your general Misbehaviour towards Authors and Actors, bring an *Odium* on your Brother *Menagers*, as well as yourself; and were not these, with many others, the Reasons, that sometimes gave Occasion to *Wilks*, to chastise you, with his Tongue only."

Man ; and I rather chose to give up my Reason, or not see my Wrong, than ruin our Community by an equal Rashness. By this opposite Conduct our Accounts at the End of our Labours stood thus : While he lived he was the elder Man, when he died he was not so old as I am : He never left the Stage till he left the World : I never so well enjoy'd the World as when I left the Stage : He died in Possession of his Wishes ; and I, by having had a less cholerick Ambition, am still tasting mine in Health and Liberty. But as he in a great measure wore out the Organs of Life in his incessant Labours to gratify the Publick, the Many whom he gave Pleasure to will always owe his Memory a favourable Report—Some Facts that will vouch for the Truth of this Account will be found in the Sequel of these Memoirs. If I have spoke with more Freedom of his quondam Competitor *Powel*, let my good Intentions to future Actors, in shewing what will so much concern them to avoid, be my Excuse for it : For though *Powel* had from Nature much more than *Wilks* ; in Voice and Ear, in Elocution in Tragedy, and Humour in Comedy, greatly the Advantage of him ; yet, as I have observ'd, from the Neglect and Abuse of those valuable Gifts, he suffer'd *Wilks* to be of thrice the Service to our Society. Let me give another Instance of the Reward and Favour which, in a Theatre, Diligence and Sobriety seldom fail of : *Mills* the elder <sup>1</sup> grew into the Friendship of

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of John Mills at end of second volume.

*Wilks* with not a great deal more than those useful Qualities to recommend him : He was an honest, quiet, careful Man, of as few Faults as Excellencies, and *Wilks* rather chose him for his second in many Plays, than an Actor of perhaps greater Skill that was not so laboriously diligent. And from this constant Assiduity, *Mills*, with making to himself a Friend in *Wilks*, was advanced to a larger Sallary than any Man-Actor had enjoy'd during my time on the Stage.<sup>1</sup> I have yet to offer a more happy Recommendation of Temperance, which a late celebrated Actor was warn'd into by the mis-conduct of *Powel*. About the Year that *Wilks* return'd from *Dublin*, *Booth*, who had commenced Actor upon that Theatre, came over to the Company in *Lincolns-Inn-Fields* :<sup>2</sup> He was then but an Under-graduate of the Buskin; and, as he told me himself, had been for some time too frank a Lover of the Bottle; but having had the Happiness to observe into what Contempt and Distresses *Powel* had plung'd himself by the same Vice, he was so struck with the Terror of his Example, that he fix'd a Resolution (which

<sup>1</sup> John Mills, in the advertisement issued by Rich, in 1709, in the course of a dispute with his actors, is stated to have a salary of "£4 a week for himself, and £1 a week for his wife, for little or nothing." This advertisement is quoted by me in Chap. XII. Mills's salary was the same as Betterton's. No doubt Cibber, Wilks, Dogget, and Booth had ultimately larger salaries, but they, of course, were managers as well as actors.

<sup>2</sup> Booth seems to have joined the Lincoln's Inn Fields Company in 1700.

from that time to the End of his Days he strictly observ'd) of utterly reforming it ; an uncommon Act of Philosophy in a young Man ! of which in his Fame and Fortune he afterwards enjoy'd the Reward and Benefit. These Observations I have not merely thrown together as a Moralist, but to prove that the briskest loose Liver or intemperate Man (though Morality were out of the Question) can never arrive at the necessary Excellencies of a good or useful Actor.



## CHAPTER VIII.

*The Patentee of Drury-Lane wiser than his Actors. His particular Menagement. The Author continues to write Plays. Why. The best dramatick Poets censured by J. Collier, in his Short View of the Stage. It has a good Effect. The Master of the Revels, from that time, cautious in his licensing new Plays. A Complaint against him. His Authority founded upon Custom only. The late Law for fixing that Authority in a proper Person, considered.*

**T**HOUGH the Master of our Theatre had no Conception himself of Theatrical Merit either in Authors or Actors, yet his Judgment was govern'd by a saving Rule in both : He look'd into his Receipts for the Value of a Play, and from common Fame he judg'd of his Actors. But by whatever Rule he was govern'd, while he had prudently



reserv'd to himself a Power of not paying them more than their Merit could get, he could not be much deceived by their being over or under-valued. In a Word, he had with great Skill inverted the Constitution of the Stage, and quite changed the Channel of Profits arising from it ; formerly, (when there was but one Company) the Proprietors punctually paid the Actors their appointed Sallaries, and took to themselves only the clear Profits : But our wiser Proprietor took first out of every Day's Receipts two Shillings in the Pound to himself ; and left their Sallaries to be paid only as the less or greater Deficiencies of acting (according to his own Accounts) would permit. What seem'd most extraordinary in these Measures was, that at the same time he had persuaded us to be contented with our Condition, upon his assuring us that as fast as Money would come in we should all be paid our Arrears : And that we might not have it always in our Power to say he had never intended to keep his Word, I remember in a few Years after this time he once paid us nine Days in one Week : This happen'd when the *Funeral*, or *Grief à la Mode*,<sup>1</sup> was first acted, with more than expected Success. Whether this well-tim'd Bounty was only allow'd us to save Appearances I will not say : But if that was his real Motive for it, it was too costly a frolick to be repeated, and was at least the only Grimace of its kind he vouchsafed us ; we

<sup>1</sup> Steele's comedy was produced at Drury Lane in 1702. Cibber played Lord Hardy.

never having received one Day more of those Arrears in above fifteen Years Service.

While the Actors were in this Condition, I think I may very well be excused in my presuming to write Plays : which I was forced to do for the Support of my encreasing Family, my precarious Income as an Actor being then too scanty to supply it with even the Necessaries of Life.

It may be observable, too, that my Muse and my Spouse were equally prolifick ; that the one was seldom the Mother of a Child, but in the same Year the other made me the Father of a Play : I think we had a Dozen of each Sort between us ; of both which kinds, some died in their Infancy, and near an equal Number of each were alive when I quitted the Theatre—But it is no Wonder, when a Muse is only call'd upon by Family Duty, she should not always rejoice in the Fruit of her Labour. To this Necessity of writing, then, I attribute the Defects of my second Play, which, coming out too hastily the Year after my first, turn'd to very little Account. But having got as much by my first as I ought to have expected from the Success of them both, I had no great Reason to complain : Not but, I confess, so bad was my second, that I do not chuse to tell you the Name of it ; and that it might be peaceably forgotten, I have not given it a Place in the two Volumes of those I publish'd in Quarto in the Year 1721.<sup>1</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> The play was called "Woman's Wit ; or, the Lady in Fashion." It was produced at Drury Lane in 1697. It must have been in

whenever I took upon me to make some dormant Play of an old Author to the best of my Judgment fitter for the Stage, it was honestly not to be idle that set me to work; as a good Housewife will mend old Linnen when she has not better Employment: But when I was more warmly engag'd by a Subject entirely new, I only thought it a good Subject when it seem'd worthy of an abler Pen than my own, and might prove as useful to the Hearer as profitable to my self: [Therefore, whatever any of my Productions might want of Skill, Learning, Wit, or Humour, or however unqualify'd I might be to instruct others who so ill govern'd my self: Yet such Plays (entirely my own) were not wanting, at least, in what our most admired Writers seem'd to neglect, and without which I cannot allow the most taking Play to be in-

the early months of that year, for in his Preface Cibber says, to excuse its failure, that it was hurriedly written, and that "rather than lose a Winter" he forced himself to invent a fable. "The Laureat," p. 50, stupidly says that the name of the play was "*Perolla and Isadora.*" The cast was:—

LORD LOVEMORE . . . . .	Mr. Harland.
LONGVILLE . . . . .	Mr. Cibber.
MAJOR RAKISH . . . . .	Mr. Penkethman.
JACK RAKISH . . . . .	Mr. Powel.
MASS JOHNNY, Lady Manlove's Son, a schoolboy . . . . .	Mr. Dogget.
FATHER BENEDIC . . . . .	Mr. Smeaton.
LADY MANLOVE . . . . .	Mrs. Powel.
LEONORA . . . . .	Mrs. Knight.
EMILIA . . . . .	Mrs. Rogers.
OLIVIA . . . . .	Mrs. Cibber.
LETTICE . . . . .	Mrs. Kent.

trinsically good, or to be a Work upon which a Man of Sense and Probity should value himself: I mean when they do not, as well *prodesse* as *delectare*,<sup>1</sup> give Profit with Delight! The *Utile Dulci*<sup>2</sup> was, of old, equally the Point; and has always been my Aim, however wide of the Mark I may have shot my Arrow. It has often given me Amazement that our best Authors of that time could think the Wit and Spirit of their Scenes could be an Excuse for making the Looseness of them publick. The many Instances of their Talents so abused are too glaring to need a closer Comment, and are sometimes too gross to be recited. If then to have avoided this Imputation, or rather to have had the Interest and Honour of Virtue always in view, can give Merit to a Play, I am contented that my Readers should think such Merit the All that mine have to boast of—Libertines of meer Wit and Pleasure may laugh at these grave Laws that would limit a lively Genius: But every sensible honest Man, conscious of their Truth and Use, will give these Ralliers Smile for Smile, and shew a due Contempt for their Merriment.]

But while our Authors took these extraordinary Liberties with their Wit, I remember the Ladies were then observ'd to be decently afraid of venturing bare-fac'd to a new Comedy 'till they had been

<sup>1</sup> "Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae."

Hor. *Ars Poetica*, 333.

<sup>2</sup> "Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci."

Hor. *Ars Poetica*, 343.

assur'd they might do it without the Risque of an Insult to their Modesty—Or, if their Curiosity were too strong for their Patience, they took Care, at least, to save Appearances, and rarely came upon the first Days of Acting but in Masks, (then daily worn and admitted in the Pit, the side Boxes, and Gallery<sup>1</sup>) which Custom, however, had so many ill Consequences attending it, that it has been abolish'd these many Years.

These Immoralities of the Stage had by an avow'd Indulgence been creeping into it ever since King *Charles* his Time; nothing that was loose could then be too low for it: The *London Cuckolds*, the most rank Play that ever succeeded,<sup>2</sup> was then in the highest Court-Favour: In this almost general Corruption, *Dryden*, whose Plays were more fam'd for their Wit than their Chastity, led the way, which he fairly confesses, and endeavours to excuse in his Epilogue to the *Pilgrim*, revived in 1700 for his

<sup>1</sup> Pepys (12th June, 1663) records that the Lady Mary Cromwell at the Theatre, "when the House began to fill, put on her vizard, and so kept it on all the play; which of late is become a great fashion among the ladies, which hides their whole face." Very soon, however, ladies gave up the use of the mask, and "Vizard-mask" became a synonym for "Prostitute." In this sense it is frequently used in Dryden's Prologues and Epilogues.

<sup>2</sup> Compare with Cibber's condemnation Genest's opinion of this play. He says (i. 365): "If it be the province of Comedy, not to retail morality to a yawning pit, but to make the audience laugh, and to keep them in good humour, this play must be allowed to be one of the best comedies in the English language."

Benefit,<sup>1</sup>] in his declining Age and Fortune—The following Lines of it will make good my Observation.

*Perhaps the Parson<sup>2</sup> stretch'd a Point too far,  
When with our Theatres he wag'd a War.  
He tells you that this very moral Age  
Receiv'd the first Infection from the Stage.  
But sure, a banish'd Court, with Lewdness fraught,  
The Seeds of open Vice returning brought.  
Thus lodg'd (as vice by great Example thrives)  
It first debauch'd the Daughters, and the Wives.  
London, a fruitful Soil, yet never bore  
So plentiful a Crop of Horns before.  
The Poets, who must live by Courts or starve,  
Were proud so good a Government to serve.  
And mixing with Buffoons and Pimps profane,  
Tainted the Stage for some small snip of Gain.  
For they, like Harlots under Bawds profest,  
Took all th'ungodly Pains, and got the least.  
Thus did the thriving Malady prevail,*

<sup>1</sup> To "The Pilgrim," revived in 1700, as Cibber states, Dryden's "Secular Masque" was attached. Whether the revival took place before or after Dryden's death (1st May, 1700) is a moot point. See Genest, ii. 179, for an admirable account of the matter. He thinks it probable that the date of production was 25th March, 1700. Cibber is scarcely accurate in stating that "The Pilgrim" was revived for Dryden's benefit. It seems, rather, that Vanbrugh, who revised the play, stipulated that, in consideration of Dryden's writing "The Secular Masque," and also the Prologue and Epilogue, he should have the usual author's third night. The B. M. copy of "The Pilgrim" is dated, in an old handwriting, "Monday, the 5 of May."

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Collier.

*The Court it's Head, the Poets but the Tail.*  
*The Sin was of our native Growth, 'tis true,*  
*The Scandal of the Sin was wholly new.*  
*Misses there were, but modestly conceal'd ;*  
*White-hall the naked Venus first reveal'd.*  
*Who standing, as at Cyprus, in her Shrine,*  
*The Strumpet was ador'd with Rites divine, &c.*

This Epilogue, and the Prologue to the same Play, written by *Dryden*, I spoke myself, which not being usually done by the same Person, I have a mind, while I think of it, to let you know on what Occasion they both fell to my Share, and how other Actors were affected by it.

Sir *John Vanbrugh*, who had given some light touches of his Pen to the *Pilgrim* to assist the Benefit Day of *Dryden*, had the Disposal of the Parts, and I being then as an Actor in some Favour with him, he read the Play first with me alone, and was pleased to offer me my Choice of what I might like best for myself in it. But as the chief Characters were not (according to my Taste) the most shining, it was no great Self-denial in me that I desir'd he would first take care of those who were more difficult to be pleased ; I therefore only chose for myself two short incidental Parts, that of *the stuttering Cook*<sup>1</sup> and *the mad Englishman*. In which homely Characters I saw more Matter for Delight than those that

<sup>1</sup> Genest notes (ii. 181) that in the original play the Servant in the 2nd act did not stutter.

might have a better Pretence to the Amiable : And when the Play came to be acted I was not deceiv'd in my Choice. Sir *John*, upon my being contented with so little a Share in the Entertainment, gave me the Epilogue to make up my Mess ; which being written so much above the Strain of common Authors, I confess I was not a little pleased with. And *Dryden*, upon his hearing me repeat it to him, made me a farther Compliment of trusting me with the Prologue. This so particular Distinction was looked upon by the Actors as something too extraordinary. But no one was so impatiently ruffled at it as *Wilks*, who seldom chose soft Words when he spoke of any thing he did not like. The most gentle thing he said of it was, that he did not understand such Treatment ; that for his Part he look'd upon it as an Affront to all the rest of the Company, that there shou'd be but one out of the Whole judg'd fit to speak either a Prologue or an Epilogue ! to quiet him I offer'd to decline either in his Favour, or both, if it were equally easy to the Author : But he was too much concern'd to accept of an Offer that had been made to another in preference to himself, and which he seem'd to think his best way of resenting was to contemn. But from that time, however, he was resolv'd, to the best of his Power, never to let the first Offer of a Prologue escape him : Which little Ambition sometimes made him pay too dear for his Success : The Flatness of the many miserable Prologues that by this means fell to his Lot, seem'd



wofully unequal to the few good ones he might have Reason to triumph in.

I have given you this Fact only as a Sample of those frequent Rubs and Impediments I met with when any Step was made to my being distinguish'd as an Actor ; and from this Incident, too, you may partly see what occasion'd so many Prologues, after the Death of *Betterton*, to fall into the Hands of one Speaker : But it is not every Successor to a vacant Post that brings into it the Talents equal to those of a Predecessor. [To speak a good Prologue well is, in my Opinion, one of the hardest Parts and strongest Proofs of sound Elocution, of which, I confess, I never thought that any of the several who attempted it shew'd themselves, by far, equal Masters to *Betterton*. *Betterton*, in the Delivery of a good Prologue, had a natural Gravity that gave Strength to good Sense, a temper'd Spirit that gave Life to Wit, and a dry Reserve in his Smile that threw Ridicule into its brightest Colours. Of these Qualities, in the speaking of a Prologue, *Booth* only had the first, but attain'd not to the other two : *Wilks* had Spirit, but gave too loose a Rein to it, and it was seldom he could speak a grave and weighty Verse harmoniously : His Accents were frequently too sharp and violent, which sometimes occasion'd his eagerly cutting off half the Sound of Syllables that ought to have been gently melted into the Melody of Metre : In Verses of Humour, too, he would sometimes carry the Mimickry farther than the hint would bear, even to

a trifling Light, as if himself were pleased to see it so glittering. In the Truth of this Criticism I have been confirm'd by those whose Judgment I dare more confidently rely on than my own: *Wilks* had many Excellencies, but if we leave Prologue-Speaking out of the Number he will still have enough to have made him a valuable Actor. And I only make this Exception from them to caution others from imitating what, in his time, they might have too implicitly admired— But I have a Word or two more to say concerning the Immoralities of the Stage. Our Theatrical Writers were not only accus'd of Immorality, but Prophaneness; many flagrant Instances of which were collected and published by a Non-juring Clergyman, *Jeremy Collier*, in his *View of the Stage, &c.* about the Year 1697.<sup>1</sup> However just his Charge against the Authors that then wrote for it might be, I cannot but think his Sentence against the Stage itself is unequal; Reformation he thinks too mild a Treatment for it, and is therefore for laying his Ax to the Root of it: If this were to be a Rule of Judgment for Offences of the same Nature,

<sup>1</sup> Collier's famous work, which was entitled "A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage: together with the sense of Antiquity upon this Argument," was published in 1698. Collier was a Nonjuring clergyman. He was born on 23rd September, 1650, and died in 1726. The circumstance to which Cibber alludes in the second paragraph from the present, was Collier's attending to the scaffold Sir John Friend and Sir William Perkins, who were executed for complicity in plots against King William in 1696.







WILLIAM CONGREVE.



what might become of the Pulpit, where many a seditious and corrupted Teacher has been known to cover the most pernicious Doctrine with the Masque of Religion? ] This puts me in mind of what the noted *Jo. Hains*,<sup>1</sup> the Comedian, a Fellow of a wicked Wit, said upon this Occasion ; who being ask'd what could transport Mr. *Collier* into so blind a Zeal for a general Suppression of the Stage, when only some particular Authors had abus'd it? Whereas the Stage, he could not but know, was generally allow'd, when rightly conducted, to be a delightful Method of mending our Morals? "For that Reason, reply'd "*Hains*: *Collier* is by Profession a Moral-mender "himself, and two of Trade, you know, can never "agree."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The facetious Joe Haines was an actor of great popularity, and seems to have excelled in the delivery of Prologues and Epilogues, especially of those written by himself. He was on the stage from about 1672 to 1700 or 1701, in which latter year (on the 4th of April) he died. He was the original Sparkish in Wycherley's "Country Wife," Lord Plausible in the same author's "Plain Dealer," and Tom Errand in Farquhar's "Constant Couple." Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 284) tells, on Quin's authority, an anecdote of Haines's pretended conversion to Romanism during James the Second's reign. He declared that the Virgin Mary appeared to him in a vision. "Lord Sunderland sent for Joe, and asked him about the truth of his conversion, and whether he had really seen the Virgin?—Yes, my Lord, I assure you it is a fact.—How was it, pray?—Why, as I was lying in my bed, the Virgin appeared to me, and said, *Arise, Joe!*—You lie, you rogue, said the Earl; for, if it had really been the Virgin herself, she would have said *Joseph*, if it had been only out of respect to her husband." For an account of Haines, see also Anthony Aston.

<sup>2</sup> "The Laureat" (p. 53) states that soon after the publication

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The Authors of *the old Batchelor* and of the *Relapse* were those whom *Collier* most labour'd to convict of Immorality ; to which they severally publish'd their Reply ; the first seem'd too much hurt to be able to defend himself, and the other felt him so little that his Wit only laugh'd at his Lashes.<sup>1</sup>

My first Play of the *Fool in Fashion*, too, being then in a Course of Success ; perhaps for that Reason only, this severe Author thought himself oblig'd to attack it ; in which I hope he has shewn more Zeal than Justice, his greatest Charge against it is, that it sometimes uses the Word *Faith!* as an Oath, in the Dialogue : But if *Faith* may as well signify our given Word or Credit as our religious Belief, why might not his Charity have taken it in the less criminal Sense ? [ Nevertheless, Mr. *Collier's* Book was upon the whole thought so laudable a Work, that King

of *Collier's* book, informers were placed in different parts of the theatres, on whose information several players were charged with uttering immoral words. Queen Anne, however, satisfied that the informers were not actuated by zeal for morality, stopped the inquisition. These informers were paid by the Society for the Reformation of Manners.

<sup>1</sup> Congreve's answer to *Collier* was entitled "Amendments of Mr. *Collier's* false and imperfect Citations, &c. from the Old Batchelour, Double Dealer, Love for Love, Mourning Bride. By the Author of those Plays." Vanbrugh called his reply, "A Short Vindication of the *Relapse* and the Provok'd Wife, from Immorality and Prophaneness. By the Author." Davies says, regarding Congreve ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 401) : "Congreve's pride was hurt by *Collier's* attack on plays which all the world had admired and commended ; and no hypocrite showed more rancour and resentment, when unmasked, than this author, so greatly celebrated for sweetness of temper and elegance of manners."



*William*, soon after it was publish'd, granted him a *Nolo Prosequi* when he stood answerable to the Law for his having absolved two Criminals just before they were executed for High Treason. And it must be farther granted that his calling our Dramatick Writers to this strict Account had a very wholesome Effect upon those who writ after this time. They were now a great deal more upon their guard; Indecencies were no longer Wit; and by Degrees the fair Sex came again to fill the Boxes on the first Day of a new Comedy, without Fear or Censure. But the Master of the Revels,<sup>1</sup> who then licens'd all Plays for the Stage, assisted this Reformation with a more zealous Severity than ever. He would strike out whole Scenes of a vicious or immoral Character, tho' it were visibly shewn to be reform'd or punish'd; a severe Instance of this kind falling upon my self may be an Excuse for my relating it: When *Richard the Third* (as I alter'd it from *Shakespear*)<sup>2</sup> came from his Hands to the Stage, he expung'd the whole first Act without sparing a Line of it. This extraordinary Stroke of a *Sic volo* occasion'd my applying to him for the small Indulgence of a Speech or two, that the other four Acts might limp on with a little less Absurdity! no! he had not leisure to consider what might be separately inoffensive. He had an Objec-

<sup>1</sup> Charles Killigrew, who died in 1725, having held the office of Master of the Revels for over forty years.

<sup>2</sup> Produced at Drury Lane in 1700. For some account of Cibber's playing of Richard, see *ante*, pp. 139, 140.

tion to the whole Act, and the Reason he gave for it was, that the Distresses of King *Henry the Sixth*, who is kill'd by *Richard* in the first Act, would put weak People too much in mind of King *James* then living in *France*; a notable Proof of his Zeal for the Government!<sup>1</sup> Those who have read either the Play or the History, I dare say will think he strain'd hard for the Parallel. } In a Word, we were forc'd, for some few Years, to let the Play take its Fate with only four Acts divided into five; by the Loss of so considerable a Limb, may one not modestly suppose it was robbed of at least a fifth Part of that Favour it afterwards met with? For tho' this first Act was at last recovered, and made the Play whole again, yet the Relief came too late to repay me for the Pains I had taken in it. Nor did I ever hear that this zealous Severity of the Master of the Revels was afterwards thought justifiable. But my good Fortune, in Process of time, gave me an Opportunity to talk with my Oppressor in my Turn.

The Patent granted by his Majesty King *George* the First to Sir *Richard Steele* and his Assigns,<sup>2</sup> of which I was one, made us sole Judges of what Plays

<sup>1</sup> Chalmers ("Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare Papers," page 535) comments unfavourably on Cibber's method of stating this fact, saying, "Well might Pope cry out, *modest* Cibber!" But Chalmers is unjust to Colley, who is not expressing his own opinion of his play's importance, but merely reporting the opinion of Killigrew.

<sup>2</sup> Steele's name first appears in a License granted 18th October, 1714. His Patent was dated 19th January, 1715.

might be proper for the Stage, without submitting them to the Approbation or License of any other particular Person. Notwithstanding which, the Master of the Revels demanded his Fee of Forty Shillings upon our acting a new One, tho' we had spared him the Trouble of perusing it. This occasion'd my being deputed to him to enquire into the Right of his Demand, and to make an amicable End of our Dispute.<sup>1</sup> I confess I did not dislike the Office; and told him, according to my Instructions, That I came not to defend even our own Right in prejudice to his; that if our Patent had inadvertently superseded the Grant of any former Power or Warrant whereon he might ground his Pretensions, we would not insist upon our Broad Seal, but would readily answer his Demands upon sight of such his Warrant, any thing in our Patent to the contrary notwithstanding. This I had reason to think he could not do; and when I found he made no direct Reply to my Question, I repeated it with greater Civilities

<sup>1</sup> Chalmers ("Apology for the Believers," page 536) says: "The patentees sent Colley Cibber, as envoy-extraordinary, to negotiate an amicable settlement with the Sovereign of the Revels. It is amusing to hear, how this flippant negotiator explained his own pretensions, and attempted to invalidate the right of his opponent; as if a subsequent charter, under the great seal, could supersede a preceding grant under the same authority. Charles Killigrew, who was now sixty-five years of age, seems to have been oppressed by the insolent civility of Colley Cibber." But this is an undeserved hit at Cibber, who had suffered the grossest injustice at Killigrew's hands regarding the licensing of "Richard III." See *ante*, p. 275. The dispute regarding fees must have occurred about 1715.

and Offers of Compliance, 'till I was forc'd in the end to conclude with telling him, That as his Pretensions were not back'd with any visible Instrument of Right, and as his strongest Plea was Custom, we could not so far extend our Complaisance as to continue his Fees upon so slender a Claim to them : And from that Time neither our Plays or his Fees gave either of us any farther trouble. In this Negotiation I am the bolder to think Justice was on our Side, because the Law lately pass'd,<sup>1</sup> by which the

<sup>1</sup> The Licensing Act of 1737. This Act was passed by Sir Robert Walpole's government, and gave to the Lord Chamberlain the power to prohibit a piece from being acted at all, by making it necessary to have every play licensed. This power, however, had practically been exercised by the Chamberlain before, as in the case of Gay's "Polly," which Cibber has already mentioned. The immediate cause of this Act of 1737 was a piece called "The Golden Rump," which was so full of scurrility against the powers that were, that Giffard, the manager to whom it was submitted, carried it to Walpole. In spite of the opposition of Lord Chesterfield, who delivered a famous speech against it, the Bill was passed, 21st June, 1737. The "Biographia Dramatica" hints plainly that "The Golden Rump" was written at Walpole's instigation to afford an excuse for the Act. Bellchambers has the following note on this passage :—

"The Abbé Le Blanc,\* who was in England at the time this law passed, has the following remarks upon it in his correspondence :—

"This act occasioned an universal murmur in the nation, and was openly complained of in the public papers : in all the coffee-houses of London it was treated as an unjust law, and manifestly contrary to the liberties of the people of England. When winter came, and the play-houses were opened, that of Covent-garden

\* Mr. Garrick, when in Paris, refused to meet this writer, on account of the irreverence with which he had treated Shakspeare.

Power of Licensing Plays, &c. is given to a proper Person, is a strong Presumption that no Law had ever given that Power to any such Person before.

My having mentioned this Law, which so immediately affected the Stage, inclines me to throw out a

began with three new pieces, which had been approved of by the Lord Chamberlain. There was a crowd of spectators present at the first, and among the number myself. The best play in the world would not have succeeded the first night.\* There was a resolution to damn whatever might appear, the word *hiss* not being sufficiently expressive for the English. They always say, to *damn* a piece, to *damn* an author, &c. and, in reality, the word is not too strong to express the manner in which they receive a play which does not please them. The farce in question was damned indeed, without the least compassion: nor was that all, for the actors were driven off the stage, and happy was it for the author that he did not fall into the hands of this furious assembly.

“As you are unacquainted with the customs of this country, you cannot easily devise who were the authors of all this disturbance. Perhaps you may think they were schoolboys, apprentices, clerks, or mechanics. No, sir, they were men of a very grave and genteel profession; they were lawyers, and please you; a body of gentlemen, perhaps less honoured, but certainly more feared here than they are in France. Most of them live in colleges,† where, conversing always with one another, they mutually preserve a spirit of independency through the body, and with great ease form cabals. These gentlemen, in the stage entertainments of London, behave much like our footboys, in those at a fair. With us, your party-coloured gentry are the most noisy; but here, men of the law have all the sway, if I may be permitted to call so those pretended professors of it, who are rather the organs of chicanery, than the inter-

\* The action was interrupted almost as soon as begun, in presence of a numerous assembly, by a cabal who had resolved to overthrow the first effect of this act of parliament, though it had been thought necessary for the regulation of the stage.

† Called here Inns of Court, as the two Temples, Lincoln's Inn, Gray's Inn, Doctor's Commons, &c.

few Observations upon it : But I must first lead you gradually thro' the Facts and natural Causes that made such a Law necessary.

Although it had been taken for granted, from Time

preters of justice. At Paris the cabals of the pit are only among young fellows, whose years may excuse their folly, or persons of the meanest education and stamp ; here they are the fruit of deliberations in a very grave body of people, who are not less formidable to the minister in place, than to the theatrical writers.

“ ‘The players were not dismayed, but soon after stuck up bills for another new piece : there was the same crowding at Covent-garden, to which I again contributed. I was sure, at least, that if the piece advertised was not performed, I should have the pleasure of beholding some very extraordinary scene acted in the pit.

“ ‘Half an hour before the play was to begin, the spectators gave notice of their dispositions by frightful hisses and outcries, equal, perhaps, to what were ever heard at a Roman amphitheatre. I could not have known, but by my eyes only, that I was among an assembly of beings who thought themselves to be reasonable. The author, who had foreseen this fury of the pit, took care to be armed against it. He knew what people he had to deal with, and, to make them easy, put in his prologue double the usual dose of incense that is offered to their vanity ; for there is an established tax of this kind, from which no author is suffered to dispense himself. This author's wise precaution succeeded, and the men that were before so redoubtable grew calm ; the charms of flattery, more strong than those of music, deprived them of all their fierceness.

“ ‘You see, sir, that the pit is the same in all countries : it loves to be flattered, under the more genteel name of being complimented. If a man has tolerable address at panegyric, they swallow it greedily, and are easily quelled and intoxicated by the draught. Every one in particular thinks he merits the praise that is given to the whole in general ; the illusion operates, and the prologue is good, only because it is artfully directed. Every one saves his own blush by the authority of the multitude he makes a part of, which

immemorial, that no Company of Comedians could act Plays, &c. without the Royal License or Protection of some legal Authority, a Theatre was, notwithstanding, erected in *Goodman's-Fields* about

is, perhaps, the only circumstance in which a man can think himself not obliged to be modest.

“The author having, by flattery, begun to tame this wild audience, proceeded entirely to reconcile it by the first scene of his performance. Two actors came in, one dressed in the English manner very decently, and the other with black eyebrows, a ribbon of an ell long under his chin, a bag-peruke immoderately powdered, and his nose all bedaubed with snuff. What Englishman could not know a Frenchman by this ridiculous picture! The common people of London think we are indeed such sort of folks, and of their own accord, add to our real follies all that their authors are pleased to give us. But when it was found, that the man thus equipped, being also laced down every seam of his coat, was nothing but a cook, the spectators were equally charmed and surprised. The author had taken care to make him speak all the impertinencies he could devise, and for that reason, all the impertinencies of his farce were excused, and the merit of it immediately decided. There was a long criticism upon our manners, our customs, and above all, upon our cookery. The excellence and virtues of English beef were cried up, and the author maintained, that it was owing to the qualities of its juice, that the English were so courageous, and had such a solidity of understanding, which raised them above all the nations in Europe: he preferred the noble old English pudding beyond all the finest ragouts that were ever invented by the greatest geniuses that France has produced; and all these ingenious strokes were loudly clapped by the audience.

“The pit, biassed by the abuse that was thrown on the French, forgot that they came to damn the play, and maintain the ancient liberty of the stage. They were friends with the players, and even with the court itself, and contented themselves with the privilege left them, of lashing our nation as much as they pleased, in the room of laughing at the expense of the minister. The license of

seven Years ago,<sup>1</sup> where Plays, without any such License, were acted for some time unmolested and with Impunity. After a Year or two, this Playhouse was thought a Nuisance too near the City: Upon which the Lord-Mayor and Aldermen petition'd the Crown to suppress it: What Steps were taken in favour of that Petition I know not, but common Fame seem'd to allow, from what had or had not been done in it, that acting Plays in the said Theatre was not evidently unlawful.<sup>2</sup> However, this Question of Acting without a License a little time after came to a nearer Decision in *Westminster-Hall*; the Occasion of bringing it thither was this: It happened that the Purchasers of the Patent, to whom authors did not seem to be too much restrained, since the court did not hinder them from saying all the ill they could of the French.

“Intractable as the populace appear in this country, those who know how to take hold of their foibles, may easily carry their point. Thus is the liberty of the stage reduced to just bounds, and yet the English pit makes no farther attempt to oppose the new regulation. The law is executed without the least trouble, all the plays since having been quietly heard, and either succeeded, or not, according to their merit.”

See article in Mr. Archer's "About the Theatre," p. 101, and Parliamentary Reports, 1832 and 1866.

<sup>1</sup> The theatre in Goodman's Fields was opened in October, 1729, by Thomas Odell, who was afterwards Deputy Licenser under the 1737 Act. Odell, having no theatrical experience, entrusted the management to Henry Giffard. Odell's theatre seems to have been in Lemau Street.

<sup>2</sup> I can find no hint that plays were ever stopped at Odell's theatre. There is a pamphlet, published in 1730, with the following title: "A Letter to the Right Honourable Sir Richard



Mr. *Booth* and Myself had sold our Shares,<sup>1</sup> were at variance with the Comedians that were then left to their Government, and the Variance ended in the chief of those Comedians deserting and setting up for themselves in the little House in the *Hay-Market*, in 1733, by which Desertion the Patentees were very much distressed and considerable Losers. Their Affairs being in this desperate Condition, they were advis'd to put the Act of the Twelfth of Queen *Anne* against Vagabonds in force against these Deserters, then acting in the *Hay-Market* without License. Accordingly, one of their chief Performers<sup>2</sup> was taken from the Stage by a Justice of Peace his Warrant, and committed to *Bridewell* as one within the Penalty of the said Act. When the Legality of this Commitment was disputed in *Westminster-Hall*, by all I could observe from the learned Pleadings on both Sides (for I had the Curiosity to

Brocas, Lord Mayor of London. By a Citizen," which demands the closing of the theatre, but I do not suppose any practical result followed. In 1733 an attempt by the Patentees of Drury Lane and Covent Garden to silence Giffard's Company, then playing at his new theatre in Goodman's Fields, was unsuccessful. This theatre was in Ayliffe Street.

<sup>1</sup> Half of Booth's share of the Patent was purchased by Highmore, who also bought the whole of Cibber's share. Giffard was the purchaser of the remainder of Booth's share.

<sup>2</sup> This was John Harper. Davies ("Life of Garrick," i. 40) says that "The reason of the Patentees fixing on Harper was in consequence of his natural timidity." His trial was on the 20th November, 1733. Harper was a low comedian of some ability, but of no great note.

hear them) it did not appear to me that the Comedian so committed was within the Description of the said Act, he being a Housekeeper and having a Vote for the *Westminster* Members of Parliament. He was discharged accordingly, and conducted through the Hall with the Congratulations of the Crowds that attended and wish'd well to his Cause.

The Issue of this Trial threw me at that time into a very odd Reflexion, *viz.* That if acting Plays without License did not make the Performers Vagabonds unless they wandered from their Habitations so to do, how particular was the Case of Us three late Menaging Actors at the *Theatre-Royal*, who in twenty Years before had paid upon an Averidge at least Twenty Thousand Pounds to be protected (as Actors) from a Law that has not since appeared to be against us. Now, whether we might certainly have acted without any License at all I shall not pretend to determine; but this I have of my own Knowledge to say, That in Queen *Anne's* Reign the Stage was in such Confusion, and its Affairs in such Distress, that Sir *John Vanbrugh* and Mr. *Congreve*, after they had held it about one Year, threw up the Menagement of it as an unprofitable Post, after which a License for Acting was not thought worth any Gentleman's asking for, and almost seem'd to go a begging, 'till some time after, by the Care, Application, and Industry of three Actors, it became so prosperous, and the Profits so considerable, that it created a new Place, and a *Sine-cure* of a Thousand

Pounds a Year,<sup>1</sup> which the Labour of those Actors constantly paid to such Persons as had from time to time Merit or Interest enough to get their Names inserted as Fourth Menagers in a License with them for acting Plays, &c. a Preferment that many a Sir *Francis Wronghead* would have jump'd at.<sup>2</sup> But to go on with my Story. This Endeavour of the Patentees to suppress the Comedians acting in the *Hay-Market* proving ineffectual, and no Hopes of a Reunion then appearing, the Remains of the Company left in *Drury-Lane* were reduced to a very low Condition. At this time a third Purchaser, *Charles Fleetwood*, Esq., stepped in ; who judging the best Time to buy was when the Stock was at the lowest Price, struck up a Bargain at once for Five Parts in Six of the Patent ;<sup>3</sup> and, at the same time, gave the revolted Comedians their own Terms to return and come under his Government in *Drury-Lane*, where they now continue to act at very ample Sallaries, as I am informed, in 1738.<sup>4</sup> But (as I have observ'd) the late

<sup>1</sup> Cibber again alludes to this in Chap. XIII.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Francis Wronghead is a character in "The Provoked Husband," a country squire who comes to London to seek a place at Court. In Act iv. Sir Francis relates his interview with a certain great man : "Sir Francis, says my lord, pray what sort of a place may you ha' turned your thoughts upon? My lord, says I, beggars must not be chusers ; but ony place, says I, about a thousand a-year, will be well enough to be doing with, till something better falls in—for I thowght it would not look well to stond haggling with him at first."

<sup>3</sup> Giffard seems to have retained his sixth part.

<sup>4</sup> Some account of the entire dispute between Highmore and his actors will be found in my Supplement to this book.

Cause of the prosecuted Comedian having gone so strongly in his Favour, and the House in *Goodman's-Fields*, too, continuing to act with as little Authority unmolested; these so tolerated Companies gave Encouragement to a broken Wit to collect a fourth Company, who for some time acted Plays in the *Hay-Market*, which House the united *Drury-Lane* Comedians had lately quitted: This enterprising Person, I say (whom I do not chuse to name,<sup>1</sup> unless it could be to his Advantage, or that it were of Importance) had Sense enough to know that the best Plays with bad Actors would turn but to a very poor Account; and therefore found it necessary to give the Publick some Pieces of an extraordinary Kind, the Poetry of which he conceiv'd ought to be so strong that the greatest Dunce of an Actor could not spoil it: He knew, too, that as he was in haste to

<sup>1</sup> This "broken Wit" was Henry Fielding, between whom and Cibber there was war to the knife, Fielding taking every opportunity of mocking at Colley and attacking his works.

Mr. Austin Dobson, in his "Fielding," page 66, writes: "When the *Champion* was rather more than a year old, Colley Cibber published his famous *Apology*. To the attacks made upon him by Fielding at different times he had hitherto printed no reply—perhaps he had no opportunity of doing so. But in his eighth chapter, when speaking of the causes which led to the Licensing Act, he takes occasion to refer to his assailant in terms which Fielding must have found exceedingly galling. He carefully abstained from mentioning his name, on the ground that it could do him no good, and was of no importance; but he described him as 'a broken Wit,'" &c.

Mr. Dobson, on page 69, gives his approval to the theory that "Fielding had openly expressed resentment at being described by Cibber as 'a broken wit,' without being mentioned by name."

get Money, it would take up less time to be intrepidly abusive than decently entertaining; that to draw the Mob after him he must rake the Channel<sup>1</sup> and pelt their Superiors; that, to shew himself somebody, he must come up to *Juvenal's* Advice and stand the Consequence :

*Aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris, & carcere dignum  
Si vis esse aliquis* — Juv. Sat. I.<sup>2</sup>

Such, then, was the mettlesome Modesty he set out with; upon this Principle he produc'd several frank and free Farces that seem'd to knock all Distinctions of Mankind on the Head: Religion, Laws, Government, Priests, Judges, and Ministers, were all laid flat at the Feet of this *Herculean* Satyrst! This *Drawcansir* in Wit,<sup>3</sup> that spared neither Friend nor Foe! who to make his Poetical Fame immortal, like another *Erostratus*, set Fire to his Stage by writing up to an Act of Parliament to demolish it.<sup>4</sup> I shall

<sup>1</sup> The use of "channel," meaning "gutter," is obsolete in England; but I am sure that I have heard it used in that sense in Scotland. Shakespeare in "King Henry the Sixth," third part, act ii. sc. 2, has,

"As if a channel should be called the sea."

And in Marlowe's "Edward the Second," act i. sc. 1, occur the lines:—

"Throw off his golden mitre, rend his stole,  
And in the channel christen him anew."

<sup>2</sup> Juvenal, i. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Dobson ("Fielding," page 67) says: "He [Cibber] called him, either in allusion to his stature, or his pseudonym in the *Champion*, a '*Herculean* Satyrst,' a '*Drawcansir* in Wit."

<sup>4</sup> Fielding's political satires, in such pieces as "Pasquin" and

not give the particular Strokes of his Ingenuity a Chance to be remembred by reciting them ; it may be enough to say, in general Terms, they were so openly flagrant, that the Wisdom of the Legislature thought it high time to take a proper Notice of them,<sup>1</sup>

Having now shewn by what means there came to be four Theatres, besides a fifth for Operas, in *London*, all open at the same time, and that while they were so numerous it was evident some of them must have starv'd unless they fed upon the Trash and Filth of Buffoonry and Licentiousness ; I now come, as I promis'd, to speak of that necessary Law which has reduced their Number and prevents the Repetition of such Abuses in those that remain open for the Publick Recreation.

“The Historical Register for 1736,” contributed largely to the passing of the Act of 1737, although “The Golden Rump” was the ostensible cause.

<sup>1</sup> Fielding, in the “Champion” for Tuesday, April 22nd, 1740, says of Cibber’s refusal to quote from “Pasquin”—“the good Parent seems to imagine that he hath produced, as well as my Lord *Clarendon*, a *Κτήμα ἐς αἰὶ* ; for he refuses to quote anything out of *Pasquin*, lest he should *give it a chance of being remembered*.”

Mr. Dobson (“Fielding,” page 69) says Fielding “never seems to have wholly forgotten his animosity to the actor, to whom there are frequent references in *Joseph Andrews* ; and, as late as 1749, he is still found harping on ‘the withered laurel’ in a letter to Lyttelton. Even in his last work, the *Voyage to Lisbon*, Cibber’s name is mentioned. The origin of this protracted feud is obscure ; but, apart from want of sympathy, it must probably be sought for in some early misunderstanding between the two in their capacities of manager and author.”









CHARLOTTE CHARKE



While this Law was in Debate a lively Spirit and uncommon Eloquence was employ'd against it.<sup>1</sup> It was urg'd That *one* of the greatest Goods we can enjoy is *Liberty*. (This we may grant to be an incontestable Truth, without its being the least Objection to this Law.) It was said, too, That to bring the Stage under the Restraint of a Licenser was leading the way to an Attack upon the Liberty of the Press. This amounts but to a Jealousy at best, which I hope and believe all honest *Englishmen* have as much Reason to think a groundless, as to fear it is a just Jealousy: For the Stage and the Press, I shall endeavour to shew, are very different Weapons to wound with. If a great Man could be no more injured by being personally ridicul'd or made contemptible in a Play, than by the same Matter only printed and read against him in a Pamphlet or the strongest Verse; then, indeed, the Stage and the Press might pretend to be upon an equal Foot of Liberty: But when the wide Difference between these two Liberties comes to be explain'd and consider'd, I dare say we shall find the Injuries from one capable of being ten times more severe and formidable than from the other: Let us see, at least, if the Case will not be vastly alter'd. Read what Mr. *Collier* in his *Defence* of his *Short View of the Stage, &c.* Page 25, says to this Point; he sets this Difference in a clear Light. These are his Words:

<sup>1</sup> By Lord Chesterfield.

“ The Satyr of a *Comedian* and another *Poet*, have  
 “ a different effect upon Reputation. A Character  
 “ of Disadvantage upon the *Stage*, makes a stronger  
 “ Impression than elsewhere. Reading is but Hear-  
 “ ing at the second Hand ; Now Hearing at the best,  
 “ is a more languid Conveyance than Sight. For as  
 “ *Horace* observes,

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,  
 Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.*<sup>1</sup>

“ The Eye is much more affecting, and strikes  
 “ deeper into the Memory than the Ear. Besides,  
 “ Upon the *Stage* both the Senses are in Conjun-  
 “ tion. The Life of the Action fortifies the Object,  
 “ and awakens the Mind to take hold of it. Thus  
 “ a dramattick Abuse is rivetted in the Audience, a  
 “ Jest is improv'd into an Argument, and Rallying  
 “ grows up into Reason: Thus a Character of Scandal  
 “ becomes almost indelible, a Man goes for a Block-  
 “ head upon *Content* ; and he that's made a Fool in  
 “ a *Play*, is often made one for his Life-time. 'Tis  
 “ true he passes for such only among the prejudiced  
 “ and unthinking; but these are no inconsiderable  
 “ Division of Mankind. For these Reasons, I humbly  
 “ conceive the *Stage* stands in need of a great deal  
 “ of Discipline and Restraint: To give them an un-  
 “ limited Range, is in effect to make them Masters  
 “ of all Moral Distinctions, and to lay Honour and  
 “ Religion at their Mercy. To shew Greatness ridi-

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 180.

“culous, is the way to lose the use, and abate the value of the Quality. Things made little in jest, will soon be so in earnest: for Laughing and Esteem, are seldom bestow'd on the same Object.”

If this was Truth and Reason (as sure it was) forty Years ago, will it not carry the same Conviction with it to these Days, when there came to be a much stronger Call for a Reformation of the Stage, than when this Author wrote against it, or perhaps than was ever known since the *English* Stage had a Being? And now let us ask another Question! Does not the general Opinion of Mankind suppose that the Honour and Reputation of a Minister is, or ought to be, as dear to him as his Life? Yet when the Law, in Queen *Anne's* Time, had made even an unsuccessful Attempt upon the Life of a Minister capital, could any Reason be found that the Fame and Honour of his Character should not be under equal Protection? Was the Wound that *Guiscard* gave to the late Lord *Oxford*, when a Minister,<sup>1</sup> a greater Injury than the Theatrical Insult which was offer'd to a later Minister, in a more valuable Part, his Character? Was it not as high time, then, to take this dangerous Weapon of mimical Insolence and Defamation out of the Hands of a mad Poet, as to wrest the Knife from the lifted Hand of a Murderer? And is not that Law of a milder Nature which *prevents* a Crime, than that which *punishes* it after it is committed? May not one think it amazing

<sup>1</sup> Guiscard's attack on Harley occurred in 1711.

that the Liberty of defaming lawful Power and Dignity should have been so eloquently contended for? or especially that this Liberty ought to triumph in a Theatre, where the most able, the most innocent, and most upright Person must himself be, while the Wound is given, defenceless? How long must a Man so injur'd lie bleeding before the Pain and Anguish of his Fame (if it suffers wrongfully) can be dispell'd? or say he had deserv'd Reproof and publick Accusation, yet the Weight and Greatness of his Office never can deserve it from a publick Stage, where the lowest Malice by sawcy Parallels and abusive Inuendoes may do every thing but name him: But alas! Liberty is so tender, so chaste a Virgin, that it seems not to suffer her to do irreparable Injuries with Impunity is a Violation of her! It cannot sure be a Principle of Liberty that would turn the Stage into a Court of Enquiry, that would let the partial Applauses of a vulgar Audience give Sentence upon the Conduct of Authority, and put Impeachments into the Mouth of a *Harlequin*? Will not every impartial Man think that Malice, Envy, Faction, and Mis-rule, might have too much Advantage over lawful Power, if the Range of such a Stage-Liberty were unlimited and insisted on to be enroll'd among the glorious Rights of an *English* Subject?

I remember much such another ancient Liberty, which many of the good People of *England* were once extremely fond of; I mean that of throwing

Squibs and Crackers at all Spectators without Distinction upon a Lord-Mayor's Day ; but about forty Years ago a certain Nobleman happening to have one of his Eyes burnt out by this mischievous Merriment, it occasion'd a penal Law to prevent those Sorts of Jest's from being laugh'd at for the future : Yet I have never heard that the most zealous Patriot ever thought such a Law was the least Restraint upon our Liberty.

If I am ask'd why I am so voluntary a Champion for the Honour of this Law that has limited the Number of Play-Houses, and which now can no longer concern me as a Professor of the Stage ? I reply, that it being a Law so nearly relating to the Theatre, it seems not at all foreign to my History to have taken notice of it ; and as I have farther promised to give the Publick a true Portrait of my Mind, I ought fairly to let them see how far I am, or am not, a Blockhead, when I pretend to talk of serious Matters that may be judg'd so far above my Capacity : Nor will it in the least discompose me whether my Observations are contemn'd or applauded. A Blockhead is not always an unhappy Fellow, and if the World will not flatter us, we can flatter ourselves ; perhaps, too, it will be as difficult to convince us we are in the wrong, as that you wiser Gentlemen are one Tittle the better for your Knowledge. It is yet a Question with me whether we weak Heads have not as much Pleasure, too, in giving our shallow Reason a little Exercise, as those clearer Brains have

that are allow'd to dive into the deepest Doubts and Mysteries ; to reflect or form a Judgment upon remarkable things *past* is as delightful to me as it is to the gravest Politician to penetrate into what is *present*, or to enter into Speculations upon what is, or is not likely to come. Why are Histories written, if all Men are not to judge of them? Therefore, if my Reader has no more to do than I have, I have a Chance for his being as willing to have a little more upon the same Subject as I am to give it him.

When direct Arguments against this Bill were found too weak, Recourse was had to dissuasive ones : It was said that *this Restraint upon the Stage would not remedy the Evil complain'd of: That a Play refus'd to be licensed would still be printed, with double Advantage, when it should be insinuated that it was refused for some Strokes of Wit, &c. and would be more likely then to have its Effect among the People.* However natural this Consequence may seem, I doubt it will be very difficult to give a *printed* Satyr or Libel half the Force or Credit of an *acted* one. The most artful or notorious Lye or strain'd Allusion that ever slander'd a great Man, may be read by some People with a Smile of Contempt, or, at worst, it can impose but on one Person at once : but when the Words of the same plausible Stuff shall be repeated on a Theatre, the Wit of it among a Crowd of Hearers is liable to be over-valued, and may unite and warm a whole Body of the Malicious or Ignorant into a Plaudit ; nay, the partial Claps of only *twenty*



ill-minded Persons among several hundreds of silent Hearers shall, and often have been, mistaken for a general Approbation, and frequently draw into their Party the Indifferent or Inapprehensive, who rather than be thought not to understand the Conceit, will laugh with the Laughers and join in the Triumph ! But alas ! the *quiet* Reader of the same ingenious Matter can only like for *himself* ; and the Poison has a much slower Operation upon the Body of a People when it is so retail'd out, than when sold to a full Audience by wholesale. The *single* Reader, too, may happen to be a sensible or unprejudiced Person ; and then the merry Dose, meeting with the Antidote of a sound Judgment, perhaps may have no Operation at all : With such a one the Wit of the most ingenious Satyr will only by its intrinsick Truth or Value gain upon his Approbation ; or if it be worth an Answer, a printed Falshood may possibly be confounded by printed Proofs against it. But against Contempt and Scandal, heighten'd and colour'd by the Skill of an *Actor* ludicrously infusing it into a Multitude, there is no immediate Defence to be made or equal Reparation to be had for it ; for it would be but a poor Satisfaction at last, after lying long patient under the Injury, that Time only is to shew (which would probably be the Case) that the Author of it was a desperate Indigent that did it for Bread. How much less dangerous or offensive, then, is the *written* than the *acted* Scandal ? The Impression the Comedian gives to it is a kind of double

Stamp upon the Poet's Paper, that raises it to ten times the intrinsick Value. Might we not strengthen this Argument, too, even by the Eloquence that seem'd to have opposed this Law? I will say for my self, at least, that when I came to read the printed Arguments against it, I could scarce believe they were the same that had amaz'd and raised such Admiration in me when they had the Advantage of a lively Elocution, and of that Grace and Spirit which gave Strength and Lustre to them in the Delivery!

Upon the whole ; if the Stage ought ever to have been reform'd ; if to place a Power *somewhere* of restraining its Immoralities was not inconsistent with the Liberties of a civiliz'd People (neither of which, sure, any moral Man of Sense can dispute) might it not have shewn a Spirit too poorly prejudiced, to have rejected so rational a Law only because the Honour and Office of a Minister might happen, in some small Measure, to be protected by it.<sup>1</sup>

But however little Weight there may be in the Observations I have made upon it, I shall, for my own Part, always think them just ; unless I should live to see (which I do not expect) some future Set of upright Ministers use their utmost Endeavours to repeal it.

<sup>1</sup> Genest (iii. 521) remarks, "If the power of the Licensor had been laid *under proper regulations*, all would have been right." The whole objection to the Licensor is simply that he is under no regulations whatever. He is a perfectly irresponsible authority, and one from whose decisions there is no appeal.

And now we have seen the Consequence of what many People are apt to contend for, Variety of Play-houses! How was it possible so many could honestly subsist on what was fit to be seen? Their extraordinary Number, of Course, reduc'd them to live upon the Gratification of such Hearers as they knew would be best pleased with publick Offence; and publick Offence, of what kind soever, will always be a good Reason for making Laws to restrain it.

To conclude, let us now consider this Law in a quite different Light; let us leave the political Part of it quite out of the Question; what Advantage could either the Spectators of Plays or the Masters of Play-houses have gain'd by its having never been made? How could the same Stock of Plays supply four Theatres, which (without such additional Entertainments as a Nation of common Sense ought to be ashamed of) could not well support two? Satiety must have been the natural Consequence of the same Plays being twice as often repeated as now they need be; and Satiety puts an End to all Tastes that the Mind of Man can delight in. Had therefore this Law been made seven Years ago, I should not have parted with my Share in the Patent under a thousand Pounds more than I received for it<sup>1</sup>—So that, as far as I am able to judge, both the Publick as Spectators, and the Patentees as Undertakers,

<sup>1</sup> Cibber received three thousand guineas from Highmore for his share in the Patent. (See Victor's "History," i. 8).

are, or might be, in a way of being better entertain'd and more considerable Gainers by it.

I now return to the State of the Stage, where I left it, about the Year 1697, from whence this Pursuit of its Immoralities has led me farther than I first design'd to have follow'd it.



## CHAPTER IX.

*A small Apology for writing on. The different State of the two Companies. Wilks invited over from Dublin. Estcourt, from the same Stage, the Winter following. Mrs. Oldfield's first Admission to the Theatre-Royal. Her Character. The great Theatre in the Hay-Market built for Betterton's Company. It Answers not their Expectation. Some Observations upon it. A Theatrical State Secret.*

I NOW begin to doubt that the *Gayeté du Cœur* in which I first undertook this Work may have drawn me into a more laborious Amusement than I shall know how to away with : For though I cannot say I have yet jaded my Vanity, it is not impossible but by this time the most candid of my Readers may want a little Breath ; especially when they consider

that all this Load I have heap'd upon their Patience contains but seven Years of the forty three I pass'd upon the Stage, the History of which Period I have enjoy'd my self to transmit to the Judgment (or Oblivion) of Posterity.<sup>1</sup> However, even my Dulness will find somebody to do it right; if my Reader is an ill-natur'd one, he will be as much pleased to find me a Dunce in my old Age as possibly he may have been to prove me a brisk Blockhead in my Youth: But if he has no Gall to gratify, and would (for his simple Amusement) as well know how the Play-houses went on forty Years ago as how they do now, I will honestly tell him the rest of my Story as well as I can. Lest therefore the frequent Digressions that have broke in upon it may have entangled his Memory, I must beg leave just to throw together the Heads of what I have already given him, that he may again recover the Clue of my Discourse.

Let him then remember, from the Year 1660 to 1682,<sup>2</sup> the various Fortune of the (then) King's and Duke's two famous Companies; their being reduced to one united; the Distinct Characters I have given

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat," page 72: "Indeed, *Laureat*, notwithstanding what thou may'st dream of the Immortality of this Work of thine, and bestowing the same on thy Favourites by recording them here; thou mayst, old as thou art, live to see thy precious Labours become the vile Wrappers of Pastry-Grocers and Chandlery Wares." The issue of the present edition of Cibber's "Apology" is sufficient commentary on "The Laureat's" ill-natured prophecy.

<sup>2</sup> Cibber prints 1684, repeating his former blunder. (See p. 96.)

of thirteen Actors, which in the Year 1690 were the most famous then remaining of them; the Cause of their being again divided in 1695, and the Consequences of that Division 'till 1697; from whence I shall lead them to our Second Union in——Hold! let me see——ay, it was in that memorable Year when the two Kingdoms of *England* and *Scotland* were made one. And I remember a Particular that confirms me I am right in my Chronology; for the Play of *Hamlet* being acted soon after, *Estcourt*, who then took upon him to say any thing, added a fourth Line to *Shakespear's* Prologue to the Play, in that Play which originally consisted but of three, but *Estcourt* made it run thus :

*For Us, and for our Tragedy,  
Here stooping to your Clemency,  
[This being a Year of Unity,]  
We beg your Hearing patiently.<sup>1</sup>*

This new Chronological Line coming unexpectedly upon the Audience, was received with Applause, tho' several grave Faces look'd a little out of Humour at it. However, by this Fact, it is plain our Theatrical Union happen'd in 1707.<sup>2</sup> But to speak of it in its Place I must go a little back again.

<sup>1</sup> The first play acted by the United Company was "Hamlet." In this *Estcourt* is cast for the Gravedigger, so that if Cibber's anecdote is accurate, as no doubt it is, *Estcourt* must have "doubled" the Gravedigger and the speaker of the Prologue.

<sup>2</sup> The first edition reads "1708," and in the next chapter Cibber says 1708. In point of fact, the first performance by the United Company took place 15th January, 1708. This does not make *Est-*

From 1697 to this Union both Companies went on without any memorable Change in their Affairs, unless it were that *Betterton's* People (however good in their Kind) were most of them too far advanc'd in Years to mend; and tho' we in *Drury-Lane* were too young to be excellent, we were not too old to be better. But what will not Satiety depreciate? For though I must own and avow that in our highest Prosperity I always thought we were greatly their Inferiors; yet, by our good Fortune of being seen in quite new Lights, which several new-written Plays had shewn us in, we now began to make a considerable Stand against them. One good new Play to a rising Company is of inconceivable Value. In *Oroonoko*<sup>1</sup> (and why may I not name another, tho' it be my own?) in *Love's last Shift*, and in the Sequel of it, the *Relapse*, several of our People shew'd themselves in a new Style of Acting, in which Nature had not as yet been seen. I cannot here forget a Misfortune that befel our Society about this time, by the loss of a young Actor, *Hildebrand Horden*,<sup>2</sup> who court's "gag" incorrect, for though we now should not consider May, 1707, and the following January in the same year, yet up to 1752, when the style was changed in England, they were so.

<sup>1</sup> Southerne's "Oroonoko" was produced at Drury Lane in 1696.

<sup>2</sup> Of Horden we know little more than Cibber tells us. He seems to have been on the stage only for a year or two; and during 1696 only, at Drury Lane, does his name appear to important parts. Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 443) says Horden "was bred a Scholar: he complimented George Powell, in a Latin encomium on his Treacherous Brothers."



was kill'd at the Bar of the *Rose-Tavern*,<sup>1</sup> in a frivolous, rash, accidental Quarrel; for which a late Resident at *Venice*, Colonel *Burgess*, and several other Persons of Distinction, took their Tryals, and were acquitted. This young Man had almost every natural Gift that could promise an excellent Actor; he had besides a good deal of Table-wit and Humour, with a handsome Person, and was every Day rising

"The London News-Letter," 20th May, 1696, says: "On Monday Capt. *Burgess* who kill'd Mr. *Fane*, and was found guilty of Manslaughter at the *Old Baily*, kill'd Mr. *Harding* a Comedian in a Quarrel at the *Rose Tavern* in *Hatton* [should be *Covent*] *Garden*, and is taken into custody."

In "Luttrell's Diary," on Tuesday, 19th May, 1696, is noted: "Captain *Burgesse*, convicted last sessions of manslaughter for killing Mr. *Fane*, is committed to the Gatehouse for killing Mr. *Horden*, of the Playhouse, last night in *Covent Garden*."

And on Tuesday, 30th November, 1697, "Captain *Burgesse*, who killed Mr. *Horden* the player, has obtained his majesties pardon."

<sup>1</sup> This tavern seems to have been very near Drury Lane Theatre, and to have been a favourite place of resort after the play. In the Epilogue to the "Constant Couple" the *Rose Tavern* is mentioned:—

"Now all depart, each his respective way,  
To spend an evening's chat upon the play;  
Some to *Hippolito's*; one homeward goes,  
And one with loving she, retires to th' *Rose*."

In the "Comparison between the two Stages" one scene is laid in the *Rose Tavern*, and from it we gather that the house was of a very bad character:—

"*Ramb*. Defend us! what a hurry of Sin is in this House!

*Sull*. Drunkenness, which is the proper Iniquity of a Tavern, is here the most excusable Sin; so many other Sins over-run it, 'tis hardly seen in the crowd. . . . .

*Sull*. This House is the very Camp of Sin; the Devil sets up

into publick Favour. Before he was bury'd, it was observable that two or three Days together several of the Fair Sex, well dress'd, came in Masks (then frequently worn) and some in their own Coaches, to visit this Theatrical Heroe in his Shrowd. He was the elder Son of Dr. *Horden*, Minister of *Twickenham*, in *Middlesex*. But this Misfortune was soon repair'd by the Return of *Wilks* from *Dublin* (who upon this young Man's Death was sent for over) and liv'd long enough among us to enjoy that Approbation from which the other was so unhappily cut off. The Winter following,<sup>1</sup> *Estcourt*, the famous Mimick, of whom I have already spoken, had the same Invitation from *Ireland*, where he had commenc'd Actor: His first Part here, at the *Theatre-Royal*, was the *Spanish Friar*, in which, tho' he had remembered every Look and Motion of the late *Tony Leigh* so far as to put the Spectator very his black Standard in the Faces of these hungry Harlots, and to enter into their Trenches is going down to the Bottomless Pit according to the letter."—*Comp.*, p. 140.

Pepys mentions the Rose more than once. On 18th May, 1668, the first day of Sedley's play, "The Mulberry Garden," the diarist, having secured his place in the pit, and feeling hungry, "did slip out, getting a boy to keep my place; and to the Rose Tavern, and there got half a breast of mutton, off the spit, and dined all alone. And so to the play again."

<sup>1</sup> Cibber's chronology cannot be reconciled with what we believe to be facts. Horden was killed in 1696; Wilks seems to have come to England not earlier than the end of 1698, while it is, I should say, certain that Estcourt did not appear before 1704. I can only suppose that Cibber, who is very reckless in his dates, is here particularly confused.

much in mind of him, yet it was visible through the whole, notwithstanding his Exactness in the Outlines, the true Spirit that was to fill up the Figure was not the same, but unskilfully dawb'd on, like a Child's Painting upon the Face of a *Metzo-tinto*: It was too plain to the judicious that the Conception was not his own, but imprinted in his Memory by another, of whom he only presented a dead Likeness.<sup>1</sup> But these were Defects not so obvious to common Spectators; no wonder, therefore, if by his being much sought after in private Companies, he met with a sort of Indulgence, not to say Partiality, for what he sometimes did upon the Stage.

In the Year 1699, Mrs. *Oldfield* was first taken into the House, where she remain'd about a Twelve-month almost a Mute<sup>2</sup> and unheeded, 'till Sir *John Vanbrugh*, who first recommended her, gave her the Part of *Alinda* in the *Pilgrim* revis'd. This gentle Character happily became that want of Confidence which is inseparable from young Beginners, who, without it, seldom arrive to any Excellence: Notwithstanding, I own I was then so far deceiv'd in my Opinion of her, that I thought she had little more than her Person that appear'd necessary to the forming a good Actress; for she set out with so extraordinary a Diffidence, that it kept her too de-

<sup>1</sup> For Leigh's playing of this character, see *ante*, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Curll, in his "Life of Mrs. Oldfield," says that the only part she played, previous to appearing as *Alinda*, was *Candiope* in "Secret Love." She played *Alinda* in 1700.

spondingly down to a formal, plain (not to say) flat manner of speaking. Nor could the silver Tone of her Voice 'till after some time incline my Ear to any Hope in her favour. But Publick Approbation is the warm Weather of a Theatrical Plant, which will soon bring it forward to whatever Perfection Nature has design'd it. However, Mrs. *Oldfield* (perhaps for want of fresh Parts) seem'd to come but slowly forward 'till the Year 1703.<sup>1</sup> Our Company that Summer acted at the *Bath* during the Residence of Queen *Anne* at that Place. At that time it happen'd that Mrs. *Verbruggen*, by reason of her last Sickness (of which she some few Months after dy'd) was left in *London*; and though most of her Parts were, of course, to be dispos'd of, yet so earnest was the Female Scramble for them, that only one of them fell to the Share of Mrs. *Oldfield*, that of *Leonora* in *Sir Courtly Nice*; a Character of good plain Sense, but not over elegantly written. It was in this Part Mrs. *Oldfield* surpris'd me into an Opinion of her having all the innate Powers of a good Actress, though they were yet but in the Bloom of what they promis'd. Before she had acted this Part I had so cold an Expectation from her Abilities, that she could scarce prevail with me to rehearse with her the Scenes she was chiefly concern'd in with *Sir Courtly*, which I then acted. However, we ran them over with a mutual

<sup>1</sup> In 1702, Gildon, in the "Comparison between the two Stages" (p. 200), includes Mrs. Oldfield among the "meer Rubbish that ought to be swept off the Stage with the Filth and Dust."



*[The text in this section is extremely faint and illegible due to low contrast and scan quality. It appears to be a multi-paragraph document.]*



S' R JOHN VANBRUGH





Inadvertency of one another. I seem'd careless, as concluding that any Assistance I could give her would be to little or no purpose; and she mutter'd out her Words in a sort of mighty<sup>1</sup> manner at my low Opinion of her. But when the Play came to be acted, she had a just Occasion to triumph over the Error of my Judgment, by the (almost) Amazement that her unexpected Performance awak'd me to; so forward and sudden a Step into Nature I had never seen; and what made her Performance more valuable was, that I knew it all proceeded from her own Understanding, untaught and unassisted by any one more experienc'd Actor.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it may not be unacceptable, if I enlarge a little more upon the Theatrical Character of so memorable an Actress.<sup>3</sup>

Though this Part of *Leonora* in itself was of so little value, that when she got more into Esteem it was one

<sup>1</sup> "Miff," a colloquial expression signifying "a slight degree of resentment."

<sup>2</sup> Cibber is pleasantly candid in allowing that he had no share in Mrs. Oldfield's success. The temptation to assume some credit for teaching her something must have been great.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Anne Oldfield, born about 1683, was introduced to Vanbrugh by Farquhar, who accidentally heard her reading aloud, and was struck by her dramatic style. Cibber gives so full an account of her that it is only necessary to add that she made her last appearance on 28th April, 1730, at Drury Lane, and that she died on the 23rd October in the same year. It was of Mrs. Oldfield that Pope wrote the often-quoted lines ("Moral Essays," Epistle I., Part iii.):—

"Odious ! in woollen ! 'twould a saint provoke  
(Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke),  
No, let a charming chintz and Brussels lace  
Wrap my cold limbs, and shade my lifeless face :

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of the several she gave away to inferior Actresses; yet it was the first (as I have observ'd) that corrected my Judgment of her, and confirm'd me in a strong Belief that she could not fail in very little time of being what she was afterwards allow'd to be, the foremost Ornament of our Theatre. Upon this unexpected Sally, then, of the Power and Disposition of so unforeseen an Actress, it was that I again took up the two first Acts of the *Careless Husband*, which I had written the Summer before, and had thrown aside in despair of having Justice done to the Character of Lady *Betty Modish* by any one Woman then among us; Mrs. *Verbruggen* being now in a very declining state of Health, and Mrs. *Bracegirdle* out of my Reach and engag'd in another Company: But, as I have said, Mrs. *Oldfield* having thrown out such new Proffers of a Genius, I was no longer at a loss for Support; my Doubts were dispell'd, and I had now a new Call to finish it: Accordingly, the *Careless Husband*<sup>1</sup> took its Fate

One would not, sure, be frightful when one's dead—  
And—Betty—give this cheek a little red.”

I may note that, though Cibber enlarges chiefly on her comedy acting, she acted many parts in tragedy with the greatest success.

<sup>1</sup> Produced 7th December, 1704, at Drury Lane.

“The Careless Husband.”

LORD MORELOVE . . . . .	Mr. Powel.
LORD FOPPINGTON . . . . .	Mr. Cibber.
SIR CHARLES EASY . . . . .	Mr. Wilks.
LADY BETTY MODISH . . . . .	Mrs. Oldfield.
LADY EASY . . . . .	Mrs. Knight.
LADY GRAVEAIRS . . . . .	Mrs. Moore.
MRS. EDGING . . . . .	Mrs. Lucas.

upon the Stage the Winter following, in 1704. Whatever favourable Reception this Comedy has met with from the Publick, it would be unjust in me not to place a large Share of it to the Account of Mrs. *Oldfield*; not only from the uncommon Excellence of her Action, but even from her personal manner of Conversing. There are many Sentiments in the Character of Lady *Betty Modish* that I may almost say were originally her own, or only dress'd with a little more care than when they negligently fell from her lively Humour: Had her Birth plac'd her in a higher Rank of Life, she had certainly appear'd in reality what in this Play she only excellently acted, an agreeably gay Woman of Quality a little too conscious of her natural Attractions. I have often seen her in private Societies, where Women of the best Rank might have borrow'd some part of her Behaviour without the least Diminution of their Sense or Dignity. And this very Morning, where I am now writing at the *Bath*, November 11, 1738, the same Words were said of her by a Lady of Condition, whose better Judgment of her Personal Merit in that Light has embolden'd me to repeat them. After her Success in this Character of higher Life, all that Nature had given her of the Actress seem'd to have risen to its full Perfection: But the Variety of her Power could not be known 'till she was seen in variety of Characters; which, as fast as they fell to her, she equally excell'd in. Authors had much more from her Performance than they had reason to hope

for from what they had written for her; and none had less than another, but as their Genius in the Parts they allotted her was more or less elevated.

In the Wearing of her Person she was particularly fortunate; her Figure was always improving to her Thirty-sixth Year; but her Excellence in acting was never at a stand: And the last new Character she shone in (*Lady Townly*) was a Proof that she was still able to do more, if more could have been done for *her*.<sup>1</sup> She had one Mark of good Sense, rarely known in any Actor of either Sex but herself. I have observ'd several, with promising Dispositions, very desirous of Instruction at their first setting out; but no sooner had they found their least Account in it, than they were as desirous of being left to their own Capacity, which they then thought would be disgrac'd by their seeming to want any farther Assistance. But this was not Mrs. *Oldfield's* way of thinking; for, to the last Year of her Life, she never undertook any Part she lik'd without being importunately desirous of having all the Helps in it that another could possibly give her. By knowing so much herself, she found how much more there was of Nature yet needful to be known. Yet it was a hard matter to give her any Hint that she was not able to take or improve.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Oldfield played Lady Townly in the "Provoked Husband," 10th January, 1728. I presume that Cibber means that this was her last *important* original part, for she was the original representative of Sophonisba (by James Thomson) and other characters after January, 1728.

With all this Merit she was tractable and less presuming in her Station than several that had not half her Pretensions to be troublesome: But she lost nothing by her easy Conduct; she had every thing she ask'd, which she took care should be always reasonable, because she hated as much to be *grudg'd* as *deny'd* a Civility. Upon her extraordinary Action in the *Provok'd Husband*,<sup>1</sup> the Menagers made her a Present of Fifty Guineas more than her Agreement, which never was more than a Verbal one; for they knew she was above deserting them to engage upon any other Stage, and she was conscious they would never think it their Interest to give her cause of Complaint. In the last two Months of her Illness, when she was no longer able to assist them, she

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## "The Provoked Husband."

LORD TOWNLY . . . . .	Mr. Wilks.
LADY TOWNLY . . . . .	Mrs. Oldfield.
LADY GRACE. . . . .	Mrs. Porter.
MR. MANLEY. . . . .	Mr. Mills, sen.
SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD . . . . .	Mr. Cibber, sen.
LADY WRONGHEAD. . . . .	Mrs. Thurmond.
SQUIRE RICHARD . . . . .	Young Wetherelt.
MISS JENNY . . . . .	Mrs. Cibber.
JOHN MOODY. . . . .	Mr. Miller.
COUNT BASSET . . . . .	Mr. Bridgewater.
MRS. MOTHERLY . . . . .	Mrs. Moore.
MYRTILLA. . . . .	Mrs. Grace.
MRS. TRUSTY . . . . .	Mrs. Mills.

Vanbrugh left behind him nearly four acts of a play entitled "A Journey to London," which Cibber completed, calling the finished work "The Provoked Husband." It was produced at Drury Lane on 10th January, 1728.

declin'd receiving her Sallery, tho' by her Agreement she was entitled to it. Upon the whole she was, to the last Scene she acted, the Delight of her Spectators: Why then may we not close her Character with the same Indulgence with which *Horace* speaks of a commendable Poem:

*Ubi plura nitent—non ego paucis  
Offendar maculis——*<sup>1</sup>

*Where in the whole such various Beauties shine,  
'Twere idle upon Errors to refine.*<sup>2</sup>

What more might be said of her as an Actress may be found in the Preface to the *Provok'd Husband*, to which I refer the Reader.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis Offendar maculis."—Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 351.

<sup>2</sup> "The Laureat," p. 57: "But I can see no Occasion you have to mention any Errors. She had fewer as an Actress than any; and neither you, nor I, have any Right to enquire into her Conduct any where else."

<sup>3</sup> The following is the passage referred to:—

"But there is no doing right to Mrs. Oldfield, without putting people in mind of what others, of great merit, have wanted to come near her—"Tis not enough to say, she here outdid her usual excellence. I might therefore justly leave her to the constant admiration of those spectators who have the pleasure of living while she is an actress. But as this is not the only time she has been the life of what I have given the public, so, perhaps, my saying a little more of so memorable an actress, may give this play a chance to be read when the people of this age shall be ancestors—May it therefore give emulation to our successors of the stage, to know, that to the ending of the year 1727, a contemporary comedian relates, that Mrs. Oldfield was then in her highest excellence of action, happy in all the rarely found requisites that meet in one person to complete them for the stage. She was

With the Acquisition, then, of so advanc'd a Comedian as Mrs. *Oldfield*, and the Addition of one so much in Favour as *Wilks*, and by the visible Improvement of our other Actors, as *Penkethman*, *Johnson*, *Bullock*, and I think I may venture to name myself in the Number (but in what Rank I leave to the Judgment of those who have been my Spectators)

in stature just rising to that height, where the graceful can only begin to show itself; of a lively aspect, and a command in her mien, that like the principal figure in the finest painting, first seizes, and longest delights, the eye of the spectators. Her voice was sweet, strong, piercing, and melodious; her pronunciation voluble, distinct, and musical; and her emphasis always placed, where the spirit of the sense, in her periods, only demanded it. If she delighted more in the higher comic, than in the tragic strain, 'twas because the last is too often written in a lofty disregard of nature. But in characters of modern practised life, she found occasion to add the particular air and manner which distinguished the different humours she presented; whereas, in tragedy, the manner of speaking varies as little as the blank verse it is written in.—She had one peculiar happiness from nature, she looked and maintained the agreeable, at a time when other fine women only raise admirers by their understanding—The spectator was always as much informed by her eyes as her elocution; for the look is the only proof that an actor rightly conceives what he utters, there being scarce an instance, where the eyes do their part, that the elocution is known to be faulty. The qualities she had acquired, were the genteel and the elegant; the one in her air, and the other in her dress, never had her equal on the stage; and the ornaments she herself provided (particularly in this play) seemed in all respects the *paraphernalia* of a woman of quality. And of that sort were the characters she chiefly excelled in; but her natural good sense, and lively turn of conversation, made her way so easy to ladies of the highest rank, that it is a less wonder if, on the stage, she sometimes was, what might have become the finest woman in real life to have supported.” [Bell's edition.]

the Reputation of our Company began to get ground; Mrs. *Oldfield* and Mr. *Wilks*, by their frequently playing against one another in our best Comedies, very happily supported that Humour and Vivacity which is so peculiar to our *English* Stage. The *French*, our only modern Competitors, seldom give us their Lovers in such various Lights: In their Comedies (however lively a People they are by nature) their Lovers are generally constant, simple Sighers, both of a Mind, and equally distress'd about the Difficulties of their coming together; which naturally makes their Conversation so serious that they are seldom good Company to their Auditors: And tho' I allow them many other Beauties of which we are too negligent, yet our Variety of Humour has Excellencies that all their valuable Observance of Rules have never yet attain'd to. By these Advantages, then, we began to have an equal Share of the politer sort of Spectators, who, for several Years, could not allow our Company to stand in any comparison with the other. But Theatrical Favour, like Publick Commerce, will sometimes deceive the best Judgments by an unaccountable change of its Channel; the best Commodities are not always known to meet with the best Markets. To this Decline of the Old Company many Accidents might contribute; as the too distant Situation of their Theatre, or their want of a better, for it was not then in the condition it now is, but small, and poorly fitted up within the Walls of a Tennis *Quaree* Court, which is of the



lesser sort.<sup>1</sup> *Booth*, who was then a young Actor among them, has often told me of the Difficulties *Betterton* then labour'd under and complain'd of: How impracticable he found it to keep their Body to that common Order which was necessary for their Support ;<sup>2</sup> of their relying too much upon their intrinsic Merit ; and though but few of them were young even when they first became their own Masters, yet they were all now ten Years older, and consequently more liable to fall into an inactive Negligence, or were only separately diligent for themselves in the sole Regard of their Benefit-Plays ; which several of their Principals knew, at worst, would raise them Contributions that would more than tolerably subsist them for the current Year. But as these were too precarious Expedients to be always depended upon, and brought in nothing to the general Support of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Julian Marshall, in his "Annals of Tennis," p. 34, describes the two different sorts of tennis courts—"that which was called *Le Quarré*, or the Square ; and the other with the *dedans*, which is almost the same as that of the present day." Cibber is thus correct in mentioning that the court was one of the lesser sort.

<sup>2</sup> Interesting confirmation of Cibber's statement is furnished by an edict of the Lord Chamberlain, dated 11th November, 1700, by which *Betterton* is ordered "to take upon him y<sup>e</sup> sole management" of the Lincoln's Inn Fields company, there having been great disorders, "for want of sufficient authority to keep them to their duty." See David Craufurd's Preface to "Courtship à la Mode" (1700), for an account of the disorganized state of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Company. He says that though *Betterton* did his best, some of the actors neither learned their parts nor attended rehearsals ; and he therefore withdrew his comedy and took it to Drury Lane, where it was promptly produced.

the Numbers who were at Sallaries under them, they were reduc'd to have recourse to foreign Novelties ; *L'Abbeè, Balon,* and Mademoiselle *Subligny*,<sup>1</sup> three of the then most famous Dancers of the *French* Opera, were, at several times, brought over at extraordinary Rates, to revive that sickly Appetite which plain Sense and Nature had satiated.<sup>2</sup> But alas ! there was no recovering to a sound Constitution by those mere costly Cordials ; the Novelty of a Dance was but of a short Duration, and perhaps hurtful in its consequence ; for it made a Play without a Dance less endur'd than it had been before, when such Dancing was not to be had. But perhaps their ex-

<sup>1</sup> Mons. Castil-Blaze, in his "La Danse et les Ballets," 1832, p. 153, writes : "Ballon danse avec énergie et vivacité ; mademoiselle de Subligny se fait généralement admirer pour sa danse noble et gracieuse." Madlle. Subligny was one of the first women who were dancers by profession. "La demoiselle Subligny parut peu de temps après la demoiselle Fontaine [1681], et fut aussi fort applaudie pour sa danse ; mais elle quitta le théâtre, en 1705, et mourut après l'année 1736."—"Histoire de l'Opéra." Of Mons. L'Abbé I have been unable to discover any critical notice.

<sup>2</sup> Downes ("Roscius Anglicanus," p. 46) says : "In the space of Ten Years past, Mr. *Betterton* to gratify the desires and Fancies of the Nobility and Gentry ; procur'd from Abroad the best Dances and Singers, as Monsieur *L'Abbe*, Madam *Sublini*, Monsieur *Balon*, *Margarita Delpine*, *Maria Gallia* and divers others ; who being Exorbitantly Expensive, produc'd small Profit to him and his Company, but vast Gain to themselves."

Gildon, in the "Comparison between the two Stages," alludes to some of these dancers :—

"*Sull.* The Town ran mad to see him [Balon], and the prizes were rais'd to an extravagant degree to bear the extravagant rate they allow'd him" (p. 49).

hibiting these Novelties might be owing to the Success we had met with in our more barbarous introducing of *French* Mimicks and Tumblers the Year before; of which Mr. *Rowe* thus complains in his Prologue to one of his first Plays:

*Must* Shakespear, Fletcher, and laborious Ben,  
Be left for Scaramouch and Harlequin?<sup>1</sup>

While the Crowd, therefore, so fluctuated from one House to another as their Eyes were more or less regaled than their Ears, it could not be a Question much in Debate which had the better Actors; the Merit of either seem'd to be of little moment; and the Complaint in the foregoing Lines, tho' it might be just for a time, could not be a just one for ever, because the best Play that ever was writ may tire by being too often repeated, a Misfortune naturally attending the Obligation to play every Day; not that

“*Crit.* There's another Toy now [Madame Subligny]—Gad, there's not a Year but some surprizing Monster lands: I wonder they don't first show her at *Fleet-bridge* with an old Drum and a crackt Trumpet” (p. 67).

<sup>1</sup> In the Prologue to “The Ambitious Stepmother,” produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1701 (probably), Rowe writes:—

“The Stage would need no Farce, nor Song nor Dance,  
Nor Capering Monsieur brought from Active France.”

And in the Epilogue (not Prologue, as Cibber says):—

“Show but a Mimick Ape, or French Buffoon,  
You to the other House in Shoals are gone,  
And leave us here to Tune our Crowds alone. }  
Must Shakespear, Fletcher, and laborious Ben,  
Be left for Scaramouch and Harlaquin?”

whenever such Satiety commences it will be any Proof of the Play's being a bad one, or of its being ill acted. In a word, Satiety is seldom enough consider'd by either Criticks, Spectators, or Actors, as the true, not to say just Cause of declining Audiences to the most rational Entertainments: And tho' I cannot say I ever saw a good new Play not attended with due Encouragement, yet to keep a Theatre daily open without sometimes giving the Publick a bad old one, is more than I doubt the Wit of human Writers or Excellence of Actors will ever be able to accomplish. And as both Authors and Comedians may have often succeeded where a sound Judgment would have condemn'd them, it might puzzle the nicest Critick living to prove in what sort of Excellence the true Value of either consisted: For if their Merit were to be measur'd by the full Houses they may have brought; if the Judgment of the Crowd were infallible; I am afraid we shall be reduc'd to allow that the *Beggars Opera* was the best-written Play, and Sir *Harry Wildair*<sup>1</sup> (as *Wilks* play'd it) was the best acted Part, that ever our *English* Theatre had to boast of. That Critick, indeed, must be rigid to a Folly that would deny either of them their due Praise, when they severally drew such Numbers after them; all their Hearers could not be mistaken; and yet, if they were all in the right, what sort of Fame will remain to those celebrated Authors

<sup>1</sup> In "The Constant Couple," and its sequel, "Sir Harry Wildair."

and Actors that had so long and deservedly been admired before these were in Being. The only Distinction I shall make between them is, That to write or act like the Authors or Actors of the latter end of the last Century, I am of Opinion will be found a far better Pretence to Success than to imitate these who have been so crowded to in the beginning of this. All I would infer from this Explanation is, that tho' we had then the better Audiences, and might have more of the young World on our Side, yet this was no sure Proof that the other Company were not, in the Truth of Action, greatly our Superiors. These elder Actors, then, besides the Disadvantages I have mention'd, having only the fewer true Judges to admire them, naturally wanted the Support of the Crowd whose Taste was to be pleased at a cheaper Rate and with coarser Fare. To recover them, therefore, to their due Estimation, a new Project was form'd of building them a stately Theatre in the *Hay-Market*,<sup>1</sup> by Sir *John Vanbrugh*, for which he raised a Subscription of thirty Persons of Quality, at one hundred Pounds each, in Consideration whereof every Subscriber, for his own Life, was to be admitted to whatever Entertainments should be publickly perform'd there, without farther Payment for his Entrance. Of this Theatre I saw the

<sup>1</sup> This theatre, opened 9th April, 1705, was burnt down 17th June, 1788; rebuilt 1791; again burnt in 1867. During its existence it has borne the name of Queen's Theatre, Opera House, King's Theatre, and its present title of Her Majesty's Theatre.

first Stone laid, on which was inscrib'd *The little Whig*, in Honour to a Lady of extraordinary Beauty, then the celebrated Toast and Pride of that Party.<sup>1</sup>

In the Year 1706,<sup>2</sup> when this House was finish'd, *Betterton* and his Co-partners dissolved their own Agreement, and threw themselves under the Direction of Sir *John Vanbrugh* and Mr. *Congreve*, imagining, perhaps, that the Conduct of two such eminent Authors might give a more prosperous Turn to their Condition; that the Plays it would now be their Interest to write for them would soon recover the Town to a true Taste, and be an Advantage that no other Company could hope for; that in the Interim, till such Plays could be written, the Grandeur of their House, as it was a new Spectacle, might allure the Crowd to support them: But if these were their Views, we shall see that their Dependence upon them was too sanguine. As to their Prospect of new Plays, I doubt it was not enough consider'd that good ones were Plants of a slow Growth; and tho' Sir *John Vanbrugh* had a

<sup>1</sup> The beautiful Lady Sunderland. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald ("New History," i. 238) states that it was said that workmen, on 19th March, 1825, found a stone with the inscription: "April 18th, 1704. This corner-stone of the Queen's Theatre was laid by his Grace Charles Duke of Somerset."

<sup>2</sup> Should be 1705. Downes (p. 47) says: "About the end of 1704, Mr. *Betterton* Assign'd his License, and his whole Company over to Captain *Vanbrugg* to Act under HIS, at the Theatre in the *Hay Market*." Vanbrugh opened his theatre on 9th April, 1705.

very quick Pen, yet Mr. *Congreve* was too judicious a Writer to let any thing come hastily out of his Hands: As to their other Dependence, the House, they had not yet discover'd that almost every proper Quality and Convenience of a good Theatre had been sacrificed or neglected to shew the Spectator a vast triumphal Piece of Architecture! And that the best Play, for the Reasons I am going to offer, could not but be under great Disadvantages, and be less capable of delighting the Auditor here than it could have been in the plain Theatre they came from. For what could their vast Columns, their gilded Cornices, their immoderate high Roofs avail, when scarce one Word in ten could be distinctly heard in it? Nor had it then the Form it now stands in, which Necessity, two or three Years after, reduced it to: At the first opening it, the flat Ceiling that is now over the Orchestre was then a Semi-oval Arch that sprung fifteen Feet higher from above the Cornice: The Ceiling over the Pit, too, was still more raised, being one level Line from the highest back part of the upper Gallery to the Front of the Stage: The Front-boxes were a continued Semicircle to the bare Walls of the House on each Side: This extraordinary and superfluous Space occasion'd such an Undulation from the Voice of every Actor, that generally what they said sounded like the Gabbling of so many People in the lofty Isles in a Cathedral —The Tone of a Trumpet, or the Swell of an Eunuch's holding Note, 'tis true, might be sweeten'd

by it, but the articulate Sounds of a speaking Voice were drown'd by the hollow Reverberations of one Word upon another. To this Inconvenience, why may we not add that of its Situation ; for at that time it had not the Advantage of almost a large City, which has since been built in its Neighbourhood : Those costly Spaces of *Hanover*, *Grosvenor*, and *Cavendish* Squares, with the many and great adjacent Streets about them, were then all but so many green Fields of Pasture, from whence they could draw little or no Sustenance, unless it were that of a Milk-Diet. The City, the Inns of Court, and the middle Part of the Town, which were the most constant Support of a Theatre, and chiefly to be relied on, were now too far out of the Reach of an easy Walk, and Coach-hire is often too hard a Tax upon the Pit and Gallery.<sup>1</sup> But from the vast Increase of the Buildings I have mention'd, the Situation of that Theatre has since that Time received considerable Advantages ; a new World of People of Condition are nearer to it than formerly, and I am of Opinion that if the auditory Part were a little more reduced to the Model of that in *Drury-Lane*, an excellent

<sup>1</sup> In Dryden's Prologue at the opening of Drury Lane in 1674, in comparing the situation of Drury Lane with that of Dorset Garden, which was at the east end of Fleet Street, he talks of

“ . . . . . a cold bleak road,  
Where bears in furs dare scarcely look abroad.”

This is now the Strand and Fleet Street ! No doubt the road westward to the Haymarket was equally wild.



Company of Actors would now find a better Account in it than in any other House in this populous City.<sup>1</sup> Let me not be mistaken, I say an excellent Company, and such as might be able to do Justice to the best of Plays, and throw out those latent Beauties in them which only excellent Actors can discover and give Life to. If such a Company were now there, they would meet with a quite different Set of Auditors than other Theatres have lately been used to : Polite Hearers would be content with polite Entertainments ; and I remember the time when Plays, without the Aid of Farce or Pantomime, were as decently attended as Opera's or private Assemblies, where a noisy Sloven would have past his time as uneasily in a Front-box as in a Drawing-room ; when a Hat upon a Man's Head there would have been look'd upon as a sure Mark of a Brute or a Booby : But of all this I have seen, too, the Reverse, where in the Presence of Ladies at a Play common Civility has been set at defiance, and the Privilege of being a rude Clown, even to a Nuisance, has in a manner been demanded as one of the Rights of *English* Liberty : Now, though I grant that Liberty is so precious a Jewel that we ought not to suffer the least Ray of its Lustre to be diminish'd, yet methinks the Liberty of seeing a Play in quiet has as laudable a Claim to Protection as the Privilege of not suffering you to do it has to Impunity. But since we are so

<sup>1</sup> This experiment was never tried. From the time Cibber wrote, the house was used as an Opera House.

happy as not to have a certain Power among us, which in another Country is call'd the *Police*, let us rather bear this Insult than buy its Remedy at too dear a Rate; and let it be the Punishment of such wrong-headed Savages, that they never will or can know the true Value of that Liberty which they so stupidly abuse: Such vulgar Minds possess their Liberty as profligate Husbands do fine Wives, only to disgrace them. In a Word, when Liberty boils over, such is the Scum of it. But to our new erected Theatre.

Not long before this Time the *Italian* Opera began first to steal into *England*,<sup>1</sup> but in as rude a disguise and unlike it self as possible; in a lame, hobling Translation into our own Language, with false Quantities, or Metre out of Measure to its original Notes, sung by our own unskilful Voices, with Graces misapply'd to almost every Sentiment, and with Action lifeless and unmeaning through every Character: The first *Italian* Performer that

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“to Court,

Her seat imperial Dulness shall transport.  
Already Opera prepares the way,  
The sure fore-runner of her gentle sway.”

“Dunciad,” iii. verses 301-303.

“When lo! a harlot form soft sliding by,  
With mincing step, small voice, and languid eye;  
Foreign her air, her robe's discordant pride  
In patchwork fluttering, and her head aside;  
By singing peers upheld on either hand,  
She tripp'd and laugh'd, too pretty much to stand.”

“Dunciad,” iv. verses 45-50.

made any distinguish'd Figure in it was *Valentini*, a true sensible Singer at that time, but of a Throat too weak to sustain those melodious Warblings for which the fairer Sex have since idoliz'd his Successors. However, this Defect was so well supply'd by his Action, that his Hearers bore with the Absurdity of his singing his first Part of *Turnus* in *Camilla* all in *Italian*, while every other Character was sung and recited to him in *English*.<sup>1</sup> This I have mention'd to shew not only our Tramon-tane Taste, but that the crowded Audiences which follow'd it to *Drury-Lane* might be another Occasion of their growing thinner in *Lincolns-Inn-Fields*.

To strike in, therefore, with this prevailing Novelty, Sir *John Vanbrugh* and Mr. *Congreve* open'd their new *Hay-Market Theatre* with a translated Opera to *Italian* Musick, called the *Triumph of Love*, but this not having in it the Charms of *Camilla*, either from the Inequality of the Musick or Voices, had but a cold Reception, being perform'd but three Days, and those not crowded. Immediately upon the Failure of this *Opera*, Sir *John Vanbrugh* produced his Comedy call'd the *Confede-*

<sup>1</sup> Salvini, the great Italian actor, played in America with an English company, he speaking in Italian, they answering in English. I have myself seen a similar polyglot performance at the Edinburgh Lyceum Theatre, where the manager, Mr. J. B. Howard, acted Iago (in English), while Signor Salvini and his company played in Italian. I confess the effect was not so startling as I expected.

*racy*,<sup>1</sup> taken (but greatly improv'd) from the *Bourgeois à la mode* of *Dancour*: Though the Fate of this Play was something better, yet I thought it was not equal to its Merit:<sup>2</sup> For it is written with an uncommon Vein of Wit and Humour; which confirms me in my former Observation, that the difficulty of hearing distinctly in that then wide Theatre was no small Impediment to the Applause that might have followed the same Actors in it upon every other Stage; and indeed every Play acted there before the House was alter'd seem'd to suffer from the same Inconvenience: In a Word, the Prospect of Profits from this Theatre was so very barren, that Mr. *Congreve* in a few Months gave up his Share and Interest in the Government of it wholly to Sir *John Vanbrugh*.<sup>3</sup> But Sir *John*, being sole Proprietor of the House, was at all Events oblig'd to do his utmost to support it. As he had a happier Talent of throwing the *English* Spirit into his Translation of *French* Plays than any former Author who had borrowed from them, he in the same Season gave the Publick three more of that kind, call'd the *Cuckold in Conceit*, from the *Cocu imaginaire* of *Moliere*; <sup>4</sup> *Squire Trelooby*,

<sup>1</sup> "The Confederacy" was not produced till the following season—30th October, 1705.

<sup>2</sup> It was acted ten times.

<sup>3</sup> Genest (ii. 333) says that Congreve resigned his share at the close of the season 1704-5.

<sup>4</sup> Cibber should have said "The Confederacy." "The Cuckold in Conceit" has never been printed, and Genest doubts if it is by Vanbrugh. Besides, it was not produced till 22nd March, 1707.

from his *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, and the *Mistake*, from the *Dépit Amoureux* of the same Author.<sup>1</sup> Yet all these, however well executed, came to the Ear in the same undistinguish'd Utterance by which almost all their Plays had equally suffered: For what few could plainly hear, it was not likely a great many could applaud.

It must farther be consider'd, too, that this Company were not now what they had been when they first revolted from the Patentees in *Drury-Lane*, and became their own Masters in *Lincolns-Inn-Fields*. Several of them, excellent in their different Talents, were now dead; as *Smith*, *Kynaston*, *Sandford*, and *Leigh*: *Mrs. Betterton* and *Underhil* being, at this time, also superannuated Pensioners whose Places were generally but ill supply'd: Nor could it be expected that *Betterton* himself, at past seventy, could retain his former Force and Spirit; though he was yet far distant from any Competitor. Thus, then, were these Remains of the best Set of Actors that I believe were ever known at once in *England*, by Time, Death, and the Satiety of their Hearers, mould'ring to decay.

It was now the Town-talk that nothing but a Union of the two Companies could recover the Stage to its former Reputation,<sup>2</sup> which Opinion was certainly

<sup>1</sup> "The Mistake" was produced 27th December, 1705. "Squire Trelooby," which was first played in 1704, was revived 28th January, 1706, with a new second act.

<sup>2</sup> A junction of the companies seems to have been talked of as

true : One would have thought, too, that the Patentee of *Drury-Lane* could not have fail'd to close with it, he being then on the Prosperous Side of the Question, having no Relief to ask for himself, and little more to do in the matter than to consider what he might safely grant : But it seems this was not his way of counting ; he had other Persons who had great Claims to Shares in the Profits of this Stage, which Profits, by a Union, he foresaw would be too visible to be doubted of, and might raise up a new Spirit in those Adventurers to revive their Suits at Law with him ; for he had led them a Chace in Chancery several Years,<sup>1</sup> and when they had driven him into a Contempt of that Court, he conjur'd up a Spirit, in the Shape of Six and eight Pence a-day, that constantly struck the Tipstaff blind whenever he came near him : He knew the intrinsick Value of Delay, and was resolv'd to stick to it as the surest way to give the Plaintiffs enough on't. And by this Expedient our good Master had long walk'd about at his Leisure, cool and contented as a Fox when the Hounds were drawn off and gone home from

early as 1701. In the Prologue to "The Unhappy Penitent" (1701), the lines occur :—

"But now the peaceful tattle of the town,  
Is how to join both houses into one."

<sup>1</sup> In "The Post-Boy Rob'd of his Mail," p. 342, some curious particulars of the negotiations for a Union are given. One of Rich's objections to it is that he has to consider the interests of his Partners, with some of whom he has already been compelled to go to law on monetary questions.

him. But whether I am right or not in my Conjectures, certain it is that this close Master of *Drury-Lane* had no Inclination to a Union, as will appear by the Sequel.<sup>1</sup>

Sir *John Vanbrugh* knew, too, that to make a Union worth his while he must not seem too hasty for it; he therefore found himself under a Necessity, in the mean time, of letting his whole Theatrical Farm to some industrious Tenant that might put it into better Condition. This is that Crisis, as I observed in the Eighth Chapter, when the Royal Licence for acting Plays, &c. was judg'd of so little Value as not to have one Suitor for it. At this time, then, the Master of *Drury-Lane* happen'd to have a sort of premier Agent in his Stage-Affairs, that seem'd in Appearance as much to govern the Master as the Master himself did to govern his Actors: But this Person was under no Stipulation or Sallary for the Service he render'd, but had gradually wrought himself into the Master's extraordinary Confidence and Trust, from an habitual Intimacy, a cheerful Humour,

<sup>1</sup> In July, 1705, Rich was approached on behalf of Vanbrugh regarding a Union, and the Lord Chamberlain supported the latter's proposal. Rich, in declining, wrote: "I am concern'd with above forty Persons in number, either as Adventurers under the two Patents granted to Sir *William Davenant*, and *Tho. Killigrew*, Esq.; or as Renters of *Covent-Garden* and *Dorset-Garden* Theatres. . . . I am a purchaser under the Patents, to above the value of two Thousand Pounds (a great part of which was under the Marriage-Settlements of Dr. *Davenant*)."—"The Post-Boy Rob'd of his Mail," p. 344.

and an indefatigable Zeal for his Interest. If I should farther say, that this Person has been well known in almost every Metropolis in *Europe*; that few private Men have, with so little Reproach, run through more various Turns of Fortune; that, on the wrong side of Three-score, he has yet the open Spirit of a hale young Fellow of five and twenty; that though he still chuses to speak what he thinks to his best Friends with an undisguis'd Freedom, he is, notwithstanding, acceptable to many Persons of the first Rank and Condition; that any one of them (provided he likes them) may now send him, for their Service, to *Constantinople* at half a Day's Warning; that Time has not yet been able to make a visible Change in any Part of him but the Colour of his Hair, from a fierce coal-black to that of a milder milk-white: When I have taken this Liberty with him, methinks it cannot be taking a much greater if I at once should tell you that this Person was Mr. *Owen Swiney*,<sup>1</sup> and that it was to him Sir *John*

<sup>1</sup> Owen Swiney, or Mac Swiney, was an Irishman. As is related by Cibber in this and following chapters, he leased the Haymarket from Vanbrugh from the beginning of the season 1706-7. At the Union, 1707-8, the Haymarket was made over to him for the production of operas; and when, at the end of 1708-9, Rich was ordered to silence his company at Drury Lane, Swiney was allowed to engage the chief of Rich's actors to play at the Haymarket, where they opened September, 1709. At the beginning of season 1710-11, Swiney and his partners became managers of Drury Lane, but Swiney was forced at the end of that season to resume the management of the operas. After a year of the Opera-house (end of 1711-12), Swiney was ruined and had to go abroad. He



*Vanbrugh*, in this Exigence of his Theatrical Affairs, made an Offer of his Actors, under such Agreements of Sallary as might be made with them; and of his House, Cloaths, and Scenes, with the Queen's License to employ them, upon Payment of only the casual Rent of five Pounds upon every acting Day, and not to exceed 700*l.* in the Year. Of this Proposal Mr. *Swiney* desir'd a Day or two to consider; for, however he might like it, he would not meddle in any sort without the Consent and Approbation of his Friend and Patron, the Master of *Drury Lane*. Having given the Reasons why this Patentee was averse to a Union, it may now seem less a Wonder why he immediately consented that *Swiney* should take the *Hay-Market* House, &c. and continue that Company to act against him; but the real Truth was, that he had a mind both Companies should be clandestinely under one and the same Interest, and yet in so loose a manner that he might declare his Verbal Agreement with *Swiney* good, or null and void, as he might best find his Account in either. What flatter'd him that he had this wholsom

remained abroad some twenty years. On 26th February, 1735, he had a benefit at Drury Lane, at which Cibber played for his old friend. The "Biographia Dramatica" says that he received a place in the Custom House, and was made Keeper of the King's Mews. He died 2nd October, 1754, leaving his property to Mrs. Woffington. Davies, in his "Dramatic Miscellanies" (i. 232), tells an idle tale of a scuffle between Swiney and Mrs. Clive's brother, which Bellchambers quotes at length, though it has no special reference to anything.

Project, and *Swiney* to execute it, both in his Power, was that at this time *Swiney* happen'd to stand in his Books Debtor to Cash upwards of Two Hundred Pounds : But here, we shall find, he over-rated his Security. However, *Swiney* as yet follow'd his Orders; he took the *Hay-Market* Theatre, and had, farther, the private Consent of the Patentee to take such of his Actors from *Drury-Lane* as either from Inclination or Discontent, might be willing to come over to him in the *Hay-Market*. The only one he made an Exception of, was myself : For tho' he chiefly depended upon his Singers and Dancers,<sup>1</sup> he said it would be necessary to keep some one tolerable Actor with him, that might enable him to set those Machines a going. Under this Limitation of not entertaining me, *Swiney* seem'd to acquiesce 'till after he had open'd with the so recruited Company in the *Hay-Market* : the Actors that came to him from *Drury-Lane* were *Wilks*, *Estcourt*,<sup>2</sup> *Mills*, *Keen*,<sup>3</sup> *Johnson*, *Bullock*, *Mrs. Oldfield*, *Mrs. Rogers*, and some few others of less note : But I must here let you know that this Project was form'd and put in Execution all in very few Days, in the Summer-

<sup>1</sup> At Drury Lane this season (1706-7) very few plays were acted, Rich relying chiefly on operas.

<sup>2</sup> Cibber seems to be wrong in including Estcourt in this list. His name appears in the Drury Lane bills for 1706-7, and his great part of Sergeant Kite (" Recruiting Officer ") was played at the Haymarket by Pack. On 30th November, 1706, it was advertised that " the true Sergeant Kite is performed at Drury Lane."

<sup>3</sup> See memoir of Theophilus Keen at end of second volume.

Season, when no Theatre was open. To all which I was entirely a Stranger, being at this time at a Gentleman's House in *Gloucestershire*, scribbling, if I mistake not, the *Wife's Resentment*.<sup>1</sup>

The first Word I heard of this Transaction was by a Letter from *Swiney*, inviting me to make One in the *Hay-Market* Company, whom he hop'd I could not but now think the stronger Party. But I confess I was not a little alarm'd at this Revolution: For I consider'd, that I knew of no visible Fund to support these Actors but their own Industry; that all his Recruits from *Drury-Lane* would want new Cloathing; and that the warmest Industry would be always labouring up Hill under so necessary an Expence, so bad a Situation, and so inconvenient a Theatre. I was always of opinion, too, that in changing Sides, in most Conditions, there generally were discovered more unforeseen Inconveniencies than visible Advantages; and that at worst there would always some sort of Merit remain with Fidelity, tho' unsuccessful. Upon these Considerations I was

<sup>1</sup> Downes (p. 50) gives the following account of the transaction:—

“In this Interval Captain *Vantbrugg* by Agreement with Mr. *Swinnny*, and by the Concurrence of my Lord Chamberlain, Transferr'd and Invested his License and Government of the Theatre to Mr. *Swinnny*; who brought with him from Mr. *Rich*, Mr. *Wilks*, Mr. *Cyber*, Mr. *Mills*, Mr. *Johnson*, Mr. *Keene*, Mr. *Norris*, Mr. *Fairbank*, Mrs. *Oldfield* and others; United them to the Old Company; Mr. *Betterton* and Mr. *Underhill*, being the only remains of the Duke of *York's* Servants, from 1662, till the Union in *October* 1706.”

only thankful for the Offers made me from the *Hay-Market*, without accepting them, and soon after came to Town towards the usual time of their beginning to act, to offer my Service to our old Master. But I found our Company so thinn'd that it was almost impracticable to bring any one tolerable Play upon the Stage.<sup>1</sup> When I ask'd him where were his Actors, and in what manner he intended to proceed? he reply'd, *Don't you trouble yourself, come along, and I'll shew you.* He then led me about all the By-places in the House, and shew'd me fifty little Back-doors, dark Closets, and narrow Passages; in Alterations and Contrivances of which kind he had busied his Head most part of the Vacation; for he was scarce ever without some notable Joyner, or a Brick-layer extraordinary, in pay, for twenty Years. And there are so many odd obscure Places about a Theatre, that his Genius in Nook-building was never out of Employment; nor could the most vain-headed Author be more deaf to an Interruption in reciting his Works, than our wise Master was while entertaining me with the Improvements he had made in his invisible Architecture; all which, without thinking any one Part of it necessary, tho' I seem'd to approve, I could not help now and then breaking in upon his Delight with the impertinent Question of

<sup>1</sup> The chief actors left at Drury Lane were Estcourt, Pinkethman, Powell, Capt. Griffin, Mrs. Tofts, Mrs. Mountfort (that is, the great Mrs. Mountfort's daughter), and Mrs. Cross: a miserably weak company.

—*But, Master, where are your Actors?* But it seems I had taken a wrong time for this sort of Enquiry; his Head was full of Matters of more moment, and (as you find) I was to come another time for an Answer: A very hopeful Condition I found myself in, under the Conduct of so profound a Vertuoso and so considerate a Master! But to speak of him seriously, and to account for this Disregard to his Actors, his Notion was that Singing and Dancing, or any sort of Exotick Entertainments, would make an ordinary Company of Actors too hard for the best Set who had only plain Plays to subsist on. Now, though I am afraid too much might be said in favour of this Opinion, yet I thought he laid more Stress upon that sort of Merit than it would bear; as I therefore found myself of so little Value with him, I could not help setting a little more upon myself, and was resolv'd to come to a short Explanation with him. I told him I came to serve him at a time when many of his best Actors had deserted him; that he might now have the Refusal of me; but I could not afford to carry the Compliment so far as to lessen my Income by it; that I therefore expected either my casual Pay to be advanced, or the Payment of my former Sallary made certain for as many Days as we had acted the Year before.—No, he was not willing to alter his former Method; but I might chuse whatever Parts I had a mind to act of theirs who had left him. When I found him, as I thought, so insensible or impregnable, I look'd gravely in his

Face, and told him—He knew upon what Terms I was willing to serve him, and took my leave. By this time the *Hay-Market* Company had begun acting to Audiences something better than usual, and were all paid their full Sallaries, a Blessing they had not felt in some Years in either House before. Upon this Success *Swiney* press'd the Patentee to execute the Articles they had as yet only verbally agreed on, which were in Substance, That *Swiney* should take the *Hay-Market* House in his own Name, and have what Actors he thought necessary from *Drury-Lane*, and after all Payments punctually made, the Profits should be equally divided between these two Undertakers. But soft and fair! Rashness was a Fault that had never yet been imputed to the Patentee; certain Payments were Methods he had not of a long, long time been us'd to; that Point still wanted time for Consideration. But *Swiney* was as hasty as the other was slow, and was resolv'd to know what he had to trust to before they parted; and to keep him the closer to his Bargain, he stood upon his Right of having *Me* added to that Company if I was willing to come into it. But this was a Point as absolutely refus'd on one side as insisted on on the other. In this Contest high Words were exchang'd on both sides, 'till, in the end, this their last private Meeting came to an open Rupture: But before it was publicly known, *Swiney*, by fairly letting me into the whole Transaction, took effectual means to secure me in his Interest. When the Mystery of the Patentee's

Indifference to me was unfolded, and that his slighting me was owing to the Security he rely'd on of *Swiney's* not daring to engage me, I could have no further Debate with my self which side of the Question I should adhere to. To conclude, I agreed, in two Words, to act with *Swiney*,<sup>1</sup> and from this time every Change that happen'd in the Theatrical Government was a nearer Step to that twenty Years of Prosperity which Actors, under the Management of Actors, not long afterwards enjoy'd. What was the immediate Consequence of this last Desertion from *Drury-Lane* shall be the Subject of another Chapter.

<sup>1</sup> *Swiney's* company began to act at the Haymarket on 15th October, 1706. Cibber's first appearance seems to have been on 7th November, when he played Lord Foppington in "The Careless Husband."

END OF VOL. I.



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AN APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE OF  
MR. COLLEY CIBBER.

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*VOLUME THE SECOND.*

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COLLEY CIBBER AS LORD FOPPINGTON

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AN APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE OF  
MR. COLLEY CIBBER

*WRITTEN BY HIMSELF*

A NEW EDITION WITH NOTES AND SUPPLEMENT

BY

ROBERT W. LOWE

*WITH TWENTY-SIX ORIGINAL MEZZOTINT PORTRAITS BY*

*R. B. PARKES, AND EIGHTEEN ETCHINGS*

*BY ADOLPHE LALAUZE*

*IN TWO VOLUMES*

VOLUME THE SECOND

LONDON

JOHN C. NIMMO

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AN APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE OF  
MR. COLLEY CIBBER, &c.

CHAPTER X.

*The recruited Actors in the Hay-Market encourag'd by a Subscription. Drury-Lane under a particular Menagement. The Power of a Lord-Chamberlain over the Theatres consider'd. How it had been formerly exercis'd. A Digression to Tragick Authors.*

HAVING shewn the particular Conduct of the Patentee in refusing so fair an Opportunity of securing to himself both Companies under his sole Power and Interest, I shall now lead the Reader, after a short View of what pass'd in this new Establishment of the *Hay-Market* Theatre, to the Acci-

dents that the Year following compell'd the same Patentee to receive both Companies, united, into the *Drury-Lane* Theatre, notwithstanding his Disinclination to it.

It may now be imagin'd that such a Detachment of Actors from *Drury-Lane* could not but give a new Spirit to those in the *Hay-Market*; not only by enabling them to act each others Plays to better Advantage, but by an emulous Industry which had lain too long inactive among them, and without which they plainly saw they could not be sure of Subsistence. Plays by this means began to recover a good Share of their former Esteem and Favour; and the Profits of them in about a Month enabled our new Menager to discharge his Debt (of something more than Two hundred Pounds) to his old Friend the Patentee, who had now left him and his Troop in trust to fight their own Battles. The greatest Inconvenience they still laboured under was the immoderate Wideness of their House, in which, as I have observ'd, the Difficulty of Hearing may be said to have bury'd half the Auditors Entertainment. This Defect seem'd evident from the much better Reception several new Plays (first acted there) met with when they afterwards came to be play'd by the same Actors in *Drury-Lane*: Of this Number were the *Stratagem*<sup>1</sup> and the *Wife's Resent-*

<sup>1</sup> That is, "The Beaux' Stratagem," by Farquhar, produced 8th March, 1707. Cibber played the part of Gibbet.

*ment*;<sup>1</sup> to which I may add the *Double Gallant*.<sup>2</sup> This last was a Play made up of what little was tolerable in two or three others that had no Success, and were laid aside as so much Poetical Lumber; but by collecting and adapting the best Parts of them all into one Play, the *Double Gallant* has had a Place every Winter amongst the Publick Entertainments these Thirty Years. As I was only the Compiler of this Piece I

<sup>1</sup> "Lady's Last Stake; or, the Wife's Resentment," a comedy by Cibber, produced 13th December, 1707.

LORD WRONGLOVE . . . . .	Mr. Wilks.
SIR GEORGE BRILLANT . . . . .	Mr. Cibber.
SIR FRIENDLY MORAL . . . . .	Mr. Keene.
LADY WRONGLOVE . . . . .	Mrs. Barry.
LADY GENTLE . . . . .	Mrs. Rogers.
MRS. CONQUEST . . . . .	Mrs. Oldfield.
MISS NOTABLE . . . . .	Mrs. Cross.

<sup>2</sup> "The Double Gallant; or, the Sick Lady's Cure," a comedy by Cibber, produced 1st November, 1707.

SIR SOLOMON SADLIFE . . . . .	Mr. Johnson.
CLERIMONT . . . . .	Mr. Booth.
CARELESS . . . . .	Mr. Wilks.
ATALL . . . . .	Mr. Cibber.
CAPTAIN STRUT . . . . .	Mr. Bowen.
SIR SQUABBLE SPLITHAIR . . . . .	Mr. Norris.
SAUNTER . . . . .	Mr. Pack.
OLD MR. WILFUL . . . . .	Mr. Bullock.
SIR HARRY ATALL . . . . .	Mr. Cross.
SUPPLE . . . . .	Mr. Fairbank.
LADY DAINTY . . . . .	Mrs. Oldfield.
LADY SADLIFE . . . . .	Mrs. Crosse.
CLARINDA . . . . .	Mrs. Rogers.
SYLVIA . . . . .	Mrs. Bradshaw.
WISHWELL . . . . .	Mrs. Saunders.
SITUP . . . . .	Mrs. Brown.

II.

B

did not publish it in my own Name; but as my having but a Hand in it could not be long a Secret, I have been often treated as a Plagiary on that Account: Not that I think I have any right to complain of whatever would detract from the Merit of that sort of Labour, yet a Cobler may be allow'd to be useful though he is not famous :<sup>1</sup> And I hope a Man is not blameable for doing a little Good, tho' he cannot do as much as another? But so it is—Twopenny Criticks must live as well as Eighteenpenny Authors!<sup>2</sup>

While the Stage was thus recovering its former Strength, a more honourable Mark of Favour was shewn to it than it was ever known before or since to have receiv'd. The then Lord *Hallifax* was not only the Patron of the Men of Genius of this Time, but had likewise a generous Concern for the Reputation and Prosperity of the Theatre, from whence the most elegant Dramatick Labours of the Learned, he knew, had often shone in their brightest Lustre. A Proposal therefore was drawn up and addressed to that Noble Lord for his Approbation and Assistance to raise a publick Subscription for Reviving Three Plays of the best Authors, with the full Strength of the Company; every Subscriber to have Three Tickets for the first Day of each Play for

<sup>1</sup> The plays from which Cibber compiled "The Double Gallant" are "Love at a Venture," "The Lady's Visiting Day," and "The Reformed Wife" (Genest, ii. 389).

<sup>2</sup> Eighteenpence was for many years the recognized price of plays when published.



his single Payment of Three Guineas. This Subscription his Lordship so zealously encouraged, that from his Recommendation chiefly, in a very little time it was compleated. The Plays were *Julius Cæsar* of *Shakespear*; the *King and no King* of *Fletcher*, and the Comic Scenes of *Dryden's Marriage à la mode* and of his *Maiden Queen* put together;<sup>1</sup> for it was judg'd that, as these comic Episodes were utterly independent of the serious Scenes they were originally written to, they might on this occasion be as well Episodes either to the other, and so make up five livelier Acts between them: At least the Project so well succeeded, that those comic Parts have never since been replaced, but were continued to be jointly acted as one Play several Years after.

By the Aid of this Subscription, which happen'd in 1707, and by the additional Strength and Industry of this Company, not only the Actors (several of which were handsomely advanc'd in their Sallaries) were duly paid, but the Menager himself, too, at the Foot of his Account, stood a considerable Gainer.

<sup>1</sup> These were played on 14th January, 21st January, and 4th February, 1707, in the order Cibber gives them. The alteration of Dryden's plays was done by Cibber, and was called "Marriage à la Mode; or, the Comical Lovers."

CELADON . . . . .	Mr. Cibber.
PALAMEDE . . . . .	Mr. Wilks.
RHODOPHIL . . . . .	Mr. Booth.
MELANTHA . . . . .	Mrs. Bracegirdle.
FLORIMEL . . . . .	Mrs. Oldfield.
DORALICE . . . . .	Mrs. Porter.

I have not seen a copy of this, so take the cast from Genest.

At the same time the Patentee of *Drury-Lane* went on in his usual Method of paying extraordinary Prices to Singers, Dancers, and other exotick Performers, which were as constantly deducted out of the sinking Sallaries of his Actors: 'Tis true his Actors perhaps might not deserve much more than he gave them; yet, by what I have related, it is plain he chose not to be troubled with such as visibly had deserv'd more: For it seems he had not purchas'd his Share of the Patent to mend the Stage, but to make Money of it: And to say Truth, his Sense of every thing to be shewn there was much upon a Level with the Taste of the Multitude, whose Opinion and whose Money weigh'd with him full as much as that of the best Judges. His Point was to please the Majority, who could more easily comprehend any thing they *saw* than the daintiest things that could be said to them. But in this Notion he kept no medium; for in my Memory he carry'd it so far that he was (some few Years before this time) actually dealing for an extraordinary large Elephant at a certain Sum for every Day he might think fit to shew the tractable Genius of that vast quiet Creature in any Play or Farce in the Theatre (then standing) in *Dorset-Garden*. But from the Jealousy which so formidable a Rival had rais'd in his Dancers, and by his Bricklayer's assuring him that if the Walls were to be open'd wide enough for its Entrance it might endanger the fall of the House, he gave up his Project, and with it so hopeful a Prospect of

making the Receipts of the Stage run higher than all the Wit and Force of the best Writers had ever yet rais'd them to.<sup>1</sup>

About the same time of his being under this Disappointment he put in Practice another Project of as new, though not of so bold a Nature ; which was his introducing a Set of Rope-dancers into the same Theatre ; for the first Day of whose Performance he had given out some Play in which I had a material Part : But I was hardy enough to go into the Pit and acquaint the Spectators near me, that I hop'd they would not think it a Mark of my Disrespect to them, if I declin'd acting upon any Stage that was brought to so low a Disgrace as ours was like to be by that Day's Entertainment. My Excuse was so well taken that I never after found any ill Consequences, or heard of the least Disapprobation of it : And the whole Body of Actors, too, protesting against such an Abuse of their Profession, our cautious Master was too much alarm'd and intimidated to repeat it.

After what I have said, it will be no wonder that all due Regards to the original Use and Institution of the Stage should be utterly lost or neglected : Nor was the Conduct of this Menager easily to be alter'd while he had found the Secret of making Money out

<sup>1</sup> An elephant was introduced into the pantomime of "Harlequin and Padmanaba," at Covent Garden, 26th December, 1811. Genest points out that one had appeared at Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, in 1771-2.

of Disorder and Confusion : For however strange it may seem, I have often observ'd him inclin'd to be cheerful in the Distresses of his Theatrical Affairs, and equally reserv'd and pensive when they went smoothly forward with a visible Profit. Upon a Run of good Audiences he was more frighted to be thought a Gainer, which might make him accountable to others, than he was dejected with bad Houses, which at worst he knew would make others accountable to him : And as, upon a moderate Computation, it cannot be supposed that the contested Accounts of a twenty Year's Wear and Tear in a Play-house could be fairly adjusted by a Master in Chancery under four-score Years more, it will be no Surprize that by the Neglect, or rather the Discretion, of other Proprietors in not throwing away good Money after bad, this Hero of a Menager, who alone supported the War, should in time so fortify himself by Delay, and so tire his Enemies, that he became sole Monarch of his Theatrical Empire, and left the quiet Possession of it to his Successors.

If these Facts seem too trivial for the Attention of a sensible Reader, let it be consider'd that they are not chosen Fictions to *entertain*, but Truths necessary to *inform* him under what low Shifts and Disgraces, what Disorders and Revolutions, the Stage labour'd before it could recover that Strength and Reputation wherewith it began to flourish towards the latter End of Queen *Anne's* Reign ; and which it continued to enjoy for a Course of twenty Years

following. But let us resume our Account of the new Settlement in the *Hay-Market*.

It may be a natural Question why the Actors whom *Swiney* brought over to his Undertaking in the *Hay-Market* would tie themselves down to limited Sallaries? for though he as their Menager was obliged to make them certain Payments, it was not certain that the Receipts would enable him to do it; and since their own Industry was the only visible Fund they had to depend upon, why would they not for that Reason insist upon their being Sharers as well of possible Profits as Losses? How far in this Point they acted right or wrong will appear from the following State of their Case.

It must first be consider'd that this Scheme of their Desertion was all concerted and put in Execution in a Week's Time, which short Warning might make them overlook that Circumstance, and the sudden Prospect of being deliver'd from having seldom more than half their Pay was a Contentment that had bounded all their farther Views. Besides, as there could be no room to doubt of their receiving their full Pay previous to any Profits that might be reap'd by their Labour, and as they had no great Reason to apprehend those Profits could exceed their respective Sallaries so far as to make them repine at them, they might think it but reasonable to let the Chance of any extraordinary Gain be on the Side of their Leader and Director. But farther, as this Scheme had the Approbation of the Court, these Actors in

reality had it not in their Power to alter any Part of it : And what induced the Court to encourage it was, that by having the Theatre and its Menager more immediately dependent on the Power of the Lord Chamberlain, it was not doubted but the Stage would be recover'd into such a Reputation as might now do Honour to that absolute Command which the Court or its Officers seem'd always fond of having over it.

Here, to set the Constitution of the Stage in a clearer Light, it may not be amiss to look back a little on the Power of a Lord Chamberlain, which, as may have been observ'd in all Changes of the Theatrical Government, has been the main Spring without which no Scheme of what kind soever could be set in Motion. My Intent is not to enquire how far by Law this Power has been limited or extended ; but merely as an Historian to relate Facts to gratify the Curious, and then leave them to their own Reflections : This, too, I am the more inclin'd to, because there is no one Circumstance which has affected the Stage wherein so many Spectators, from those of the highest Rank to the Vulgar, have seem'd more positively knowing or less inform'd in.

Though in all the Letters Patent for acting Plays, &c. since King *Charles the First's* Time there has been no mention of the Lord Chamberlain, or of any Subordination to his Command or Authority, yet it was still taken for granted that no Letters Patent, by the bare Omission of such a great Officer's Name,

could have superseded or taken out of his Hands that Power which Time out of Mind he always had exercised over the Theatre.<sup>1</sup> The common Opinions then abroad were, that if the Profession of Actors was unlawful, it was not in the Power of the Crown to license it; and if it were not unlawful, it ought to be free and independent as other Professions; and that a Patent to exercise it was only an honorary Favour from the Crown to give it a better Grace of Recommendation to the Publick. But as the Truth of this Question seem'd to be wrapt in a great deal of Obscurity, in the old Laws made in former Reigns relating to Players, &c. it may be no Wonder that the best Companies of Actors should be desirous of taking Shelter under the visible Power of a Lord Chamberlain who they knew had at his Pleasure favoured and protected or born hard upon them: But be all this as it may, a Lord Chamberlain (from whencesoever his Power might be derived) had till of later Years had always an implicit Obedience paid to it: I shall now give some few Instances in what manner it was exercised.

What appear'd to be most reasonably under his Cognizance was the licensing or refusing new Plays,

<sup>1</sup> In Mr. Percy Fitzgerald's "New History of the English Stage" (ii. 436) he gives an interesting memorandum by the Hon. Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane regarding this point. It begins: "That the Chamberlain's authority proceeded from the Sovereign alone is clear, from the fact that no Act of Parliament, previous to the 10 Geo. II., c. 28 (passed in 1737), alludes to his licensing powers, though he was constantly exercising them."

or striking out what might be thought offensive in them: Which Province had been for many Years assign'd to his inferior Officer, the Master of the Revels; yet was not this License irrevocable; for several Plays, though acted by that Permission, had been silenced afterwards. The first Instance of this kind that common Fame has deliver'd down to us, is that of the *Maid's Tragedy* of *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*, which was forbid in King *Charles* the *Second's* time, by an Order from the Lord Chamberlain. For what Reason this Interdiction was laid upon it the Politicks of those Days have only left us to guess. Some said that the killing of the King in that Play, while the tragical Death of King *Charles* the *First* was then so fresh in People's Memory, was an Object too horribly impious for a publick Entertainment. What makes this Conjecture seem to have some Foundation, is that the celebrated *Waller*, in Compliment to that Court, alter'd the last Act of this Play (which is printed at the End of his Works) and gave it a new Catastrophe, wherein the Life of the King is loyally saved, and the Lady's Matter made up with a less terrible Reparation. Others have given out, that a repenting Mistress, in a romantick Revenge of her Dishonour, killing the King in the very Bed he expected her to come into, was shewing a too dangerous Example to other *Evadnes* then shining at Court in the same Rank of royal Distinction; who, if ever their Consciences should have run equally mad, might have had frequent Opportunities of putting



the Expiation of their Frailty into the like Execution. But this I doubt is too deep a Speculation, or too ludicrous a Reason, to be relied on; it being well known that the Ladies then in favour were not so nice in their Notions as to think their Preferment their Dishonour, or their Lover a Tyrant: Besides, that easy Monarch loved his Roses without Thorns; nor do we hear that he much chose to be himself the first Gatherer of them.<sup>1</sup>

The *Lucius Junius Brutus* of *Nat. Lee*<sup>2</sup> was in the same Reign silenced after the third Day of Acting it; it being objected that the Plan and Sentiments of it had too boldly vindicated, and might enflame republican Principles.

A Prologue (by *Dryden*) to the *Prophetess* was forbid by the Lord *Dorset* after the first Day of its being spoken.<sup>3</sup> This happen'd when King *William* was prosecuting the War in *Ireland*. It must be

<sup>1</sup> Langbaine, in his "Account of the English Dramatick Poets," 1691, says (p. 212): "*Maids Tragedy*, a Play which has always been acted with great Applause at the King's Theatre; and which had still continu'd on the English Stage, had not King *Charles* the Second, for some particular Reasons forbid its further Appearance during his Reign. It has since been reviv'd by Mr. *Waller*, the last Act having been wholly alter'd to please the Court."

I think there can be little doubt that the last reason suggested by Cibber was the real cause of the prohibition.

<sup>2</sup> Produced at Dorset Garden, 1681.

<sup>3</sup> Produced at Dorset Garden, 1690. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 187. I presume that the lines alluded to by Cibber are:—

"Never content with what you had before,  
But true to change, and Englishmen all o'er."

confess'd that this Prologue had some familiar, metaphorical Sneers at the Revolution itself; and as the Poetry of it was good, the Offence of it was less pardonable.

The Tragedy of *Mary Queen of Scotland*<sup>1</sup> had been offer'd to the Stage twenty Years before it was acted: But from the profound Penetration of the Master of the Revels, who saw political Spectres in it that never appear'd in the Presentation, it had lain so long upon the Hands of the Author; who had at last the good Fortune to prevail with a Nobleman to favour his Petition to Queen *Anne* for Permission to have it acted: The Queen had the Goodness to refer the Merit of his Play to the Opinion of that noble Person, although he was not her Majesty's Lord Chamberlain; upon whose Report of its being every way an innocent Piece, it was soon after acted with Success.

Reader, by your Leave—I will but just speak a Word or two to any Author that has not yet writ one Line of his next Play, and then I will come to my Point again—What I would say to him is this—Sir, before you set Pen to Paper, think well and principally of your Design or chief Action, towards

<sup>1</sup> In the "Biographia Dramatica" (iii. 24) the following note appears: "Mary Queen of Scotland. A play under this title was advertised, among others, as sold by Wellington, in St. Paul's Churchyard, in 1703." But the work Cibber refers to is "The Island Queens; or, the Death of Mary Queen of Scots," a tragedy by John Banks, printed in 1684, but not produced till 6th March, 1704, when it was played at Drury Lane as "The Albion Queens."

which every Line you write ought to be drawn, as to its Centre : If we can say of your finest Sentiments, This or That might be left out without maiming the Story, you would tell us, depend upon it, that fine thing is said in a wrong Place ; and though you may urge that a bright Thought is not to be resisted, you will not be able to deny that those very fine Lines would be much finer if you could find a proper Occasion for them : Otherwise you will be thought to take less Advice from *Aristotle* or *Horace* than from Poet *Bays* in the *Rehearsal*, who very smartly says—*What the Devil is the Plot good for but to bring in fine things ?* Compliment the Taste of your Hearers as much as you please with them, provided they belong to your Subject, but don't, like a dainty Preacher who has his Eye more upon this World than the next, leave your Text for them. When your Fable is good, every Part of it will cost you much less Labour to keep your Narration alive, than you will be forced to bestow upon those elegant Discourses that are not absolutely conducive to your Catastrophe or main Purpose : Scenes of that kind shew but at best the unprofitable or injudicious Spirit of a Genius. It is but a melancholy Commendation of a fine Thought to say, when we have heard it, *Well ! but what's all this to the Purpose ?* Take, therefore, in some part, Example by the Author last mention'd ! There are three Plays of his, *The Earl of Essex*,<sup>1</sup> *Anna*

<sup>1</sup> "The Unhappy Favourite ; or, the Earl of Essex," produced at the Theatre Royal, 1682.

*Bullen*,<sup>1</sup> and *Mary Queen of Scots*, which, tho' they are all written in the most barren, barbarous Stile that was ever able to keep Possession of the Stage, have all interested the Hearts of his Auditors. To what then could this Success be owing, but to the intrinsick and naked Value of the well-conducted Tales he has simply told us? There is something so happy in the Disposition of all his Fables; all his chief Characters are thrown into such natural Circumstances of Distress, that their Misery or Affliction wants very little Assistance from the Ornaments of Stile or Words to speak them. When a skilful Actor is so situated, his bare plaintive Tone of Voice, the Cast of Sorrow from his Eye, his slowly graceful Gesture, his humble Sighs of Resignation under his Calamities: All these, I say, are sometimes without a Tongue equal to the strongest Eloquence. At such a time the attentive Auditor supplies from his own Heart whatever the Poet's Language may fall short of in Expression, and melts himself into every Pang of Humanity which the like Misfortunes in real Life could have inspir'd.

After what I have observ'd, whenever I see a Tragedy defective in its Fable, let there be never so many fine Lines in it; I hope I shall be forgiven if I impute that Defect to the Idleness, the weak Judgment, or barren Invention of the Author.

If I should be ask'd why I have not always myself follow'd the Rules I would impose upon others;

<sup>1</sup> "Virtue Betrayed; or, Anna Bullen," first acted at Dorset Garden, 1682.

I can only answer, that whenever I have not, I lie equally open to the same critical Censure. But having often observ'd a better than ordinary Stile thrown away upon the loose and wandering Scenes of an ill-chosen Story, I imagin'd these Observations might convince some future Author of how great Advantage a Fable well plann'd must be to a Man of any tolerable Genius.

All this I own is leading my Reader out of the way; but if he has as much Time upon his Hands as I have, (provided we are neither of us tir'd) it may be equally to the Purpose what he reads or what I write of. But as I have no Objection to Method when it is not troublesome, I return to my Subject.

Hitherto we have seen no very unreasonable Instance of this absolute Power of a Lord Chamberlain, though we were to admit that no one knew of any real Law, or Construction of Law, by which this Power was given him. I shall now offer some Facts relating to it of a more extraordinary Nature, which I leave my Reader to give a Name to.

About the middle of King *William's* Reign an Order of the Lord Chamberlain was then subsisting that no Actor of either Company should presume to go from one to the other without a Discharge from their respective Menagers<sup>1</sup> and the Permission of

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers notes here that this order was superfluous, because the prohibition was inserted in the Patents given to Davenant and Killigrew. But, whether superfluous or not, I find from the

the Lord Chamberlain. Notwithstanding such Order, *Powel*, being uneasy at the Favour *Wilks* was then rising into, had without such Discharge left the *Drury-Lane* Theatre and engag'd himself to that of *Lincolns-Inn-Fields*: But by what follows it will appear that this Order was not so much intended to do both of them *good*, as to do that which the Court chiefly favour'd (*Lincolns-Inn-Fields*) no harm.<sup>1</sup> For when *Powel* grew dissatisfy'd at his Station there too, he return'd to *Drury-Lane* (as he had before gone from it) without a Discharge: But halt a little! here, on this Side of the Question, the Order was to stand in force, and the same Offence against it now was not to be equally pass'd over. He was the next Day taken up by a Messenger and confin'd to the Porter's-Lodge, where, to the best of my Remembrance, he remain'd about two Days; when the Menagers of *Lincolns-Inn-Fields*, not thinking an Actor of his

Records of the Lord Chamberlain's Office that this order was frequently made. On 16th April, 1695, an edict was issued forbidding actors to desert from Betterton's company; on 25th July, 1695, desertions from either company were forbidden; and this latter order was reiterated on 27th May, 1697.

<sup>1</sup> I do not know whether it is merely a coincidence, but it is curious that, after Betterton got his License (on 25th March, 1695), an edict was issued that no one was to desert from his company to that of the Theatre Royal; while a general order against any desertion from either company to the other was not issued for more than three months after the first edict. The dates, as given in the Records of the Lord Chamberlain's Office, are 16th April and 25th July respectively. If this were intentional, it would form a curious commentary on Cibber's statement.

loose Character worth their farther Trouble, gave him up; though perhaps he was releas'd for some better Reason.<sup>1</sup> Upon this occasion, the next Day, behind the Scenes at *Drury-Lane*, a Person of great Quality in my hearing enquiring of *Powel* into the Nature of his Offence, after he had heard it, told him, That if he had had Patience or Spirit enough to have staid in his Confinement till he had given him Notice of it, he would have found him a handsomer way of coming out of it.

Another time the same Actor, *Powel*, was provok'd

<sup>1</sup> Genest supposes that this incident occurred about June, 1704. But the Lord Chamberlain's Records of that time contain no note of it, and Cibber's language scarcely bears the interpretation that three years elapsed between Powell's leaving Drury Lane and returning to it, as was the case at that time; for he was at Lincoln's Inn Fields for three seasons, 1702 to 1704. I find, however, a warrant, dated 14th November, 1705, to apprehend Powell for refusing to act his part at the Haymarket, so that the audience had to be dismissed, and for trying to raise a mutiny in the company. He was ordered to be confined in the Porter's Lodge until further notice. On the 24th November Rich was informed that Powell had deserted the Haymarket, and was warned not to engage him. Now these desertions must have followed each other pretty closely, for he was at Drury Lane in the beginning of 1705; at the Haymarket in April of the same year; and about six months later had deserted the latter. The sequel to this difficulty seems to be the silencing of Rich for receiving Powell, on 5th March in the fifth year of Queen Anne's reign, that is, 1707. Unless the transcriber of the Records has made a mistake in the year, Powell was thus suspended for about eighteen months. It will be noticed that Cibber does not say that he was acting the night after his release, but merely that he was behind the scenes.

II.

C

at *Will's* Coffee-house, in a Dispute about the Play-house Affairs, to strike a Gentleman whose Family had been sometimes Masters of it ; a Complaint of this Insolence was, in the Absence of the Lord-Chamberlain, immediately made to the Vice-Chamberlain, who so highly resented it that he thought himself bound in Honour to carry his Power of redressing it as far as it could possibly go : For *Powel* having a Part in the Play that was acted the Day after, the Vice-Chamberlain sent an Order to silence the whole Company for having suffer'd *Powel* to appear upon the Stage before he had made that Gentleman Satisfaction, although the Masters of the Theatre had had no Notice of *Powel's* Misbehaviour : However, this Order was obey'd, and remain'd in force for two or three Days, 'till the same Authority was pleas'd or advis'd to revoke it.<sup>1</sup> From the Measures this injur'd Gentleman took for his Redress, it may be judg'd how far it was taken for granted that a Lord-Chamberlain had an absolute Power over the Theatre.

I shall now give an Instance of an Actor who had the Resolution to stand upon the Defence of his

<sup>1</sup> Among the Lord Chamberlain's Records is a copy of a decree suspending all performances at Drury Lane because Powell had been allowed to play. This is dated 3rd May, 1698. His offence was that he had drawn his sword on Colonel Stanhope and young Davenant. The suspension was removed the following day ; but on the 19th of the same month Powell was forbidden to be received at either Drury Lane or Dorset Garden.



Liberty against the same Authority, and was reliev'd by it.

In the same King's Reign, *Dogget*, who tho', from a severe Exactness in his Nature, he could be seldom long easy in any Theatre, where Irregularity, not to say Injustice, too often prevail'd, yet in the private Conduct of his Affairs he was a prudent, honest Man. He therefore took an unusual Care, when he return'd to act under the Patent in *Drury-Lane*, to have his Articles drawn firm and binding: But having some Reason to think the Patentee had not dealt fairly with him, he quitted the Stage and would act no more, rather chusing to lose his whatever unsatisfy'd Demands than go through the chargeable and tedious Course of the Law to recover it. But the Patentee, who (from other People's Judgment) knew the Value of him, and who wanted, too, to have him sooner back than the Law could possibly bring him, thought the surer way would be to desire a shorter Redress from the Authority of the Lord-Chamberlain.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, upon his Complaint a Messenger was immediately dispatch'd to *Norwich*, where *Dogget* then was, to bring him up in Custody: But doughty *Dogget*, who had Money in his Pocket and the Cause of Liberty at his Heart, was not in the least intimidated

<sup>1</sup> A warrant was issued to apprehend *Dogget* and take him to the Knight Marshall's Prison, on 23rd November, 1697, his offence being desertion of the company of *Drury Lane* and *Dorset Garden*. The Records contain no note as to the termination of the matter; but this is, beyond doubt, the occasion referred to by *Cibber*.

by this formidable Summons. He was observ'd to obey it with a particular Chearfulness, entertaining his Fellow-traveller, the Messenger, all the way in the Coach (for he had protested against Riding) with as much Humour as a Man of his Business might be capable of tasting. And as he found his Charges were to be defray'd, he, at every Inn, call'd for the best Dainties the Country could afford or a pretended weak Appetite could digest. At this rate they jollily roll'd on, more with the Air of a Jaunt than a Journey, or a Party of Pleasure than of a poor Devil in Durance. Upon his Arrival in Town he immediately apply'd to the Lord Chief Justice *Holt* for his *Habeas Corpus*. As his Case was something particular, that eminent and learned Minister of the Law took a particular Notice of it: For *Dogget* was not only discharg'd, but the Process of his Confinement (according to common Fame) had a Censure pass'd upon it in Court, which I doubt I am not Lawyer enough to repeat! To conclude, the officious Agents in this Affair, finding that in *Dogget* they had mistaken their Man, were mollify'd into milder Proceedings, and (as he afterwards told me) whisper'd something in his Ear that took away *Dogget's* farther Uneasiness about it.

By these Instances we see how naturally Power only founded on Custom is apt, where the Law is silent, to run into Excesses, and while it laudably pretends to govern others, how hard it is to govern itself. But since the Law has lately open'd its

Mouth, and has said plainly that some Part of this Power to govern the Theatre shall be, and is plac'd in a proper Person; and as it is evident that the Power of that white Staff, ever since it has been in the noble Hand that now holds it, has been us'd with the utmost Lenity, I would beg leave of the murmuring Multitude who frequent the Theatre to offer them a simple Question or two, *viz.* Pray, Gentlemen, how came you, or rather your Fore-fathers, never to be mutinous upon any of the occasional Facts I have related? And why have you been so often tumultuous upon a Law's being made that only confirms a less Power than was formerly exercis'd without any Law to support it? You cannot, sure, say such Discontent is either just or natural, unless you allow it a Maxim in your Politicks that Power exercis'd *without* Law is a less Grievance than the same Power exercis'd *according* to Law!

Having thus given the clearest View I was able of the usual Regard paid to the Power of a Lord-Chamberlain, the Reader will more easily conceive what Influence and Operation that Power must naturally have in all Theatrical Revolutions, and particularly in the complete Re-union of both Companies, which happen'd in the Year following.



## CHAPTER XI.

*Some Chimærical Thoughts of making the Stage useful: Some, to its Reputation. The Patent unprofitable to all the Proprietors but one. A fourth Part of it given away to Colonel Brett. A Digression to his Memory. The two Companies of Actors reunited by his Interest and Menagement. The first Direction of Operas only given to Mr. Swiney.*

**F**ROM the Time that the Company of Actors in the *Hay-Market* was recruited with those from *Drury-Lane*, and came into the Hands of their new Director, *Swiney*, the Theatre for three or four Years following suffer'd so many Convulsions, and was thrown every other Winter under such different Interests and Menagement before it came to a firm

and lasting Settlement, that I am doubtful if the most candid Reader will have Patience to go through a full and fair Account of it: And yet I would fain flatter my self that those who are not too wise to frequent the Theatre (or have Wit enough to distinguish what sort of Sights there either do Honour or Disgrace to it) may think their national Diversion no contemptible Subject for a more able Historian than I pretend to be: If I have any particular Qualification for the Task more than another it is that I have been an ocular Witness of the several Facts that are to fill up the rest of my Volume, and am perhaps the only Person living (however unworthy) from whom the same Materials can be collected; but let them come from whom they may, whether at best they will be worth reading, perhaps a Judgment may be better form'd after a patient Perusal of the following Digression.

In whatever cold Esteem the Stage may be among the Wise and Powerful, it is not so much a Reproach to those who contentedly enjoy it in its lowest Condition, as that Condition of it is to those who (though they cannot but know to how valuable a publick Use a Theatre, well establish'd, might be rais'd) yet in so many civiliz'd Nations have neglected it. This perhaps will be call'd thinking my own wiser than all the wise Heads in *Europe*. But I hope a more humble Sense will be given to it; at least I only mean, that if so many Governments have their Reasons for their Disregard of their Theatres, those

Reasons may be deeper than my Capacity has yet been able to dive into: If therefore my simple Opinion is a wrong one, let the Singularity of it expose me: And tho' I am only building a Theatre in the Air, it is there, however, at so little Expence and in so much better a Taste than any I have yet seen, that I cannot help saying of it, as a wiser Man did (it may be) upon a wiser Occasion:

— *Si quid novisti rectius istis,  
Candidus imperti; si non —*

Hor.<sup>1</sup>

Give me leave to play with my Project in Fancy.

I say, then, that as I allow nothing is more liable to debase and corrupt the Minds of a People than a licentious Theatre, so under a just and proper Establishment it were possible to make it as apparently the School of Manners and of Virtue. Were I to collect all the Arguments that might be given for my Opinion, or to inforce it by exemplary Proofs, it might swell this short Digression to a Volume; I shall therefore trust the Validity of what I have laid down to a single Fact that may be still fresh in the Memory of many living Spectators. When the Tragedy of *Cato* was first acted,<sup>2</sup> let us call to mind the noble Spirit of Patriotism which that Play then infus'd into the Breasts of a free People that crowded to it; with what affecting Force was that most elevated of Human Virtues recommended? Even the false Pretenders to it felt an unwilling Conviction,

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Epis.*, i. 6, 68.    <sup>2</sup> At Drury Lane, 14th April, 1713.

and made it a Point of Honour to be foremost in their Approbation; and this, too, at a time when the fermented Nation had their different Views of Government. Yet the sublime Sentiments of Liberty in that venerable Character rais'd in every sensible Hearer such conscious Admiration, such compell'd Assent to the Conduct of a suffering Virtue, as even *demand'd* two almost irreconcilable Parties to embrace and join in their equal Applauses of it.<sup>1</sup> Now, not to take from the Merit of the Writer, had that Play never come to the Stage, how much of this valuable Effect of it must have been lost? It then could have had no more immediate weight with the Publick than our poring upon the many ancient Authors thro' whose Works the same Sentiments have been perhaps less profitably dispers'd, tho' amongst Millions of Readers; but by bringing such Sentiments to the Theatre and into Action, what a superior Lustre did they shine with? There *Cato* breath'd again in Life; and though he perish'd in the Cause of Liberty, his Virtue was victorious, and left the Triumph of it in the Heart of every melting Spectator. If Effects like these are laudable, if the Representation of such Plays can carry Conviction with so much Pleasure to the Understanding, have

<sup>1</sup> This is a pretty way of putting what Johnson, in his *Life of Addison*, afterwards stated in the well-known words: "The Whigs applauded every line in which Liberty was mentioned, as a satire on the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap to show that the satire was unfelt." In the next paragraph Johnson describes the play as "supported by the emulation of factious praise."

they not vastly the Advantage of any other Human Helps to Eloquence? What equal Method can be found to lead or stimulate the Mind to a quicker Sense of Truth and Virtue, or warm a People into the Love and Practice of such Principles as might be at once a Defence and Honour to their Country? In what Shape could we listen to Virtue with equal Delight or Appetite of Instruction? The Mind of Man is naturally free, and when he is compell'd or menac'd into any Opinion that he does not readily conceive, he is more apt to doubt the Truth of it than when his Capacity is led by Delight into Evidence and Reason. To preserve a Theatre in this Strength and Purity of Morals is, I grant, what the wisest Nations have not been able to perpetuate or to transmit long to their Posterity: But this Difficulty will rather heighten than take from the Honour of the Theatre: The greatest Empires have decay'd for want of proper Heads to guide them, and the Ruins of them sometimes have been the Subject of Theatres that could not be themselves exempt from as various Revolutions: Yet may not the most natural Inference from all this be, That the Talents requisite to form good Actors, great Writers, and true Judges were, like those of wise and memorable Ministers, as well the Gifts of Fortune as of Nature, and not always to be found in all Climes or Ages. Or can there be a stronger modern Evidence of the Value of Dramatick Performances than that in many Countries where the Papal Religion prevails



the Holy Policy (though it allows not to an Actor Christian Burial) is so conscious of the Usefulness of his Art that it will frequently take in the Assistance of the Theatre to give even Sacred History, in a Tragedy, a Recommendation to the more pathetick Regard of their People. How can such Principles, in the Face of the World, refuse the Bones of a Wretch the lowest Benefit of Christian Charity after having admitted his Profession (for which they deprive him of that Charity) to serve the solemn Purposes of Religion? How far then is this Religious Inhumanity short of that famous Painter's, who, to make his *Crucifix* a Master-piece of Nature, stabb'd the Innocent Hireling from whose Body he drew it; and having heighten'd the holy Portrait with his last Agonies of Life, then sent it to be the consecrated Ornament of an Altar? Though we have only the Authority of common Fame for this Story, yet be it true or false the Comparison will still be just. Or let me ask another Question more humanly political.

How came the *Athenians* to lay out an Hundred Thousand Pounds upon the Decorations of one single Tragedy of *Sophocles*?<sup>1</sup> Not, sure, as it was merely a Spectacle for Idleness or Vacancy of Thought to gape at, but because it was the most rational, most instructive and delightful Composition that Human Wit had yet arrived at, and consequently the most worthy to be the Entertainment of a wise and warlike Nation: And it may be still a Question whether

<sup>1</sup> I confess I do not know Cibber's authority for this statement.

the *Sophocles* inspir'd this Publick Spirit, or this Publick Spirit inspir'd the *Sophocles*?<sup>1</sup>

But alas! as the Power of giving or receiving such Inspirations from either of these Causes seems pretty well at an End, now I have shot my Bolt I shall descend to talk more like a Man of the Age I live in: For, indeed, what is all this to a common *English* Reader? Why truly, as *Shakespear* terms it—*Caviare to the Multitude!*<sup>2</sup> Honest *John Trott* will tell you, that if he were to believe what I have said of the *Athenians*, he is at most but astonish'd at it; but that if the twentieth Part of the Sum I have mentioned were to be apply'd out of the Publick money to the Setting off the best Tragedy the nicest Noddle in the Nation could produce, it would probably raise the Passions higher in those that did Not like it than in those that did; it might as likely meet with an Insurrection as the Applause of the People, and so, mayhap, be fitter for the Subject of a Tragedy than for a publick Fund to support it. — Truly, Mr. *Trott*, I cannot but own that I am very much of your Opinion: I am only concerned that the Theatre has not a better Pretence to the Care and further Consideration of those Governments where it is tolerated; but as what I have said

<sup>1</sup> “The Laureat” abuses Cibber for this sentence, declaring that he evidently considered “Sophocles” to be the name of a tragedy. But Cibber’s method of expression, though curious, does not justify this attack.

<sup>2</sup> “Caviare to the general.”—“Hamlet,” act ii. sc. 2.

will not probably do it any great Harm, I hope I have not put you out of Patience by throwing a few good Wishes after an old Acquaintance.

To conclude this Digression. If for the Support of the Stage what is generally shewn there must be lower'd to the Taste of common Spectators; or if it is inconsistent with Liberty to mend that Vulgar Taste by making the Multitude less merry there; or by abolishing every low and senseless Jollity in which the Understanding can have no Share; whenever, I say, such is the State of the Stage, it will be as often liable to unanswerable Censure and manifest Disgraces. Yet there *was* a Time, not yet out of many People's Memory, when it subsisted upon its own rational Labours; when even Success attended an Attempt to reduce it to Decency; and when Actors themselves were hardy enough to hazard their Interest in pursuit of so dangerous a Reformation. And this Crisis I am my self as impatient as any tir'd Reader can be to arrive at. I shall therefore endeavour to lead him the shortest way to it. But as I am a little jealous of the badness of the Road, I must reserve to myself the Liberty of calling upon any Matter in my way, for a little Refreshment to whatever Company may have the Curiosity or Goodness to go along with me.

When the sole Menaging Patentee at *Drury-Lane* for several Years could never be persuaded or driven to any Account with the Adventurers, Sir *Thomas Skipwith* (who, if I am rightly inform'd, had an equal

Share with him<sup>1</sup>) grew so weary of the Affair that he actually made a Present of his entire Interest in it upon the following Occasion.

Sir *Thomas* happen'd in the Summer preceding the Re-union of the Companies to make a Visit to an intimate Friend of his, Colonel *Brett*, of *Sandywell*, in *Gloucestershire*; where the Pleasantness of the Place, and the agreeable manner of passing his Time there, had raised him to such a Gallantry of Heart, that in return to the Civilities of his Friend the Colonel he made him an Offer of his whole Right in the Patent; but not to overrate the Value of his Present, told him he himself had made nothing of it these ten Years: But the Colonel (he said) being a greater Favourite of the People in Power, and (as he believ'd) among the Actors too, than himself was, might think of some Scheme to turn it to Advantage, and in that Light, if he lik'd it, it was at

<sup>1</sup> Malone supposes that Skipwith acquired his shares from the Killigrew family, but in the indenture by which he transferred his interest to Brett, it seems as if he had acquired part of it from Alexander Davenant, and the remainder by buying up shares of the original Adventurers. The indenture will be found at length in Mr. Percy Fitzgerald's "New History of the English Stage," i. 252. Skipwith is described in the "Biog. Dram." (i. 487) as "a weak, vain, conceited coxcomb." The proportion in which the shares were divided among the various holders is shown by the "Opinion" of Northey and Raymond, in 1711, to have been this: Three-twentieths belonged to Charles Killigrew. The remainder was divided into tenths, of which two-tenths belonged to Rich; the other eight parts were owned by the Mortgagees or Adventurers. If Cibber's supposition is correct, two of these parts belonged to Shipwith.

his Service. After a great deal of Raillery on both sides of what Sir *Thomas* had *not* made of it, and the particular Advantages the Colonel was likely to make of it, they came to a laughing Resolution That an Instrument should be drawn the next Morning of an Absolute Conveyance of the Premises. A Gentleman of the Law well known to them both happening to be a Guest there at the same time, the next Day produced the Deed according to his Instructions, in the Presence of whom and of others it was sign'd, seal'd, and deliver'd to the Purposes therein contain'd.<sup>1</sup>

This Transaction may be another Instance (as I have elsewhere observed) at how low a Value the Interests in a Theatrical License were then held, tho' it was visible from the Success of *Swiney* in that very Year that with tolerable Menagement they could at no time have fail'd of being a profitable Purchase.

The next Thing to be consider'd was what the Colonel should do with his new Theatrical Commission, which in another's Possession had been of so little Importance. Here it may be necessary to premise that this Gentleman was the first of any Consideration since my coming to the Stage with whom I had contracted a Personal Intimacy; which might be the Reason why in this Debate my Opinion had some Weight with him: Of this Intimacy, too, I am the more tempted to talk from the natural Pleasure

<sup>1</sup> It is dated 6th October, 1707.

of calling back in Age the Pursuits and happy Ardours of Youth long past, which, like the Ideas of a delightful Spring in a Winter's Ruminaton, are sometimes equal to the former Enjoyment of them. I shall, therefore, rather chuse in this Place to gratify my self than my Reader, by setting the fairest Side of this Gentleman in view, and by indulging a little conscious Vanity in shewing how early in Life I fell into the Possession of so agreeable a Companion : Whatever Failings he might have to others, he had none to me ; nor was he, where he had them, without his valuable Qualities to balance or soften them. Let, then, what was not to be commended in him rest with his Ashes, never to be rak'd into : But the friendly Favours I received from him while living give me still a Pleasure in paying this only Mite of my Acknowledgment in my Power to his Memory. And if my taking this Liberty may find Pardon from several of his fair Relations still living, for whom I profess the utmost Respect, it will give me but little Concern tho' my critical Readers should think it all Impertinence.

This Gentleman, then, *Henry*, was the eldest Son of *Henry Brett*, Esq; of *Cowley*, in *Gloucestershire*, who coming early to his Estate of about Two Thousand a Year, by the usual Negligences of young Heirs had, before this his eldest Son came of age, sunk it to about half that Value, and that not wholly free from Incumbrances. Mr. *Brett*, whom I am speaking of, had his Education, and I might say,

ended it, at the University of *Oxford*; for tho' he was settled some time after at the *Temple*, he so little followed the Law there that his Neglect of it made the Law (like some of his fair and frail Admirers) very often follow *him*. As he had an uncommon Share of Social Wit and a handsom Person, with a sanguine Bloom in his Complexion, no wonder they persuaded him that he might have a better Chance of Fortune by throwing such Accomplishments into the gayer World than by shutting them up in a Study. The first View that fires the Head of a young Gentleman of this modish Ambition just broke loose from Business, is to cut a Figure (as they call it) in a Side-box at the Play, from whence their next Step is to the *Green Room* behind the Scenes, sometimes their *Non ultra*. Hither at last, then, in this hopeful Quest of his Fortune, came this Gentleman-Errant, not doubting but the fickle Dame, while he was thus qualified to receive her, might be tempted to fall into his Lap. And though possibly the Charms of our Theatrical Nymphs might have their Share in drawing him thither, yet in my Observation the most visible Cause of his first coming was a more sincere Passion he had conceived for a fair full-bottom'd Perriwig which I then wore in my first Play of the *Fool in Fashion* in the Year 1695.<sup>1</sup> For it is to be noted that the *Beaux* of those Days were of a quite different Cast from the modern Stamp, and had

<sup>1</sup> As noted vol. i. p. 213, January, 1695, Old Style; that is, January, 1696.

more of the Stateliness of the Peacock in their Mien than (which now seems to be their highest Emulation) the pert Air of a Lapwing. Now, whatever Contempt Philosophers may have for a fine Perriwig, my Friend, who was not to despise the World, but to live in it, knew very well that so material an Article of Dress upon the Head of a Man of Sense, if it became him, could never fail of drawing to him a more partial Regard and Benevolence than could possibly be hoped for in an ill-made one.<sup>1</sup> This perhaps may soften the grave Censure which so youthful a Purchase might otherwise have laid upon him : In a Word, he made his Attack upon this Perriwig, as your young Fellows generally do upon a Lady of Pleasure, first by a few familiar Praises of her Person, and then a civil Enquiry into the Price of it. But upon his observing me a little surprized at the Levity of his Question about a Fop's Perriwig, he began to railly himself with so much Wit and Humour upon the Folly of his Fondness for it, that he struck me with an equal Desire of granting any thing in my

<sup>1</sup> Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 84) says: "The heads of the English actors were, for a long time, covered with large full-bottomed perriwigs, a fashion introduced in the reign of Charles II., which was not entirely disused in public till about the year 1720. Addison, Congreve, and Steele, met at Button's coffee-house, in large, flowing, flaxen wigs; Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, when full-dressed, wore the same. Till within these twenty-five years, our Tamerlanes and Catos had as much hair on their heads as our judges on the bench. . . . I have been told, that he [Booth] and Wilks bestowed forty guineas each on the exorbitant thatching of their heads."



Power to oblige so facetious a Customer. This singular Beginning of our Conversation, and the mutual Laughs that ensued upon it, ended in an Agreement to finish our Bargain that Night over a Bottle.

If it were possible the Relation of the happy Indiscretions which passed between us that Night could give the tenth Part of the Pleasure I then received from them, I could still repeat them with Delight: But as it may be doubtful whether the Patience of a Reader may be quite so strong as the Vanity of an Author, I shall cut it short by only saying that single Bottle was the Sire of many a jolly Dozen that for some Years following, like orderly Children, whenever they were call'd for, came into the same Company. Nor, indeed, did I think from that time, whenever he was to be had, any Evening could be agreeably enjoy'd without him.<sup>1</sup> But the long continuance of our Intimacy perhaps may be thus accounted for.

He who can taste Wit in another may in some sort be said to have it himself: Now, as I always

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat," p. 66, relates with great acrimony an anecdote of Colonel Brett's reproving Cibber harshly for his treatment of an author who had submitted a play to him. Cibber is said to have opened the author's MS., and, having read two lines only, to have returned it to him saying, "Sir, it will not do." Going to Button's, he related his exploit with great glee, but was rebuked in the strongest terms by Colonel Brett, who is said to have put him to shame before the whole company. This is related as having occurred many years after the time Cibber now writes of; the suggestion being that Brett did not consider Cibber as a friend.

II.

D

had, and (I bless my self for the Folly) still have a quick Relish of whatever did or can give me Delight : This Gentleman could not but see the youthful Joy I was generally raised to whenever I had the Happiness of a *Tête à tête* with him ; and it may be a moot Point whether Wit is not as often inspired by a proper Attention as by the brightest Reply to it. Therefore, as he had Wit enough for any two People, and I had Attention enough for any four, there could not well be wanting a sociable Delight on either side. And tho' it may be true that a Man of a handsome Person is apt to draw a partial Ear to every thing he says ; yet this Gentleman seldom said any thing that might not have made a Man of the plainest Person agreeable. Such a continual Desire to please, it may be imagined, could not but sometimes lead him into a little venial Flattery rather than not succeed in it. And I, perhaps, might be one of those Flies that was caught in this Honey. As I was then a young successful Author and an Actor in some unexpected Favour, whether deservedly or not imports not ; yet such Appearances at least were plausible Pretences enough for an amicable Adulation to enlarge upon, and the Sallies of it a less Vanity than mine might not have been able to resist. Whatever this Weakness on my side might be, I was not alone in it ; for I have heard a Gentleman of Condition say, who knew the World as well as most Men that live in it, that let his Discretion be ever so much upon its Guard, he never fell into Mr. *Brett's*

Company without being loth to leave it or carrying away a better Opinion of himself from it. If his Conversation had this Effect among the Men; what must we suppose to have been the Consequence when he gave it a yet softer turn among the Fair Sex? Here, now, a *French* Novellist would tell you fifty pretty Lies of him; but as I chuse to be tender of Secrets of that sort, I shall only borrow the good Breeding of that Language, and tell you in a Word, that I knew several Instances of his being *un Homme à bonne Fortune*. But though his frequent Successes might generally keep him from the usual Disquiets of a Lover, he knew this was a Life too liquorish to last; and therefore had Reflexion enough to be govern'd by the Advice of his Friends to turn these his Advantages of Nature to a better use.

Among the many Men of Condition with whom his Conversation had recommended him to an Intimacy, Sir *Thomas Skipwith* had taken a particular Inclination to him; and as he had the Advancement of his Fortune at Heart, introduced him where there was a Lady<sup>1</sup> who had enough in her Power to disencumber him of the World and make him every way easy for Life.

While he was in pursuit of this Affair, which no time was to be lost in (for the Lady was to be in

<sup>1</sup> This was the Countess of Macclesfield, the supposed mother of Richard Savage, who had a large fortune in her own right, of which she was not deprived on her divorce from the Earl of Macclesfield. Shortly after her divorce, probably about 1698, she married Brett. She lived to be eighty, or over it, dying 11th October, 1753.

Town but for three Weeks) I one Day found him idling behind the Scenes before the Play was begun. Upon sight of him I took the usual Freedom he allow'd me, to rate him roundly for the Madness of not improving every Moment in his Power in what was of such consequence to him. Why are you not (said I) where you know you only should be? If your Design should once get Wind in the Town, the Ill-will of your Enemies or the Sincerity of the Lady's Friends may soon blow up your Hopes, which in your Circumstances of Life cannot be long supported by the bare Appearance of a Gentleman. —But it is impossible to proceed without some Apology for the very familiar Circumstance that is to follow—Yet, as it might not be so trivial in its Effect as I fear it may be in the Narration, and is a Mark of that Intimacy which is necessary should be known had been between us, I will honestly make bold with my Scruples and let the plain Truth of my Story take its Chance for Contempt or Approbation.

After twenty Excuses to clear himself of the Neglect I had so warmly charged him with, he concluded them with telling me he had been out all the Morning upon Business, and that his Linnen was too much soil'd to be seen in Company. Oh, ho! said I, is that all? Come along with me, we will soon get over that dainty Difficulty: Upon which I haul'd him by the Sleeve into my Shifting-Room, he either staring, laughing, or hanging back all the way. There, when I had lock'd him in, I began to strip off

my upper Cloaths, and bad him do the same ; still he either did not, or would not seem to understand me, and continuing his Laugh, cry'd, What ! is the Puppy mad ? No, no, only positive, said I ; for look you, in short, the Play is ready to begin, and the Parts that you and I are to act to Day are not of equal consequence ; mine of young *Reveller* (in *Greenwich-Park*<sup>1</sup>) is but a Rake ; but whatever you may be, you are not to appear so ; therefore take my Shirt and give me yours ; for depend upon't, stay here you shall not, and so go about your Business. To conclude, we fairly chang'd Linnen, nor could his Mother's have wrap'd him up more fortunately ; for in about ten Days he marry'd the Lady.<sup>2</sup> In a Year or two after his Marriage he was chosen a Member of that Parliament which was sitting when

<sup>1</sup> A comedy by Mountfort the actor, originally played at the Theatre Royal, 1691. The part of Young Reveller was then taken by the author, and we have no record of Cibber's playing it before 1708 ; but from this anecdote he must have done so ten years earlier.

<sup>2</sup> In Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (i. 174) there is a note by Boswell himself :—

“ Miss Mason, after having forfeited the title of Lady Macclesfield by divorce, was married to Colonel Brett, and, it is said, was well known in all the polite circles. Colley Cibber, I am informed, had so high an opinion of her taste and judgement as to genteel life, and manners, that he submitted every scene of his *Careless Husband* to Mrs. Brett's revisal and correction. Colonel Brett was reported to be too free in his gallantry with his Lady's maid. Mrs. Brett came into a room one day in her own house, and found the Colonel and her maid both fast asleep in two chairs. She tied a white handkerchief round her husband's neck,

King *William* dy'd. And, upon raising of some new Regiments, was made Lieutenant-Colonel to that of Sir *Charles Hotham*. But as his Ambition extended not beyond the Bounds of a Park Wall and a pleasant Retreat in the Corner of it, which with too much Expence he had just finish'd, he, within another Year, had leave to resign his Company to a younger Brother.

This was the Figure in Life he made when Sir *Thomas Skipwith* thought him the most proper Person to oblige (if it could be an Obligation) with the Present of his Interest in the Patent. And from these Anecdotes of my Intimacy with him, it may be less a Surprise, when he came to Town invested with this new Theatrical Power, that I should be the first Person to whom he took any Notice of it. And notwithstanding he knew I was then engag'd, in another Interest, at the *Hay-Market*, he desired we might consider together of the best Use he could make of it, assuring me at the same time he should think it of none to himself unless it could in some Shape be turn'd to my Advantage. This friendly Declaration, though it might be generous in him to make, was not needful to incline me in whatever might be honestly in my Power, whether by Interest or Negotiation, to serve him. My first Advice,

which was a sufficient proof that she had discovered his intrigue ; but she never at any time took notice of it to him. This incident, as I am told, gave occasion to the well-wrought scene of Sir Charles and Lady Easy and Edging."

therefore, was, That he should produce his Deed to the other Menaging Patentee of *Drury-Lane*, and demand immediate Entrance to a joint Possession of all Effects and Powers to which that Deed had given him an equal Title. After which, if he met with no Opposition to this Demand (as upon sight of it he did not) that he should be watchful against any Contradiction from his Collegue in whatever he might propose in carrying on the Affair, but to let him see that he was determin'd in all his Measures. Yet to heighten that Resolution with an Ease and Temper in his manner, as if he took it for granted there could be no Opposition made to whatever he had a mind to. For that this Method, added to his natural Talent of Persuading, would imperceptibly lead his Collegue into a Reliance on his superior Understanding, That however little he car'd for Business he should give himself the Air at least of Enquiry into what *had* been done, that what he intended to do might be thought more considerable and be the readier comply'd with : For if he once suffer'd his Collegue to seem wiser than himself, there would be no end of his perplexing him with absurd and dilatory Measures ; direct and plain Dealing being a Quality his natural Diffidence would never suffer him to be Master of ; of which his not complying with his Verbal Agreement with *Swiney*, when the *Hay-Market* House was taken for both their Uses, was an Evidence. And though some People thought it Depth and Policy in him to keep things often in

Confusion, it was ever my Opinion they over-rated his Skill, and that, in reality, his Parts were too weak for his Post, in which he had always acted to the best of his Knowledge. That his late Colleague, Sir *Thomas Shipwith*, had trusted too much to his Capacity for this sort of Business, and was treated by him accordingly, without ever receiving any Profits from it for several Years: Insomuch that when he found his Interest in such desperate Hands he thought the best thing he could do with it was (as he saw) to give it away. Therefore if he (*Mr. Brett*) could once fix himself, as I had advis'd, upon a different Foot with this hitherto untractable Menager, the Business would soon run through whatever Channel he might have a mind to lead it. And though I allow'd the greatest Difficulty he would meet with would be in getting his Consent to a Union of the two Companies, which was the only Scheme that could raise the Patent to its former Value, and which I knew this close Menager would secretly lay all possible Rubs in the way to; yet it was visible there was a way of reducing him to Compliance: For though it was true his Caution would never part with a Straw by way of Concession, yet to a high Hand he would give up any thing, provided he were suffer'd to keep his Title to it: If his Hat were taken from his Head in the Street, he would make no farther Resistance than to say, *I am not willing to part with it*. Much less would he have the Resolution openly to oppose any just



Measures, when he should find one, who with an equal Right to his and with a known Interest to bring them about, was resolv'd to go thro' with them.

Now though I knew my Friend was as thoroughly acquainted with this Patentee's Temper as myself, yet I thought it not amiss to quicken and support his Resolution, by confirming to him the little Trouble he would meet with, in pursuit of the Union I had advis'd him to; for it must be known that on our side Trouble was a sort of Physick we did not much care to take: But as the Fatigue of this Affair was likely to be lower'd by a good deal of Entertainment and Humour, which would naturally engage him in his dealing with so exotick a Partner, I knew that this softening the Business into a Diversion would lessen every Difficulty that lay in our way to it.

However copiously I may have indulg'd my self in this Commemoration of a Gentleman with whom I had pass'd so many of my younger Days with Pleasure, yet the Reader may by this Insight into his Character, and by that of the other Patentee, be better able to judge of the secret Springs that gave Motion to or obstructed so considerable an Event as that of the Re-union of the two Companies of Actors in 1708.<sup>1</sup> In Histories of more weight, for want of such Particulars we are often deceiv'd in the true Causes of Facts that most concern us to be let into; which sometimes makes us ascribe to Policy, or false

<sup>1</sup> See note, vol. i. p. 301.

Appearances of Wisdom, what perhaps in reality was the mere Effect of Chance or Humour.

Immediately after Mr. *Brett* was admitted as a joint Patentee, he made use of the Intimacy he had with the Vice-Chamberlain to assist his Scheme of this intended Union, in which he so far prevail'd that it was soon after left to the particular Care of the same Vice-Chamberlain to give him all the Aid and Power necessary to the bringing what he desired to Perfection. The Scheme was, to have but one Theatre for Plays and another for Operas, under separate Interests. And this the generality of Spectators, as well as the most approv'd Actors, had been some time calling for as the only Expedient to recover the Credit of the Stage and the valuable Interests of its Menagers.

As the Condition of the Comedians at this time is taken notice of in my *Dedication* of the *Wife's Resentment* to the Marquis (now Duke) of *Kent*, and then Lord-Chamberlain, which was publish'd above thirty Years ago,<sup>1</sup> when I had no thought of ever troubling the World with this Theatrical History, I see no Reason why it may not pass as a Voucher of the Facts I am now speaking of; I shall therefore give them in the very Light I then saw them. After some Acknowledgment for his Lordship's Protection of our (*Hay-Market*) Theatre, it is further said——

“ The Stage has, for many Years, 'till of late,

<sup>1</sup> 1707. See note on page 3 of this vol.

“ groan’d under the greatest Discouragements, which  
 “ have been very much, if not wholly, owing to the  
 “ Mismenagement of those that have aukwardly  
 “ govern’d it. Great Sums have been ventur’d upon  
 “ empty Projects and Hopes of immoderate Gains,  
 “ and when those Hopes have fail’d, the Loss has  
 “ been tyrannically deducted out of the Actors  
 “ Sallary. And if your Lordship had not redeem’d  
 “ them—*This is meant of our being suffer’d to come*  
 “ *over to Swiney*—they were very near being  
 “ wholly laid aside, or, at least, the Use of their  
 “ Labour was to be swallow’d up in the pretended  
 “ Merit of Singing and Dancing.”

What follows relates to the Difficulties in dealing with the then impracticable Menager, *viz.*

“ —And though your Lordship’s Tenderness of  
 “ oppressing is so very just that you have rather  
 “ staid to convince a Man of your good Intentions  
 “ to him than to do him even a Service against his  
 “ Will; yet since your Lordship has so happily begun  
 “ the Establishment of the separate Diversions, we  
 “ live in hope that the same Justice and Resolution  
 “ will still persuade you to go as successfully through  
 “ with it. But while any Man is suffer’d to confound  
 “ the Industry and Use of them by acting publickly  
 “ in opposition to your Lordship’s equal Intentions,  
 “ under a false and intricate Pretence of not being  
 “ able to comply with them, the Town is likely to  
 “ be more entertain’d with the private Dissensions  
 “ than the publick Performance of either, and the

“ Actors in a perpetual Fear and Necessity of  
“ petitioning your Lordship every Season for new  
“ Relief.”

Such was the State of the Stage immediately preceding the time of Mr. *Brett's* being admitted a joint Patentee, who, as he saw with clearer Eyes what was its evident Interest, left no proper Measures unattempted to make this so long despair'd-of Union practicable. The most apparent Difficulty to be got over in this Affair was, what could be done for *Swiney* in consideration of his being oblig'd to give up those Actors whom the Power and Choice of the Lord-Chamberlain had the Year before set him at the Head of, and by whose Menagement those Actors had found themselves in a prosperous Condition. But an Accident at this time happily contributed to make that Matter easy. The Inclination of our People of Quality for foreign Operas had now reach'd the Ears of *Italy*, and the Credit of their Taste had drawn over from thence, without any more particular Invitation, one of their capital Singers, the famous Signior *Cavaliero Nicolini* : From whose Arrival, and the Impatience of the Town to hear him, it was concluded that Operas being now so completely provided could not fail of Success, and that by making *Swiney* sole Director of them the Profits must be an ample Compensation for his Resignation of the Actors. This Matter being thus adjusted by *Swiney's* Acceptance of the Opera only to be perform'd at the *Hay-Market* House, the

Actors were all order'd to return to *Drury-Lane*, there to remain (under the Patentees) her Majesty's only Company of Comedians.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The edict which ordered this division of plays and operas is dated 31st December, 1707. Each theatre is ordered to confine itself to its own sphere on pain of being silenced; and no other theatre is permitted to be built. A copy of the edict is given by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald ("New History," i. 258), but it is not a *verbatim* copy of the original in the Lord Chamberlain's Office, though it contains all that is of importance in it.



## CHAPTER XII.

*A short View of the Opera when first divided from the Comedy. Plays recover their Credit. The old Patentee uneasy at their Success. Why. The Occasion of Colonel Brett's throwing up his Share in the Patent. The Consequences of it. Anecdotes of Goodman the Actor. The Rate of favourite Actors in his Time. The Patentees, by endeavouring to reduce their Price, lose them all a second time. The principal Comedians return to the Hay-Market in Shares with Swiney. They alter that Theatre. The original and present Form of the Theatre in Drury-Lane compar'd. Operas fall off. The Occasion of it. Farther Observations upon them. The Patentee disposess'd of Drury-Lane Theatre. Mr. Collier, with a new License, heads the Remains of that Company.*

**P**LAYS and Operas being thus established upon separate Interests,<sup>1</sup> they were now left to make

<sup>1</sup> At the Union, 1707-8, the Lord Chamberlain took measures

the best of their way into Favour by their different Merit. Although the Opera is not a Plant of our Native Growth, nor what our plainer Appetites are fond of, and is of so delicate a Nature that without excessive Charge it cannot live long among us; especially while the nicest *Connoisseurs* in Musick fall into such various Heresies in Taste, every Sect pretending to be the true one: Yet, as it is call'd a Theatrical Entertainment, and by its Alliance or Neutrality has more or less affected our Domestick Theatre, a short View of its Progress may be allow'd a Place in our History.

After this new Regulation the first Opera that appear'd was *Pyrrhus*. Subscriptions at that time were not extended, as of late, to the whole Season, but were limited to the first Six Days only of a new Opera. The chief Performers in this were *Nicolini*, *Valentini*, and Mrs. *Tofts*;<sup>1</sup> and for the inferior Parts the best that were then to be found. Whatever Praises may have been given to the most famous Voices that have been heard since *Nicolini*, upon the whole I cannot but come into the Opinion that still prevails among several Persons of Condition who are able to give a Reason for their liking, that no Singer since his Time has so justly and gracefully to assert his supremacy. Under date 6th January, 1708, he orders that no actors are to be engaged at Drury-Lane who are not Her Majesty's servants, and he therefore directs the managers to send a list of all actors to be sworn in.

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers notes that Mrs. Tofts "sang in English, while her associates responded in Italian."

fully acquitted himself in whatever Character he appear'd as *Nicolini*. At most the Difference between him and the greatest Favourite of the Ladies, *Farinelli*, amounted but to this, that he might sometimes more exquisitely surprize us, but *Nicolini* (by pleasing the Eye as well as the Ear) fill'd us with a more various and *rational* Delight. Whether in this Excellence he has since had any Competitor, perhaps will be better judg'd by what the Critical Censor of *Great Britain* says of him in his 115th *Tatler*, viz.

“ *Nicolini* sets off the Character he bears in an  
 “ Opera by his Action, as much as he does the  
 “ Words of it by his Voice; every Limb and Finger  
 “ contributes to the Part he acts, insomuch that a  
 “ deaf Man might go along with him in the Sense  
 “ of it. There is scarce a beautiful Posture in an  
 “ old Statue which he does not plant himself in, as  
 “ the different Circumstances of the Story give occa-  
 “ sion for it— He performs the most ordinary  
 “ Action in a manner suitable to the Greatness of  
 “ his Character, and shews the Prince even in the  
 “ giving of a Letter or dispatching of a Message,  
 “ &c.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The whole passage regarding Nicolini is :—

“ I went on *Friday* last to the Opera, and was surprised to find a thin House at so noble an Entertainment, till I heard that the Tumbler was not to make his Appearance that Night. For my own Part, I was fully satisfied with the Sight of an Actor, who, by the Grace and Propriety of his Action and Gesture, does Honour to an human Figure, as much as the other vilifies and degrades



His Voice at this first time of being among us (for he made us a second Visit when it was impair'd) had all that strong, clear Sweetness of Tone so lately admir'd in *Senesino*. A blind Man could scarce have distinguish'd them; but in Volubility of Throat the former had much the Superiority. This so excellent Performer's Agreement was Eight Hundred Guineas for the Year, which is but an eighth Part more than half the Sum that has since been given to several that could never totally surpass him: The Consequence of which is, that the Losses by Operas, for several Seasons, to the End of the Year 1738, have been so great, that those Gentlemen of Quality who last undertook the Direction of them, found it ridiculous any longer to entertain the Publick at so extravagant

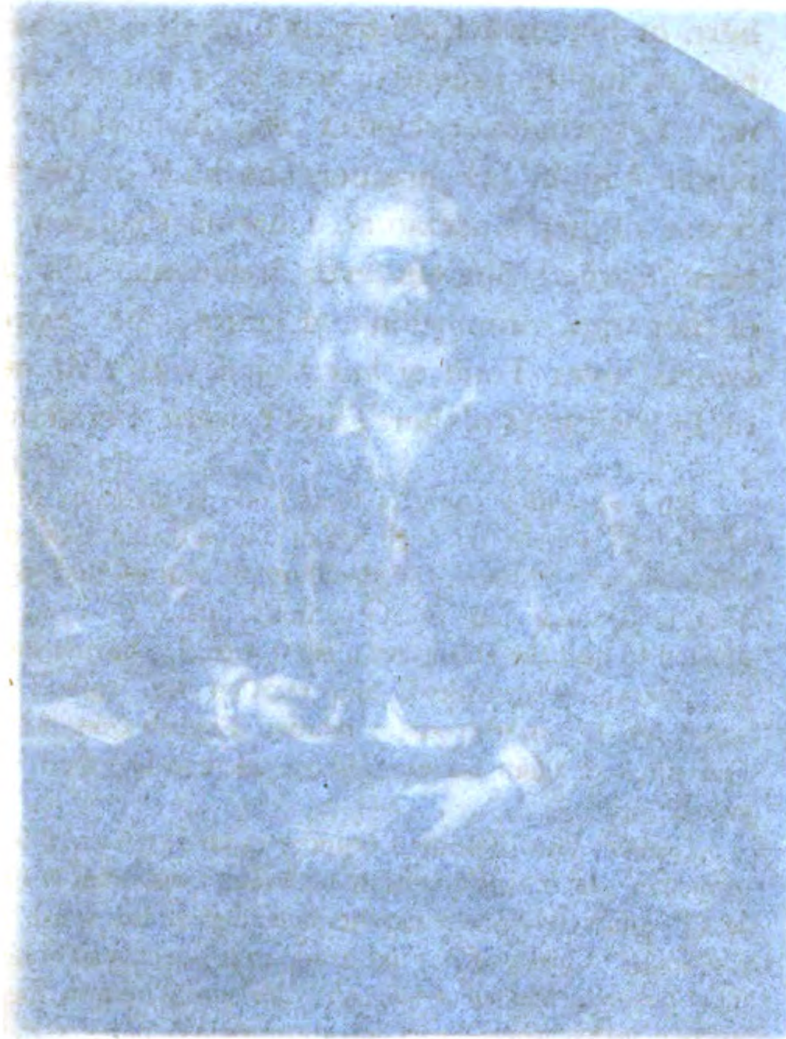
it. Every one will easily imagine I mean Signior *Nicolini*, who sets off the Character he bears in an Opera by his Action, as much as he does the Words of it by his Voice. Every Limb, and every Finger, contributes to the Part he acts, insomuch that a deaf Man might go along with him in the Sense of it. There is scarce a beautiful Posture in an old Statue which he does not plant himself in, as the different Circumstances of the Story give Occasion for it. He performs the most ordinary Action in a Manner suitable to the Greatness of his Character, and shows the Prince even in the giving of a Letter, or the dispatching of a Message. Our best Actors are somewhat at a Loss to support themselves with proper Gesture, as they move from any considerable Distance to the Front of the Stage; but I have seen the Person of whom I am now speaking, enter alone at the remotest Part of it, and advance from it with such Greatness of Air and Mien, as seemed to fill the Stage, and at the same Time commanded the Attention of the Audience with the Majesty of his Appearance."—"Tatler," No. 115, January 3rd, 1710.

an Expence, while no one particular Person thought himself oblig'd by it.

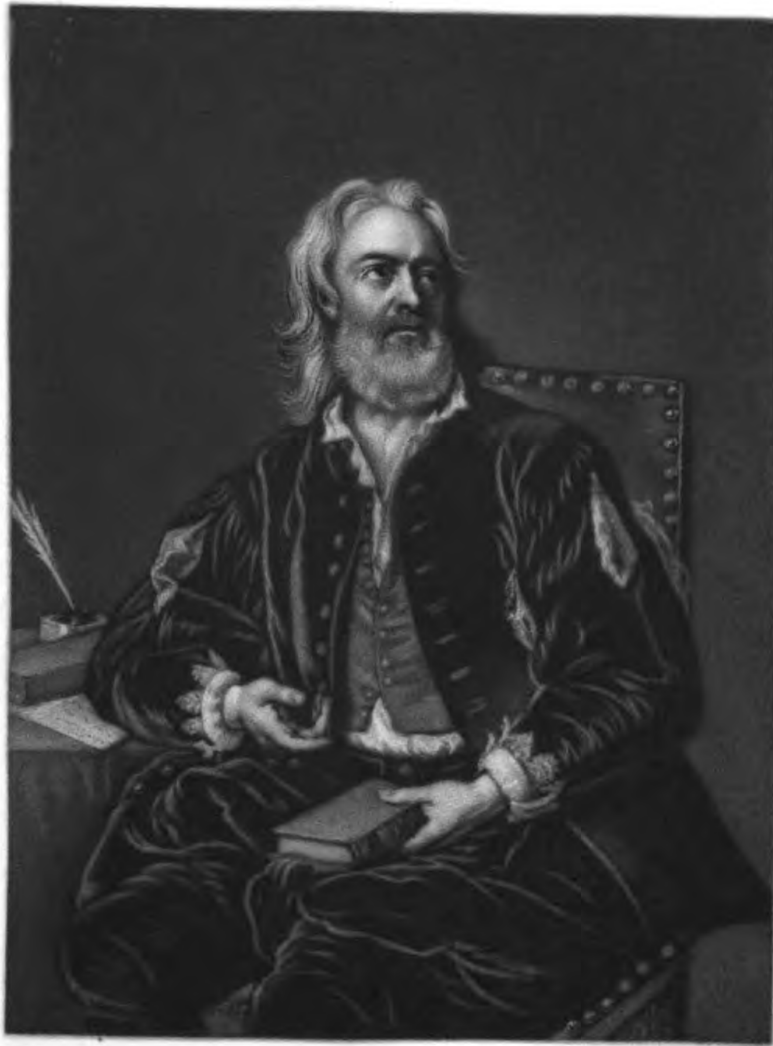
Mrs. *Tofts*,<sup>1</sup> who took her first Grounds of Musick here in her own Country, before the *Italian* Taste had so highly prevail'd, was then not an Adept in it:<sup>2</sup> Yet whatever Defect the fashionably Skilful might find in her manner, she had, in the general Sense of her Spectators, Charms that few of the most learned Singers ever arrive at. The Beauty of her fine proportion'd Figure, and exquisitely sweet, silver Tone of her Voice, with that peculiar, rapid Swiftness of her Throat, were Perfections not

<sup>1</sup> An excellent account of Mrs. Tofts is given by Mr. Henry Morley in a note on page 38 of his valuable edition of the "Spectator." She was the daughter of one of Bishop Burnet's household, and had great natural gifts. In 1709 she was obliged to quit the stage, her mental faculties having failed; but she afterwards recovered, and married Mr. Joseph Smith, a noted art patron, who was appointed English Consul at Venice. Her intellect again became disordered, and she died about the year 1760.

<sup>2</sup> Cibber's most notorious blunder in language was made in this sentence. In his first edition he wrote "was then *but* an Adept in it," completely reversing the meaning of the word "Adept." Fielding ("Champion," 22nd April, 1740) declares Cibber to be a most absolute Master of English, "for surely he must be absolute Master of that whose Laws he can trample under Feet, and which he can use as he pleases. This Power he hath exerted, of which I shall give a *barbarous* Instance in the Case of the poor Word *Adept*. . . . This Word our great *Master* hath tortured and wrested to signify a *Tyro* or *Novice*, being directly contrary to the Sense in which it hath been hitherto used." It is of course conceivable that the error was a printer's error not corrected in reading the proof.



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to be imitated by Art or Labour. *Valentini* I have already mention'd, therefore need only say farther of him, that though he was every way inferior to *Nicolini*,<sup>1</sup> yet, as he had the Advantage of giving us our first Impression of a good Opera Singer, he had still his Admirers, and was of great Service in being so skilful a Second to his Superior.

Three such excellent Performers in the same kind of Entertainment at once, *England* till this Time had never seen : Without any farther Comparison, then, with the much dearer bought who have succeeded them, their Novelty at least was a Charm that drew vast Audiences of the fine World after them. *Swiney*, their sole Director, was prosperous, and in one Winter a Gainer by them of a moderate younger Brother's Fortune. But as Musick, by so profuse a Dispensation of her Beauties, could not always supply our dainty Appetites with equal Variety, nor for ever please us with the same Objects, the Opera, after one luxurious Season, like the fine Wife of a roving Husband, began to loose its Charms, and every Day discover'd to our Satiety Imperfections which our former Fondness had been blind to : But of this I shall observe

<sup>1</sup> Nicolini was the stage name of the Cavalier Nicolo Grimaldi. Dr. Burney says : " This great singer, and still greater actor, was a Neapolitan ; his voice was at first a *soprano*, but afterwards descended into a fine *contralto*." He first appeared, about 1694, in Rome, and paid his first visit to England in 1708. *Valentini Urbani* was a *castrato*, his voice was not so strong as Nicolini's, but his action was so excellent that his vocal defects were not noticed.—" General History of Music," 1789, iv. 207, 205.

II.

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more in its Place : in the mean time, let us enquire into the Productions of our native Theatre.

It may easily be conceiv'd, that by this entire Reunion of the two Companies Plays must generally have been perform'd to a more than usual Advantage and Exactness : For now every chief Actor, according to his particular Capacity, piqued himself upon rectifying those Errors which during their divided State were almost unavoidable. Such a Choice of Actors added a Richness to every good Play as it was then serv'd up to the publick Entertainment : The common People crowded to them with a more joyous Expectation, and those of the higher Taste return'd to them as to old Acquaintances, with new Desires after a long Absence. In a Word, all Parties seem'd better pleas'd but he who one might imagine had most Reason to be so, the (lately) sole menaging Patentee. He, indeed, saw his Power daily mould'ring from his own Hands into those of Mr. *Brett*,<sup>1</sup> whose

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Brett, by an indenture dated 31st March, 1708, made Wilks, Estcourt, and Cibber, his deputies in the management of the theatre. Genest (ii. 405) says this was probably "31st March, 1708, Old Style," by which I suppose he means March, 1709. But I cannot see why he should think this. Brett entered into management in January, 1708, and was probably out of it by March, 1709. It may be that Genest supposes that this indenture marks the end of Brett's connection with the theatre ; whereas it was probably one of his first actions. It will be remembered that he stated his intention of benefitting Cibber by taking the Patent (see *ante*, p. 42). A copy of the indenture is given by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald ("New History," ii. 443). It is dated 31st March in the seventh year of Queen Anne's reign, that is, 1708.



Gentlemanly manner of making every one's Business easy to him, threw their old Master under a Disregard which he had not been us'd to, nor could with all his happy Change of Affairs support. Although this grave Theatrical Minister of whom I have been oblig'd to make such frequent mention, had acquired the Reputation of a most profound Politician by being often incomprehensible, yet I am not sure that his Conduct at this Juncture gave us not an evident Proof that he was, like other frail Mortals, more a Slave to his Passions than his Interest; for no Creature ever seem'd more fond of Power that so little knew how to use it to his Profit and Reputation; otherwise he could not possibly have been so discontented, in his secure and prosperous State of the Theatre, as to resolve at all Hazards to destroy it. We shall now see what infallible Measures he took to bring this laudable Scheme to Perfection.

He plainly saw that, as this disagreeable Prosperity was chiefly owing to the Conduct of Mr. *Brett*, there could be no hope of recovering the Stage to its former Confusion but by finding some effectual Means to make Mr. *Brett* weary of his Charge: The most probable he could for the Present think of, in this Distress, was to call in the Adventurers (whom for many Years, by his Defence in Law, he had kept out) now to take care of their visibly improving Interests.<sup>1</sup> This fair Appearance of Equity being

<sup>1</sup> On p. 328 of vol. i., Cibber says that Rich (about 1705) had led the Adventurers "a Chace in Chancery several years." From

known to be his own Proposal, he rightly guess'd would incline these Adventurers to form a Majority of Votes on his Side in all Theatrical Questions, and consequently become a Check upon the Power of Mr. *Brett*, who had so visibly alienated the Hearts of his Theatrical Subjects, and now began to govern without him. When the Adventurers, therefore, were re-admitted to their old Government, after having recommended himself to them by proposing to make some small Dividend of the Profits (though he did not design that Jest should be repeated) he took care that the Creditors of the Patent, who were then no inconsiderable Body, should carry off the every Weeks clear Profits in proportion to their several Dues and Demands. This Conduct, so speciously just, he had Hopes would let Mr. *Brett* see that his Share in the Patent was not so valuable an Acquisition as perhaps he might think it; and probably make a Man of his Turn to Pleasure soon weary of the little Profit and great Plague it gave him. Now, though these might be all notable Expedients, yet I

the petition presented in 1709 against the order silencing Rich, we learn that the principal Adventurers were: Lord Guilford, Lord John Harvey, Dame Alice Brownlow, Mrs. Shadwell, Sir Edward Smith, Bart., Sir Thomas Skipwith, Bart., George Sayer, Charles Killegrew, Christopher Rich, Charles Davenant, John Metcalf, Thomas Goodall, Ashburnham Toll, Ashburnham Frowd, William East, Richard Middlemore, Robert Gower, and William Collier. It is curious that everyone who has reproduced this list has, as far as I know, mistaken the name "Frowd," calling it "Trowd." The earliest reproduction of the list of names which I know is in the "Dramatic Censor," 1811, col. 111.

cannot say they would have wholly contributed to Mr. *Brett's* quitting his Post, had not a Matter of much stronger Moment, an unexpected Dispute between him and Sir *Thomas Skipwith*, prevailed with him to lay it down: For in the midst of this flourishing State of the Patent, Mr. *Brett* was surpriz'd with a Subpœna into Chancery from Sir *Thomas Skipwith*, who alledg'd in his Bill that the Conveyance he had made of his Interest in the Patent to Mr. *Brett* was only intended in Trust. (Whatever the Intent might be, the Deed it self, which I then read, made no mention of any Trust whatever.) But whether Mr. *Brett*, as Sir *Thomas* farther asserted, had previously, or after the Deed was sign'd, given his Word of Honour that if he should ever make the Stage turn to any Account or Profit, he would certainly restore it: That, indeed, I can say nothing to; but be the Deed valid or void, the Facts that apparently follow'd were, that tho' Mr. *Brett* in his Answer to this Bill absolutely deny'd his receiving this Assignment either in Trust or upon any limited Condition of what kind soever, yet he made no farther Defence in the Cause. But since he found Sir *Thomas* had thought fit on any Account to sue for the Restitution of it, and Mr. *Brett* being himself conscious that, as the World knew he had paid no Consideration for it, his keeping it might be misconstrued, or not favourably spoken of; or perhaps finding, tho' the Profits were great, they were constantly swallowed up (as has been observ'd) by the previous Satisfac-

tion of old Debts, he grew so tir'd of the Plague and Trouble the whole Affair had given him, and was likely still to engage him in, that in a few Weeks after he withdrew himself from all Concern with the Theatre, and quietly left Sir *Thomas* to find his better Account in it. And thus stood this undecided Right till, upon the Demise of Sir *Thomas*, Mr. *Brett* being allow'd the Charges he had been at in this Attendance and Prosecution of the Union, reconvey'd this Share of the Patent to Sir *George Skipwith*, the Son and Heir of Sir *Thomas*.<sup>1</sup>

Our Politician, the old Patentee, having thus fortunately got rid of Mr. *Brett*, who had so rashly brought the Patent once more to be a profitable Tenure, was now again at Liberty to chuse rather to lose all than not to have it all to himself.

I have elsewhere observ'd that nothing can so effectually secure the Strength, or contribute to the Prosperity of a good Company, as the Directors of it having always, as near as possible, an amicable Understanding with three or four of their best Actors, whose good or ill-will must naturally make a wide Difference in their profitable or useless manner of serving them: While the Principal are kept reasonably easy the lower Class can never be troublesome without hurting themselves: But when a valuable Actor is hardly treated, the Master must be a very

<sup>1</sup> I do not know when Sir *Thomas Skipwith* died; but in 1709 the petition of the Adventurers, &c., is signed by, among others, Sir *Thomas Skipwith*.

cunning Man that finds his Account in it. We shall now see how far Experience will verify this Observation.

The Patentees thinking themselves secure in being restor'd to their former absolute Power over this now only Company, chose rather to govern it by the Reverse of the Method I have recommended: For tho' the daily Charge of their united Company amounted not, by a good deal, to what either of the two Companies now in *Drury-Lane* or *Covent-Garden* singly arises, they notwithstanding fell into their former Politicks of thinking every Shilling taken from a hired Actor so much clear Gain to the Proprietor: Many of their People, therefore, were actually, if not injudiciously, reduced in their Pay, and others given to understand the same Fate was design'd them; of which last Number I my self was one; which occurs to my Memory by the Answer I made to one of the Adventurers, who, in Justification of their intended Proceeding,<sup>1</sup> told me that my Sallery, tho' it should be less than it was by ten Shillings a Week, would still be more than ever *Goodman* had, who was a better Actor than I could pretend to be: To which I reply'd, This may be true, but then you know, Sir, it is as true that *Goodman* was forced to go upon the High-way for

<sup>1</sup> This anecdote shows that Rich had some sort of Committee of Shareholders to aid (or hinder) him. Subsequent experience has shown, as witness the Drury Lane Committee at the beginning of this century, how disastrous such form of management is.

a Livelihood. As this was a known Fact of *Goodman*, my mentioning it on that Occasion I believe was of Service to me; at least my Sallary was not reduced after it. To say a Word or two more of *Goodman*, so celebrated an Actor in his Time, perhaps may set the Conduct of the Patentees in a clearer Light. Tho' *Goodman* had left the Stage before I came to it, I had some slight Acquaintance with him. About the Time of his being expected to be an Evidence against Sir *John Fenwick* in the Assassination-Plot,<sup>1</sup> in 1696, I happen'd to meet him at Dinner at Sir *Thomas Skipwith's*, who, as he was an agreeable Companion himself, liked *Goodman* for the same Quality. Here it was that *Goodman*, with-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Doran ("Their Majesties' Servants," 1888 edition, i. 103) gives the following account of Goodman's connection with this plot:—

"King James having saved Cardell's neck, Goodman, out of pure gratitude, perhaps, became a Tory, and something more, when William sat in the seat of his father-in-law. After Queen Mary's death, Scum was in the Fenwick and Charnock plot to kill the King. When the plot was discovered, Scum was ready to peach. As Fenwick's life was thought by his friends to be safe if Goodman could be bought off and got out of the way, the rogue was looked for, at the *Fleece*, in Covent Garden, famous for homicides, and at the robbers' and the revellers' den, the *Dog*, in Drury Lane. Fenwick's agent, O'Bryan, erst soldier and highwayman, now a Jacobite agent, found Scum at the *Dog*, and would then and there have cut his throat, had not Scum consented to the pleasant alternative of accepting £500 a year, and a residence abroad. . . . Scum suddenly disappeared, and Lord Manchester, our Ambassador in Paris, inquired after him in vain. It is impossible to say whether the rogue died by an avenging hand, or starvation."

out Disguise or sparing himself, fell into a laughing Account of several loose Passages of *his* younger Life; as his being expell'd the University of *Cambridge* for being one of the hot-headed Sparks who were concern'd in the cutting and defacing the Duke of *Monmouth's* Picture, then Chancellor of that Place. But this Disgrace, it seems, had not disqualified him for the Stage, which, like the Sea-Service, refuses no Man for his Morals that is able-bodied: There, as an Actor, he soon grew into a different Reputation; but whatever his Merit might be, the Pay of a hired Hero in those Days was so very low that he was forced, it seems, to take the Air (as he call'd it) and borrow what Money the first Man he met had about him. But this being his first Exploit of that kind which the Scantiness of his Theatrical Fortune had reduced him to, King *James* was prevail'd upon to pardon him: Which *Goodman* said was doing him so particular an Honour that no Man could wonder if his Acknowledgment had carried him a little farther than ordinary into the Interest of that Prince: But as he had lately been out of Luck in backing his old Master, he had now no way to get home the Life he was out upon his Account but by being under the same Obligations to King *William*.

Another Anecdote of him, though not quite so dishonourably enterprizing, which I had from his own Mouth at a different Time, will equally shew to what low Shifts in Life the poor Provision for good

Actors, under the early Government of the Patent, reduced them. In the younger Days of their Heroism, Captain *Griffin* and *Goodman* were confined by their moderate Sallaries to the Oeconomy of lying together in the same Bed and having but one whole Shirt between them: One of them being under the Obligation of a Rendezvous with a fair Lady, insisted upon his wearing it out of his Turn, which occasion'd so high a Dispute that the Combat was immediately demanded, and accordingly their Pretensions to it were decided by a fair Tilt upon the Spot, in the Room where they lay: But whether *Clytus* or *Alexander* was obliged to see no Company till a worse could be wash'd for him, seems not to be a material Point in their History, or to my Purpose.<sup>1</sup>

By this Rate of *Goodman*, who, 'till the Time of his quitting the Stage never had more than what is call'd forty Shillings a Week, it may be judg'd how cheap the Labour of Actors had been formerly; and the Patentees thought it a Folly to continue the higher Price, (which their Divisions had since raised them to) now there was but one Market for them; but alas! they had forgot their former fatal Mistake of squabbling with their Actors in 1695;<sup>2</sup> nor did

<sup>1</sup> This anecdote is valuable as establishing the identity of *Captain Griffin* with the Griffin who retired (temporarily) from the stage about 1688. See note on page 83 of vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> When Betterton and his associates left the Theatre Royal and opened Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre. See Chapter VI.



they make any Allowance for the Changes and Operations of Time, or enough consider the Interest the Actors had in the Lord Chamberlain, on whose Protection they might always rely, and whose Decrees had been less restrain'd by Precedent than those of a Lord Chancellor.

In this mistaken View of their Interest, the Patentees, by treating their Actors as Enemies, really made them so: And when once the Masters of a hired Company think not their Actors Hearts as necessary as their Hands, they cannot be said to have agreed for above half the Work they are able to do in a Day: Or, if an unexpected Success should, notwithstanding, make the Profits in any gross Disproportion greater than the Wages, the Wages will always have something worse than a Murmur at the Head of them, that will not only measure the Merit of the Actor by the Gains of the Proprietor, but will never naturally be quiet till every Scheme of getting into Property has been tried to make the Servant his own Master: And this, as far as Experience can make me judge, will always be in either of these Cases the State of our *English* Theatre. What Truth there may be in this Observation we are now coming to a Proof of.

To enumerate all the particular Acts of Power in which the Patentees daily bore hard upon *this* now only Company of Actors, might be as tedious as unnecessary; I shall therefore come at once to their most material Grievance, upon which they grounded

their Complaint to the Lord Chamberlain, who, in the Year following, 1709, took effectual Measures for their Relief.

The Patentees observing that the Benefit-Plays of the Actors towards the latter End of the Season brought the most crowded Audiences in the Year, began to think their own Interests too much neglected by these partial Favours of the Town to their Actors; and therefore judg'd it would not be impolitick in such wholesome annual Profits to have a Fellow-feeling with them. Accordingly an *Indulto*<sup>1</sup> was laid of one Third out of the Profits of every Benefit for the proper Use and Behoof of the Patent.<sup>2</sup> But that a clear Judgment may be form'd of the Equity or Hardship of this Imposition, it will be necessary to shew from whence and from what Causes the Actors Claim to Benefits originally proceeded.

<sup>1</sup> *Indulto*—In Spain, a duty, tax, or custom, paid to the King for all goods imported.

<sup>2</sup> In the "Answer to Steele's State of the Case," 1720 (Nichols's ed. p. 527), it is said: "After Mr. Rich was again restored to the management of the Play-house, he made an order to stop a certain proportion of the clear profits of every Benefit-play without exception; which being done, and reaching the chief Players as well as the underlings, zealous application was made to the Lord Chamberlain, to oblige Mr. Rich to return the money stopped to each particular. The dispute lasted some time, and Mr. Rich, not giving full satisfaction upon that head, was silenced; during the time of which silence, the chief Players, either by a new License, or by some former (which I cannot absolutely determine, my Memoirs being not at this time by me) set up for themselves, and got into the possession of the Play-house in Drury-lane."

During the Reign of King *Charles* an Actor's Benefit had never been heard of. The first Indulgence of this kind was given to Mrs. *Barry* (as has been formerly observed <sup>1</sup>) in King *James's* Time, in Consideration of the extraordinary Applause that had followed her Performance: But there this Favour rested to her alone, 'till after the Division of the only Company in 1695, at which time the Patentees were soon reduced to pay their Actors half in good Words and half in ready Money. In this precarious Condition some particular Actors (however binding their Agreements might be) were too poor or too wise to go to Law with a Lawyer, and therefore rather chose to compound their Arrears for their being admitted to the Chance of having them made up by the Profits of a Benefit-Play. This Expedient had this Consequence; that the Patentees, tho' their daily Audiences might, and did sometimes mend, still kept the short Subsistence of their Actors at a stand, and grew more steady in their Resolution so to keep them, as they found them less apt to mutiny while their Hopes of being clear'd off by a Benefit were depending. In a Year or two these Benefits grew so advantageous that they became at last the chief Article in every Actor's Agreement.

Now though the Agreements of these united Actors I am speaking of in 1708 were as yet only Verbal, yet that made no difference in the honest Obligation to keep them: But as Honour at that

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, vol. i., p. 161.

time happen'd to have but a loose hold of their Consciences, the Patentees rather chose to give it the slip, and went on with their Work without it. No Actor, therefore, could have his Benefit fix'd 'till he had first sign'd a Paper signifying his voluntary Acceptance of it upon the above Conditions, any Claims from Custom to the contrary notwithstanding. Several at first refus'd to sign this Paper; upon which the next in Rank were offer'd on the same Conditions to come before the Refusers; this smart Expedient got some few of the Fearful the Preference to their Seniors; who, at last, seeing the Time was too short for a present Remedy, and that they must either come into the Boat or lose their Tide, were forc'd to comply with what they as yet silently resented as the severest Injury. In this Situation, therefore, they chose to let the principal Benefits be over, that their Grievances might swell into some bulk before they made any Application for Redress to the Lord-Chamberlain; who, upon hearing their general Complaint, order'd the Patentees to shew cause why their Benefits had been diminish'd one Third, contrary to the common Usage? The Patentees pleaded the sign'd Agreement, and the Actors Receipts of the other two Thirds, in Full Satisfaction. But these were prov'd to have been exacted from them by the Methods already mentioned. They notwithstanding insist upon them as lawful. But as Law and Equity do not always agree, they were look'd upon as unjust and arbitrary. Whereupon

the Patentees were warn'd at their Peril to refuse the Actors full Satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> But here it was thought necessary that Judgment should be for some time respited, 'till the Actors, who had leave so to do, could form a Body strong enough to make the Inclination of the Lord-Chamberlain to relieve them practicable.

Accordingly *Swiney* (who was then sole Director of the Opera only) had Permission to enter into a private Treaty with such of the united Actors in *Drury-Lane* as might be thought fit to head a Company under their own Menagement, and to be Sharers with him in the *Hay-Market*. The Actors chosen for this Charge were *Wilks*, *Dogget*, Mrs. *Oldfield*, and Myself. But before I proceed, lest it should seem surprizing that neither *Betterton*, Mrs. *Barry*, Mrs. *Bracegirdle*, or *Booth* were Parties in this Treaty, it must be observ'd that *Betterton* was now Seventy-three, and rather chose, with the Infirmities of Age upon him, to rely on such Sallary as might be appointed him, than to involve himself in the Cares and Hurry that must unavoidably attend the Regulation of a new Company. As to the two celebrated Actresses I have named, this has been my first proper Occasion of making it known that they had both quitted the Stage the Year before this

<sup>1</sup> This warning is dated 30th April, 1709, and is a very peremptory document. Rich's treasurer is ordered to pay the actors the full receipts of their benefits, under deduction only of £40 for the charges of the house. See the Order for Silence quoted *post*, page 73.

Transaction was thought of.<sup>1</sup> And *Booth* as yet was scarce out of his Minority as an Actor, or only in the Promise of that Reputation which, in about four or five Years after, he happily arriv'd at. However, at this Juncture he was not so far overlook'd as not to be offer'd a valuable Addition to his Sallary : But this he declin'd, being, while the Patentees were under this Distress, as much, if not more, in favour with their chief Menager as a Schematist than as an Actor : And indeed he appear'd, to my Judgment, more inclin'd to risque his Fortune in *Drury-Lane*, where he should have no Rival in Parts or Power, than on any Terms to embark in the *Hay-Market*, where he was sure to meet with Opponents in both.<sup>2</sup> However, this his Separation from our Interest when our All was at stake, afterwards kept his Advancement to a Share with us in our more successful Days longer postpon'd than otherwise it probably might have been.

When Mrs. *Oldfield* was nominated as a joint Sharer in our new Agreement to be made with *Swiney*, *Dogget*, who had no Objection to her Merit, insisted that our Affairs could never be upon a secure Foundation if there was more than one Sex admitted to

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Bracegirdle retired in February, 1707. Mrs. Barry played up to the end of the season, 1708, that is, up to June, 1708. She does not seem to have been engaged in 1708-9, but she was a member of the Haymarket Company in 1709-10.

<sup>2</sup> From Chapter XVI. it will be seen that Wilks's unfair partiality for John Mills, whom he forced into prominence at Booth's expense, was the leading reason for Booth's remaining with Rich.









ANNE OLDFIELD.



the Menagement of them. He therefore hop'd that if we offer'd Mrs. *Oldfield* a *Carte Blanche* instead of a Share, she would not think herself slighted. This was instantly agreed to, and Mrs. *Oldfield* receiv'd it rather as a Favour than a Disobligation : Her Demands therefore were Two Hundred Pounds a Year certain, and a Benefit clear of all Charges, which were readily sign'd to. Her Easiness on this Occasion, some Years after, when our Establishment was in Prosperity, made us with less Reluctancy advance her Two Hundred Pounds to Three Hundred Guineas *per Annum*, with her usual Benefit, which, upon an Average, for several Years at least doubled that Sum.

When a sufficient number of Actors were engag'd under our Confederacy with *Swiney*, it was then judg'd a proper time for the Lord-Chamberlain's Power to operate, which, by lying above a Month dormant, had so far recover'd the Patentees from any Apprehensions of what might fall upon them from their late Usurpations on the Benefits of the Actors, that they began to set their Marks upon those who had distinguish'd themselves in the Application for Redress. Several little Disgraces were put upon them, particularly in the Disposal of Parts in Plays to be reviv'd, and as visible a Partiality was shewn in the Promotion of those in their Interest, though their Endeavours to serve them could be of no extraordinary use. How often does History shew us, in the same State of Courts, the same Politicks have been practis'd? All this while the other Party were

II.

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passively silent, 'till one Day the Actor who particularly solicited their Cause at the Lord-Chamberlain's Office, being shewn there the Order sign'd for absolutely silencing the Patentees, and ready to be serv'd, flew back with the News to his Companions, then at a Rehearsal in which he had been wanted; when being call'd to his Part, and something hastily question'd by the Patentee for his Neglect of Business: This Actor, I say, with an erected Look and a Theatrical Spirit, at once threw off the Mask and roundly told him—*Sir, I have now no more Business Here than you have; in half an Hour you will neither have Actors to command nor Authority to employ them.*—The Patentee, who though he could not readily comprehend his mysterious manner of Speaking, had just a Glimpse of Terror enough from the Words to soften his Reproof into a cold formal Declaration, That *if he would not do his Work he should not be paid.*—But now, to complete the Catastrophe of these Theatrical Commotions, enters the Messenger with the Order of Silence in his Hand, whom the same Actor officiously introduc'd, telling the Patentee that the Gentleman wanted to speak with him from the Lord-Chamberlain. When the Messenger had delivered the Order, the Actor, throwing his Head over his Shoulder towards the Patentee, in the manner of *Shakespear's Harry the Eighth to Cardinal Wolsey*, cry'd—*Read o'er that! and now—to Breakfast, with what Appetite you may.* Tho' these Words might be spoken in too vindictive and

insulting a manner to be commended, yet, from the Fulness of a Heart injuriously treated and now relief'd by that instant Occasion, why might they not be pardon'd ?<sup>1</sup>

The Authority of the Patent now no longer subsisting, all the confederated Actors immediately walk'd out of the House, to which they never return'd 'till they became themselves the Tenants and Masters of it.

<sup>1</sup> The Order for Silence has never, I believe, been quoted. I therefore give it in full. The theatre closed on the 4th of June, 1709, which was Saturday, and did not open again under Rich's management, the Order for Silence being issued on the next Monday.

*"Play House in Covent Garden silent'd.* Whereas by an Order dated the 30<sup>th</sup> day of Apr<sup>l</sup> last upon the petiçõn of sev<sup>l</sup> Players &c: I did then direct and require you to pay to the respective Comedians who had benefit plays last winter the full receipt<sup>th</sup> of such plays deducting only from each the sume of 40l. for the Charges of the House pursuant to the Articles made w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>m</sup> at y<sup>e</sup> theatre in the Haymarkett and w<sup>ch</sup> were promis<sup>d</sup> to be made good upon their removall to the Theatre in Covent Garden.

"And whereas I am inform<sup>d</sup> y<sup>t</sup> in Contempt of the said Ord<sup>r</sup> y<sup>u</sup> still refuse to pay and detain from the s<sup>d</sup> Comedians y<sup>e</sup> profits of y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> benefit plays I do therefore for the s<sup>d</sup> Contempt hereby silence you from further acting & require you not to perform any Plays or other Theatricall entertainm<sup>ts</sup> till further Ord<sup>r</sup>; And all her Maj<sup>ty</sup> Sworn Comedians are hereby forbid to act any Plays at y<sup>e</sup> Theatre in Covent Gard<sup>n</sup> or else where w<sup>th</sup>out my leave as they shall answer the contrary at their perill And &c: Given &c: this 6<sup>th</sup> day of June 1709 in the Eighth Year of her Majesty's Reign.

(Signed) KENT.

"To the Manager or Manag<sup>rs</sup>  
of her Maj<sup>ty</sup> Company of Comedi<sup>ans</sup>  
for their Patentees." }

I have copied this from the Lord Chamberlain's Records.

Here agen we see an higher Instance of the Authority of a Lord-Chamberlain than any of those I have elsewhere mentioned: From whence that Power might be deriv'd, as I have already said, I am not Lawyer enough to know; however, it is evident that a Lawyer obey'd it, though to his Cost; which might incline one to think that the Law was not clearly against it: Be that as it may, since the Law has lately made it no longer a Question, let us drop the Enquiry and proceed to the Facts which follow'd this Order that silenc'd the Patent.

From this last injudicious Disagreement of the Patentees with their principal Actors, and from what they had suffered on the same Occasion in the Division of their only Company in 1695, might we not imagine there was something of Infatuation in their Menagement? For though I allow Actors in general, when they are too much indulg'd, or govern'd by an unsteady Head, to be as unruly a Multitude as Power can be plagued with; yet there is a Medium which, if cautiously observed by a candid use of Power, making them always know, without feeling, their Superior, neither suffering their Encroachments nor invading their Rights, with an immoveable Adherence to the accepted Laws they are to walk by; such a Regulation, I say, has never fail'd, in my Observation, to have made them a tractable and profitable Society. If the Government of a well-establish'd Theatre were to be compar'd to that of a Nation, there is no one Act of Policy or Misconduct in the

one or the other in which the Menager might not, in some parallel Case, (laugh, if you please) be equally applauded or condemned with the Statesman. Perhaps this will not be found so wild a Conceit if you look into the 193d *Tatler*, Vol. 4. where the Affairs of the State and those of the very Stage which I am now treating of, are, in a Letter from *Downs* the Promptor,<sup>1</sup> compar'd, and with a great deal of Wit

<sup>1</sup> "Honoured Sir,

July 1. 1710.

"Finding by divers of your late Papers, that you are a Friend to the Profession of which I was many Years an unworthy Member, I the rather make bold to crave your Advice, touching a Proposal that has been lately made me of coming into Business, and the Sub-Administration of Stage Affairs. I have, from my Youth, been bred up behind the Curtain, and been a Prompter from the Time of the Restoration. I have seen many Changes, as well of Scenes as of Actors, and have known Men within my Remembrance arrive to the highest Dignities of the Theatre, who made their Entrance in the Quality of Mutes, Joynt-stools, Flower-pots, and Tapestry Hangings. It cannot be unknown to the Nobility and Gentry, That a Gentleman of the Inns of Court, and a deep Intriguer, had some Time since worked himself into the sole Management and Direction of the Theatre. Nor is it less notorious, That his restless Ambition, and subtle Machinations, did manifestly tend to the Extirpation of the good old *British* Actors, and the Introduction of foreign Pretenders; such as Harlequins, *French* Dancers, and *Roman* Singers; which, tho' they impoverish'd the Proprietors, and imposed on the Audience, were for some Time tolerated, by Reason of his dextrous Insinuations, which prevailed upon a few deluded Women, especially the Vizard Masks, to believe, that the Stage was in Danger. But his Schemes were soon exposed, and the Great Ones that supported him withdrawing their Favour, he made his *Exit*, and remained for a Season in Obscurity. During this Retreat the Machiavilian was not idle, but secretly fomented Divisions, and wrought over to his Side

and Humour, set upon an equal Foot of Policy. The Letter is suppos'd to have been written in the last Change of the Ministry in Queen *Anne's* Time. I will therefore venture, upon the Authority of that Author's Imagination, to carry the Comparison as high as it can possibly go, and say, That as I remember one of our Princes in the last Century to have lost his Crown by too arbitrary a Use of his Power, though he knew how fatal the same Measures had been to his unhappy Father before him, why should we wonder that the same Passions taking Possession of Men in lower Life, by an equally impolitick Usage of their Theatrical Subjects, should have involved the Patentees in proportionable Calamities.

some of the inferior Actors, reserving a Trap Door to himself, to which only he had a Key. This Entrance secured, this cunning Person, to compleat his Company, bethought himself of calling in the most eminent of Strollers from all Parts of the Kingdom. I have seen them all ranged together behind the Scenes ; but they are many of them Persons that never trod the Stage before, and so very aukward and ungainly, that it is impossible to believe the Audience will bear them. He was looking over his Catalogue of Plays, and indeed picked up a good tolerable Set of grave Faces for Counsellors, to appear in the famous Scene of *Venice Preserved*, when the Danger is over ; but they being but meer Outsides, and the Actors having a great Mind to play the *Tempest*, there is not a Man of them when he is to perform any Thing above Dumb Show is capable of acting with a good Grace so much as the Part of *Trincalo*. However, the Master persists in his Design, and is fitting up the old Storm ; but I am afraid he will not be able to procure able Sailors or experienced Officers for Love or Money.



During the Vacation, which immediately follow'd the Silence of the Patent, both Parties were at leisure to form their Schemes for the Winter: For the Patentee would still hold out, notwithstanding his being so miserably maim'd or over-match'd: He had no more Regard to Blows than a blind Cock of the Game; he might be beaten, but would never yield; the Patent was still in his Possession, and the Broad-Seal to it visibly as fresh as ever: Besides, he had yet some Actors in his Service,<sup>1</sup> at a much cheaper

“Besides all this, when he comes to cast the Parts there is so great a Confusion amongst them for Want of proper Actors, that for my Part I am wholly discouraged. The Play with which they design to open is, *The Duke and no Duke*; and they are so put to it, That the master himself is to act the Conjurer, and they have no one for the General but honest *George Powell*.

“Now, Sir, they being so much at a Loss for the *Dramatis Personæ*, viz. the Persons to enact, and the whole Frame of the House being designed to be altered, I desire your Opinion, whether you think it advisable for me to undertake to prompt 'em: For tho' I can clash Swords when they represent a Battel, and have yet Lungs enough to huzza their Victories, I question, if I should prompt 'em right, whether they would act accordingly.—I am

“*Your Honour's most humble Servant,*

“J. DOWNES.

*P. S.* Sir, Since I writ this, I am credibly informed, That they design a New House in *Lincoln's-Inn-fields*, near the Popish Chapel, to be ready by *Michaelmas* next; which indeed is but repairing an Old one that has already failed. You know the honest Man who kept the Office is gone already.”

<sup>1</sup> The chief actor who remained with Rich was Booth. Among the others were Powell, Bickerstaffe, Pack, Keene, Francis Leigh, Norris, Mrs. Bignell, Mrs. Moor, Mrs. Bradshaw, and Mrs. Knight.

Rate than those who had left him, the Sallaries of which last, now they would not work for him, he was not oblig'd to pay.<sup>1</sup> In this way of thinking, he still kept together such as had not been invited over to the *Hay-Market*, or had been influenc'd by *Booth* to follow his Fortune in *Drury-Lane*.

By the Patentee's keeping these Remains of his broken Forces together, it is plain that he imagin'd this Order of Silence, like others of the same Kind, would be recall'd, of course, after a reasonable time of Obedience had been paid to it: But, it seems, he had rely'd too much upon former Precedents; nor had his Politicks yet div'd into the Secret that the Court Power, with which the Patent had been so long and often at variance, had now a mind to take the publick Diversions more absolutely into their own Hands: Not that I have any stronger Reasons for this Conjecture than that the Patent never after this Order of Silence got leave to play during the Queen's Reign. But upon the Accession of his late Majesty, Power having then a different Aspect, the Patent found no Difficulty in being permitted to exercise its

<sup>1</sup> An interesting advertisement was published on Rich's behalf in July, 1709, which gives curious particulars regarding the actors' salaries. I quote it from "Edwin's Eccentricities," i. 219-224, without altering the figures, which, as regards the pence, are rather eccentric:—

**"ADVERTISEMENT CONCERNING THE POOR ACTORS, WHO, UNDER PRETENCE OF HARD USAGE FROM THE PATENTEEBS, ARE ABOUT TO DESERT THEIR SERVICE.**

**"Some persons having industriously spread about amongst the Quality and others, what small allowances the chief Actors have**

former Authority for acting Plays, &c. which, however, from this time of their lying still, in 1709, did not happen 'till 1714, which the old Patentee never liv'd to see : For he dy'd about six weeks before the new-built Theatre in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields* was open'd,<sup>1</sup> where the first Play acted was the *Recruiting Officer*, under the Menagement of his Heirs and Successors. But of that Theatre it is not yet time to give any further Account.

The first Point resolv'd on by the Comedians now re-established in the *Hay-Market*,<sup>2</sup> was to alter the

had this last Winter from the Patentees of Drury Lane Play-house, as if they had received no more than so many poor palatines ; it was thought necessary to print the following Account.

“The whole company began to act on the 12th of October, 1708, and left off on the 26th of the same month, by reason of Prince

<sup>1</sup> It was opened 18th December, 1714.

<sup>2</sup> The Lord Chamberlain's Records enable an exact account to be given of the transactions which led to the formation of this Haymarket Company. After Rich was silenced, his actors petitioned the Lord Chamberlain on three separate occasions, namely, 10th June, 20th June, and 5th July, 1709, and in answer to their petitions, the Haymarket, which was then devoted solely to Opera, was permitted to be used for Plays also. In an Answer to the actors' petitions, the Lord Chamberlain permits the manager of the Haymarket to engage such of them as he wished, and to act Plays four times a week, the other days being devoted to Operas. This License is dated 8th July, 1709. This is, of course, only a formal sanction of the private arrangement mentioned by Cibber *ante* p. 69 ; and was resented by Booth and others who were in Rich's favour. They therefore petitioned the Queen direct, in despite of the Lord Chamberlain (see “Dramatic Censor,” 1811, col. 112 ; Genest, ii. 426 ; Mr. Fitzgerald's “New History,” i. 273), but no result followed, until Collier's advent, as is related further on.

Auditory Part of their Theatre, the Inconveniencies of which have been fully enlarged upon in a former Chapter. What embarrass'd them most in this Design, was their want of Time to do it in a more complete manner than it now remains in, otherwise they had brought it to the original Model of that in

George's illness and death ; and began again the 14th of December following, and left off upon the Lord Chamberlain's order, on the 4th of June last, 1709. So acted, during that time, in all 135 days, which is 22 weeks and three days, accounting six acting days to a week.

	In that time	£	s.	d.
To Mr. Wilkes, by salary, for acting, and taking care of the rehearsals ; paid . . . . .		168	6	8
By his Benefit play ; . . . . .		90	14	9
	Total	259	1	5
<hr/>				
To Mr. Betterton by salary, for acting, 4 <i>l.</i> a week for himself, and 1 <i>l.</i> a week for his wife, although she does not act ; paid . . . . .		112	10	0
By a benefit play at common prices, besides what he got by high prices, and Guineas ; paid . . . . .		76	4	5
		188	14	5
<hr/>				
To Mr. Eastcourt, at 5 <i>l.</i> a week salary ; paid . . . . .		112	10	0
By a benefit play ; paid . . . . .		51	8	6
		163	18	6
<hr/>				
To Mr. Cibber, at 5 <i>l.</i> a week salary ; paid . . . . .		111	10	0
By a benefit play ; paid . . . . .		51	0	10
		162	10	10
<hr/>				

*Drury-Lane*, only in a larger Proportion, as the wider Walls of it would require; as there are not many Spectators who may remember what Form the *Drury-Lane* Theatre stood in about forty Years ago, before the old Patentee, to make it hold more Money, took it in his Head to alter it, it were but Justice to

	£	s.	d.
To Mr. Mills, at 4 <i>l.</i> a week for himself, and 1 <i>l.</i> a week for his wife, for little or nothing . . . .	112	10	0
By a benefit play paid to him (not including therein what she got by a benefit play) . . . .	58	1	4
	170 11 4		

To Mrs. Oldfield, at 4 <i>l.</i> a week salary, which for 14 weeks and one day; she leaving off acting presently after her benefit (viz.) on the 17th of March last, 1708, though the benefit was intended for her whole nine months acting, and she refused to assist others in their benefits; her salary for these 14 weeks and one day came to, and she was paid, . . . . .	56	13	4
In January she required, and was paid ten guineas, to wear on the stage in some plays, during the whole season, a mantua petticoat that was given her for the stage, and though she left off three months before she should, yet she hath not returned any part of the ten guineas . . . .	10	15	0
And she had for wearing in some plays a suit of boys cloaths on the stage; paid . . . .	2	10	9
By a benefit play; paid . . . . .	62	7	8
	132 6 7		
Certainties in all	1077	3	8

lay the original Figure which Sir *Christopher Wren* first gave it, and the Alterations of it now standing, in a fair Light ; that equal Spectators may see, if they were at their choice, which of the Structures would incline them to a Preference. But in this

“ Besides which certain sums abovementioned, the same actors got by their benefit plays, as follows :

	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Note, that Mr. Betterton having had 76 <i>l.</i> 4 <i>s.</i> 5 <i>d.</i> as above mentioned, for two-thirds of the profits by a benefit play, reckoning his tickets for the boxes at 5 <i>s.</i> a piece, the pit at 3 <i>s.</i> the first gallery at 2 <i>s.</i> and the upper gallery at 1 <i>s.</i> —But the boxes, pit, and stage, laid together on his day, and no person admitted but by his tickets, the lowest at half a guinea a ticket ; nay he had much more, for one lady gave him ten guineas, some five guineas, some two guineas, and most one guinea, supposing that he designed not to act any more, and he delivered tickets out for more persons, than the boxes, pit, and stage could hold ; it is thought he cleared at least 450 <i>l.</i> over and besides the 76 <i>l.</i> 4 <i>s.</i> 5 <i>d.</i> . . . . .	450	0	0
'Tis thought Mr. Estcourt cleared 200 <i>l.</i> besides the said 51 <i>l.</i> 8 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> . . . . .	200	0	0
That Mr. Wilkes cleared by Guineas, as it is thought, about 40 <i>l.</i> besides the said 90 <i>l.</i> 14 <i>s.</i> 9 <i>d.</i> . . . .	40	0	0
That Mr. Cibber got by Guineas, as it is thought, about 50 <i>l.</i> besides the said 51 <i>l.</i> 0 <i>s.</i> 10 <i>d.</i> . . . .	50	0	0
That Mr. Mills got by guineas about 20 <i>l.</i> as it is thought, besides the said 58 <i>l.</i> 1 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i> . . . .	20	0	0
That Mrs. Oldfield, it is thought, got 120 <i>l.</i> by guineas over and above the said 62 <i>l.</i> 7 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i> . .	120	0	0
In all	880	0	0

Appeal I only speak to such Spectators as allow a good Play well acted to be the most valuable Entertainment of the Stage. Whether such Plays (leaving

“So that these six comedians, who are the unsatisfied people, have between the 12th of October and the 4th of June last, cleared in all the following sums :

	£	s.	d.
Acted 100 times, Mr. Wilkes certain . . . . .	259	1	5
and more by computation . . . . .	40	0	0
	<hr/>		
Both	299	1	5
	<hr/>		
Acted 16 times, Mr. Betterton certain . . . . .	188	14	5
and more by computation . . . . .	450	0	0
	<hr/>		
	638	14	5
	<hr/>		
Acted 52 times, Mr. Estcourt certain . . . . .	163	18	6
and more by computation . . . . .	200	0	0
	<hr/>		
	363	18	6
	<hr/>		
Acted 71 times, Mr. Cibber certain . . . . .	162	10	10
and more by computation . . . . .	50	0	0
	<hr/>		
	212	10	10
	<hr/>		
Acted — times, Mr. Mills certain . . . . .	170	11	4
and more by computation . . . . .	20	0	0
	<hr/>		
	190	11	4
	<hr/>		
Acted 39 times, Mrs. Oldfield certain . . . . .	132	6	7
and more by computation . . . . .	120	0	3
	<hr/>		
	252	6	7
	<hr/>		
In all	1957	3	2
	<hr/>		

the Skill of the dead or living Actors equally out of the Question) have been more or less recommended in their Presentation by either of these different Forms of that Theatre, is our present Matter of Enquiry.

It must be observ'd, then,<sup>1</sup> that the Area or Plat-

“Had not acting been forbid seven weeks on the occasion of Prince George's death, and my Lord Chamberlain forbid acting about five weeks before the tenth of July instant; each of these actors would have had twelve weeks salary more than is above-mentioned.

“As to the certainties expressed in this paper, to be paid to the six Actors, the same are positively true: and as to the sums they got over and above such certainties, I believe the same to be true, according to the best of my computation.

“Witness my hand, who am Receiver and Treasurer at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

“July 8th, 1709.

“ZACHARY BAGGS.”

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<sup>1</sup> The description of the shape of the stage which follows is interesting and valuable. In early times the stage was a platform surrounded by the audience, not, as now, a picture framed by the proscenium. This is evident, not only from descriptive allusions, but from the two drawings which have come down to us of the interior of pre-Restoration theatres—De Witt's drawing of the Swan Theatre in 1596, reproduced in Herr Gaedertz's “Zur Kenntniss der altenglischen Bühne” (Bremen, 1888), and the well-known print of the Red Bull Theatre during the Commonwealth, which forms the frontispiece to Kirkman's “The Wits, or Sport upon Sport” (1672). In both of them the pit entirely surrounds the stage on three sides, while the fourth side also contains spectators in boxes placed above the entrance-doors. By gradual modifications the shape of the stage has changed, till now the audience is confined to one side. The doors used for entrances and exits, to which Cibber alludes, have disappeared comparatively recently. They may be seen, for instance, in Cruikshank's plates to Dickens's “Grimaldi.”



form of the old Stage projected about four Foot forwarder, in a Semi-oval Figure, parallel to the Benches of the Pit; and that the former lower Doors of Entrance for the Actors were brought down between the two foremost (and then only) Pilasters; in the Place of which Doors now the two Stage-Boxes are fixt. That where the Doors of Entrance now are, there formerly stood two additional Side-Wings, in front to a full Set of Scenes, which had then almost a double Effect in their Loftiness and Magnificence.

By this Original Form, the usual Station of the Actors, in almost every Scene, was advanc'd at least ten Foot nearer to the Audience than they now can be; because, not only from the Stage's being shorten'd in front, but likewise from the additional Interposition of those Stage-Boxes, the Actors (in respect to the Spectators that fill them) are kept so much more backward from the main Audience than they us'd to be: But when the Actors were in Possession of that forwarder Space to advance upon, the Voice was then more in the Centre of the House, so that the most distant Ear had scarce the least Doubt or Difficulty in hearing what fell from the weakest Utterance: All Objects were thus drawn nearer to the Sense; every painted Scene was stronger; every grand Scene and Dance more extended; every rich or fine-coloured Habit had a more lively Lustre: Nor was the minutest Motion of a Feature (properly changing with the Passion or Humour it suited) ever lost, as they frequently must be in the Obscurity of

too great a Distance : And how valuable an Advantage the Facility of hearing distinctly is to every well-acted Scene, every common Spectator is a Judge. A Voice scarce raised above the Tone of a Whisper, either in Tenderness, Resignation, innocent Distress, or Jealousy suppress'd, often have as much concern with the Heart as the most clamorous Passions ; and when on any of these Occasions such affecting Speeches are plainly heard, or lost, how wide is the Difference from the great or little Satisfaction received from them ? To all this a Master of a Company may say, I now receive Ten Pounds more than could have been taken formerly in every full House ! Not unlikely. But might not his House be oftener full if the Auditors were oftener pleas'd ? Might not every bad House too, by a Possibility of being made every Day better, add as much to one Side of his Account as it could take from the other ? If what I have said carries any Truth in it, why might not the original Form of this Theatre be restor'd ? but let this Digression avail what it may, the Actors now return'd to the *Hay-Market*, as I have observ'd, wanting nothing but length of Time to have govern'd their Alteration of that Theatre by this original Model of *Drury-Lane* which I have recommended. As their time therefore was short, they made their best use of it ; they did something to it : They contracted its Wideness by three Ranges of Boxes on each side, and brought down its enormous high Ceiling within so proportionable a







THEOPHILUS CIBBER AS ANTIENT PISTOL.



Compass that it effectually cur'd those hollow Undulations of the Voice formerly complain'd of. The Remedy had its Effect; their Audiences exceeded their Expectation. There was now no other Theatre open against them;<sup>1</sup> they had the Town to themselves; they were their own Masters, and the Profits of their Industry came into their own Pockets.

Yet with all this fair Weather, the Season of their uninterrupted Prosperity was not yet arriv'd; for the great Expence and thinner Audiences of the Opera (of which they then were equally Directors) was a constant Drawback upon their Gains, yet not so far but that their Income this Year was better than in their late Station at *Drury-Lane*. But by the short Experience we had then had of Operas; by the high Reputation they seem'd to have been arriv'd at the Year before; by their Power of drawing the whole Body of Nobility as by Enchantment to their Solemnities; by that Prodigality of Expence at which they were so willing to support them; and from the late extraordinary Profits *Swiney* had made of them, what Mountains did we not hope from this Mole-hill? But alas! the fairy Vision was vanish'd; this bridal Beauty was grown familiar to the general Taste, and Satiety began to make Excuses for its want of Appetite: Or, what is still stranger, its

<sup>1</sup> The Haymarket opened on 15th September, 1709, and there was no rival theatre till 23rd November, when Drury Lane opened; but from this latter date till the end of the season both theatres were open.

late Admirers now as much valued their Judgment in being able to find out the Faults of the Performers, as they had before in discovering their Excellencies. The Truth is, that this kind of Entertainment being so entirely sensual, it had no Possibility of getting the better of our Reason but by its Novelty ; and that Novelty could never be supported but by an annual Change of the best Voices, which, like the finest Flowers, bloom but for a Season, and when that is over are only dead Nose-gays. From this Natural Cause we have seen within these two Years even *Farinelli* singing to an Audience of five and thirty Pounds, and yet, if common Fame may be credited, the same Voice, so neglected in one Country, has in another had Charms sufficient to make that Crown sit easy on the Head of a Monarch, which the Jealousy of Politicians (who had their Views in his keeping it) fear'd, without some such extraordinary Amusement, his Satiety of Empire might tempt him a second time to resign.<sup>1</sup>

There is, too, in the very Species of an *Italian* Singer such an innate, fantastical Pride and Caprice, that the Government of them (here at least) is almost im-

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers has here the following note :—" The monarch alluded to, I suppose, was Victor Amadeus, King of Sardinia. Carlo Broschi, better known by the name of Farinelli, was born in the dukedom of Modena, in 1705, and suffered emasculation, from an accident, when young. The Spanish king Ferdinand created him a knight of Calatrava, honoured him with his friendship, and added to his fortune. He returned to Italy on his patron's death, and died in 1782."



practicable. This Distemper, as we were not sufficiently warn'd or apprized of, threw our musical Affairs into Perplexities we knew not easily how to get out of. There is scarce a sensible Auditor in the Kingdom that has not since that Time had Occasion to laugh at the several Instances of it: But what is still more ridiculous, these costly Canary-Birds have sometimes infested the whole Body of our dignified Lovers of Musick with the same childish Animosities: Ladies have been known to decline their Visits upon account of their being of a different musical Party. *Cæsar* and *Pompey* made not a warmer Division in the *Roman* Republick than those Heroines, their Country Women, the *Faustina* and *Cuzzoni*, blew up in our Common-wealth of Academical Musick by their implacable Pretensions to Superiority.<sup>1</sup> And while this Greatness of Soul is their unalterable Virtue, it will never be practicable to make two capital Singers of the same Sex do as they should do in one Opera at the same time! no, not tho' *England* were to double the Sums it has already thrown after them: For even in their own

<sup>1</sup> Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni Hasset, whose famous rivalry in 1726 and 1727 is here referred to, were singers of remarkable powers. Cuzzoni's voice was a *soprano*, her rival's a *mezzo-soprano*, and while the latter excelled in brilliant execution, the former was supreme in pathetic expression. Dr. Burney ("History of Music," iv. 319) quotes from M. Quantz the statement that so keen was their supporters' party spirit, that when one party began to applaud their favourite, the other party hissed!

Country, where an extraordinary Occasion has called a greater Number of their best to sing together, the Mischief they have made has been proportionable ; an Instance of which, if I am rightly inform'd, happen'd at *Parma*, where, upon the Celebration of the Marriage of that Duke, a Collection was made of the most eminent Voices that Expence or Interest could purchase, to give as complete an Opera as the whole vocal Power of *Italy* could form. But when it came to the Proof of this musical Project, behold ! what woful Work they made of it ! every Performer would be a *Cæsar* or Nothing ; their several Pretensions to Preference were not to be limited within the Laws of Harmony ; they would all choose their own Songs, but not more to set off themselves than to oppose or deprive another of an Occasion to shine : Yet any one would sing a bad Song, provided no body else had a good one, till at last they were thrown together, like so many feather'd Warriors, for a Battle-royal in a Cock-pit, where every one was oblig'd to kill another to save himself ! What Pity it was these froward Misses and Masters of Musick had not been engag'd to entertain the Court of some King of *Morocco*, that could have known a good Opera from a bad one ! with how much Ease would such a Director have brought them to better Order ? But alas ! as it has been said of greater Things,

*Suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit.* Hor.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Epod.* xvi. 2.

Imperial *Rome* fell by the too great Strength of its own Citizens! So fell this mighty Opera, ruin'd by the too great Excellency of its Singers! For, upon the whole, it proved to be as barbarously bad as if Malice it self had composed it.

Now though something of this kind, equally provoking, has generally embarrass'd the State of Operas these thirty Years, yet it was the Misfortune of the menaging Actors at the *Hay-Market* to have felt the first Effects of it: The Honour of the Singer and the Interest of the Undertaker were so often at Variance, that the latter began to have but a bad Bargain of it. But not to impute more to the Caprice of those Performers than was really true, there were two different Accidents that drew Numbers from our Audiences before the Season was ended; which were another Company permitted to act in *Drury-Lane*,<sup>1</sup> and the long Trial of Doctor *Sacheverel* in *Westminster-Hall*:<sup>2</sup> By the way, it must be observed that this Company was not under the Direction of the Patent (which continued still silenced) but was set up by a third Interest, with a License from Court. The Person to whom this new License was granted was *William Collier*, Esq.,

<sup>1</sup> See note on page 87.

<sup>2</sup> The trial opened on 27th February, 1710, and lasted for more than three weeks. The political excitement it caused must have done great harm to theatricals. Shadwell, in the Preface to "The Fair Quaker of Deal," mentioned *post*, page 95, says it was a success, "Notwithstanding the trial in Westminster-Hall, and the rehearsal of the new opera."

Charles, The  
died ca.  
1700?

a Lawyer of an enterprising Head and a jovial Heart; what sort of Favour he was in with the People then in Power may be judg'd from his being often admitted to partake with them those detach'd Hours of Life when Business was to give way to Pleasure: But this was not all his Merit, he was at the same time a Member of Parliament for *Truro* in *Cornwall*, and we cannot suppose a Person so qualified could be refused such a Trifle as a License to head a broken Company of Actors. This sagacious Lawyer, then, who had a Lawyer to deal with, observing that his Antagonist kept Possession of a Theatre without making use of it, and for which he was not obliged to pay Rent unless he actually *did* use it, wisely conceived it might be the Interest of the joint Landlords, since their Tenement was in so precarious a Condition, to grant a Lease to one who had an undisputed Authority to be liable, by acting Plays in it, to pay the Rent of it; especially when he tempted them with an Offer of raising it from three to four Pounds *per Diem*. His Project succeeded, the Lease was sign'd; but the Means of getting into Possession were to be left to his own Cost and Discretion. This took him up but little Time; he immediately laid Siege to it with a sufficient Number of Forces, whether lawless or lawful I forget, but they were such as obliged the old Governor to give it up; who, notwithstanding, had got Intelligence of his Approaches and Design time enough to carry off every thing that was worth moving, except a great

Number of old Scenes and new Actors that could not easily follow him.<sup>1</sup>

A ludicrous Account of this Transaction, under fictitious Names, may be found in the 99th *Tatler*, Vol. 2. which this Explanation may now render more intelligible to the Readers of that agreeable Author.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the British Museum will be found a copy of the report by the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, who were ordered by Queen Anne to inquire into this business. Rich declared that Collier broke into the theatre with an armed mob of soldiers, &c., but Collier denied the soldiers, though he admitted the breaking in. He gave as his authority for taking possession a letter signed by Sir James Stanley, dated 19th November, 1709, by which the Queen gave him authority to act, and required him not to allow Rich to have any concern in the theatre. His authority was appointed to run from 23rd November, 1709.

<sup>2</sup> "Tatler," No. 99, 26th November, 1709: "*Divito* [Rich] was too modest to know when to resign it, till he had the Opinion and Sentence of the Law for his Removal. . . . The lawful Ruler [of Drury Lane] sets up an Attorney to expel an Attorney, and chose a Name dreadful to the Stage [that is Collier], who only seemed able to beat *Divito* out of his Intrenchments.

"On the 22d Instant, a Night of public Rejoycing, the Enemies of *Divito* made a Largess to the People of Faggots, Tubs, and other combustible Matter, which was erected into a Bonfire before the Palace. Plentiful Cans were at the same time distributed among the Dependences of that Principality; and the artful Rival of *Divito* observing them prepared for Enterprize, presented the lawful Owner of the neighbouring Edifice, and showed his Deputation under him. War immediately ensued upon the peaceful Empire of Wit and the Muses; The *Goths* and *Vandals* sacking *Rome* did not threaten a more barbarous Devastation of Arts and Sciences. But when they had forced their Entrance, the experienced *Divito* had detached all his Subjects, and evacuated all his Stores. The neighbouring Inhabitants report, That the Refuse of *Divito's* Followers marched off the Night before disguised in

This other new License being now in Possession of the *Drury-Lane* Theatre, those Actors whom the Patentee ever since the Order of Silence had retain'd in a State of Inaction, all to a Man came over to the Service of *Collier*. Of these *Booth* was then the chief.<sup>1</sup> The Merit of the rest had as yet made no considerable Appearance, and as the Patentee had not left a Rag of their Cloathing behind him, they were but poorly equip'd for a publick Review; consequently at their first Opening they were very little able to annoy us. But during the Trial of *Sacheverel* our Audiences were extremely weaken'd by the better Rank of People's daily attending it: While, at the same time, the lower Sort, who were

Magnificence; Door-Keepers came out clad like Cardinals, and Scene-Drawers like Heathen Gods. *Divito* himself was wrapped up in one of his black Clouds, and left to the Enemy nothing but an empty Stage, full of Trap-Doors, known only to himself and his Adherents."

<sup>1</sup> Barton Booth, Theophilus Keen, Norris, John Bickerstaffe, George Powell, Francis Leigh, George Pack, Mrs. Knight, Mrs. Bradshaw, and Mrs. Moore were Collier's chief performers. As most of them had signed the petition in Rich's favour which I mentioned in a note on page 79, it is not wonderful that disturbances soon arose. Collier appointed Aaron Hill to manage the company, and his post seems to have been a somewhat lively one. On 14th June, 1710, the Lord Chamberlain's Records contain an entry which proves how rebellious the company were. Powell, Booth, Bickerstaffe, Keen, and Leigh, are stated to have defied and beaten Aaron Hill, to have broken open the doors of the theatre, and made a riot generally. For this Powell is discharged, and the others suspended. Mr. Fitzgerald ("New History," i. 308 *et seq.*) quotes a letter from Hill, in which some account of this matter is given.

not equally admitted to that grand Spectacle, as eagerly crowded into *Drury-Lane* to a new Comedy call'd *The fair Quaker of Deal*. This Play having some low Strokes of natural Humour in it, was rightly calculated for the Capacity of the Actors who play'd it, and to the Taste of the Multitude who were now more disposed and at leisure to see it:<sup>1</sup> But the most happy Incident in its Fortune was the Charm of the fair Quaker which was acted by Miss *Santlow*, (afterwards Mrs. *Booth*) whose Person was then in the full Bloom of what Beauty she might pretend to: Before this she had only been admired as the most excellent Dancer, which perhaps might not a little contribute to the favourable Reception she now met with as an Actress, in this Character which so happily suited her Figure and Capacity: The gentle Softness of her Voice, the composed Innocence of her Aspect, the Modesty of her Dress,

<sup>1</sup> Charles Shadwell's "Fair Quaker of Deal" was produced at Drury Lane on 25th February, 1710. In the Preface the author says, "This play was written about three years since, and put into the hands of a famous Comedian belonging to the Haymarket Playhouse, who took care to beat down the value of it so much, as to offer the author to alter it fit to appear on the stage, on condition he might have half the profits of the third day, and the dedication entire; that is as much as to say, that it may pass for one of his, according to custom. The author not agreeing to this reasonable proposal, it lay in his hands till the beginning of this winter, when Mr. Booth read it, and liked it, and persuaded the author, that, with a little alteration, it would please the town" (Bell's edition). If, as is likely, Cibber is the actor referred to, his abuse of the play and the actors is not unintelligible.

the reserv'd Decency of her Gesture, and the Simplicity of the Sentiments that naturally fell from her, made her seem the amiable Maid she represented: In a Word, not the enthusiastick Maid of *Orleans* was more serviceable of old to the *French* Army when the *English* had distressed them, than this fair Quaker was at the Head of that dramattick Attempt upon which the Support of their weak Society depended.<sup>1</sup>

But when the Trial I have mention'd and the Run of this Play was over, the Tide of the Town beginning to turn again in our Favour, *Collier* was reduced to give his Theatrical Affairs a different Scheme; which advanced the Stage another Step towards that Settlement which, in my Time, was of the longest Duration.

<sup>1</sup> Hester Santlow, the "Santlow, fam'd for dance" of Gay, married Barton Booth. She appears to have retired from the stage about 1733. Genest (iii. 375) says, "she seems to have been a pleasing actress with no great powers." Her reputation was none of the best before her marriage, for she was said to have been the mistress of the Duke of Marlborough and of Secretary Craggs. See memoir of Booth.





### CHAPTER XIII.

*The Patentee, having now no Actors, rebuilds the new Theatre in  
Lincolns-Inn-Fields. A Guess at his Reasons for it. More  
Changes in the State of the Stage. The Beginning of its better  
Days under the Triumvirate of Actors. A Sketch of their govern-  
ing Characters.*

AS coarse Mothers may have comely Children,  
so Anarchy has been the Parent of many a  
good Government; and by a Parity of possible  
Consequences, we shall find that from the frequent  
Convulsions of the Stage arose at last its longest  
Settlement and Prosperity; which many of my  
Readers (or if I should happen to have but few of  
them, many of my Spectators at least) who I hope

have not yet liv'd half their Time, will be able to remember.

Though the Patent had been often under Distresses, it had never felt any Blow equal to this unrevoked Order of Silence; which it is not easy to conceive could have fallen upon any other Person's Conduct than that of the old Patentee: For if he was conscious of his being under the Subjection of that Power which had silenc'd him, why would he incur the Danger of a Suspension by his so obstinate and impolitick Treatment of his Actors? If he thought such Power over him illegal, how came he to obey it now more than before, when he slighted a former Order that injoin'd him to give his Actors their Benefits on their usual Conditions?<sup>1</sup> But to do him Justice, the same Obstinacy that involv'd him in these Difficulties, at last preserv'd to his Heirs the Property of the Patent in its full Force and Value;<sup>2</sup> yet to suppose that he foresaw a milder use of Power in some future Prince's Reign might be more favourable to him, is begging at best but a cold Question. But whether he knew that this broken

<sup>1</sup> Genest (ii. 430) has the following outspoken character of Rich: "He seems in his public capacity of Patentee and Manager to have been a despicable character—without spirit to bring the power of the Lord Chamberlain to a legal test—without honesty to account to the other proprietors for the receipts of the theatre—without any feeling for his actors—and without the least judgment as to players and plays."

<sup>2</sup> Rich's Patent was revived, as Cibber states (p. 78), in 1714, when it was the property of his son, John Rich.

Condition of the Patent would not make his troublesome Friends the Adventurers fly from it as from a falling House, seems not so difficult a Question. However, let the Reader form his own Judgment of them from the Facts that follow'd : It must therefore be observ'd, that the Adventurers seldom came near the House but when there was some visible Appearance of a Dividend: But I could never hear that upon an ill Run of Audiences they had ever returned or brought in a single Shilling, to make good the Deficiencies of their daily Receipts. Therefore, as the Patentee in Possession had alone, for several Years, supported and stood against this Uncertainty of Fortune, it may be imagin'd that his Accounts were under so voluminous a Perplexity that few of those Adventurers would have Leisure or Capacity enough to unravel them : And as they had formerly thrown away their Time and Money at law in a fruitless Enquiry into them, they now seem'd to have intirely given up their Right and Interest: And, according to my best Information, notwithstanding the subsequent Gains of the Patent have been sometimes extraordinary, the farther Demands or Claims of Right of the Adventurers have lain dormant above these five and twenty Years.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is no more curious transaction in theatrical history than the acquisition of the entire right in the Patent by Rich and his son. Christopher Rich's share (see note on p. 32) was seventeen one-hundredths, or about one-sixth ; yet, by obstinate dishonesty, he succeeded in annexing the remainder.

Having shewn by what means *Collier* had disposess'd this Patentee, not only of the *Drury-Lane* House, but likewise of those few Actors which he had kept for some time unemploy'd in it, we are now led to consider another Project of the same Patentee, which, if we are to judge of it by the Event, has shewn him more a Wise than a Weak Man ; which I confess at the time he put it in Execution seem'd not so clear a Point : For notwithstanding he now saw the Authority and Power of his Patent was superseded, or was at best but precarious, and that he had not one Actor left in his Service, yet, under all these Dilemma's and Distresses, he resolv'd upon rebuilding the New Theatre in *Lincolns-Inn-Fields*, of which he had taken a Lease, at a low Rent, ever since *Betterton's* Company had first left it.<sup>1</sup> This Conduct seem'd too deep for my Comprehension ! What are we to think of his taking this Lease in the height of his Prosperity, when he could have no Occasion for it ? Was he a Prophet ? Could he then foresee he should, one time or other, be turn'd out of *Drury-Lane* ? Or did his mere Appetite of Architecture urge him to build a House, while he could not be sure he should ever have leave to make use of it ? But of all this we may think as we please ; whatever was his Motive, he, at his own Expence, in this Interval of his having nothing else to do, rebuilt that Theatre from the Ground, as it is now

<sup>1</sup> In March, 1705.

standing.<sup>1</sup> As for the Order of Silence, he seem'd little concern'd at it while it gave him so much un-interrupted Leisure to supervise a Work which he naturally took Delight in.

After this Defeat of the Patentee, the Theatrical Forces of *Collier* in *Drury-Lane*, notwithstanding their having drawn the Multitude after them for about three Weeks during the Trial of *Sacheverel*, had made but an indifferent Campaign at the end of the Season. *Collier* at least found so little Account in it, that it obliged him to push his Court-Interest (which, wherever the Stage was concern'd, was not inconsiderable) to support him in another Scheme; which was, that in consideration of his giving up the *Drury-Lane*, Cloaths, Scenes, and Actors, to *Swiney*

<sup>1</sup> There has been some doubt as to the locality of the theatre in Little Lincoln's Inn Fields, in which Betterton acted, one authority at least holding that he played in Gibbons' Tennis Court in Vere Street, Clare Market. But Cibber distinctly states that Rich rented the building which Betterton left in 1705, and old maps of London show clearly that Rich's theatre was in Portugal Street, just opposite the end of the then unnamed street, now called Carey Street. In "A New and Exact Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster," published 30th August, 1738, by George Foster, "The New Play House" is given as the name of this building, and it is worthy of notice that Cibber, a few lines above, writes of "the New Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields." See also vol. i. p. 192, note 1, where I quote Downes, who calls Betterton's theatre the New Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. About 1756 this house was made a barrack; it was afterwards an auction room; then the China Repository of Messrs. Spode and Copeland, and was ultimately pulled down about 1848 to make room for the extension of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons.

and his joint Sharers in the *Hay-Market*, he (*Collier*) might be put into an equal Possession of the *Hay-Market* Theatre, with all the Singers, &c. and be made sole Director of the Opera. Accordingly, by Permission of the Lord Chamberlain, a Treaty was enter'd into, and in a few Days ratified by all Parties, conformable to the said Preliminaries.<sup>1</sup> This was that happy Crisis of Theatrical Liberty which the labouring Comedians had long sigh'd for, and which, for above twenty Years following, was so memorably fortunate to them.

However, there were two hard Articles in this Treaty, which, though it might be Policy in the Actors to comply with, yet the Imposition of them seem'd little less despotick than a Tax upon the Poor when a Government did not want it.

The first of these Articles was, That whereas the sole License for acting Plays was presum'd to be a more profitable Authority than that for acting Operas only, that therefore Two Hundred Pounds a Year should be paid to *Collier*, while Master of the Opera, by the Comedians; to whom a verbal Assurance was given by the *Plenipo's* on the Court-side, that while such Payment subsisted no other Company should be permitted to act Plays against them within the Liberties, &c. The other Article was, That on every *Wednesday* whereon an Opera could be per-

<sup>1</sup> The Licence to Swiney, Wilks, Cibber, and Dogget, for Drury Lane, is dated 6th November, 1710. In it Swiney's name is spelled "Swyny," and Cibber's "Cybber."

form'd, the Plays should, *toties quoties*, be silent at *Drury-Lane*, to give the Opera a fairer Chance for a full House.

This last Article, however partial in the Intention, was in its Effect of great Advantage to the sharing Actors: For in all publick Entertainments a Day's Abstinence naturally increases the Appetite to them: Our every *Thursday's* Audience, therefore, was visibly the better by thus making the Day before it a Fast. But as this was not a Favour design'd us, this Prohibition of a Day, methinks, deserves a little farther Notice, because it evidently took a sixth Part of their Income from all the hired Actors, who were only paid in proportion to the Number of acting Days. This extraordinary Regard to Operas was, in effect, making the Day-labouring Actors the principal Subscribers to them, and the shutting out People from the Play every *Wednesday* many murmur'd at as an Abridgment of their usual Liberty. And tho' I was one of those who profited by that Order, it ought not to bribe me into a Concealment of what was then said and thought of it. I remember a Nobleman of the first Rank, then in a high Post, and not out of Court-Favour, said openly behind the Scenes—*It was shameful to take part of the Actors Bread from them to support the silly Diversion of People of Quality.* But alas! what was all this Grievance when weigh'd against the Qualifications of so grave and stanch a Senator as *Collier*? Such visible Merit, it seems, was to be made easy, tho' at

the Expence of the—I had almost said, *Honour* of the Court, whose gracious Intention for the Theatrical Common-wealth might have shone with thrice the Lustre if such a paltry Price had not been paid for it. But as the Government of the Stage is but that of the World in Miniature, we ought not to have wonder'd that *Collier* had Interest enough to quarter the Weakness of the Opera upon the Strength of the Comedy. General good Intentions are not always practicable to a Perfection. The most necessary Law can hardly pass, but a Tenderness to some private Interest shall often hang such Exceptions upon particular Clauses, 'till at last it comes out lame and lifeless, with the Loss of half its Force, Purpose, and Dignity. As, for Instance, how many fruitless Motions have been made in Parliaments to moderate the enormous Exactions in the Practice of the Law? And what sort of Justice must that be call'd, which, when a Man has not a mind to pay you a Debt of Ten Pounds, it shall cost you Fifty before you can get it? How long, too, has the Publick been labouring for a Bridge at *Westminster*? But the Wonder that it was not built a Hundred Years ago ceases when we are told, That the Fear of making one End of *London* as rich as the other has been so long an Obstruction to it:<sup>1</sup> And though it might seem a still

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Bridge was authorized to be built in the face of virulent opposition from the Corporation of London, who feared that its existence would damage the trade of the City. Dr. Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury, and others interested, applied for an









HESTER SANTLOW



greater Wonder, when a new Law for building one had at last got over that Apprehension, that it should meet with any farther Delay ; yet Experience has shewn us that the Structure of this useful Ornament to our Metropolis has been so clogg'd by private Jobs that were to be pick'd out of the Undertaking, and the Progress of the Work so disconcerted by a tedious Contention of private Interests and Endeavours to impose upon the Publick abominable Bargains, that a whole Year was lost before a single Stone could be laid to its Foundation. But Posterity will owe its Praises to the Zeal and Resolution of a truly Noble Commissioner, whose distinguish'd Impatience has broke thro' those narrow Artifices, those false and frivolous Objections that delay'd it, and has already began to raise above the Tide that future Monument of his Publick Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

How far all this may be allow'd applicable to the State of the Stage is not of so great Importance, nor so much my Concern, as that what is observ'd upon it should always remain a memorable Truth, to the Honour of that Nobleman. But now I go on : *Collier* being thus possess'd of his Musical Government, thought his best way would be to farm it out

Act of Parliament in 1736 ; the bridge was begun in 1738, and not finished till 1750, the opening ceremony being held on 17th November of that year. Until this time the only bridge was London Bridge. See "Old and New London," iii. 297.

<sup>1</sup> I presume the Noble Commissioner is the Earl of Pembroke, who laid the first stone of the bridge on 29th January, 1739.

II.

H

to a Gentleman, *Aaron Hill*, Esq.<sup>1</sup> (who he had reason to suppose knew something more of Theatrical Matters than himself) at a Rent, if I mistake not, of Six Hundred Pounds *per Annum*: But before the Season was ended (upon what occasion, if I could remember, it might not be material to say) took it into his Hands again: But all his Skill and Interest could not raise the Direction of the Opera to so good a Post as he thought due to a Person of his Consideration: He therefore, the Year following, enter'd upon another high-handed Scheme, which, 'till the Demise of the Queen, turn'd to his better Account.

After the Comedians were in Possession of *Drury-Lane*, from whence during my time upon the Stage they never departed, their Swarm of Audiences exceeded all that had been seen in thirty Years before; which, however, I do not impute so much to the Excellence of their Acting as to their indefatigable Industry and good Management; for, as I have often said, I never thought in the general that we stood in any Place of Comparison with the eminent Actors before us; perhaps, too, by there being now an End of the frequent Divisions and Disorders that had from time to time broke in upon and frustrated their Labours, not a little might be contributed to their Success.

<sup>1</sup> Collier seems to have relied on Aaron Hill in all his theatrical enterprises, for, as previously noted, Hill had been manager for him at Drury Lane.

*Collier*, then, like a true liquorish Courtier, observing the Prosperity of a Theatre, which he the Year before had parted with for a worse, began to meditate an Exchange of Theatrical Posts with *Swiney*, who had visibly very fair Pretensions to that he was in, by his being first chosen by the Court to regulate and rescue the Stage from the Disorders it had suffer'd under its former Menagers :<sup>1</sup> Yet *Collier* knew that sort of Merit could stand in no Competition with his being a Member of Parliament : He therefore had recourse to his Court-Interest (where meer Will and Pleasure at that time was the only Law that dispos'd of all Theatrical Rights) to oblige *Swiney* to let him be off from his bad Bargain for a better. To this it may be imagin'd *Swiney* demurr'd, and as he had Reason, strongly remonstrated against it : But as *Collier* had listed his Conscience under the Command of Interest, he kept it to strict Duty, and was immoveable ; insomuch that Sir *John Vanbrugh*, who was a Friend to *Swiney*, and who, by his Intimacy with the People in Power, better knew the Motive of their Actions, advis'd *Swiney* rather to accept of the Change, than by a Non-compliance to hazard his being excluded from any Post or Concern in either of the Theatres : To conclude, it was not long before *Collier* had procured a new License for acting Plays, &c. for himself, *Wilks*, *Dogget*, and *Cibber*, exclusive of *Swiney*, who by this new Regula-

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the season 1708-9. See *ante*, p. 69.

tion was reduc'd to his *Hobson's* Choice of the Opera.<sup>1</sup>

*Swiney* being thus transferr'd to the Opera<sup>2</sup> in the sinking Condition *Collier* had left it, found the Receipts of it in the Winter following, 1711, so far short of the Expences, that he was driven to attend his Fortune in some more favourable Climate, where he remain'd twenty Years an Exile from his Friends and Country, tho' there has been scarce an *English* Gentleman who in his *Tour of France* or *Italy* has not renew'd or created an Acquaintance with him. As this is a Circumstance that many People may have forgot, I cannot remember it without that Regard and Concern it deserves from all that know him: Yet it is some Mitigation of his Misfortune that since his Return to *England*, his grey Hairs and cheerful Disposition have still found a general Welcome among his foreign and former domestick Acquaintance.

*Collier* being now first-commission'd Menager with the Comedians, drove them, too, to the last Inch of a hard Bargain (the natural Consequence of all Treaties between Power and Necessity.) He not only demanded six hundred a Year neat Money, the Price at which he had farm'd out his Opera, and to make the Business a *Sine-cure* to him, but likewise insisted

<sup>1</sup> *Collier's* treatment of *Swiney* was so discreditable, that when he in his turn was evicted from Drury Lane (1714) we cannot help feeling gratified at his downfall.

<sup>2</sup> *Swiney's* Licence for the Opera is dated 17th April, 1712.



upon a Moiety of the Two hundred that had been levied upon us the Year before in Aid of the Operas ; in all 700*l*. These large and ample Conditions, considering in what Hands we were, we resolv'd to swallow without wry Faces ; rather chusing to run any Hazard than contend with a formidable Power against which we had no Remedy ; But so it happen'd that Fortune took better care of our Interest than we ourselves had like to have done : For had *Collier* accepted of our first Offer, of an equal Share with us, he had got three hundred Pounds a Year more by complying with it than by the Sum he imposed upon us, our Shares being never less than a thousand annually to each of us, 'till the End of the Queen's Reign in 1714. After which *Collier's* Commission was superseded, his Theatrical Post, upon the Accession of his late Majesty, being given to Sir *Richard Steele*.<sup>1</sup>

From these various Revolutions in the Government of the Theatre, all owing to the Patentees mistaken Principle of increasing their Profits by too far enslaving their People, and keeping down the Price of good Actors (and I could almost insist that giving large Sallaries to bad Ones could not have had a worse Consequence) I say, when it is consider'd that the Authority for acting Plays, &c. was thought of so little worth that (as has been observ'd) Sir *Thomas*

<sup>1</sup> For a further account of Steele's being given a share of the Patent, which he got through Marlborough's influence, see the beginning of Chapter XV.

*Skipwith* gave away his Share of it, and the Adventurers had fled from it ; that Mr. *Congreve*, at another time, had voluntarily resign'd it ; and Sir *John Vanbrugh* (meerly to get the Rent of his new House paid) had, by Leave of the Court, farm'd out his License to *Swiney*, who not without some Hesitation had ventur'd upon it ; let me say again, out of this low Condition of the Theatre, was it not owing to the Industry of three or four Comedians that a new Place was now created for the Crown to give away, without any Expence attending it, well worth the Acceptance of any Gentleman whose Merit or Services had no higher Claim to Preferment, and which *Collier* and Sir *Richard Steele*, in the two last Reigns, successively enjoy'd ? Tho' I believe I may have said something like this in a former Chapter,<sup>1</sup> I am not unwilling it should be twice taken notice of.

We are now come to that firm Establishment of the Theatre, which, except the Admittance of *Booth* into a Share and *Dogget's* retiring from it, met with no Change or Alteration for above twenty Years after.

*Collier*, as has been said, having accepted of a certain Appointment of seven hundred *per Annum*, *Wilks*, *Dogget*, and Myself were now the only acting Menagers under the Queen's License ; which being a Grant but during Pleasure oblig'd us to a Conduct that might not undeserve that Favour. At this

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. 284-5.

Time we were All in the Vigour of our Capacities as Actors, and our Prosperity enabled us to pay at least double the Sallaries to what the same Actors had usually receiv'd, or could have hoped for under the Government of the Patentees. *Dogget*, who was naturally an Oeconomist, kept our Expences and Accounts to the best of his Power within regulated Bounds and Moderation. *Wilks*, who had a stronger Passion for Glory than Lucre, was a little apt to be lavish in what was not always as necessary for the Profit as the Honour of the Theatre: For example, at the Beginning of almost every Season, he would order two or three Suits to be made or refresh'd for Actors of moderate Consequence, that his having constantly a new one for himself might seem less particular, tho' he had as yet no new Part for it. This expeditious Care of doing us good without waiting for our Consent to it, *Dogget* always look'd upon with the Eye of a Man in Pain: But I, who hated Pain, (tho' I as little liked the Favour as *Dogget* himself) rather chose to laugh at the Circumstance, than complain of what I knew was not to be cured but by a Remedy worse than the Evil. Upon these Occasions, therefore, whenever I saw him and his Followers so prettily dress'd out for an old Play, I only commended his Fancy; or at most but whisper'd him not to give himself so much trouble about others, upon whose Performance it would but be thrown away: To which, with a smiling Air of Triumph over my want of Penetration, he has reply'd—Why,

now, that was what I really did it for! to shew others that I love to take care of them as well as of myself. Thus, whenever he made himself easy, he had not the least Conception, let the Expence be what it would, that we could possibly dislike it. And from the same Principle, provided a thinner Audience were liberal of their Applause, he gave himself little Concern about the Receipt of it. As in these different Tempers of my Brother-Managers there might be equally something right and wrong, it was equally my Business to keep well with them both: And tho' of the two I was rather inclin'd to *Dogget's* way of thinking, yet I was always under the disagreeable Restraint of not letting *Wilks* see it: Therefore, when in any material Point of Menagement they were ready to come to a Rupture, I found it adviseable to think neither of them absolutely in the wrong; but by giving to one as much of the Right in his Opinion this way as I took from the other in that, their Differences were sometimes soft'ned into Concessions, that I have reason to think prevented many ill Consequences in our Affairs that otherwise might have attended them. But this was always to be done with a very gentle Hand; for as *Wilks* was apt to be easily hurt by Opposition, so when he felt it he was as apt to be insupportable. However, there were some Points in which we were always unanimous. In the twenty Years while we were our own Directors, we never had a Creditor that had occasion to come twice for his Bill; every *Monday* Morning dis-

charged us of all Demands before we took a Shilling for our own Use. And from this time we neither ask'd any Actor, nor were desired by them, to sign any written Agreement (to the best of my Memory) whatsoever: The Rate of their respective Sallaries were only enter'd in our daily Pay-Roll; which plain Record every one look'd upon as good as City-Security: For where an honest Meaning is mutual, the mutual Confidence will be Bond enough in Conscience on both sides: But that I may not ascribe more to our Conduct than was really its Due, I ought to give Fortune her Share of the Commendation; for had not our Success exceeded our Expectation, it might not have been in our Power so throughly to have observ'd those laudable Rules of Oeconomy, Justice, and Lenity, which so happily supported us: But the Severities and Oppression we had suffer'd under our former Masters made us incapable of imposing them on others; which gave our whole Society the cheerful Looks of a rescued People. But notwithstanding this general Cause of Content, it was not above a Year or two before the Imperfection of human Nature began to shew itself in contrary Symptoms. The Merit of the Hazards which the Menagers had run, and the Difficulties they had combated in bringing to Perfection that Revolution by which they had all so amply profited in the Amendment of their general Income, began now to be forgotten; their Acknowledgments and thankful Promises of Fidelity were no more repeated, or

scarce thought obligatory: Ease and Plenty by an habitual Enjoyment had lost their Novelty, and the Largeness of their Sallaries seem'd rather lessen'd than advanc'd by the extraordinary Gains of the Undertakers; for that is the Scale in which the hired Actor will always weigh his Performance; but whatever Reason there may seem to be in his Case, yet, as he is frequently apt to throw a little Self-partiality into the Balance, that Consideration may a good deal alter the Justness of it. While the Actors, therefore, had this way of thinking, happy was it for the Menagers that their united Interest was so inseparably the same, and that their Skill and Power in Acting stood in a Rank so far above the rest, that if the whole Body of private Men had deserted them, it would yet have been an easier matter for the Menagers to have pick'd up Recruits, than for the Deserters to have found proper Officers to head them. Here, then, in this Distinction lay our Security: Our being Actors ourselves was an Advantage to our Government which all former Menagers, who were only idle Gentlemen, wanted: Nor was our Establishment easily to be broken, while our Health and Limbs enabled us to be Joint-labourers in the Work we were Masters of.

The only Actor who, in the Opinion of the Publick, seem'd to have had a Pretence of being advanc'd to a Share with us was certainly *Booth*: But when it is consider'd how strongly he had oppos'd the Measures that had made us Menagers, by setting

himself (as has been observ'd) at the Head of an opposite Interest,<sup>1</sup> he could not as yet have much to complain of: Beside, if the Court had thought him, now, an equal Object of Favour, it could not have been in our Power to have oppos'd his Preferment: This I mention, not to take from his Merit, but to shew from what Cause it was not as yet better provided for. Therefore it may be no Vanity to say, our having at that time no visible Competitors on the Stage was the only Interest that rais'd us to be the Menagers of it.

But here let me rest a while, and since at my time of Day our best Possessions are but Ease and Quiet, I must be content, if I will have Sallies of Pleasure, to take up with those only that are to be found in Imagination. When I look back, therefore, on the Storms of the Stage we had been toss'd in; when I consider that various Vicissitude of Hopes and Fears we had for twenty Years struggled with, and found ourselves at last thus safely set on Shore to enjoy the Produce of our own Labours, and to have rais'd those Labours by our Skill and Industry to a much fairer Profit, than our Task-masters by all their severe and griping Government had ever reap'd from them, a good-natur'd Reader, that is not offended at the Comparison of great things with small, will allow was a Triumph in proportion equal to those that have attended the

<sup>1</sup> That is, he had been the chief of Collier's Company at Drury Lane at his opening in November, 1709. See *ante*, p. 94.

most heroick Enterprizes for Liberty! What Transport could the first *Brutus* feel upon his Expulsion of the *Tarquins* greater than that which now danc'd in the Heart of a poor Actor, who, from an injur'd Labourer, unpaid his Hire, had made himself, without Guilt, a legal Menager of his own Fortune? Let the Grave and Great contemn or yawn at these low Conceits, but let me be happy in the Enjoyment of them! To this Hour my Memory runs o'er that pleasing Prospect of Life past with little less Delight than when I was first in the real Possession of it. This is the natural Temper of my Mind, which my Acquaintance are frequently Witnesses of: And as this was all the Ambition Providence had made my obscure Condition capable of, I am thankful that Means were given me to enjoy the Fruits of it.

——— *Hoc est*

*Vivere bis, vitâ posse priore frui.*<sup>1</sup>

Something like the Meaning of this the less learned Reader may find in my Title Page.

<sup>1</sup> Martial, x. 23, 7.





A. J. Leighton sc.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*The Stage in its highest Prosperity. The Menagers not without Errors. Of what Kind. Cato first acted. What brought it to the Stage. The Company go to Oxford. Their Success and different Auditors there. Booth made a Sharer. Dogget objects to him. Quits the Stage upon his Admittance. That not his true Reason. What was. Dogget's Theatrical Character.*

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the Menaging Actors were now in a happier Situation than their utmost Pretensions could have expected, yet it is not to be suppos'd but wiser Men might have mended it. As we could not all govern our selves, there were Seasons when we were not all fit to govern others. Our Passions and our Interest drew not always the

same way. *Self* had a great Sway in our Debates : We had our Partialities ; our Prejudices ; our Favourites of less Merit ; and our Jealousies of those who came too near us ; Frailties which Societies of higher Consideration, while they are compos'd of Men, will not always be free from. To have been constantly capable of Unanimity had been a Blessing too great for our Station : One Mind among three People were to have had three Masters to one Servant ; but when that one Servant is called three different ways at the same time, whose Business is to be done first ? For my own Part, I was forced almost all my Life to give up my Share of him. And if I could, by Art or Persuasion, hinder others from making what I thought a wrong use of their Power, it was the All and utmost I desired. Yet, whatever might be our Personal Errors, I shall think I have no Right to speak of them farther than where the Publick Entertainment was affected by them. If therefore, among so many, some particular Actors were remarkable in any part of their private Lives, that might sometimes make the World merry without Doors, I hope my laughing Friends will excuse me if I do not so far comply with their Desires or Curiosity as to give them a Place in my History. I can only recommend such Anecdotes to the Amusement of a Noble Person, who (in case I conceal them) does me the flattering Honour to threaten my Work with a Supplement. 'Tis enough for me that such Actors had their Merits to the Publick : Let

those recite their Imperfections who are themselves without them : It is my Misfortune not to have that Qualification. Let us see then (whatever was amiss in it) how our Administration went forward.

When we were first invested with this Power, the Joy of our so unexpectedly coming into it kept us for some time in Amity and Good-Humour with one another : And the Pleasure of reforming the many false Measures, Absurdities, and Abuses, that, like Weeds, had suck'd up the due Nourishment from the Fruits of the Theatre, gave us as yet no leisure for private Dissentions. Our daily Receipts exceeded our Imagination : And we seldom met as a Board to settle our weekly Accounts without the Satisfaction of Joint-Heirs just in Possession of an unexpected Estate that had been distantly intail'd upon them. Such a sudden Change of our Condition it may be imagin'd could not but throw out of us a new Spirit in almost every Play we appear'd in : Nor did we ever sink into that common Negligence which is apt to follow Good-fortune : Industry we knew was the Life of our Business ; that it not only conceal'd Faults, but was of equal Value to greater Talents without it ; which the Decadence once of *Betterton's* Company in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields* had lately shewn us a Proof of.

This then was that happy Period, when both Actors and Menagers were in their highest Enjoyment of general Content and Prosperity. Now it was that the politer World, too, by their decent

Attention, their sensible Taste, and their generous Encouragements to Authors and Actors, once more saw that the Stage, under a due Regulation, was capable of being what the wisest Ages thought it *might* be, The most rational, Scheme that Human Wit could form to dissipate with Innocence the Cares of Life, to allure even the Turbulent or Ill-disposed from worse Meditations, and to give the leisure Hours of Business and Virtue an instructive Recreation.

If this grave Assertion is less recommended by falling from the Pen of a Comedian, I must appeal for the Truth of it to the Tragedy of *Cato*, which was first acted in 1712.<sup>1</sup> I submit to the Judgment of those who were then the sensible Spectators of it, if the Success and Merit of that Play was not an Evidence of every Article of that Value which I have given to a decent Theatre? But (as I was observing) it could not be expected the Summer

<sup>1</sup> This is a blunder, which, by the way, Bellchambers does not correct. "Cato" was produced at Drury Lane on 14th April, 1713. The cast was:—

CATO . . . . .	Mr. Booth.
LUCIUS . . . . .	Mr. Keen.
SEMPRONIUS . . . . .	Mr. Mills.
JUBA . . . . .	Mr. Wilks.
SYPHAX . . . . .	Mr. Cibber.
PORTIUS. . . . .	Mr. Powell.
MARCUS. . . . .	Mr. Ryan.
DECIUS . . . . .	Mr. Bowman.
MARCIA . . . . .	Mrs. Oldfield.
LUCIA . . . . .	Mrs. Porter.

Days I am speaking of could be the constant Weather of the Year; we had our clouded Hours as well as our sun-shine, and were not always in the same Good-Humour with one another: Fire, Air, and Water could not be more vexatiously opposite than the different Tempers of the Three Menagers, though they might equally have their useful as well as their destructive Qualities. How variously these Elements in our several Dispositions operated may be judged from the following single Instance, as well as a thousand others, which, if they were all to be told, might possibly make my Reader wish I had forgot them.

Much about this time, then, there came over from *Dublin* Theatre two uncelebrated Actors to pick up a few Pence among us in the Winter, as *Wilks* had a Year or two before done on their side the Water in the Summer.<sup>1</sup> But it was not so clear to *Dogget* and myself that it was in their Power to do us the same Service in *Drury-Lane* as *Wilks* might have done them in *Dublin*. However, *Wilks* was so much a Man of Honour that he scorned to be outdone in

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat" says these Irish actors were Elrington and Griffith, but I venture to think that Evans's name should be substituted for that of Griffith. All three came from Ireland to Drury Lane in 1714; but, while Elrington and Evans played many important characters, Griffith did very little. Again, I can find no record of the latter's benefit, but the others had benefits in the best part of the season. The fact that they had *separate* benefits makes my theory contradict Cibber on this one point; but what he says may have occurred in connection with one of the two benefits. Cibber's memory is not infallible.

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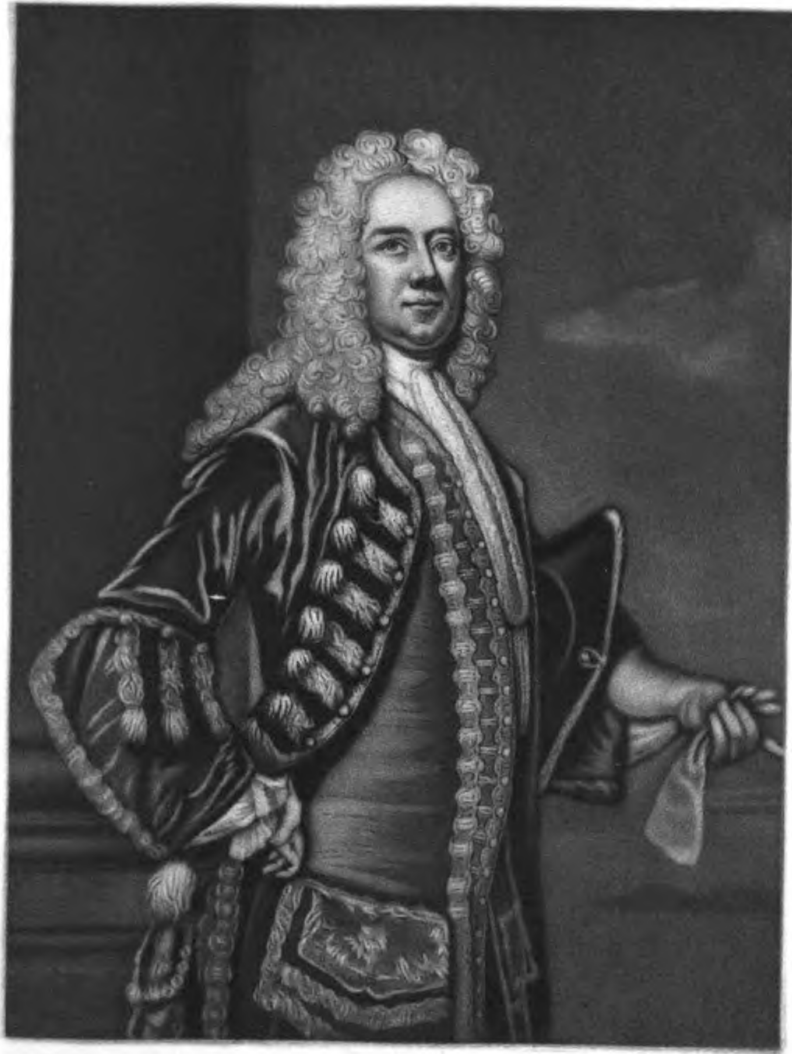
ROBERT WILKS.

the least Point of it, let the Cost be what it would to his Fellow-Menagers, who had no particular Accounts of Honour open with them. To acquit himself therefore with a better Grace, *Wilks* so order'd it, that his *Hibernian* Friends were got upon our Stage before any other Menager had well heard of their Arrival. This so generous Dispatch of their Affair gave *Wilks* a very good Chance of convincing his Friends that Himself was sole Master of the Masters of the Company. Here, now, the different Elements in our Tempers began to work with us. While *Wilks* was only animated by a grateful Hospitality to his Friends, *Dogget* was ruffled into a Storm, and look'd upon this Generosity as so much Insult and Injustice upon himself and the Fraternity. During this Disorder I stood by, a seeming quiet Passenger, and, since talking to the Winds I knew could be to no great Purpose (whatever Weakness it might be call'd) could not help smiling to observe with what officious Ease and Delight *Wilks* was treating his Friends at our Expence, who were scarce acquainted with them: For it seems all this was to end in their having a Benefit-Play in the Height of the Season, for the unprofitable Service they had done us without our Consent or Desire to employ them. Upon this *Dogget* bounc'd and grew almost as untractable as *Wilks* himself. Here, again, I was forc'd to clap my Patience to the Helm to weather this difficult Point between them: Applying myself therefore to the Person I imagin'd was most









ROBERT WILKS.



likely to hear me, I desired *Dogget* “to consider that  
 “ I must naturally be as much hurt by this vain and  
 “ over-bearing Behaviour in *Wilks* as he could be ;  
 “ and that tho’ it was true these Actors had no Pre-  
 “ tence to the Favour design’d them, yet we could  
 “ not say they had done us any farther Harm, than  
 “ letting the Town see the Parts they had been  
 “ shewn in, had been better done by those to whom  
 “ they properly belong’d: Yet as we had greatly  
 “ profited by the extraordinary Labour of *Wilks*, who  
 “ acted long Parts almost every Day, and at least  
 “ twice to *Dogget’s* once;<sup>1</sup> and that I granted it  
 “ might not be so much his Consideration of our  
 “ common Interest, as his Fondness for Applause,  
 “ that set him to Work, yet even that Vanity, if he  
 “ supposed it such, had its Merit to us ; and as we  
 “ had found our Account in it, it would be Folly  
 “ upon a Punctilio to tempt the Rashness of a Man,  
 “ who was capable to undo all he had done, by any  
 “ Act of Extravagance that might fly into his Head :  
 “ That admitting this Benefit might be some little  
 “ Loss to us, yet to break with him upon it could not  
 “ but be ten times of worse Consequence, than our  
 “ overlooking his disagreeable manner of making the  
 “ Demand upon us.”

Though I found this had made *Dogget* drop the Severity of his Features, yet he endeavoured still to seem uneasy, by his starting a new Objection, which

<sup>1</sup> Genest’s record gives *Wilks* about one hundred and fifty different characters, *Dogget* only about sixty.

was, That we could not be sure even of the Charge they were to pay for it : For *Wilks*, said he, you know, will go any Lengths to make it a good Day to them, and may whisper the Door-keepers to give them the Ready-money taken, and return the Account in such Tickets only as these Actors have not themselves disposed of. To make this easy too, I gave him my Word to be answerable for the Charge my self. Upon this he acceded, and accordingly they had the Benefit-Play. But so it happen'd (whether as *Dogget* had suspected or not, I cannot say) the Ready-money receiv'd fell Ten Pounds short of the Sum they had agreed to pay for it. Upon the *Saturday* following, (the Day on which we constantly made up our Accounts) I went early to the Office, and inquired if the Ten Pounds had yet been paid in ; but not hearing that one Shilling of it had found its way thither, I immediately supply'd the Sum out of my own Pocket, and directed the Treasurer to charge it received from me in the deficient Receipt of the Benefit-Day. Here, now, it might be imagined, all this silly Matter was accommodated, and that no one could so properly say he was aggrieved as myself : But let us observe what the Consequence says—why, the Effect of my insolent interposing honesty prov'd to be this : That the Party most oblig'd was the most offended ; and the Offence was imputed to me who had been Ten Pounds out of Pocket to be able to commit it : For when *Wilks* found in the Account how spitefully the Ten Pounds had been paid in, he

took me aside into the adjacent Stone-Passage, and with some Warmth ask'd me, What I meant by pretending to pay in this Ten Pounds? And that, for his part, he did not understand such Treatment. To which I reply'd, That tho' I was amaz'd at his thinking himself ill-treated, I would give him a plain, justifiable Answer.—That I had given my Word to *Dogget* the Charge of the Benefit should be fully paid, and since his Friends had neglected it, I found myself bound to make it good. Upon which he told me I was mistaken if I thought he did not see into the bottom of all this—That *Dogget* and I were always endeavouring to thwart and make him uneasy; but he was able to stand upon his own Legs, and we should find he would not be used so: That he took this Payment of the Ten Pounds as an Insult upon him and a Slight to his Friends; but rather than suffer it he would tear the whole Business to pieces: That I knew it was in his Power to do it; and if he could not do a civil thing to a Friend without all this senseless Rout about it, he could be received in *Ireland* upon his own Terms, and could as easily mend a Company there as he had done here: That if he were gone, *Dogget* and I would not be able to keep the Doors open a Week; and, by G—, he would not be a Drudge for nothing. As I knew all this was but the Foam of the high Value he had set upon himself, I thought it not amiss to seem a little silently concerned, for the helpless Condition to which his Resentment of the Injury I have related

was going to reduce us : For I knew I had a Friend in his Heart that, if I gave him a little time to cool, would soon bring him to Reason : The sweet Morsel of a Thousand Pounds a Year was not to be met with at every Table, and might tempt a nicer Palate than his own to swallow it, when he was not out of Humour. This I knew would always be of weight with him, when the best Arguments I could use would be of none. I therefore gave him no farther Provocation than by gravely telling him, We all had it in our Power to do one another a Mischief ; but I believed none of us much cared to hurt ourselves ; that if he was not of my Opinion, it would not be in my Power to hinder whatever new Scheme he might resolve upon ; that *London* would always have a Play-house, and I should have some Chance in it, tho' it might not be so good as it had been ; that he might be sure, if I had thought my paying in the Ten Pounds could have been so ill received, I should have been glad to have saved it. Upon this he seem'd to mutter something to himself, and walk'd off as if he had a mind to be alone. I took the Occasion, and return'd to *Dogget* to finish our Accounts. In about six Minutes *Wilks* came in to us, not in the best Humour, it may be imagined ; yet not in so ill a one but that he took his Share of the Ten Pounds without shewing the least Contempt of it ; which, had he been proud enough to have refused, or to have paid in himself, I might have thought he intended to make good his Menaces, and that the



Injury I had done him would never have been forgiven; but it seems we had different ways of thinking.

Of this kind, more or less delightful, was the Life I led with this impatient Man for full twenty Years. *Dogget*, as we shall find, could not hold it so long; but as he had more Money than I, he had not Occasion for so much Philosophy. And thus were our Theatrical Affairs frequently disconcerted by this irascible Commander, this *Achilles* of our Confederacy, who, I may be bold to say, came very little short of the Spirit *Horace* gives to that Hero in his—

*Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer.*<sup>1</sup>

This, then, is one of those Personal Anecdotes of our Variances, which, as our publick Performances were affected by it, could not, with regard to Truth and Justice, be omitted.

From this time to the Year 1712 my Memory (from which Repository alone every Article of what I write is collected) has nothing worth mentioning, 'till the first acting of the Tragedy of *Cato*.<sup>2</sup> As to the Play itself, it might be enough to say, That the Author and the Actors had their different Hopes of Fame and Profit amply answer'd by the Performance; but as its Success was attended with remarkable Consequences, it may not be amiss to trace it from its several Years Concealment in the Closet, to the Stage.

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 121.

<sup>2</sup> See note on page 120.

In 1703, nine Years before it was acted, I had the Pleasure of reading the first four Acts (which was all of it then written) privately with Sir *Richard Steele*: It may be needless to say it was impossible to lay them out of my Hand 'till I had gone thro' them, or to dwell upon the Delight his Friendship to the Author receiv'd upon my being so warmly pleas'd with them: But my Satisfaction was as highly disappointed when he told me, Whatever Spirit Mr. *Addison* had shewn in his writing it, he doubted he would never have Courage enough to let his *Cato* stand the Censure of an *English* Audience; that it had only been the Amusement of his leisure Hours in *Italy*, and was never intended for the Stage. This Poetical Diffidence<sup>1</sup> Sir *Richard* himself spoke of with some Concern, and in the Transport of his Imagination could not help saying, *Good God! what a Part would Betterton make of Cato!* But this was seven Years before *Betterton* died, and when *Booth* (who afterwards made his Fortune by acting it) was in his Theatrical Minority. In the latter end of Queen *Anne's* Reign, when our National Politicks had changed Hands, the Friends of Mr. *Addison* then thought it a proper time to animate the Publick with the Sentiments of *Cato*; in a word, their Importunities were too warm to be resisted; and it was no sooner finish'd than hurried to the Stage, in *April*,

<sup>1</sup> Johnson (*Life of Addison*) terms this "the despicable cant of literary modesty."

1712,<sup>1</sup> at a time when three Days a Week were usually appointed for the Benefit Plays of particular Actors: But a Work of that critical Importance was to make its way through all private Considerations; nor could it possibly give place to a Custom, which the Breach of could very little prejudice the Benefits, that on so unavoidable an Occasion were (in part, tho' not wholly) postpon'd; it was therefore (*Mondays* excepted) acted every Day for a Month to constantly crowded Houses.<sup>2</sup> As the Author had made us a Present of whatever Profits he might have claim'd from it, we thought our selves oblig'd to spare no Cost in the proper Decorations of it. Its coming so late in the Season to the Stage prov'd of particular Advantage to the sharing Actors, because the Harvest of our annual Gains was generally over before the middle of *March*, many select Audiences being then usually reserv'd in favour to the Benefits of private Actors; which fixt Engagements naturally abated the Receipts of the Days before and after them: But this unexpected Aftercrop of *Cato* largely

<sup>1</sup> 14th April, 1713. See note on page 120.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Oldfield, Powell, Mills, Booth, Pinkethman, and Mrs. Porter, had their benefits before "Cato" was produced. "Cato" was then acted twenty times—April 14th to May 9th—that is, every evening except Monday in each week, as Cibber states. On Monday nights the benefits continued—being one night in the week instead of three. Johnson, Keen, and Mrs. Bicknell had their benefits during the run of "Cato," and on May 11th the regular benefit performances recommenced, Mrs. Rogers taking her benefit on that night.

supplied to us those Deficiencies, and was almost equal to two fruitful Seasons in the same Year ; at the Close of which the three menaging Actors found themselves each a Gainer of thirteen hundred and fifty Pounds : But to return to the first Reception of this Play from the Publick.

Although *Cato* seems plainly written upon what are called *Whig* Principles, yet the *Torys* of that time had Sense enough not to take it as the least Reflection upon their Administration ; but, on the contrary, they seem'd to brandish and vaunt their Approbation of every Sentiment in favour of Liberty, which, by a publick Act of their Generosity, was carried so high, that one Day, while the Play was acting, they collected fifty Guineas in the Boxes, and made a Present of them to *Booth*, with this Compliment—*For his honest Opposition to a perpetual Dictator, and his dying so bravely in the Cause of Liberty* : What was insinuated by any Part of these Words is not my Affair ;<sup>1</sup> but so publick a Reward had the Appearance of a laudable Spirit, which only such a Play as *Cato* could have inspired ; nor could *Booth* be blam'd if, upon so particular a Distinction of his Merit, he began himself to set more Value upon it : How far he might carry it, in making use of the Favour he stood in with a certain Nobleman<sup>2</sup> then in Power at Court, was not difficult

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Marlborough is the person pointed at.

<sup>2</sup> Theo. Cibber (“Life of Booth,” p. 6) says that Booth in his early days as an actor became intimate with Lord Bolingbroke,

to penetrate, and indeed ought always to have been expected by the menaging Actors: For which of them (making the Case every way his own) could with such Advantages have contented himself in the humble Station of an hired Actor? But let us see how the Menagers stood severally affected upon this Occasion.

*Dogget*, who expected, though he fear'd not, the Attempt of what after happen'd, imagin'd he had thought of an Expedient to prevent it: And to cover his Design with all the Art of a Statesman, he insinuated to us (for he was a staunch *Whig*) that this Present of fifty Guineas was a sort of a *Tory* Triumph which they had no Pretence to; and that for his Part he could not bear that so redoubted a Champion for Liberty as *Cato* should be bought off to the Cause of a Contrary Party: He therefore, in the seeming Zeal of his Heart, proposed that the Menagers themselves should make the same Present to *Booth* which had been made him from the Boxes the Day before. This, he said, would recommend the Equality and liberal Spirit of our Menagement to the Town, and might be a Means to secure *Booth* more firmly in our Interest, it never having been known that the Skill of the best Actor had receiv'd so round a Reward or Gratuity in one Day

and that this “was of eminent advantage to Mr. *Booth*,—when, on his great Success in the Part of *CATO* (of which he was the original Actor) my Lord's Interest (then Secretary of State) established him as a Manager of the Theatre.”

before. *Wilks*, who wanted nothing but Abilities to be as cunning as *Dogget*, was so charm'd with the Proposal that he long'd that Moment to make *Booth* the Present with his own Hands; and though he knew he had no Right to do it without my Consent, had no Patience to ask it; upon which I turned to *Dogget* with a cold Smile, and told him, that if *Booth* could be purchas'd at so cheap a Rate, it would be one of the best Proofs of his Oeconomy we had ever been beholden to: I therefore desired we might have a little Patience; that our doing it too hastily might be only making sure of an Occasion to throw the fifty Guineas away; for if we should be obliged to do better for him, we could never expect that *Booth* would think himself bound in Honour to refund them. This seem'd so absurd an Argument to *Wilks* that he began, with his usual Freedom of Speech, to treat it as a pitiful Evasion of their intended Generosity: But *Dogget*, who was not so wide of my Meaning, clapping his Hand upon mine, said, with an Air of Security, O! don't trouble yourself! there must be two Words to that Bargain; let me alone to menage that Matter. *Wilks*, upon this dark Discourse, grew uneasy, as if there were some Secret between us that he was to be left out of. Therefore, to avoid the Shock of his Intemperance, I was reduc'd to tell him that it was my Opinion, that *Booth* would never be made easy by any thing we could do for him, 'till he had a Share in the Profits and Menagement; and that, as he did not want Friends

to assist him, whatever his Merit might be before, every one would think, since his acting of *Cato*, he had now enough to back his Pretensions to it. To which *Dogget* reply'd, that nobody could think his Merit was slighted by so handsome a Present as fifty Guineas; and that, for his farther Pretensions, whatever the License might avail, our Property of House, Scenes, and Cloaths were our own, and not in the Power of the Crown to dispose of. To conclude, my Objections that the Money would be only thrown away, &c. were over-rul'd, and the same Night *Booth* had the fifty Guineas, which he receiv'd with a Thankfulness that made *Wilks* and *Dogget* perfectly easy, insomuch that they seem'd for some time to triumph in their Conduct, and often endeavour'd to laugh my Jealousy out of Countenance: But in the following Winter the Game happen'd to take a different Turn; and then, if it had been a laughing Matter, I had as strong an Occasion to smile at their former Security. But before I make an End of this Matter, I cannot pass over the good Fortune of the Company that followed us to the Act at *Oxford*, which was held in the intervening Summer: Perhaps, too, a short View of the Stage in that different Situation may not be unacceptable to the Curious.

After the Restoration of King *Charles*, before the *Cavalier* and *Round-head* Parties, under their new Denomination of *Whig* and *Tory*, began again to be politically troublesome, publick Acts at *Oxford* (as I

find by the Date of several Prologues written by *Dryden*<sup>1</sup> for *Hart* on those Occasions) had been more frequently held than in later Reigns. Whether the same Party-Dissentions may have occasion'd the Discontinuance of them, is a Speculation not necessary to be enter'd into. But these Academical Jubilees have usually been look'd upon as a kind of congratulatory Compliment to the Accession of every new Prince to the Throne, and generally, as such, have attended them. King *James*,<sup>2</sup> notwithstanding his Religion, had the Honour of it; at which the Players, as usual, assisted. This I have only mention'd to give the Reader a Theatrical Anecdote of a Liberty which *Tony Leigh* the Comedian took with the Character of the well known *Obadiah Walker*,<sup>3</sup> then Head of *University College*, who in that Prince's Reign had turn'd *Roman Catholick*: The Circumstance is this.

In the latter End of the Comedy call'd the *Committee*, *Leigh*, who acted the Part of *Teague*, hauling in *Obadiah* with an Halter about his Neck, whom, according to his written Part, he was to threaten to hang for no better Reason than his refusing to drink

<sup>1</sup> There are five Prologues by Dryden spoken at Oxford; one in 1674, and the others probably about 1681.

<sup>2</sup> James II.

<sup>3</sup> Obadiah Walker, born 1616, died 1699, is famous only for the change of religion to which Cibber's anecdote refers. Macaulay ("History," 1858, ii. 85-86) relates the story of his perversion, and in the same volume, page 283, refers to the incident here told by Cibber.



the King's Health, (but here *Leigh*) to justify his Purpose with a stronger Provocation, put himself into a more than ordinary Heat with his Captive *Obadiah*, which having heightened his Master's Curiosity to know what *Obadiah* had done to deserve such Usage, *Leigh*, folding his Arms, with a ridiculous Stare of Astonishment, reply'd—*Upon my Shoule, he has shange his Religion.* As the Merit of this Jest lay chiefly in the Auditors' sudden Application of it to the *Obadiah* of *Oxford*, it was received with all the Triumph of Applause which the Zeal of a different Religion could inspire. But *Leigh* was given to understand that the King was highly displeas'd at it, inasmuch as it had shewn him that the University was in a Temper to make a Jest of his Proselyte. But to return to the Conduct of our own Affairs there in 1712.<sup>1</sup>

It had been a Custom for the Comedians while at *Oxford* to act twice a Day; the first Play ending every Morning before the College Hours of dining, and the other never to break into the time of shutting their Gates in the Evening. This extraordinary Labour gave all the hired Actors a Title to double Pay, which, at the Act in King *William's* Time, I had myself accordingly received there. But the present Menagers considering that, by acting only once a Day, their Spirits might be fresher for every single

<sup>1</sup> 1713. The performance on 23rd June, 1713, was announced as the last that season, as the company were obliged to go immediately to Oxford.

Performance, and that by this Means they might be able to fill up the Term of their Residence, without the Repetition of their best and strongest Plays; and as their Theatre was contrived to hold a full third more than the usual Form of it had done, one House well fill'd might answer the Profits of two but moderately taken up: Being enabled, too, by their late Success at *London*, to make the Journey pleasant and profitable to the rest of their Society, they resolved to continue to them their double Pay, notwithstanding this new Abatement of half their Labour. This Conduct of the Menagers more than answer'd their Intention, which was rather to get nothing themselves than not let their Fraternity be the better for the Expedition. Thus they laid an Obligation upon their Company, and were themselves considerably, though unexpected, Gainers by it. But my chief Reason for bringing the Reader to *Oxford* was to shew the different Taste of Plays there from that which prevail'd at *London*. A great deal of that false, flashy Wit and forc'd Humour, which had been the Delight of our Metropolitan Multitude, was only rated there at its bare intrinsick Value;<sup>1</sup> Applause was not to be purchased there

<sup>1</sup> Dryden writes, in one of his Prologues (about 1681), to the University of Oxford:—

“When our fop gallants, or our city folly,  
Clap over-loud, it makes us melancholy:  
We doubt that scene which does their wonder raise,  
And, for their ignorance, condemn their praise.  
Judge, then, if we who act, and they who write,

but by the true Sterling, the *Sal Atticum* of a Genius, unless where the Skill of the Actor pass'd it upon them with some extraordinary Strokes of Nature. *Shakespear* and *Johnson* had there a sort of classical Authority; for whose masterly Scenes they seem'd to have as implicit a Reverence as formerly for the Ethicks of *Aristotle*; and were as incapable of allowing Moderns to be their Competitors, as of changing their Academical Habits for gaudy Colours or Embroidery. Whatever Merit, therefore, some few of our more politely-written Comedies might pretend to, they had not the same Effect upon the Imagination there, nor were received with that extraordinary Applause they had met with from the People of Mode and Pleasure in *London*, whose vain Accomplishments did not dislike themselves in the Glass that was held to them: The elegant Follies of higher Life were not at *Oxford* among their Acquaintance, and consequently might not be so good Company to a learned Audience as Nature, in her plain Dress and unornamented, in her Pursuits and Inclinations seem'd to be.

The only distinguish'd Merit allow'd to any modern Writer<sup>1</sup> was to the Author of *Cato*, which

Should not be proud of giving you delight.  
 London likes grossly; but this nicer pit  
 Examines, fathoms, all the depths of wit;  
 The ready finger lays on every blot;  
 Knows what should justly please, and what should not."

<sup>1</sup> In a Prologue by Dryden, spoken by Hart in 1674, at Oxford, the poet says:—

Play being the Flower of a Plant raised in that learned Garden, (for there Mr. *Addison* had his Education) what favour may we not suppose was due to him from an Audience of Brethren, who from that local Relation to him might naturally have a warmer Pleasure in their Benevolence to his Fame? But not to give more Weight to this imaginary Circumstance than it may bear, the Fact was, that on our first Day of acting it our House was in a manner invested, and Entrance demanded by twelve a Clock at Noon, and before one it was not wide enough for many who came too late for Places. The same Crowds continued for three Days together, (an uncommon Curiosity in that Place) and the Death of *Cato* triumph'd over the Injuries of *Cæsar* every where. To conclude, our Reception at *Oxford*, whatever our Merit might be, exceeded our Expectation. At our taking Leave we had the Thanks of the Vice-Chancellor for the Decency and Order observ'd by our whole Society, an Honour which had not always been paid upon the same Occasions; for at

“None of our living poets dare appear;  
For Muses so severe are worshipped here,  
That, conscious of their faults, they shun the eye,  
And, as profane, from sacred places fly,  
Rather than see the offended God, and die.”

Malone (*Dryden's Prose Works*, vol. i., part ii., p. 13) gives a letter from Dryden to Lord Rochester, in which he says: “Your Lordship will judge [from the success of these Prologues, &c.] how easy 'tis to pass anything upon an University, and how gross flattery the learned will endure.”

the Act in King *William's* Time I remember some Pranks of a different Nature had been complain'd of. Our Receipts had not only enabled us (as I have observ'd) to double the Pay of every Actor, but to afford out of them towards the Repair of St. *Mary's* Church the Contribution of fifty Pounds: Besides which, each of the three Menagers had to his respective Share, clear of all Charges, one hundred and fifty more for his one and twenty Day's Labour, which being added to his thirteen hundred and fifty shared in the Winter preceding, amounted in the whole to fifteen hundred, the greatest Sum ever known to have been shared in one Year to that Time: And to the Honour of our Auditors here and elsewhere be it spoken, all this was rais'd without the Aid of those barbarous Entertainments with which, some few Years after (upon the Re-establishment of two contending Companies) we were forc'd to disgrace the Stage to support it.

This, therefore, is that remarkable Period when the Stage, during my Time upon it, was the least reproachable: And it may be worth the publick Observation (if any thing I have said of it can be so) that *One* Stage may, as I have prov'd it has done, very laudably support it self by such Spectacles only as are fit to delight a sensible People; but the equal Prosperity of *Two* Stages has always been of a very short Duration. If therefore the Publick should ever recover into the true Taste of that Time, and stick to it, the Stage must come into it, or *starve*; as,

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whenever the general Taste is vulgar, the Stage must come down to it to *live*.—But I ask Pardon of the Multitude, who, in all Regulations of the Stage, may expect to be a little indulg'd in what they like: If therefore they *will* have a May-pole, why, the Players must *give* them a May-pole; but I only speak in case they should keep an old Custom of changing their Minds, and by their Privilege of being in the *wrong*, should take a Fancy, by way of Variety, of being in the *right*—Then, in such a Case, what I have said may appear to have been no intended Design against their Liberty of judging for themselves.

After our Return from *Oxford*, *Booth* was at full Leisure to solicit his Admission to a Share in the Management,<sup>1</sup> in which he succeeded about the Beginning of the following Winter: Accordingly a new License (recalling all former Licenses) was issued, wherein *Booth's* Name was added to those of the other Menagers.<sup>2</sup> But still there was a Difficulty in his Qualification to be adjusted; what Considera-

<sup>1</sup> Theo. Cibber ("Life of Booth," p. 7) says that Colley Cibber and Booth "used frequently to set out, after Play (in the Month of *May*) to *Windsor*, where the *Court* then was, to push their different Interests." Chetwood ("History," p. 93) states that the other Patentees "to prevent his solliciting his Patrons at Court, then at *Windsor*, gave out Plays every Night, where Mr. *Booth* had a principal Part. Notwithstanding this Step, he had a Chariot and Six of a Nobleman's waiting for him at the End of every Play, that whipt him the twenty Miles in three Hours, and brought him back to the Business of the Theatre the next Night."

<sup>2</sup> The new Licence was dated 11th November, 1713. Dogget's name was of course included as well as Booth's.

tion he should allow for an equal Title to our Stock of Cloaths, Scenes, &c. without which the License was of no more use than the Stock was without the License; or, at least, if there were any Difference, the former Menagers seem'd to have the Advantage in it; the Stock being intirely theirs, and three Parts in four of the License; for *Collier*, though now but a fifth Menager, still insisted on his former Appointment of 700*l.* a Year, which in Equity ought certainly to have been proportionably abated: But Court-Favour was not always measur'd by *that* Yard; *Collier's* Matter was soon out of the Question; his Pretensions were too visible to be contested; but the Affair of *Booth* was not so clear a Point: The Lord Chamberlain, therefore, only recommended it to be adjusted among our selves; which, to say the Truth, at that Time was a greater Indulgence than I expected. Let us see, then, how this critical Case was handled.

*Wilks* was of Opinion, that to set a good round Value upon our Stock, was the only way to come near an Equivalent for the Diminution of our Shares, which the Admission of *Booth* must occasion: But *Dogget* insisted that he had no mind to dispose of any Part of his Property, and therefore would set no Price upon it at all. Though I allow'd that Both these Opinions might be grounded on a good deal of Equity, yet I was not sure that either of them was practicable; and therefore told them, that when they could Both agree which of them could be made so,

they might rely on my Consent in any Shape. In the mean time I desired they would consider, that as our License subsisted only during Pleasure, we could not pretend that the Queen might not recall or alter it: But that to speak out, without mincing the matter on either Side, the Truth was plainly this: That *Booth* had a manifest Merit as an Actor; and as he was not supposed to be a *Whig*, it was as evident that a good deal for that Reason a Secretary of State had taken him into his Protection, which I was afraid the weak Pretence of our invaded Property would not be able to contend with: That his having signaliz'd himself in the Character of *Cato* (whose Principles the *Tories* had affected to have taken into their own Possession) was a very popular Pretence of making him free of the Stage, by advancing him to the Profits of it. And, as we had seen that the Stage was frequently treated as if it was not suppos'd to have any Property at all, this Favour intended to *Booth* was thought a right Occasion to avow that Opinion by disposing of its Property at Pleasure: But be that as it might, I own'd it was not so much my Apprehensions of what the *Court* might do, that sway'd me into an Accommodation with *Booth*, as what the *Town*, (in whose Favour he now apparently stood) might think *ought* to be done: That there might be more danger in contesting their arbitrary Will and Pleasure than in disputing this less terrible Strain of the Prerogative. That if *Booth* were only impos'd upon us from his Merit to the Court, we were



then in the Condition of other Subjects: Then, indeed, Law, Right, and Possession might have a tolerable Tug for our Property: But as the Town would always look upon his Merit to *them* in a stronger Light, and be Judges of it themselves, it would be a weak and idle Endeavour in us not to sail with the Stream, when we might possibly make a Merit of our cheerfully admitting him: That though his former Opposition to our Interest might, between Man and Man, a good deal justify our not making an earlier Friend of him; yet that was a Disobligation out of the Town's Regard, and consequently would be of no weight against so approv'd an Actor's being preferr'd. But all this notwithstanding, if they could both agree in a different Opinion, I would, at the Hazard of any Consequence, be guided by it.

Here, now, will be shewn another Instance of our different Tempers: *Dogget* (who, in all Matters that concern'd our common Weal and Interest, little regarded our Opinion, and even to an Obstinacy walk'd by his own) look'd only out of Humour at what I had said, and, without thinking himself oblig'd to give any Reason for it, declar'd he would maintain his Property. *Wilks* (who, upon the same Occasions, was as remarkably ductile, as when his Superiority on the Stage was in question he was assuming and intractable) said, for his Part, provided our Business of acting was not interrupted, he did not care what we did: But, in short, he was for playing on, come what would of it. This last Part of his Declaration

I did not dislike, and therefore I desir'd we might all enter into an immediate Treaty with *Booth*, upon the Terms of his Admission. *Dogget* still sullenly reply'd, that he had no Occasion to enter into any Treaty. *Wilks* then, to soften him, propos'd that, if I liked it, *Dogget* might undertake it himself. I agreed. No! he would not be concern'd in it. I then offer'd the same Trust to *Wilks*, if *Dogget* approv'd of it. *Wilks* said he was not good at making of Bargains, but if I was willing, he would rather leave it to me. *Dogget* at this rose up and said, we might both do as we pleas'd, but that nothing but the Law should make him part with his Property—and so went out of the Room. After which he never came among us more, either as an Actor or Menager.<sup>1</sup>

By his having in this abrupt manner abdicated his Post in our Government, what he left of it naturally devolv'd upon *Wilks* and myself. However, this did not so much distress our Affair as I have Reason to believe *Dogget* thought it would : For though by our Indentures tripartite we could not dispose of his Property without his Consent ; Yet those Indentures could not oblige us to fast because he had no Appetite ; and if the Mill did not grind, we could have no Bread : We therefore determin'd, at any Hazard, to keep our Business still going, and that our safest way would be to make the best Bargain we could with *Booth* ; one Article of which was to be, That *Booth* should stand equally answerable with

<sup>1</sup> This must have been in November, 1713.

us to *Dogget* for the Consequence : To which *Booth* made no Objection, and the rest of his Agreement was to allow us Six Hundred Pounds for his Share in our Property, which was to be paid by such Sums as should arise from half his Profits of Acting, 'till the whole was discharg'd : Yet so cautious were we in this Affair, that this Agreement was only Verbal on our Part, tho' written and sign'd by *Booth* as what intirely contented him : However, Bond and Judgment could not have made it more secure to him; for he had his Share, and was able to discharge the Incumbrance upon it by his Income of that Year only. Let us see what *Dogget* did in this Affair after he had left us.

Might it not be imagin'd that *Wilks* and Myself, by having made this Matter easy to *Booth*, should have deserv'd the Approbation at least, if not the Favour of the Court that had exerted so much Power to prefer him? But shall I be believed when I affirm that *Dogget*, who had so strongly oppos'd the Court in his Admission to a Share, was very near getting the better of us both upon that Account, and for some time appeared to have more Favour there than either of us? Let me tell out my Story, and then think what you please of it.

*Dogget*, who was equally oblig'd with us to act upon the Stage, as to assist in the Menagement of it, tho' he had refus'd to do either, still demanded of us his whole Share of the Profits, without considering what Part of them *Booth* might pretend to from our

late Concessions. After many fruitless Endeavours to bring him back to us, *Booth* join'd with us in making him an Offer of half a Share if he had a mind totally to quit the Stage, and make it a *Sinecure*. No! he wanted the whole, and to sit still himself, while we (if we pleased) might work for him or let it alone, and none of us all, neither he nor we, be the better for it. What we imagin'd encourag'd him to hold us at this short Defiance was, that he had laid up enough to live upon without the Stage (for he was one of those close Oeconomists whom Prodigals call a Miser) and therefore, partly from an Inclination as an invincible *Whig* to signalize himself in defence of his Property, and as much presuming that our Necessities would oblige us to come to his own Terms, he was determin'd (even against the Opinion of his Friends) to make no other Peace with us. But not being able by this inflexible Perseverance to have his wicked Will of us, he was resolv'd to go to the Fountain-head of his own Distress, and try if from thence he could turn the Current against us. He appeal'd to the Vice-Chamberlain,<sup>1</sup> to whose Direction the adjusting of all these Theatrical Difficulties was then committed: But there, I dare say, the Reader does not expect he should meet with much Favour: However, be that as it may; for whether any regard was had to his having some Thousands in his Pocket; or that he was consider'd as a Man who would or could make

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Thomas Coke.

more Noise in the Matter than Courtiers might care for : Or what Charms, Spells, or Conjurations he might make use of, is all Darkness to me ; yet so it was, he one way or other play'd his part so well, that in a few Days after we received an Order from the Vice-Chamberlain, positively commanding us to pay *Dogget* his whole Share, notwithstanding we had complain'd before of his having withdrawn himself from acting on the Stage, and from the Menagement of it. This I thought was a dainty Distinction, indeed ! that *Dogget's* Defiance of the Commands in favour of *Booth* should be rewarded with so ample a *Sine-cure*, and that we for our Obedience should be condemn'd to dig in the Mine to pay it him ! This bitter Pill, I confess, was more than I could down with, and therefore soon determin'd at all Events never to take it. But as I had a Man in Power to deal with, it was not my business to speak *out* to him, or to set forth our Treatment in its proper Colours. My only Doubt was, Whether I could bring *Wilks* into the same Sentiments (for he never car'd to litigate any thing that did not affect his Figure upon the Stage.) But I had the good Fortune to lay our Condition in so precarious and disagreeable a Light to him, if we submitted to this Order, that he fir'd before I could get thro' half the Consequences of it ; and I began now to find it more difficult to keep him within Bounds than I had before to alarm him. I then propos'd to him this Expedient : That we should draw up a Remonstrance, neither seeming

to refuse or comply with this Order; but to start such Objections and perplexing Difficulties that should make the whole impracticable: That under such Distractions as this would raise in our Affairs we could not be answerable to keep open our Doors, which consequently would destroy the Fruit of the Favour lately granted to *Booth*, as well as of This intended to *Dogget* himself. To this Remonstrance we received an Answer in Writing, which varied something in the Measures to accommodate Matters with *Dogget*. This was all I desir'd; when I found the Style of *Sic jubeo* was alter'd, when this formidable Power began to *parley* with us, we knew there could not be much to be fear'd from it: For I would have remonstrated 'till I had died, rather than have yielded to the roughest or smoothest Persuasion, that could intimidate or deceive us. By this Conduct we made the Affair at last too troublesome for the Ease of a Courtier to go thro' with. For when it was consider'd that the principal Point, the Admission of *Booth*, was got over, *Dogget* was fairly left to the Law for Relief.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The dates regarding this quarrel with *Dogget* are very difficult to fix satisfactorily. In the collection of Mr. Francis Harvey of St. James's Street are some valuable letters by *Dogget* in connection with this matter. From these, and from Mr. Percy Fitzgerald's "New History" (i. 352-358), I have made up a list of dates, which, however, I give with all reserve. We know from "The Laureat" that *Dogget* had some funds of the theatre in his hands when he ceased acting, and this fact makes a Petition by *Cibber* and *Wilks*, that he should account with them for money, intelligible. This is dated 16th January, 1714—it cannot be 1713,

Upon this Disappointment *Dogget* accordingly preferred a Bill in *Chancery* against us. *Wilks*, who hated all Business but that of entertaining the Publick, left the Conduct of our Cause to me; in which we had, at our first setting out, this Advantage of *Dogget*, that we had three Pockets to support our Expence, where he had but One. My first Direction to our Solicitor was, to use all possible Delay that the Law would admit of, a Direction that Lawyers seldom neglect; by this means we hung up our Plaintiff about two Years in *Chancery*, 'till we were at full Leisure to come to a Hearing before the Lord-Chancellor *Cooper*, which did not happen 'till after the Accession of his late Majesty. The Issue of it was this. *Dogget* had about fourteen Days allow'd him to make his Election whether he would

as Mr. Fitzgerald says, for Booth was not admitted then, and the quarrel had not arisen. Then follows a Petition from Cibber, Booth, and Wilks, dated 5th February, 1714, praying the Chamberlain to settle the dispute. Petitions by *Dogget* bear date 17th April, 1714; and, I think, 14th June, 1714. Mr. Fitzgerald gives this latter date as 14th January, 1714, and certainly the date on the document itself is more like "Jan" than "June;" but in the course of the Petition *Dogget* says that the season will end in a few days, which seems to fix June as the correct month. The season 1713-14 ended 18th June, 1714. Next comes a Petition that *Dogget* should be compelled to act if he was to draw his share of the profits, which is dated 3rd November, 1714. In this case we are on sure ground, for the Petition is preserved among the Lord Chamberlain's Papers. Another Petition by *Dogget*, in which he talks of his being forced into Westminster Hall to obtain his rights, is dated "Jan. ye 6 1714," that is, 1715. After this, legal action was no doubt commenced, as related by Cibber.

return to act as usual : But he declaring, by his Counsel, That he rather chose to quit the Stage, he was decreed Six Hundred Pounds for his Share in our Property, with 15 *per Cent.* Interest from the Date of the last License : Upon the Receipt of which both Parties were to sign General-Releases, and severally to pay their own Costs. By this Decree, *Dogget*, when his Lawyer's Bill was paid, scarce got one Year's Purchase of what we had offer'd him without Law, which (as he surviv'd but seven Years after it) would have been an Annuity of Five Hundred Pounds and a *Sine Cure* for Life.<sup>1</sup>

Tho' there are many Persons living who know every Article of these Facts to be true : Yet it will be found that the strongest of them was not the strongest Occasion of *Dogget's* quitting the Stage. If therefore the Reader should not have Curiosity enough to know how the Publick came to be depriv'd of so valuable an Actor, let him consider that he is not obliged to go through the rest of this Chapter, which I fairly tell him before-hand will only be fill'd up with a few idle Anecdotes leading to that Discovery.

After our Law-suit was ended, *Dogget* for some few Years could scarce bear the Sight of *Wilks* or myself ; tho' (as shall be shewn) for different Reasons : Yet it was his Misfortune to meet with us almost every Day. *Button's* Coffee-house, so celebrated in

<sup>1</sup> So full an account of *Dogget* is given by *Cibber* and by *Aston*, that I need only add, that he first appeared about 1691 ; and that he died in 1721.



the *Tatlers* for the Good-Company that came there, was at this time in its highest Request. *Addison*, *Steele*, *Pope*, and several other Gentlemen of different Merit, then made it their constant *Rendezvous*. Nor could *Dogget* decline the agreeable Conversation there, tho' he was daily sure to find *Wilks* or myself in the same Place to sour his Share of it: For as *Wilks* and He were differently Proud, the one rejoicing in a captious, over-bearing, valiant Pride, and the other in a stiff, sullen, Purse-Pride, it may be easily conceiv'd, when two such Tempers met, how agreeable the Sight of one was to the other. And as *Dogget* knew I had been the Conductor of our Defence against his Law-suit, which had hurt him more for the Loss he had sustain'd in his Reputation of understanding Business, which he valued himself upon, than his Disappointment had of getting so little by it; it was no wonder if I was intirely out of his good Graces, which I confess I was inclin'd upon any reasonable Terms to have recover'd; he being of all my Theatrical Brethren the Man I most delighted in: For when he was not in a Fit of Wisdom, or not over-concerned about his Interest, he had a great deal of entertaining Humour: I therefore, notwithstanding his Reserve, always left the Door open to our former Intimacy, if he were inclined to come into it. I never failed to give him my Hat and *Your Servant* wherever I met him; neither of which he would ever return for above a Year after; but I still persisted in my usual Salutation, without observ-

ing whether it was civilly received or not. This ridiculous Silence between two Comedians, that had so lately liv'd in a constant Course of Raillery with one another, was often smil'd at by our Acquaintance who frequented the same Coffee-house: And one of them carried his Jest upon it so far, that when I was at some Distance from Town he wrote me a formal Account that *Dogget* was actually dead. After the first Surprize his Letter gave me was over, I began to consider, that this coming from a droll Friend to both of us, might possibly be written to extract some Merriment out of my real belief of it: In this I was not unwilling to gratify him, and returned an Answer as if I had taken the Truth of his News for granted; and was not a little pleas'd that I had so fair an Opportunity of speaking my Mind freely of *Dogget*, which I did, in some Favour of his Character; I excused his Faults, and was just to his Merit. His Law-suit with us I only imputed to his having naturally deceived himself in the Justice of his Cause. What I most complain'd of was, his irreconcilable Disaffection to me upon it, whom he could not reasonably blame for standing in my own Defence; that not to endure me after it was a Reflection upon his Sense, when all our Acquaintance had been Witnesses of our former Intimacy, which my Behaviour in his Life-time had plainly shewn him I had a mind to renew. But since he was now gone (however great a Churl he was to me) I was sorry my Correspondent had lost him.

This Part of my Letter I was sure, if *Dogget's* Eyes were still open, would be shewn to him ; if not, I had only writ it to no Purpose. But about a Month after, when I came to Town, I had some little Reason to imagine it had the Effect I wish'd from it : For one Day, sitting over-against him at the same Coffee-house where we often mixt at the same Table, tho' we never exchanged a single Syllable, he graciously extended his Hand for a Pinch of my Snuff : As this seem'd from him a sort of breaking the Ice of his Temper, I took Courage upon it to break Silence on my Side, and ask'd him how he lik'd it ? To which, with a slow Hesitation naturally assisted by the Action of his taking the Snuff, he reply'd—*Umh ! the best—Umh !—I have tasted a great while !*—If the Reader, who may possibly think all this extremely trifling, will consider that Trifles sometimes shew Characters in as strong a Light as Facts of more serious Importance, I am in hopes he may allow that my Matter less needs an Excuse than the Excuse itself does ; if not, I must stand condemn'd at the end of my Story.—But let me go on.

After a few Days of these coy, Lady-like Compliances on his Side, we grew into a more conversable Temper : At last I took a proper Occasion, and desired he would be so frank with me as to let me know what was his real Dislike, or Motive, that made him throw up so good an Income as his Share with us annually brought him in ? For though by our Admission of *Booth*, it might not probably amount to

so much by a Hundred or two a Year as formerly, yet the Remainder was too considerable to be quarrel'd with, and was likely to continue more than the best Actors before us had ever got by the Stage. And farther, to encourage him to be open, I told him, If I had done any thing that had particularly disobliged him, I was ready, if he could put me in the way, to make him any Amends in my Power ; if not, I desired he would be so just to himself as to let me know the real Truth without Reserve : But Reserve he could not, from his natural Temper, easily shake off. All he said came from him by half Sentences and *Inuendos*, as—No, he had not taken any thing particularly ill—for his Part, he was very easy as he was ; but where others were to dispose of his Property as they pleas'd—if you had stood it out as I did, *Booth* might have paid a better Price for it.—You were too much afraid of the Court—but that's all over.—There were other things in the Playhouse.—No Man of Spirit.—In short, to be always pester'd and provok'd by a trifling Wasp—a—vain—shallow !—A Man would sooner beg his Bread than bear it.—(Here it was easy to understand him : I therefore ask'd him what he had to bear that I had not my Share of?) No ! it was not the same thing, he said.—You can play with a Bear, or let him alone and do what he would, but I could not let him lay his Paws upon me without being hurt ; you did not feel him as I did.—And for a Man to be cutting of Throats upon every Trifle at my time of Day !—If I had been as

covetous as he thought me, may be I might have born it as well as you—but I would not be a Lord of the Treasury if such a Temper as *Wilks's* were to be at the Head of it.—

Here, then, the whole Secret was out. The rest of our Conversation was but explaining upon it. In a Word, the painful Behaviour of *Wilks* had hurt him so sorely that the Affair of *Booth* was look'd upon as much a Relief as a Grievance, in giving him so plausible a Pretence to get rid of us all with a better Grace.

*Booth* too, in a little time, had his Share of the same Uneasiness, and often complain'd of it to me: Yet as we neither of us could then afford to pay *Dogget's* Price for our Remedy, all we could do was to avoid every Occasion in our Power of inflaming the Distemper: So that we both agreed, tho' *Wilks's* Nature was not to be changed, it was a less Evil to live with him than without him.

Tho' I had often suspected, from what I had felt myself, that the Temper of *Wilks* was *Dogget's* real Quarrel to the Stage, yet I could never thoroughly believe it 'till I had it from his own Mouth. And I then thought the Concern he had shewn at it was a good deal inconsistent with that Understanding which was generally allow'd him. When I give my Reasons for it, perhaps the Reader will not have a better Opinion of my own: Be that as it may, I cannot help wondering that he who was so much more capable of Reflexion than *Wilks*, could sacrifice

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so valuable an Income to his Impatience of another's natural Frailty! And though my Stoical way of thinking may be no Rule for a wiser Man's Opinion, yet, if it should happen to be right, the Reader may make his Use of it. Why then should we not always consider that the Rashness of Abuse is but the false Reason of a weak Man? and that offensive Terms are only used to supply the want of Strength in Argument? Which, as to the common Practice of the sober World, we do not find every Man in Business is oblig'd to resent with a military Sense of Honour: Or if he should, would not the Conclusion amount to this? Because another wants Sense and Manners I am obliged to be a Madman: For such every Man is, more or less, while the Passion of Anger is in Possession of him. And what less can we call that proud Man who would put another out of the World only for putting him out of Humour? If Accounts of the Tongue were always to be made up with the Sword, all the Wisemen in the World might be brought in Debtors to Blockheads. And when Honour pretends to be Witness, Judge, and Executioner in its own Cause, if Honour were a Man, would it be an Untruth to say Honour is a very impudent Fellow? But in *Dogget's* Case it may be ask'd, How was he to behave himself? Were passionate Insults to be born for Years together? To these Questions I can only answer with two or three more, Was he to punish himself because another was in the wrong? How many sensible Husbands en-

dure the teizing Tongue of a froward Wife only because she is the weaker Vessel? And why should not a weak Man have the same Indulgence? Daily Experience will tell us that the fretful Temper of a Friend, like the Personal Beauty of a fine Lady, by Use and Cohabitation may be brought down to give us neither Pain nor Pleasure. Such, at least, and no more, was the Distress I found myself in upon the same Provocations, which I generally return'd with humming an Air to myself; or if the Storm grew very high, it might perhaps sometimes ruffle me enough to sing a little out of Tune. Thus too (if I had any ill Nature to gratify) I often saw the unruly Passion of the Aggressor's Mind punish itself by a restless Disorder of the Body.

What inclines me, therefore, to think the Conduct of *Dogget* was as rash as the Provocations he complain'd of, is that in some time after he had left us he plainly discover'd he had repented it. His Acquaintance observ'd to us, that he sent many a long Look after his Share in the still prosperous State of the Stage: But as his Heart was too high to declare (what we saw too) his shy Inclination to return, he made us no direct Overtures. Nor, indeed, did we care (though he was a golden Actor) to pay too dear for him: For as most of his Parts had been pretty well supply'd, he could not now be of his former Value to us. However, to shew the Town at least that he had not forsworn the Stage, he one Day con-

descended to play for the Benefit of Mrs. *Porter*,<sup>1</sup> in the *Wanton Wife*, at which he knew his late Majesty was to be present.<sup>2</sup> Now (tho' I speak it not of my own Knowledge) yet it was not likely Mrs. *Porter* would have ask'd that Favour of him without some previous Hint that it would be granted. His coming among us for that Day only had a strong Appearance of his laying it in our way to make him Proposals, or that he hoped the Court or Town might intimate to us their Desire of seeing him oftener: But as he acted only to do a particular Favour, the Menagers ow'd him no Compliment for it beyond Common Civilities. And, as that might not be all he proposed by it, his farther Views (if he had any) came to nothing. For after this Attempt he never returned to the Stage.

To speak of him as an Actor: He was the most an Original, and the strictest Observer of Nature, of all his Contemporaries.<sup>3</sup> He borrow'd from none of them: His Manner was his own: He was a Pattern

<sup>1</sup> See memoir of Mrs. Porter at the end of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> On March 18th, 1717. Cibber is wrong in stating that this was Dogget's last appearance; for a week after he played Ben in "Love for Love" (March 25th, 1717), and made his last appearance, after the lapse of another week (April 1st, 1717), when he acted Hob in "The Country Wake."

<sup>3</sup> Downes ("Ros. Ang.," p. 52) gives a quaint description of Dogget: "Mr. *Dogget*, On the Stage, he's very Aspectabund, wearing a Farce in his Face; his Thoughts deliberately framing his Utterance Congruous to his Looks: He is the only Comick Original now Extant: Witness, *Ben. Solon*, *Nikin*, *The Jew of Venice*, &c."



to others, whose greatest Merit was that they had sometimes tolerably imitated him. In dressing a Character to the greatest Exactness he was remarkably skilful ; the least Article of whatever Habit he wore seem'd in some degree to speak and mark the different Humour he presented ; a necessary Care in a Comedian, in which many have been too remiss or ignorant. He could be extremely ridiculous without stepping into the least Impropriety to make him so. His greatest Success was in Characters of lower Life, which he improv'd from the Delight he took in his Observations of that Kind in the real World. In Songs, and particular Dances, too, of Humour, he had no Competitor. *Congreve* was a great Admirer of him, and found his Account in the Characters he expresly wrote for him. In those of *Fondlewife*, in his *Old Batchelor*, and *Ben*, in *Love for Love*, no Author and Actor could be more obliged to their mutual masterly Performances. He was very acceptable to several Persons of high Rank and Taste : Tho' he seldom car'd to be the Comedian but among his more intimate Acquaintance.

And now let me ask the World a Question. When Men have any valuable Qualities, why are the generality of our modern Wits so fond of exposing their Failings only, which the wisest of Mankind will never wholly be free from ? Is it of more use to the Publick to know their Errors than their Perfections ? Why is the Account of Life to be so unequally stated ? Though a Man may be some-

times Debtor to Sense or Morality, is it not doing him Wrong not to let the World see, at the same time, how far he may be Creditor to both? Are Defects and Disproportions to be the only labour'd Features in a Portrait? But perhaps such Authors may know how to please the World better than I do, and may naturally suppose that what is delightful to themselves may not be disagreeable to others. For my own part, I confess myself a little touch'd in Conscience at what I have just now observ'd to the Disadvantage of my other Brother-Menager.

If, therefore, in discovering the true Cause of the Publick's losing so valuable an Actor as *Dogget*, I have been obliged to shew the Temper of *Wilks* in its natural Complexion, ought I not, in amends and Balance of his Imperfections, to say at the same time of him, That if he was not the most Correct or Judicious, yet (as *Hamlet* says of the King his Father) *Take him for All in All*, &c. he was certainly the most diligent, most laborious, and most useful Actor that I have seen upon the Stage in Fifty Years.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat," p. 83: "Thy Partiality is so notorious, with Relation to *Wilks*, that every one sees you never praise him, but to rail at him; and only oil your Hone, to whet your Razor."



## CHAPTER XV.

*Sir Richard Steele succeeds Collier in the Theatre-Royal. Lincoln's-Inn-Fields House rebuilt. The Patent restored. Eight Actors at once desert from the King's Company. Why. A new Patent obtain'd by Sir Richard Steele, and assign'd in Shares to the menaging Actors of Drury-Lane. Of modern Pantomimes. The Rise of them. Vanity invincible and asham'd. The Non-juror acted. The Author not forgiven, and rewarded for it.*

UPON the Death of the Queen, Plays (as they always had been on the like Occasions) were silenc'd for six Weeks. But this happening on the first of *August*,<sup>1</sup> in the long Vacation of the Theatre, the Observance of that Ceremony, which at another

<sup>1</sup> 1714.

Juncture would have fallen like wet Weather upon their Harvest, did them now no particular Damage. Their License, however, being of course to be renewed, that Vacation gave the Menagers Time to cast about for the better Alteration of it: And since they knew the Pension of seven hundred a Year, which had been levied upon them for *Collier*, must still be paid to somebody, they imagined the Merit of a *Whig* might now have as good a Chance for getting into it, as that of a *Tory* had for being continued in it: Having no Obligations, therefore, to *Collier*, who had made the last Penny of them, they apply'd themselves to Sir *Richard Steele*, who had distinguished himself by his Zeal for the House of *Hanover*, and had been expell'd the House of Commons for carrying it (as was judg'd at a certain Crisis) into a Reproach of the Government. This we knew was his Pretension to that Favour in which he now stood at Court: We knew, too, the Obligations the Stage had to his Writings; there being scarce a Comedian of Merit in our whole Company whom his *Tattlers* had not made better by his publick Recommendation of them. And many Days had our House been particularly fill'd by the Influence and Credit of his Pen. Obligations of this kind from a Gentleman with whom they all had the Pleasure of a personal Intimacy, the Menagers thought could not be more justly return'd than by shewing him some warm Instance of their Desire to have him at the Head of them. We therefore beg'd him to use

his Interest for the Renewal of our License, and that he would do us the Honour of getting our Names to stand with His in the same Commission. This, we told him, would put it still farther into his Power of supporting the Stage in that Reputation, to which his Lucubrations had already so much contributed; and that therefore we thought no Man had better Pretences to partake of its Success.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Dedication to Steele of "Ximena" (1719) Cibber warmly acknowledges the great service Steele had done to the theatre, not only in improving the tone of its performances, but also in the mere attracting of public attention to it. "How many a time," he says, "have we known the most elegant Audiences drawn together at a Day's Warning, by the Influence or Warrant of a single *Tatler*, when our best Endeavours without it, could not defray the Charge of the Performance." In the same Dedication Cibber's gratitude overstepped his judgment, in applying to Steele's generous acknowledgment of his indebtedness to Addison's help in his "Spectator," &c., Dryden's lines:—

"Fool that I was! upon my Eagle's Wings  
I bore this Wren, 'till I was tir'd with soaring,  
And now, he mounts above me——"

The following Epigram is quoted in "The Laureat," p. 76. It originally appeared in "Mist's Journal," 31st October, 1719:—

*"Thus Colley Cibber to his Partner Steele,  
See here, Sir Knight, how I've outdone Corneille;  
See here, how I, my Patron to inveigle,  
Make Addison a Wren, and you an Eagle.  
Safe to the silent Shades, we bid Defiance;  
For living Dogs are better than dead Lions."*

In one of his Odes, at which Johnson laughed (Boswell, i. 402 Cibber had the couplet:—

"Perch'd on the eagle's soaring wing,  
The lowly linnnet loves to sing."

Though it may be no Addition to the favourable Part of this Gentleman's Character to say with what Pleasure he receiv'd this Mark of our Inclination to him, yet my Vanity longs to tell you that it surpriz'd him into an Acknowledgment that People who are shy of Obligations are cautious of confessing. His Spirits took such a lively turn upon it, that had we been all his own Sons, no unexpected Act of filial Duty could have more endear'd us to him.

It must be observ'd, then, that as *Collier* had no Share in any Part of our Property, no Difficulties from that Quarter could obstruct this Proposal. And the usual Time of our beginning to act for the Winter-Season now drawing near, we press'd him not to lose any Time in his Solicitation of this new License. Accordingly Sir *Richard* apply'd himself to the Duke of *Marlborough*, the Hero of his Heart, who, upon the first mention of it, obtain'd it of his Majesty for Sir *Richard* and the former Mena-

“*Ximena*; or, the Heroic Daughter,” produced on 28th November, 1712, was an adaptation of Corneille's “*Cid*.” We do not know the cast of 1712, but that of 1718 (Drury Lane, 1st November) was the following :—

DON FERDINAND . . . . .	Mr. Mills.
DON ALVAREZ . . . . .	Mr. Cibber.
DON GORMAZ . . . . .	Mr. Booth.
DON CARLOS . . . . .	Mr. Wilks.
DON SANCHEZ . . . . .	Mr. Elrington.
DON ALONZO . . . . .	Mr. Thurmond.
DON GARCIA . . . . .	Mr. Boman.
XIMENA . . . . .	Mrs. Oldfield.
BELZARA . . . . .	Mrs. Porter.

gers who were Actors. *Collier* we heard no more of.<sup>1</sup>

The Court and Town being crowded very early in the Winter-Season, upon the critical Turn of Affairs so much expected from the *Hanover* Succession, the Theatre had its particular Share of that general Blessing by a more than ordinary Concourse of Spectators.

About this Time the Patentee, having very near finish'd his House in *Lincoln's-Inn Fields*, began to think of forming a new Company; and in the mean time found it necessary to apply for Leave to employ them. By the weak Defence he had always made against the several Attacks upon his Interest and former Government of the Theatre, it might be a Question, if his House had been ready in the Queen's Time, whether he would then have had the Spirit to ask, or Interest enough to obtain Leave to use it: But in the following Reign, as it did not appear he had done any thing to forfeit the Right of his Patent, he prevail'd with Mr. *Craggs* the Younger (afterwards Secretary of State) to lay his Case before the King, which he did in so effectual a manner that (as Mr. *Craggs* himself told me) his Majesty was pleas'd to say upon it, "That he remember'd when he had " been in *England* before, in King *Charles* his Time,

<sup>1</sup> A Royal Licence was granted on 18th October, 1714, to Steele, Wilks, Cibber, Dogget, and Booth. The theatre opened before the Licence was granted. The first bill given by Genest is for 21st September, 1714.

“ there had been two Theatres in *London*; and as  
 “ the Patent seem’d to be a lawful Grant, he saw no  
 “ Reason why Two Play-houses might not be con-  
 “ tinued.”<sup>1</sup>

The Suspension of the Patent being thus taken off, the younger Multitude seem’d to call aloud for two Play-houses! Many desired another, from the common Notion that *Two* would always create Emulation in the Actors (an Opinion which I have consider’d in a former Chapter). Others, too, were as eager for them, from the natural Ill-will that follows the Fortunate or Prosperous in any Undertaking. Of this low Malevolence we had, now and then, had remarkable Instances; we had been forced to dismiss an Audience of a hundred and fifty Pounds, from a Disturbance spirited up by obscure People, who never gave any better Reason for it, than that it was their Fancy to support the idle Complaint of one rival Actress against another, in their several Pretensions to the chief Part in a new Tragedy. But as this Tumult seem’d only to be the Wantonness of *English* Liberty, I shall not presume to lay any farther Censure upon it.<sup>2</sup>

Now, notwithstanding this publick Desire of re-

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Rich died before the theatre was opened, and it was under the management of John Rich, his son, that Lincoln’s Inn Fields opened on 18th December, 1714, with “The Recruiting Officer.” The company was announced as playing under Letters Patent granted by King Charles the Second.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to a riot raised by the supporters of Mrs. Rogers, on Mrs. Oldfield’s being cast for the character of Andromache in



establishing two Houses ; and though I have allow'd the former Actors greatly our Superiors ; and the Menagers I am speaking of not to have been without their private Errors : Yet under all these Disadvantages, it is certain the Stage, for twenty Years before this time, had never been in so flourishing a Condition : And it was as evident to all sensible Spectators that this Prosperity could be only owing to that better Order and closer Industry now daily observ'd, and which had formerly been neglected by our Predecessors. But that I may not impose upon the Reader a Merit which was not generally allow'd us, I ought honestly to let him know, that about this time the publick Papers, particularly *Mist's* Journal, took upon them very often to censure our Menagement, with the same Freedom and Severity as if we had been so many Ministers of State : But so it happen'd, that these unfortunate Reformers of the World, these self-appointed *Censors*, hardly ever hit upon what was really wrong in us ; but taking up Facts upon Trust, or Hear-say, piled up many a pompous Paragraph that they had ingeniously conceiv'd was sufficient to demolish our Administration, or at least to make us very uneasy in it ; which, indeed, had so far its Effect, that my equally-injur'd Brethren, *Wilks* and *Booth*, often complain'd to me of these disagreeable Aspersions, and propos'd that some publick Answer might be made to them, which Philips's tragedy of "The Distressed Mother," produced at Drury Lane on 17th March, 1712.

I always oppos'd by, perhaps, too secure a Contempt of what such Writers could do to hurt us ; and my Reason for it was, that I knew but of one way to silence Authors of that Stamp ; which was, to grow insignificant and good for nothing, and then we should hear no more of them : But while we continued in the Prosperity of pleasing others, and were not conscious of having deserv'd what they said of us, why should we gratify the little Spleen of our Enemies by wincing at it,<sup>1</sup> or give them fresh Opportunities to dine upon any Reply they might make to our publicly taking Notice of them ? And though Silence might in some Cases be a sign of Guilt or Error confess'd, our Accusers were so low in their Credit and Sense, that the Content we gave the Publick almost every Day from the Stage ought to be our only Answer to them.

However (as I have observ'd) we made many Blots, which these unskilful Gamesters never hit : But the Fidelity of an Historian cannot be excus'd the Omission of any Truth which might make for the other Side of the Question. I shall therefore

<sup>1</sup> Cibber on one occasion manifested temper to a rather unexpected degree. In 1720, when Dennis published his attacks on Steele, in connection with his being deprived of the Patent, he accused Cibber of impiety and various other crimes and misdemeanours ; and Cibber is said in the "Answer to the Character of Sir John Edgar" to have inserted the following advertisement in the "Daily Post" : "Ten Pounds will be paid by Mr. CIBBER, of the Theatre Royal, to any person who shall (by a legal proof) discover the Author of a Pamphlet, intituled, 'The Characters and Conduct of Sir JOHN EDGAR, &c.'" (Nichols, p. 401.)

confess a Fact, which, if a happy Accident had not intervened, had brought our Affairs into a very tottering Condition. This, too, is that Fact which in a former Chapter I promis'd to set forth as a Sea-Mark of Danger to future Menagers in their Theatrical Course of Government.<sup>1</sup>

When the new-built Theatre in *Lincoln's-Inn Fields* was ready to be open'd, seven or eight Actors in one Day deserted from us to the Service of the Enemy,<sup>2</sup> which oblig'd us to postpone many of our best Plays for want of some inferior Part in them which these Deserters had been used to fill : But the Indulgence of the Royal Family, who then frequently honour'd us by their Presence, was pleas'd to accept of whatever could be hastily got ready for their Entertainment. And tho' this critical good Fortune prevented, in some measure, our Audiences falling so low as otherwise they might have done, yet it was not sufficient to keep us in our former Prosperity : For that Year our Profits amounted not to above a third Part of our usual Dividends ; tho' in the following Year we intirely recover'd them. The Chief of these Deserters were *Keene, Bullock, Pack,*<sup>3</sup> *Leigh*, Son of the

<sup>1</sup> Cibber refers to his remarks (see vol. i. p. 191) on the conduct of the Patentees which caused Betterton's secession in 1694-5. ✓

<sup>2</sup> In addition to Keen, Bullock (William), Pack, and Leigh, whom Cibber mentions a few lines after, Spiller and Christopher Bullock were among the deserters ; and probably Cory and Knap. Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Knight, and Mrs. Kent also deserted.

<sup>3</sup> George Pack is an actor of whom Chetwood ("History," p. 210) gives some account. He first came on the stage as a singer,

famous *Tony Leigh*,<sup>1</sup> and others of less note. 'Tis true, they none of them had more than a negative Merit, in being only able to do us more Harm by their leaving us without Notice, than they could do us Good by remaining with us : For though the best of them could not support a Play, the worst of them by their Absence could maim it ; as the Loss of the least Pin in a Watch may obstruct its Motion. But to come to the true Cause of their Desertion : After my having discover'd the (long unknown) Occasion that drove *Dogget* from the Stage before his settled Inclination to leave it, it will be less incredible that these Actors, upon the first Opportunity to relieve themselves, should all in one Day have left us from the same Cause of Uneasiness. For, in a little time after, upon not finding their Expectations answer'd in *Lincoln's-Inn Fields*, some of them, who seem'd

performing the female parts in duets with Leveridge. His first appearance chronicled by Genest was at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1700, as Westmoreland in the first part of "Henry IV." Chetwood says he was excellent as Marplot in "The Busy Body," Beau Maiden in "Tunbridge Walks," Beau Mizen in "The Fair Quaker of Deal," &c. : "*indeed Nature seem'd to mean him for those Sort of Characters.*" On 10th March, 1722, he announced his last appearance on any stage ; but he returned on 21st April and 7th May, 1724, on which latter date he had a benefit. Chetwood says that on his retirement he opened the Globe Tavern, near Charing-Cross, over against the Hay-market. When Chetwood wrote (1749) Pack was no longer alive.

<sup>1</sup> Francis Leigh. There were several actors of the name of Leigh, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish them. This particular actor died about 1719.

to answer for the rest, told me the greatest Grievance they had in our Company was the shocking Temper of *Wilks*, who, upon every, almost no Occasion, let loose the unlimited Language of Passion upon them in such a manner as their Patience was not longer able to support. This, indeed, was what we could not justify! This was a Secret that might have made a wholesome Paragraph in a critical Newspaper! But as it was our good Fortune that it came not to the Ears of our Enemies, the Town was not entertain'd with their publick Remarks upon it.<sup>1</sup>

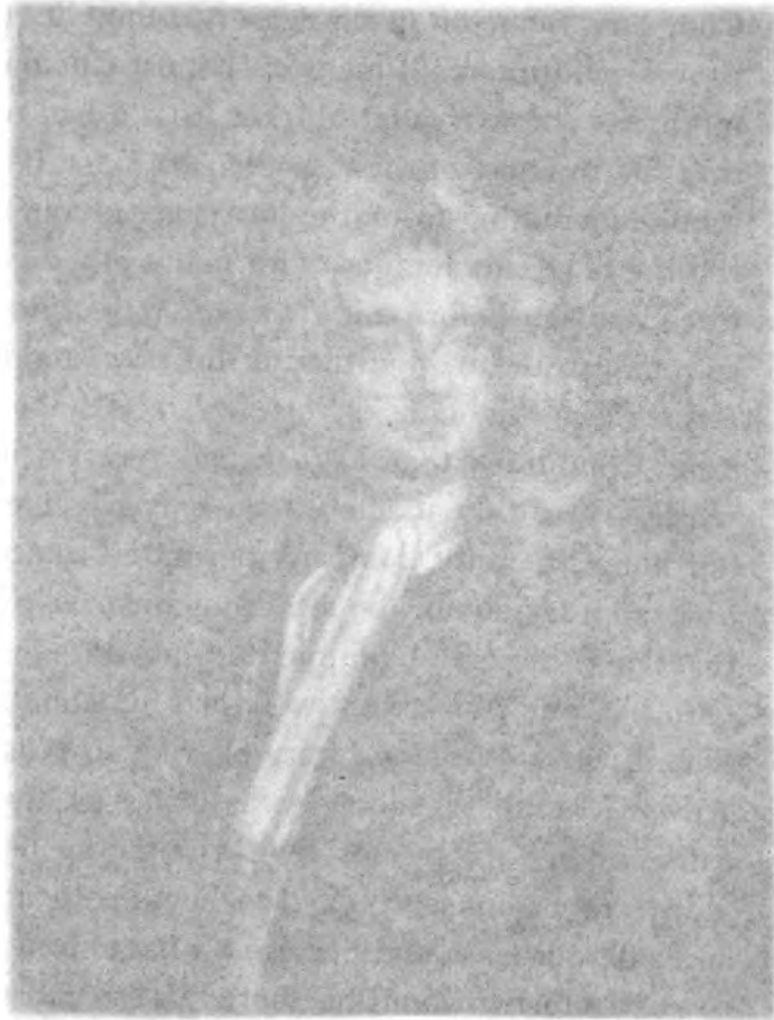
After this new Theatre had enjoy'd that short Run of Favour which is apt to follow Novelty, their Audiences began to flag: But whatever good Opi-

<sup>1</sup> In the "Weekly Packet," 18th December, 1714, the following appears:—

"This Day the New Play-House in Lincolns-Inn Fields, is to be open'd and a Comedy acted there, call'd, The Recruiting Officer, by the Company that act under the Patent; tho' it is said, that some of the Gentlemen who have left the House in Drury-Lane for that Service, are order'd to return to their Colours, upon Pain of not exercising their Lungs elsewhere; which may in Time prove of ill Service to the Patentee, that has been at vast Expence to make his Theatre as convenient for the Reception of an Audience as any one can possibly be."

Genest remarks that this seems to show that the Lord Chamberlain threatened to interfere in the interests of Drury Lane. He adds: "Cibber's silence proves nothing to the contrary, as in more than one instance he does not tell the whole truth" (ii. 565). In defence of Cibber I may say that the Chamberlain's Records contain no hint that he threatened to interfere with the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre or its actors. ✓

nion we had of our own Merit, we had not so good a one of the Multitude as to depend too much upon the Delicacy of their Taste : We knew, too, that this Company, being so much nearer to the City than we were, would intercept many an honest Customer that might not know a good Market from a bad one; and that the thinnest of their Audiences must be always taking something from the Measure of our Profits. All these Disadvantages, with many others, we were forced to lay before Sir *Richard Steele*, and farther to remonstrate to him, that as he now stood in *Collier's* Place, his Pension of 700*l.* was liable to the same Conditions that *Collier* had receiv'd it upon ; which were, that it should be only payable during our being the only Company permitted to act, but in case another should be set up against us, that then this Pension was to be liquidated into an equal Share with us ; and which we now hoped he would be contented with. While we were offering to proceed, Sir *Richard* stopt us short by assuring us, that as he came among us by our own Invitation, he should always think himself oblig'd to come into any Measures for our Ease and Service : That to be a Burthen to our Industry would be more disagreeable to him than it could be to us ; and as he had always taken a Delight in his Endeavours for our Prosperity, he should be still ready on our own Terms to continue them. Every one who knew Sir *Richard Steele* in his Prosperity (before the Effects of his Good-nature had brought him to Distresses) knew that this was



The first part of the paper discusses the general theory of the firm, which is based on the idea that the firm is a collection of individuals who are organized in a way that allows them to produce goods and services. The second part of the paper discusses the theory of the market, which is based on the idea that the market is a collection of individuals who are interacting with each other in a way that allows them to exchange goods and services. The third part of the paper discusses the theory of the economy, which is based on the idea that the economy is a collection of individuals who are interacting with each other in a way that allows them to produce and consume goods and services.

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RICHARD STEELE



his manner of dealing with his Friends in Business : Another Instance of the same nature will immediately fall in my way.

When we proposed to put this Agreement into Writing, he desired us not to hurry ourselves; for that he was advised, upon the late Desertion of our Actors, to get our License (which only subsisted during Pleasure) enlarg'd into a more ample and durable Authority, and which he said he had Reason to think would be more easily obtain'd, if we were willing that a Patent for the same Purpose might be granted to him only, for his Life and three Years after, which he would then assign over to us. This was a Prospect beyond our Hopes; and what we had long wish'd for; for though I cannot say we had ever Reason to grieve at the Personal Severities or Behaviour of any one Lord-Chamberlain in my Time, yet the several Officers under them who had not the Hearts of Noblemen, often treated us (to use *Shakespear's* Expression) with all the *Insolence of Office* that narrow Minds are apt to be elated with; but a Patent, we knew, would free us from so abject a State of Dependency. Accordingly, we desired Sir *Richard* to lose no time; he was immediately promised it: In the Interim, we sounded the Inclination of the Actors remaining with us; who had all Sense enough to know, that the Credit and Reputation we stood in with the Town, could not but be a better Security for their Sallaries, than the Promise of any other Stage put into Bonds could

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make good to them. In a few Days after, Sir *Richard* told us, that his Majesty being apprised that others had a joint Power with him in the License, it was expected we should, under our Hands, signify that his Petition for a Patent was preferr'd by the Consent of us all. Such an Acknowledgment was immediately sign'd, and the Patent thereupon pass'd the Great Seal; for which I remember the Lord Chancellor *Cooper*, in Compliment to Sir *Richard*, would receive no Fee.

We receiv'd the Patent *January* 19, 1715,<sup>1</sup> and (Sir *Richard* being obliged the next Morning to set out for *Burrowbridge* in *Yorkshire*, where he was soon after elected Member of Parliament) we were forced that very Night to draw up in a hurry ('till our Counsel might more adviseably perfect it) his Assignment to us of equal Shares in the Patent, with farther Conditions of Partnership:<sup>2</sup> But here I ought to take Shame to myself, and at the same time to give this second Instance of the Equity and Honour of Sir *Richard*: For this Assignment (which I had myself the hasty Penning of) was so worded, that it gave Sir *Richard* as equal a Title to our Property

<sup>1</sup> In both the first and second editions Cibber writes 1718, but this is so obviously a misprint that I correct the text. Steele was elected for *Boroughbridge* in the first Parliament of George I., which met 15th March, 1715.

<sup>2</sup> "The very night I received it, I participated the power and use of it, with relation to the profits that should arise from it, between the gentlemen who invited me into the Licence."—Steele, in "The Theatre," No. 8 [Nichols, p. 64].

as it had given us to his Authority in the Patent: But Sir *Richard*, notwithstanding, when he return'd to Town, took no Advantage of the Mistake, and consented in our second Agreement to pay us Twelve Hundred Pounds to be equally intitled to our Property, which at his Death we were obliged to repay (as we afterwards did) to his Executors; and which, in case any of us had died before him, the Survivors were equally obliged to have paid to the Executors of such deceased Person upon the same Account. But Sir *Richard's* Moderation with us was rewarded with the Reverse of *Collier's* Stiffness: *Collier*, by insisting on his Pension, lost Three Hundred Pounds a Year; and Sir *Richard*, by his accepting a Share in lieu of it, was, one Year with another, as much a Gainer.

The Grant of this Patent having assured us of a competent Term to be relied on, we were now emboldened to lay out larger Sums in the Decorations of our Plays:<sup>1</sup> Upon the Revival of *Dryden's All for Love*, the Habits of that Tragedy amounted to an Expende of near Six Hundred Pounds; a Sum unheard of, for many Years before, on the like Occa-

<sup>1</sup> The managers also expended money on the decoration of the theatre before the beginning of the next season after the Patent was granted. In the "Daily Courant," 6th October, 1715, they advertise: "His Majesty's Company of Comedians give Notice, That the Middle of next Week they will begin to act Plays, every day, as usual; they being oblig'd to lye still so long, to finish the New Decorations of the House."

sions.<sup>1</sup> But we thought such extraordinary Marks of our Acknowledgment were due to the Favours which the Publick were now again pouring in upon us. About this time we were so much in fashion, and follow'd, that our Enemies (who they were it would not be fair to guess, for we never knew them) made their Push of a good round Lye upon us, to terrify those Auditors from our Support whom they could not mislead by their private Arts or publick Invectives. A current Report that the Walls and Roof of our House were liable to fall, had got such Ground in the Town, that on a sudden we found our Audiences unusually decreased by it: *Wilks* was immediately for denouncing War and Vengeance on the Author of this Falshood, and for offering a Reward to whoever could discover him. But it was thought more necessary first to disprove the Falshood, and then to pay what Compliments might be thought

<sup>1</sup> This revival was on 2nd December, 1718. Dennis, whose "Invader of his Country" was, as he considered, unfairly postponed on account of this production, wrote to Steele:—

"Well, Sir, when the winter came on, what was done by your Deputies? Why, instead of keeping their word with me, they spent above two months of the season in getting up "All for Love, or, the World well Lost," a Play which has indeed a noble first act, an act which ends with a scene becoming of the dignity of the Tragic Stage. But if HORACE had been now alive, and been either a reader or spectator of that entertainment, he would have passed his old sentence upon the Author.

*'Infelix operis summâ, quia ponere totum  
Nesciet.'*" [*Ars Poetica*, 34.]

Nichols' "Theatre," p. 544.

adviseable to the Author. Accordingly an Order from the King was obtained, to have our Tenement surveyed by Sir *Thomas Hewet*, then the proper Officer; whose Report of its being in a safe and sound Condition, and sign'd by him, was publish'd in every News-Paper.<sup>1</sup> This had so immediate an Effect, that our Spectators, whose Apprehensions had lately kept them absent, now made up our Losses by returning to us with a fresh Inclination and in greater Numbers.

When it was first publicly known that the New

<sup>1</sup> Cibber here skips a few years, for the report by Sir Thomas Hewitt is dated some years after the granting of the Patent. The text of it will be found in Nichols's "Theatre," p. 470:—

"MY LORD, *Scotland-yard, Jan. 21, 1721.*

"In obedience to his Majesty's commands signified to me by your Grace the 18th instant, I have surveyed the Play-house in Drury-lane; and took with me Mr. RIPLEY, Commissioner of his Majesty's Board of Works, the Master Bricklayer, and Carpenter: We examined all its parts with the greatest exactness we could; and found the Walls, Roofing, Stage, Pit, Boxes, Galleries, Machinery, Scenes, &c. sound, and almost as good as when first built; neither decayed, nor in the least danger of falling; and when some small repairs are made, and an useless Stack of Chimnies (built by the late Mr. RICH) taken down, the Building may continue for a long time, being firm, the Materials and Joints good, and no part giving way; and capable to bear much greater weight than is put on them.

"MY LORD DUKE,

"YOUR GRACE'S Most humble and obedient servant,

"THOMAS HEWETT.

"N.B. The Stack of Chimnies mentioned in this Report (which were placed over the Stone Passage leading to the Boxes) are actually taken down."

Theatre would be open'd against us ; I cannot help going a little back to remember the Concern that my Brother-Managers express'd at what might be the Consequences of it. They imagined that now all those who wish'd Ill to us, and particularly a great Party who had been disobliged by our shutting them out from behind our Scenes, even to the Refusal of their Money,<sup>1</sup> would now exert themselves in any partial or extravagant Measures that might either hurt us or support our Competitors : These, too, were some of those farther Reasons which had discouraged them from running the hazard of continuing to Sir *Richard Steele* the same Pension which had been paid to *Collier*. Upon all which I observed to them, that, for my own Part, I had not the same Apprehensions ; but that I foresaw as many good as bad Consequences from two Houses : That tho' the Novelty might possibly at first abate a little of our Profits ; yet, if we slacken'd not our Industry, that Loss would be amply balanced by an equal Increase of our Ease and Quiet : That those turbulent Spirits which were always molesting us, would now have other Employment : That the question'd Merit of our Acting would now stand in a clearer Light when others were faintly compared to us : That though Faults might be found with the best Actors that ever were, yet the egregious Defects that would appear in others would now be the effectual means to make our Superiority shine, if we had any Pretence to it : And

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, vol. i. p. 234.



that what some People hoped might ruin us, would in the end reduce them to give up the Dispute, and reconcile them to those who could best entertain them.

In every Article of this Opinion they afterwards found I had not been deceived; and the Truth of it may be so well remember'd by many living Spectators, that it would be too frivolous and needless a Boast to give it any farther Observation.

But in what I have said I would not be understood to be an Advocate for two Play-houses: For we shall soon find that two Sets of Actors tolerated in the same Place have constantly ended in the Corruption of the Theatre; of which the auxiliary Entertainments that have so barbarously supply'd the Defects of weak Action have, for some Years past, been a flagrant Instance; it may not, therefore, be here improper to shew how our childish Pantomimes first came to take so gross a Possession of the Stage.

I have upon several occasions already observ'd, that when one Company is too hard for another, the lower in Reputation has always been forced to exhibit some new-fangled Foppery to draw the Multitude after them: Of these Expedients, Singing and Dancing had formerly been the most effectual;<sup>1</sup> but, at the Time I am speaking of, our *English* Musick had

<sup>1</sup> Cibber, vol. i. p. 94, relates how, when the King's Company proved too strong for their rivals, Davenant, "to make head against their Success, was forced to add Spectacle and Music to Action."

been so discountenanced since the Taste of *Italian* Operas prevail'd, that it was to no purpose to pretend to it.<sup>1</sup> Dancing therefore was now the only Weight in the opposite Scale, and as the New Theatre sometimes found their Account in it, it could not be safe for us wholly to neglect it. To give even Dancing therefore some Improvement, and to make it something more than Motion without Meaning, the Fable of *Mars* and *Venus*<sup>2</sup> was form'd into a connected Presentation of Dances in Character, wherein the Passions were so happily expressed, and the whole Story so intelligibly told by a mute Narration of Gesture only, that even thinking Spectators allow'd it both a pleasing and a rational Entertainment; though, at the same time, from our Distrust of its Reception, we durst not venture to decorate it with any extraordinary Expence of Scenes or Habits; but upon the Success of this Attempt it was rightly concluded, that if a visible Expence in both were added to something of the same Nature, it could not fail of drawing the Town proportionably after it. From this original Hint then (but every way unequal to it) sprung forth that Succession of monstrous Medlies that have so long infested the Stage, and which arose upon one another alternately, at both Houses

<sup>1</sup> In the season 1718-19, Rich at Lincoln's Inn Fields frequently produced French pieces and operas. He must have had a company of French players engaged.

<sup>2</sup> This is, no doubt, John Weaver's dramatic entertainment called "The Loves of Mars and Venus," which was published, as acted at Drury Lane, in 1717.

outvying in Expence, like contending Bribes on both sides at an Election, to secure a Majority of the Multitude. But so it is, Truth may complain and Merit murmur with what Justice it may, the Few will never be a Match for the Many, unless Authority should think fit to interpose and put down these Poetical Drams, these Gin-shops of the Stage, that intoxicate its Auditors and dishonour their Understanding with a Levity for which I want a Name.<sup>1</sup>

If I am ask'd (after my condemning these Fooleries myself) how I came to assent or continue my Share of Expence to them? I have no better Excuse for

<sup>1</sup> The following lines ("Dunciad," iii. verses 229-244) are descriptive of such pantomimes as Cibber refers to:—

“ He look'd, and saw a sable Sorc'rer rise,  
 Swift to whose hand a winged volume flies :  
 All sudden, Gorgons hiss, and dragons glare,  
 And ten-horn'd fiends and giants rush to war.  
 Hell rises, Heav'n descends, and dance on Earth,  
 Gods, imps, and monsters, music, rage, and mirth,  
 A fire, a jig, a battle, and a ball,  
 Till one wide conflagration swallows all.  
 Thence a new world, to nature's laws unknown,  
 Breaks out refulgent, with a heav'n its own :  
 Another Cynthia her new journey runs,  
 And other planets circle other suns :  
 The forests dance, the rivers upward rise,  
 Whales sport in woods, and dolphins in the skies,  
 And last, to give the whole creation grace,  
 Lo ! one vast Egg produces human race.”

The allusion in the last line is to “Harlequin Sorcerer,” in which Harlequin is hatched from a large egg on the stage. See Jackson's “History of the Scottish Stage,” pages 367-8, for description of John Rich's excellence in this scene.

my Error than confessing it. I did it against my Conscience! and had not Virtue enough to starve by opposing a Multitude that would have been too hard for me.<sup>1</sup> Now let me ask an odd Question: Had *Harry the Fourth of France* a better Excuse for changing his Religion?<sup>2</sup> I was still, in my Heart, as much as he could be, on the side of Truth and Sense, but with this difference, that I had their leave to quit them when they could not support me: For what Equivalent could I have found for my falling a Martyr to them? How far the Heroe or the Comedian was in the wrong, let the Clergy and the Criticks decide. Necessity will be as good a Plea for the one as the other. But let the Question go which way it will, *Harry IV.* has always been allow'd a great Man: And what I want of his Grandeur, you see by the Inference, Nature has amply supply'd to me in Vanity; a Pleasure which neither the Pertness of Wit or the Gravity of Wisdom will ever persuade me to part with. And why is there not as

<sup>1</sup> In the "Dunciad" (book iii. verses 261-4) Pope writes:—

" But lo! to dark encounter in mid air  
New wizards rise: here Booth, and Cibber there:  
Booth in his cloudy tabernacle shrin'd,  
On grinning Dragons Cibber mounts the wind."

On these lines Cibber remarks, in his "Letter to Mr. Pope," 1742 (page 37): "If you, figuratively, mean by this, that I was an Encourager of those Fooleries, you are mistaken; for it is not true: If you intend it literally, that I was Dunce enough to mount a Machine, there is as little Truth in that too."

<sup>2</sup> Henry of Navarre, of whom it has been said that he regarded religion mainly as a diplomatic instrument.

much Honesty in owning as in concealing it? For though to hide it may be Wisdom, to be without it is impossible; and where is the Merit of keeping a Secret which every Body is let into? To say we have no Vanity, then, is shewing a great deal of it; as to say we *have* a great deal cannot be shewing so much: And tho' there may be Art in a Man's accusing himself, even then it will be more pardonable than Self-commendation. Do not we find that even good Actions have their Share of it? that it is as inseparable from our Being as our Nakedness? And though it may be equally decent to cover it, yet the wisest Man can no more be without it, than the weakest can believe he was born in his Cloaths. If then what we say of ourselves be true, and not prejudicial to others, to be called vain upon it is no more a Reproach than to be called a brown or a fair Man. Vanity is of all Complexions; 'tis the growth of every Clime and Capacity; Authors of all Ages have had a Tincture of it; and yet you read *Horace*, *Montaign*, and Sir *William Temple*, with Pleasure. Nor am I sure, if it were curable by Precept, that Mankind would be mended by it! Could Vanity be eradicated from our Nature, I am afraid that the Reward of most human Virtues would not be found in this World! And happy is he who has no greater Sin to answer for in the next!

But what is all this to the Theatrical Follies I was talking of? Perhaps not a great deal; but it is to my Purpose; for though I am an Historian, I do not

write to the Wise and Learned only ; I hope to have Readers of no more Judgment than some of my *quondam* Auditors ; and I am afraid they will be as hardly contented with dry Matters of Fact, as with a plain Play without Entertainments : This Rhapsody, therefore, has been thrown in as a Dance between the Acts, to make up for the Dullness of what would have been by itself only proper. But I now come to my Story again.

Notwithstanding, then, this our Compliance with the vulgar Taste, we generally made use of these Pantomimes but as Crutches to our weakest Plays : Nor were we so lost to all Sense of what was valuable as to dishonour our best Authors in such bad Company : We had still a due Respect to several select Plays that were able to be their own Support ; and in which we found our constant Account, without painting and patching them out, like Prostitutes, with these Follies in fashion : If therefore we were not so strictly chaste in the other part of our Conduct, let the Error of it stand among the silly Consequences of Two Stages. Could the Interest of both Companies have been united in one only Theatre, I had been one of the Few that would have us'd my utmost Endeavour of never admitting to the Stage any Spectacle that ought not to have been seen there ; the Errors of my own Plays, which I could not see, excepted. And though probably the Majority of Spectators would not have been so well pleas'd with a Theatre so regulated ; yet Sense and Reason cannot

lose their intrinsick Value because the Giddy and the Ignorant are blind and deaf, or numerous ; and I cannot help saying, it is a Reproach to a sensible People to let Folly so publickly govern their Pleasures.

While I am making this grave Declaration of what I *would* have done had One only Stage been continued ; to obtain an easier Belief of my Sincerity I ought to put my Reader in mind of what I *did* do, even after Two Companies were again establish'd.

About this Time *Jacobitism* had lately exerted itself by the most unprovoked Rebellion that our Histories have handed down to us since the *Norman Conquest* :<sup>1</sup> I therefore thought that to set the Authors and Principles of that desperate Folly in a fair Light, by allowing the mistaken Consciences of some their best Excuse, and by making the artful Pretenders to Conscience as ridiculous as they were ungratefully wicked, was a Subject fit for the honest Satire of Comedy, and what might, if it succeeded, do Honour to the Stage by shewing the valuable Use of it.<sup>2</sup> And considering what Numbers at that

<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to note that this was the Scottish Rebellion of 1715 ; yet Bellchambers indicates the period as 1718.

<sup>2</sup> Cibber's most notorious play, "The Nonjuror," was produced at Drury Lane on 6th December, 1717. The cast was :—

SIR JOHN WOODVIL . . . . .	Mr. Mills.
COLONEL WOODVIL . . . . .	Mr. Booth.
MR. HEARTLY . . . . .	Mr. Wilks.
DOCTOR WOLF . . . . .	Mr. Cibber.
CHARLES . . . . .	Mr. Walker.
LADY WOODVIL . . . . .	Mrs. Porter.
MARIA . . . . .	Mrs. Oldfield.

time might come to it as prejudic'd Spectators, it may be allow'd that the Undertaking was not less hazardous than laudable.

To give Life, therefore, to this Design, I borrow'd the *Tartuffe* of *Moliere*, and turn'd him into a modern *Nonjuror*:<sup>1</sup> Upon the Hypocrisy of the *French* Character I ingrafted a stronger Wickedness, that of an *English* Popish Priest lurking under the Doctrine of our own Church to raise his Fortune upon the Ruin of a worthy Gentleman, whom his dissembled Sanctity had seduc'd into the treasonable Cause of a *Roman Catholick* Out-law. How this Design, in the Play, was executed, I refer to the Readers of it; it cannot be mended by any critical Remarks I can make in its favour: Let it speak for itself. All the Reason I had to think it no bad Performance was, that it was acted eighteen Days running,<sup>2</sup> and that the Party that were hurt by it (as I have been told) have not been the smallest Number of my back Friends ever since. But happy was it for this Play that the very Subject was its Protection; a few Smiles of silent Contempt were the utmost Disgrace that on the first Day of its Appearance it was thought safe to throw upon it; as the

<sup>1</sup> Genest (ii. 615) quotes the Epilogue to Sewell's "Sir Walter Raleigh," produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields 16th January, 1719:—

"Yet to write plays is easy, faith, enough,  
As you have seen by—Cibber—in *Tartuffe*.  
With how much wit he did your hearts engage!  
He only stole the *play*;—he writ the *title-page*."

<sup>2</sup> Genest says it was acted twenty-three times.



Satire was chiefly employ'd on the Enemies of the Government, they were not so hardy as to own themselves such by any higher Disapprobation or Resentment. But as it was then probable I might write again, they knew it would not be long before they might with more Security give a Loose to their Spleen, and make up Accounts with me. And to do them Justice, in every Play I afterwards produced they paid me the Balance to a Tittle.<sup>1</sup> But to none was I more beholden than that celebrated Author Mr. *Mist*, whose *Weekly Journal*,<sup>2</sup> for about fifteen Years following, scarce ever fail'd of passing some of his Party Compliments upon me: The State and the Stage were his frequent Parallels, and the Minister and *Minheer Keiber* the Menager were as constantly droll'd upon: Now, for my own Part, though I could never persuade my Wit to have an open Account with him (for as he had no Effects of his own, I did not think myself oblig'd to answer his Bills;) not-

<sup>1</sup> Genest remarks (ii. 616) that "Cibber deserved all the abuse and enmity that he met with—the Stage and the Pulpit ought NEVER to dabble in politics."

Theo. Cibber, in a Petition to the King, given in his "Dissertations" (Letter to Garrick, p. 29), says that his father's "Writings, and public Professions of Loyalty, created him many Enemies, among the Disaffected."

<sup>2</sup> "Mist's Weekly Journal" was an anti-Hanoverian sheet, which was prominent in opposition to the Protestant Succession. Nathaniel Mist, the proprietor, and, I suppose, editor, suffered sundry pains and penalties for his Jacobitism. In his Preface to the second volume of "Letters" selected from his paper, he relates how he had, among other things, suffered imprisonment and stood in the pillory.

withstanding, I will be so charitable to his real *Manes*, and to the Ashes of his Paper, as to mention one particular Civility he paid to my Memory, after he thought he had ingeniously kill'd me. Soon after the *Nonjuror* had receiv'd the Favour of the Town, I read in one of his Journals the following short Paragraph, *viz.* *Yesterday died Mr. Colley Cibber, late Comedian of the Theatre-Royal, notorious for writing the Nonjuror.* The Compliment in the latter part I confess I did not dislike, because it came from so impartial a Judge; and it really so happen'd that the former part of it was very near being true; for I had that very Day just crawled out, after having been some Weeks laid up by a Fever: However, I saw no use in being thought to be thoroughly dead before my Time, and therefore had a mind to see whether the Town cared to have me alive again: So the Play of the *Orphan* being to be acted that Day, I quietly stole myself into the Part of the *Chaplain*, which I had not been seen in for many Years before. The Surprize of the Audience at my unexpected Appearance on the very Day I had been dead in the News, and the Paleness of my Looks, seem'd to make it a Doubt whether I was not the Ghost of my real Self departed: But when I spoke, their Wonder eas'd itself by an Applause; which convinc'd me they were then satisfied that my Friend *Mist* had told a *Fib* of me. Now, if simply to have shown myself in broad Life, and about my Business, after he had *notoriously*

reported me dead, can be called a Reply, it was the only one which his Paper while alive ever drew from me. How far I may be vain, then, in supposing that this Play brought me into the Disfavour of so many Wits<sup>1</sup> and valiant Auditors as afterwards appear'd against me, let those who may think it worth their Notice judge. In the mean time, 'till I can find a better Excuse for their sometimes particular Treatment of me, I cannot easily give up my Suspicion: And if I add a more remarkable Fact, that afterwards confirm'd me in it, perhaps it may incline others to join in my Opinion.

On the first Day of the *Provok'd Husband*, ten Years after the *Nonjuror* had appear'd,<sup>2</sup> a powerful Party, not having the Fear of publick Offence or private Injury before their Eyes, appear'd most impetuously concern'd for the Demolition of it; in which they so far succeeded, that for some Time I gave it up for lost; and to follow their Blows, in the publick Papers of the next Day it was attack'd and triumph'd over as a dead and damn'd Piece; a swinging Criticism was made upon it in general invective Terms, for they disdain'd to trouble the

<sup>1</sup> There can be little doubt that the "Nonjuror" was one of the causes of Pope's enmity to Cibber. Pope's father was a Nonjuror. See "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," where the poet says of his father:—

"No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,  
Nor dar'd an oath, nor hazarded a lie."

<sup>2</sup> Produced 10th January, 1728. See vol. i. p. 311, for list of characters, &c.

II.

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World with Particulars; their Sentence, it seems, was Proof enough of its deserving the Fate it had met with. But this damn'd Play was, notwithstanding, acted twenty-eight Nights together, and left off at a Receipt of upwards of a hundred and forty Pounds; which happen'd to be more than in fifty Years before could be then said of any one Play whatsoever.

Now, if such notable Behaviour could break out upon so successful a Play (which too, upon the Share Sir *John Vanbrugh* had in it, I will venture to call a good one) what shall we impute it to? Why may not I plainly say, it was not the Play, but Me, who had a Hand in it, they did not like? And for what Reason? if they were not asham'd of it, why did not they publish it? No! the Reason had publish'd itself, I was the Author of the *Nonjuror!* But, perhaps, of all Authors, I ought not to make this sort of Complaint, because I have Reason to think that that particular Offence has made me more honourable Friends than Enemies; the latter of which I am not unwilling should know (however unequal the Merit may be to the Reward) that Part of the Bread I now eat was given me for having writ the *Nonjuror*.<sup>1</sup>

And yet I cannot but lament, with many quiet Spectators, the helpless Misfortune that has so many Years attended the Stage! That no Law has had Force enough to give it absolute Protection! for

<sup>1</sup> Meaning, no doubt, that the post of Poet Laureate was given to him as a reward for his services to the Government.

'till we can civilize its Auditors, the Authors that write for it will seldom have a greater Call to it than Necessity; and how unlikely is the Imagination of the Needy to inform or delight the Many in Affluence? or how often does Necessity make many unhappy Gentlemen turn Authors in spite of Nature?

What a Blessing, therefore, is it! what an enjoy'd Deliverance! after a Wretch has been driven by Fortune to stand so many wanton Buffets of unmanly Fierceness, to find himself at last quietly lifted above the Reach of them!

But let not this Reflection fall upon my Auditors without Distinction; for though Candour and Benevolence are silent Virtues, they are as visible as the most vociferous Ill-nature; and I confess the Publick has given me more frequently Reason to be thankful than to complain.



## CHAPTER XVI.

*The Author steps out of his Way. Pleads his Theatrical Cause in Chancery. Carries it. Plays acted at Hampton-Court. Theatrical Anecdotes in former Reigns. Ministers and Menagers always censur'd. The Difficulty of supplying the Stage with good Actors consider'd. Courtiers and Comedians govern'd by the same Passions. Examples of both. The Author quits the Stage. Why.*

HAVING brought the Government of the Stage through such various Changes and Revolutions, to this settled State in which it continued to almost the Time of my leaving it;<sup>1</sup> it cannot be suppos'd that a Period of so much Quiet and so long a Train of Success (though happy for those who enjoy'd

<sup>1</sup> 1733.

it) can afford such Matter of Surprize or Amusement, as might arise from Times of more Distress and Disorder. A quiet Time in History, like a Calm in a Voyage, leaves us but in an indolent Station : To talk of our Affairs when they were no longer ruffled by Misfortunes, would be a Picture without Shade, a flat Performance at best. As I might, therefore, throw all that tedious Time of our Tranquillity into one Chasm in my History, and cut my Way short at once to my last Exit from the Stage, I shall at least fill it up with such Matter only as I have a mind should be known,<sup>1</sup> how few soever may have

<sup>1</sup> In leaping from 1717 to 1728, as Cibber does here, he omits to notice much that is of the greatest interest in stage history. Steele's connection with the theatre was of a chequered complexion, and it is curious as well as regrettable that an interested observer like Cibber should have simply ignored the great points which were at issue while Steele was a sharer in the Patent. In order to bridge over the chasm I give a bare record of Steele's transactions in connection with the Patent.

His first authority was a Licence granted to him and his partners, Wilks, Cibber, Dogget, and Booth, and dated October 18th, 1714. This was followed by a Patent, in Steele's name alone, for the term of his life, and three years after his death, which bore date January 19th, 1715. Cibber (p. 174) relates that Steele assigned to Wilks, Booth, and himself, equal shares in this Patent. All went smoothly for more than two years, until the appointment of the Duke of Newcastle (April 13th, 1717) as Lord Chamberlain. He seems soon to have begun to interfere in the affairs of the theatre. Steele, in the eighth number of "The Theatre," states that shortly after his appointment the Duke demanded that he should resign his Patent and accept a Licence in its place. This Steele naturally and rightly declined to do, and here the matter rested for many months. With reference to this

Patience to read it: Yet, as I despair not of some Readers who may be most awake when they think others have most occasion to sleep; who may be more pleas'd to find me languid than lively, or in the

it is interesting to note that among the Lord Chamberlain's Papers is the record of a consultation of the Attorney-General whether Steele's Patent made him independent of the Lord Chamberlain's authority. Unfortunately it is impossible to decide, from the terms of the queries put to the Attorney-General, whether these were caused by aggressive action on Steele's part, or merely by his defence of his rights.

The next molestation was an order, dated December 19th, 1719, addressed to Steele, Wilks, and Booth, ordering them to dismiss Cibber; which they did. His suspension, for it was nothing more, lasted till January 28th, 1720. Steele, in the seventh number of "The Theatre," January 23rd, 1720, alludes to his suspension as then existing, and in No. 12 talks of Cibber's being just restored to the "Begging Bridge," that is, the theatre. The allusion is to an Apologue by Steele ("Reader," No. II.) which Cibber quotes, and applies to Steele, in his Dedication of "Ximena" to him. A peasant had succeeded in barricading, with his whole belongings, a bridge over which an enemy attempted to invade his native country. He kept them back till his countrymen were roused; but when the forces of his friends attacked the enemy, the peasant's property was destroyed in the fray and he was left destitute. He received no compensation, but it was enacted that he and his descendants were alone to have the privilege of *begging* on this bridge. Cibber applies this fable to the treatment of Steele by the Lord Chamberlain, and there can be no doubt that this Dedication must have caused great offence to that official, and contributed materially to Cibber's suspension, though Steele declared that the attack upon his partner was merely intended as an oblique attack on himself. The author of the "Answer to the Case of Sir Richard Steele," 1720 (Nichols's ed., p. 532), says that Cibber had offended the Duke by an attack on the King and the Ministry in the Dedication of his "Ximena" to Steele. He also says that when the Chamberlain wanted a certain actor to play a part which belonged to one of the managers, Cibber flatly refused to allow



wrong than in the right ; why should I scruple (when it is so easy a Matter too) to gratify their particular Taste by venturing upon any Error that I like, or the Weakness of my Judgment misleads me to com-

him, and was thereupon silenced. (The actor is said to have been Elrington, and the part Torrismund ; but I doubt if Elrington was at Drury Lane in 1719-20.) A recent stage historian curiously says that the play which gave offence was "The Non-juror," which is about as likely as that a man should be accused of high treason because he sang "God Save the Queen !"

Steele then, being made to understand that the attack on Cibber was the beginning of evil directed against himself, wrote to two great Ministers of State, and presented a Petition to the King on January 22nd, 1720, praying to be protected from molestation by the Lord Chamberlain. The result of this action was a revocation of Steele's Licence (*not* his Patent specially, which is curious) dated January 23rd, 1720 ; and on the next Monday, the 25th, an Order for Silence was sent to the managers and actors at Drury Lane. The theatre accordingly remained closed Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, January 25th to 27th, 1720, and on the 28th re-opened, Wilks, Cibber, and Booth having made their submission and received a Licence dated the previous day.

On the 4th of March following the actors of Drury Lane were sworn at the Lord Chamberlain's office, "pursuant to an Order occasioned by their acting in obedience to his Majesty's Licence, lately granted, exclusive of a Patent formerly obtained by Sir Richard Steele, Knight." The tenor of the Oath was, that as his Majesty's Servants they should act subservient to the Lord Chamberlain, Vice-Chamberlain, and Gentleman-Usher in Waiting. Whether Steele took any steps to test the legality of this treatment is doubtful ; but, on the accession of his friend Walpole to office, he was restored to his position at the head of the theatre. On May 2nd, 1721, Cibber and his partners were ordered to account with Steele for his past and present share of the profits of the theatre, as if all the regulations from which his name had been excluded had never been made. This edict is signed by the Duke of Newcastle, and must, I fancy, have been rather a bitter pill for that nobleman. How Steele subsequently conducted himself,

mit? I think, too, I have a very good Chance for my Success in this passive Ambition, by shewing myself in a Light I have not been seen in.

By your Leave then, Gentlemen! let the Scene open, and at once discover your Comedian at the Bar! There you will find him a Defendant, and pleading his own Theatrical Cause in a Court of *Chancery*: But, as I chuse to have a Chance of pleasing others as well as of indulging you, Gentlemen; I must first beg leave to open my Case to them; after which my whole Speech upon that Occasion shall be at your Mercy.

In all the Transactions of Life, there cannot be a more painful Circumstance, than a Dispute at Law with a Man with whom we have long liv'd in an agreeable Amity: But when Sir *Richard Steele*, to get himself out of Difficulties, was oblig'd to throw his Affairs into the Hands of Lawyers and Trustees, that Consideration, then, could be of no weight: The Friend, or the Gentleman, had no more to do in the Matter! Thus, while Sir *Richard* no longer acted from himself, it may be no Wonder if a Flaw was found in our Conduct for the Law to make Work

and how much interest he took in the theatre, Cibber very fully relates in the next few pages. After Steele's death a new Patent was granted to Cibber, Wilks, and Booth, as will be related further on. It may be noted here, however, that the date of the new Patent proves conclusively that Steele's grant was never superseded. The new power was dated July 3rd, 1731, but it did not take effect till September 1st, 1732, exactly three years after Steele's death, according to the terms of his original Patent.

with. It must be observed, then, that about two or three Years before this Suit was commenc'd, upon Sir *Richard's* totally absenting himself from all Care and Menagement of the Stage (which by our Articles of Partnership he was equally and jointly oblig'd with us to attend) we were reduc'd to let him know that we could not go on at that Rate; but that if he expected to make the Business a *sine-Cure*, we had as much Reason to expect a Consideration for our extraordinary Care of it; and that during his Absence we therefore intended to charge our selves at a Sallary of 1*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* every acting Day (unless he could shew us Cause to the contrary) for our Menagement: To which, in his compos'd manner, he only answer'd; That to be sure we knew what was fitter to be done than he did; that he had always taken a Delight in making us easy, and had no Reason to doubt of our doing him Justice. Now whether, under this easy Stile of Approbation, he conceal'd any Dislike of our Resolution, I cannot say. But, if I may speak my private Opinion, I really believe, from his natural Negligence of his Affairs, he was glad, at any rate, to be excus'd an Attendance which he was now grown weary of. But, whether I am deceiv'd or right in my Opinion, the Fact was truly this, that he never once, directly nor indirectly, complain'd or objected to our being paid the above-mention'd daily Sum in near three Years together; and yet still continued to absent himself from us and our Affairs. But notwithstanding he had seen and done all this

with his Eyes open ; his Lawyer thought here was still a fair Field for a Battle in Chancery, in which, though his Client might be beaten, he was sure his Bill must be paid for it : Accordingly, to work with us he went. But, not to be so long as the Lawyers were in bringing this Cause to an Issue, I shall at once let you know, that it came to a Hearing before the late Sir *Joseph Jekyll*, then Master of the Rolls, in the Year 1726.<sup>1</sup> Now, as the chief Point in dispute was, of what Kind or Importance the Business of a Menager was, or in what it principally consisted ; it could not be suppos'd that the most learned Council could be so well appriz'd of the Nature of it, as one who had himself gone through the Care and Fatigue of it. I was therefore encourag'd by our Council to speak to that particular Head myself ; which I confess I was glad he suffer'd me to undertake ; but when I tell you that two of the learned Council against us came afterwards to be successively Lord-Chancellors,

<sup>1</sup> This is one of Cibber's bad blunders. The Case was heard in 1728. Genest (iii. 208) refers to the *St. James's Evening Post's* mention of the hearing ; and, in the Burney MSS. in the British Museum, a copy of the paragraph is given. It is not, however, a cutting, but a manuscript copy. "Saty. Feb. 17. There was an hearing in the Rolls Chapel in a Cause between Sir Richard Steele, Mr. Cibber, Mr. Wilks, and others belonging to Drury-Lane Theatre, which held five hours—one of which was taken up by a speech of Mr. Wilks, which had so good an effect, that the Cause went against Sir Richard Steele."—*St. James's Evening Post*, Feb. 17 to Feb. 20, 1728. In its next issue, Feb. 20 to Feb. 22, it corrects the blunder which it had made in attributing Cibber's speech to Wilks.

it sets my Presumption in a Light that I still tremble to shew it in: But however, not to assume more Merit from its Success than was really its Due, I ought fairly to let you know, that I was not so hardy as to deliver my Pleading without Notes, in my Hand, of the Heads I intended to enlarge upon; for though I thought I could conquer my Fear, I could not be so sure of my Memory: But when it came to the critical Moment, the Dread and Apprehension of what I had undertaken so disconcerted my Courage, that though I had been us'd to talk to above Fifty Thousand different People every Winter, for upwards of Thirty Years together; an involuntary and unaffected Proof of my Confusion fell from my Eyes; and, as I found myself quite out of my Element, I seem'd rather gasping for Life than in a condition to cope with the eminent Orators against me. But, however, I soon found, from the favourable Attention of my Hearers, that my Diffidence had done me no Disservice: And as the Truth I was to speak to needed no Ornament of Words, I delivered it in the plain manner following, *viz.*

In this Cause, Sir, I humbly conceive there are but two Points that admit of any material Dispute. The first is, Whether Sir *Richard Steele* is as much obliged to do the Duty and Business of a Menager as either *Wilks*, *Booth*, or *Cibber*: And the second is, Whether by Sir *Richard's* totally withdrawing himself from the Business of a Menager, the Defendants are justifiable in charging to each of themselves

the *1l. 13s. 4d. per Diem* for their particular Pains and Care in carrying on the whole Affairs of the Stage without any Assistance from Sir *Richard Steele*.

As to the First, if I don't mistake the Words of the Assignment, there is a Clause in it that says, All Matters relating to the Government or Menagement of the Theatre shall be concluded by a Majority of Voices. Now I presume, Sir, there is no room left to alledge that Sir *Richard* was ever refused his Voice, though in above three Years he never desir'd to give it: And I believe there will be as little room to say, that he could have a Voice if he were not a Menager. But, Sir, his being a Menager is so self-evident, that it is amazing how he could conceive that he was to take the Profits and Advantages of a Menager without doing the Duty of it. And I will be bold to say, Sir, that his Assignment of the Patent to *Wilks, Booth, and Cibber*, in no one Part of it, by the severest Construction in the World, can be wrested to throw the heavy Burthen of the Menagement only upon their Shoulders. Nor does it appear, Sir, that either in his Bill, or in his Answer to our Cross-Bill, he has offer'd any Hint, or Glimpse of a Reason, for his withdrawing from the Menagement at all; or so much as pretend, from the time complained of, that he ever took the least Part of his Share of it. Now, Sir, however unaccountable this Conduct of Sir *Richard* may seem, we will still allow that he had some Cause for it; but whether or no that Cause was a reasonable one your Honour will

the better judge, if I may be indulged in the Liberty of explaining it.

Sir, the Case, in plain Truth and Reality, stands thus: Sir *Richard*, though no Man alive can write better of Oeconomy than himself, yet, perhaps, he is above the Drudgery of practising it: Sir *Richard*, then, was often in want of Money; and while we were in Friendship with him, we often assisted his Occasions: But those Compliances had so unfortunate an Effect, that they only heightened his Impor-tunity to borrow more, and the more we lent, the less he minded us, or shew'd any Concern for our Wel-fare. Upon this, Sir, we stopt our Hands at once, and peremptorily refus'd to advance another Shilling 'till by the Balance of our Accounts it became due to him. / And this Treatment (though, we hope, not in the least unjustifiable) we have Reason to believe so ruffled his Temper, that he at once was as short with us as we had been with him; for, from that Day, he never more came near us: Nay, Sir, he not only continued to neglect what he *should* have done, but actually did what he ought *not* to have done: He made an Assignment of his Share without our Con-sent, in a manifest Breach of our Agreement: For, Sir, we did not lay that Restriction upon ourselves for no Reason: We knew, before-hand, what Trouble and Inconvenience it would be to unravel and expose our Accounts to Strangers, who, if they were to do us no hurt by divulging our Secrets, we were sure could do us no good by keeping them. If Sir *Richard*

had had our common Interest at heart, he would have been as warm in it as we were, and as tender of hurting it : But supposing his assigning his Share to others may have done us no great Injury, it is, at least, a shrewd Proof that he did not care whether it did us any or no. And if the Clause was not strong enough to restrain him from it in Law, there was enough in it to have restrain'd him in Honour from breaking it. But take it in its best Light, it shews him as remiss a Menager in our Affairs as he naturally was in his own. Suppose, Sir, we had all been as careless as himself, which I can't find he has any more Right to be than we have, must not our whole Affair have fallen to Ruin ? And may we not, by a parity of Reason, suppose, that by his Neglect a fourth Part of it *does* fall to Ruin ? But, Sir, there is a particular Reason to believe, that, from our want of Sir *Richard*, more than a fourth Part *does* suffer by it : His Rank and Figure in the World, while he gave us the Assistance of them, were of extraordinary Service to us : He had an easier Access, and a more regarded Audience at Court, than our low Station of Life could pretend to, when our Interest wanted (as it often did) a particular Solicitation there. But since we have been deprived of him, the very End, the very Consideration of his Share in our Profits is not perform'd on his Part. And will Sir *Richard*, then, make us no Compensation for so valuable a Loss in our Interests, and so palpable an Addition to our Labour ? I am afraid, Sir, if we were



all to be as indolent in the Menaging-Part as Sir *Richard* presumes he has a Right to be ; our Patent would soon run us as many Hundreds in Debt, as he had (and still seems willing to have) his Share of, for doing of nothing.

Sir, our next Point in question is whether *Wilks*, *Booth*, and *Cibber* are justifiable in charging the 1*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* *per diem* for their extraordinary Menagement in the Absence of Sir *Richard Steele*. I doubt, Sir, it will be hard to come to the Solution of this Point, unless we may be a little indulg'd in setting forth what is the daily and necessary Business and Duty of a Menager. But, Sir, we will endeavour to be as short as the Circumstances will admit of.

Sir, by our Books it is apparent that the Menagers have under their Care no less than One Hundred and Forty Persons in constant daily Pay : And among such Numbers, it will be no wonder if a great many of them are unskilful, idle, and sometimes untractable ; all which Tempers are to be led, or driven, watch'd, and restrain'd by thè continual Skill, Care, and Patience of the Menagers. Every Menager is oblig'd, in his turn, to attend two or three Hours every Morning at the Rehearsal of Plays and other Entertainments for the Stage, or else every Rehearsal would be but a rude Meeting of Mirth and Jollity. The same Attendance is as necessary at every Play during the time of its publick Action, in which one or more of us have constantly been punctual, whether we have had any part in the Play

then acted or not. A Menager ought to be at the Reading of every new Play when it is first offer'd to the Stage, though there are seldom one of those Plays in twenty which, upon hearing, proves to be fit for it; and upon such Occasions the Attendance must be allow'd to be as painfully tedious as the getting rid of the Authors of such Plays must be disagreeable and difficult. Besides this, Sir, a Menager is to order all new Cloaths, to assist in the Fancy and Propriety of them, to limit the Expence, and to withstand the unreasonable Importunities of some that are apt to think themselves injur'd if they are not finer than their Fellows. A Menager is to direct and oversee the Painters, Machinists, Musicians, Singers, and Dancers; to have an Eye upon the Door-keepers, Under-Servants, and Officers that, without such Care, are too often apt to defraud us, or neglect their Duty.

And all this, Sir, and more, much more, which we hope will be needless to trouble you with, have we done every Day, without the least Assistance from Sir *Richard*, even at times when the Concern and Labour of our Parts upon the Stage have made it very difficult and irksome to go through with it.

In this Place, Sir, it may be worth observing that Sir *Richard*, in his Answer to our Cross-Bill, seems to value himself upon *Cibber's* confessing, in the Dedication of a Play which he made to Sir *Richard*, that he (Sir *Richard*) had done the Stage very considerable Service by leading the Town to our Plays,

and filling our Houses by the Force and Influence of his *Tatlers*.<sup>1</sup> But Sir *Richard* forgets that those *Tatlers* were written in the late Queen's Reign, long before he was admitted to a Share in the Play-house: And in truth, Sir, it was our real Sense of those Obligations, and Sir *Richard's* assuring us they should be continued, that first and chiefly inclin'd us to invite him to share the Profits of our Labours, upon such farther Conditions as in his Assignment of the Patent to us are specified. And, Sir, as *Cibber's* publick Acknowledgment of those Favours is at the same time an equal Proof of Sir *Richard's Power* to continue them; so, Sir, we hope it carries an equal Probability that, without his Promise to *use* that Power, he would never have been thought on, much less have been invited by us into a Joint-Menagement of the Stage, and into a Share of the Profits: And, indeed, what Pretence could he have form'd for asking a Patent from the Crown, had he been possess'd of no eminent Qualities but in common with other Men? But, Sir, all these Advantages, all these Hopes, nay, Certainties of greater Profits from those great Qualities, have we been utterly depriv'd of by the wilful and unexpected Neglect of Sir *Richard*. But we find, Sir, it is a common thing in the Practice of Mankind to justify one Error by committing another: For Sir *Richard* has not only refused us the extraordinary Assistance which he is able and

<sup>1</sup> This was in the Dedication to "Ximena." The passage will be found quoted by me in a note on page 163 of this volume.

bound to give us ; but, on the contrary, to our great Expence and Loss of Time, now calls us to account, in this honourable Court, for the Wrong we have done him, in not doing his Business of a Menager for nothing. But, Sir, Sir *Richard* has not met with such Treatment from us : He has not writ Plays for us for *Nothing*, we paid him very well, and in an extraordinary manner, for his late Comedy of the *Conscious Lovers* : And though, in writing that Play, he had more Assistance from one of the Menagers<sup>1</sup> than becomes me to enlarge upon, of which Evidence has been given upon Oath by several of our Actors ; yet, Sir, he was allow'd the full and particular Profits of that Play as an Author, which amounted to Three Hundred Pounds, besides about Three Hundred more which he received as a Joint-Sharer of the general Profits that arose from it. Now, Sir, though the Menagers are not all of them able to write Plays, yet they have all of them been able to do (I won't say as good, but at least) as profitable a thing. They have invented and adorn'd a Spectacle that for Forty Days together has brought more Money to the House than the best Play that ever was writ. The Spectacle I mean, Sir, is that of the Coronation-Ceremony of *Anna Bullen* :<sup>2</sup> And though we allow a

<sup>1</sup> Cibber himself, of course.

<sup>2</sup> This Coronation was tacked to the play of "Henry VIII.," which was revived at Drury Lane on 26th October, 1727. Special interest attached to it on account of the recent Coronation of George II.







BARTON BOOTH.





good Play to be the more laudable Performance, yet, Sir, in the profitable Part of it there is no Comparison. If, therefore, our Spectacle brought in as much, or more Money than Sir *Richard's* Comedy, what is there on his Side but Usage that intitles him to be paid for one, more than we are for t'other? But then, Sir, if he is so profitably distinguish'd for his Play, if we yield him up the Preference, and pay him for his extraordinary Composition, and take nothing for our own, though it turn'd out more to our common Profit; sure, Sir, while we do such extraordinary Duty as Menagers, and while he neglects his Share of that Duty, he cannot grudge us the moderate Demand we make for our separate Labour?

To conclude, Sir, if by our constant Attendance, our Care, our Anxiety (not to mention the disagreeable Contests we sometimes meet with, both within and without Doors, in the Management of our Theatre) we have not only saved the whole from Ruin, which, if we had all follow'd Sir *Richard's* Example, could not have been avoided; I say, Sir, if we have still made it so valuable an Income to him, without his giving us the least Assistance for several Years past; we hope, Sir, that the poor Labourers that have done all this for Sir *Richard* will not be thought unworthy of their Hire.

How far our Affairs, being set in this particular Light, might assist our Cause, may be of no great Importance to guess; but the Issue of it was this: That Sir *Richard* not having made any Objection

II.

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to what we had charged for Management for three Years together; and as our Proceedings had been all transacted in open Day, without any clandestine Intention of Fraud; we were allow'd the Sums in dispute above-mention'd; and Sir *Richard* not being advised to appeal to the Lord-Chancellor, both Parties paid their own Costs, and thought it their mutual Interest to let this be the last of their Law-suits.

And now, gentle Reader, I ask Pardon for so long an Imposition on your Patience: For tho' I may have no ill Opinion of this Matter myself; yet to you I can very easily conceive it may have been tedious. You are, therefore, at your own Liberty of charging the whole Impertinence of it, either to the Weakness of my Judgment, or the Strength of my Vanity; and I will so far join in your Censure, that I farther confess I have been so impatient to give it you, that you have had it out of its Turn: For, some Years before this Suit was commenced, there were other Facts that ought to have had a Precedence in my History: But that, I dare say, is an Oversight you will easily excuse, provided you afterwards find them worth reading. However, as to that Point I must take my Chance, and shall therefore proceed to speak of the Theatre which was order'd by his late Majesty to be erected in the Great old Hall at *Hampton-Court*; where Plays were intended to have been acted twice a Week during the Summer-Season. But before the Theatre could be finish'd, above half the Month of *September*

being elapsed, there were but seven Plays acted before the Court returned to *London*.<sup>1</sup> This throwing open a Theatre in a Royal Palace seem'd to be reviving the Old *English* hospitable Grandeur, where the lowest Rank of neighbouring Subjects might make themselves merry at Court without being laugh'd at themselves. In former Reigns, Theatrical Entertainments at the Royal Palaces had been perform'd at vast Expence, as appears by the Description of the Decorations in several of *Ben. Johnson's* Masques in King *James* and *Charles the First's* Time;<sup>2</sup> many curious and original Draughts of which, by Sir *Inigo Jones*, I have seen in the *Musæum* of our greatest Master and Patron of Arts and Architecture, whom it would be a needless Liberty to name.<sup>3</sup> But when our Civil Wars ended in the Decadence of Monarchy, it was then an Honour to the Stage to have fallen with it: Yet, after the Restoration of *Charles II.* some faint Attempts were made to revive these Theatrical Spectacles at Court; but I have met with no Account of above one Masque acted there by the Nobility; which was that of *Calisto*, written by *Crown*, the Author of *Sir Courtly Nice*. For what Reason *Crown* was chosen to that Honour

<sup>1</sup> This was in 1718. On 24th September, 1718, the bills announce "the same Entertainments that were performed yesterday before his Majesty at Hampton Court."

<sup>2</sup> In Whitelocke's "Memorials" there is an account of a Masque played in 1633, before Charles I. and his Queen, by the gentlemen of the Temple, which cost £21,000.

<sup>3</sup> The Earl of Burlington.

rather than *Dryden*, who was then Poet-Laureat and out of all Comparison his Superior in Poetry, may seem surprizing: But if we consider the Offence which the then Duke of *Buckingham* took at the Character of *Zimri* in *Dryden's Absalom, &c.* (which might probably be a Return to his Grace's *Drawcansir* in the *Rehearsal*) we may suppose the Prejudice and Recommendation of so illustrious a Pretender to Poetry might prevail at Court to give *Crown* this Preference.<sup>1</sup> In the same Reign the King had his Comedians at *Windsor*, but upon a particular Establishment; for tho' they acted in *St. George's Hall*, within the Royal Palace, yet (as I have been inform'd by an Eye-witness) they were permitted to take Money at the Door of every Spectator; whether this was an Indulgence, in Conscience I cannot say; but it was a common Report among the principal Actors, when I first came into the *Theatre-Royal*, in 1690, that there was then due to the Company from that Court about One Thousand Five Hundred Pounds for Plays commanded, &c. and yet it was the general Complaint, in that Prince's Reign, that he paid too much Ready-money for his Pleasures:

<sup>1</sup> "Calisto" was published in 1675. Genest (i. 181) says: "Cibber, with his usual accuracy as to dates, supposes that Crowne was selected to write a mask for the Court in preference to Dryden, through the influence of the Duke of Buckingham, who was offended at what Dryden had said of him in *Absalom* and *Achitophel*—Dryden's poem was not written till 1681—Lord Rochester was the person who recommended Crowne." I may add that Dryden furnished an Epilogue to "Calisto," which was not spoken.

But these Assertions I only give as I received them, without being answerable for their Reality. This Theatrical Anecdote, however, puts me in mind of one of a more private nature, which I had from old solemn *Boman*, the late Actor of venerable Memory.<sup>1</sup> *Boman*, then a Youth, and fam'd for his Voice, was appointed to sing some Part in a Concert of Musick at the private Lodgings of Mrs. *Gwin*; at which were only present the King, the Duke of *York*, and one or two more who were usually admitted upon those detach'd Parties of Pleasure. When the Performance was ended, the King express'd himself highly pleased, and gave it extraordinary Commendations: Then, Sir, said the Lady, to shew you don't speak like a Courtier, I hope you will make the Performers a handsome Present: The King said he had no Money about him, and ask'd the Duke if he had any? To which the Duke reply'd, I believe, Sir, not above a Guinea or two. Upon which the laughing Lady, turning to the People about her, and making bold with the King's common Expression, cry'd, *Od's Fish! what Company am I got into!*

<sup>1</sup> Boman, or Bowman, was born about 1651, and lived till 23rd March, 1739. He made his first appearance about 1673, and acted to within a few months of his death, having thus been on the stage for the extraordinary period of sixty-five years. He was very sensitive on the subject of his age, and, if asked how old he was, only replied, that he was very well. . Davies speaks highly of Boman's acting in his extreme old age ("Dram. Misc.," i. 286 and ii. 100). Mrs. Boman was the adopted daughter of Betterton.

Whether the reverend Historian of his *Own Time*,<sup>1</sup> among the many other Reasons of the same Kind he might have for stiling this Fair One the *indiscreetest and wildest Creature that ever was in a Court*, might know this to be one of them, I can't say : But if we consider her in all the Disadvantages of her Rank and Education, she does not appear to have had any criminal Errors more remarkable than her Sex's Frailty to answer for : And if the same Author, in his latter End of that Prince's Life, seems to reproach his Memory with too kind a Concern for her Support, we may allow that it becomes a Bishop to have had no Eyes or Taste for the frivolous Charms or playful *Badinage* of a King's Mistress : Yet, if the common Fame of her may be believ'd, which in my Memory was not doubted, she had less to be laid to her Charge than any other of those Ladies who were in the same State of Preferment : She never meddled in Matters of serious Moment, or was the Tool of working Politicians : Never broke into those amorous Infidelities which others in that grave Author are accus'd of ; but was as visibly distinguish'd by her particular Personal Inclination to the King, as her Rivals were by their Titles and Grandeur. Give me leave to carry (perhaps the Partiality of) my Observation a little farther. The same Author, in the same Page, 263,<sup>2</sup> tells us, That "Another of the King's Mistresses, the Daughter of " a Clergyman, Mrs. *Roberts*, in whom her first

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Burnet.

<sup>2</sup> First edition, vol. i.

“ Education had so deep a Root, that though she fell  
 “ into many scandalous Disorders, with very dismal  
 “ Adventures in them all, yet a Principle of Reli-  
 “ gion was so deep laid in her, that tho’ it did not  
 “ restrain her, yet it kept alive in her such a constant  
 “ Horror of Sin, that she was never easy in an ill  
 “ course, and died with a great Sense of her former  
 “ ill Life.”

To all this let us give an implicit Credit : Here is the Account of a frail Sinner made up with a Reverend Witness ! Yet I cannot but lament that this Mitred Historian, who seems to know more Personal Secrets than any that ever writ before him, should not have been as inquisitive after the last Hours of our other Fair Offender, whose Repentance I have been unquestionably inform’d, appear’d in all the contrite Symptoms of a Christian Sincerity. If therefore you find I am so much concern’d to make this favourable mention of the one, because she was a Sister of the *Theatre*, why may not— But I dare not be so presumptuous, so uncharitably bold, as to suppose the other was spoken better of merely because she was the Daughter of a *Clergyman*. Well, and what then ? What’s all this idle Prate, you may say, to the matter in hand ? Why, I say your Question is a little too critical ; and if you won’t give an Author leave, now and then, to embellish his Work by a natural Reflexion, you are an ungentle Reader. But I have done with my Digression, and return to our Theatre at *Hampton-Court*, where I am

not sure the Reader, be he ever so wise, will meet with any thing more worth his notice: However, if he happens to read, as I write, for want of something better to do, he will go on; and perhaps wonder when I tell him that

A Play presented at Court, or acted on a publick Stage, seem to their different Auditors a different Entertainment. Now hear my Reason for it. In the common Theatre the Guests are at home, where the politer Forms of Good-breeding are not so nicely regarded: Every one there falls to, and likes or finds fault according to his natural Taste or Appetite. At Court, where the Prince gives the Treat, and honours the Table with his own Presence, the Audience is under the Restraint of a Circle, where Laughter or Applause rais'd higher than a Whisper would be star'd at. At a publick Play they are both let loose, even 'till the Actor is sometimes pleas'd with his not being able to be heard for the Clamour of them. But this Coldness or Decency of Attention at Court I observ'd had but a melancholy Effect upon the impatient Vanity of some of our Actors, who seem'd inconsolable when their flashy Endeavours to please had pass'd unheeded: Their not considering where they were quite disconcerted them; nor could they recover their Spirits 'till from the lowest Rank of the Audience some gaping *John* or *Joan*, in the fullness of their Hearts, roar'd out their Approbation: And, indeed, such a natural Instance of honest Simplicity a Prince himself, whose Indul-



gence knows where to make Allowances, might reasonably smile at, and perhaps not think it the worst part of his Entertainment. Yet it must be own'd, that an Audience may be as well too much reserv'd, as too profuse of their Applause: For though it is possible a *Betterton* would not have been discourag'd from throwing out an Excellence, or elated into an Error, by his Auditors being too little or too much pleas'd, yet, as Actors of his Judgment are Rarities, those of less Judgment may sink into a Flatness in their Performance for want of that Applause, which from the generality of Judges they might perhaps have some Pretence to: And the Auditor, when not seeming to feel what ought to affect him, may rob himself of something more that he might have had by giving the Actor his Due, who measures out his Power to please according to the Value he sets upon his Hearer's Taste or Capacity. But, however, as we were not here itinerant Adventurers, and had properly but one Royal Auditor to please; after that Honour was attain'd to, the rest of our Ambition had little to look after: And that the King was often pleas'd, we were not only assur'd by those who had the Honour to be near him; but could see it, from the frequent Satisfaction in his Looks at particular Scenes and Passages: One Instance of which I am tempted to relate, because it was at a Speech that might more naturally affect a Sovereign Prince than any private Spectator. In *Shakespear's Harry the Eighth*, that King commands the Cardinal to write

circular Letters of Indemnity into every County where the Payment of certain heavy Taxes had been disputed : Upon which the Cardinal whispers the following Directions to his Secretary *Cromwell* :

——— *A Word with you :*

*Let there be Letters writ to every Shire*

*Of the King's Grace and Pardon : The griev'd  
Commons*

*Hardly conceive of me. Let it be nois'd*

*That through our Intercession this Revokement*

*And Pardon comes.—I shall anon advise you*

*Farther in the Proceeding* ——

The Solitude of this Spiritual Minister, in filching from his Master the Grace and Merit of a good Action, and dressing up himself in it, while himself had been Author of the Evil complain'd of, was so easy a Stroke of his Temporal Conscience, that it seem'd to raise the King into something more than a Smile whenever that Play came before him : And I had a more distinct Occasion to observe this Effect ; because my proper Stand on the Stage when I spoke the Lines required me to be near the Box where the King usually sate :<sup>1</sup> In a Word, this Play is so true

<sup>1</sup> Davies ("Dram. Misc.," i. 365) says : "Wolsey's filching from his royal master the honour of bestowing grace and pardon on the subject, appeared so gross and impudent a prevarication, that, when this play was acted before George I. at Hampton-Court, about the year 1717, the courtiers laughed so loudly at this ministerial craft, that his majesty, who was unacquainted with the

a Dramatick Chronicle of an old *English Court*, and where the Character of *Harry the Eighth* is so exactly drawn, even to a humourous Likeness, that it may be no wonder why his Majesty's particular Taste for it should have commanded it three several times in one Winter.

This, too, calls to my Memory an extravagant Pleasantry of Sir *Richard Steele*, who being ask'd by a grave Nobleman, after the same Play had been presented at *Hampton-Court*, how the King lik'd it, reply'd, *So terribly well, my Lord, that I was afraid I should have lost all my Actors! For I was not sure the King would not keep them to fill the Posts at Court that he saw them so fit for in the Play.*

It may be imagin'd that giving Plays to the People at such a distance from *London* could not but be attended with an extraordinary Expence; and it was some Difficulty, when they were first talk'd of, to bring them under a moderate Sum; I shall therefore, in as few Words as possible, give a Particular of what Establishment they were then brought to, that in case the same Entertainments should at any time hereafter be call'd to the same Place, future Courts may judge how far the Precedent may stand good, or need an Alteration.

English language, asked the lord-chamberlain the meaning of their mirth; upon being informed of it, the king joined in a laugh of approbation." Davies adds that this scene "was not unsuitably represented by Colley Cibber;" but, in scenes requiring dignity or passion, he expresses an unfavourable opinion of Cibber's playing.

Though the stated Fee for a Play acted at *Whitehall* had been formerly but Twenty Pounds ;<sup>1</sup> yet, as that hinder'd not the Company's acting on the same Day at the Publick Theatre, that Sum was almost all clear Profits to them : But this Circumstance not being practicable when they were commanded to *Hampton-Court*, a new and extraordinary Charge was unavoidable : The Menagers, therefore, not to inflame it, desired no Consideration for their own Labour, farther than the Honour of being employ'd in his Majesty's Commands ; and, if the other Actors might be allow'd each their Day's Pay and travelling Charges, they should hold themselves ready to act any Play there at a Day's Warning : And that the Trouble might be less by being divided, the Lord-Chamberlain was pleas'd to let us know that the Houshold-Musick, the Wax Lights, and a *Chaise-Marine* to carry our moving Wardrobe to every different Play, should be under the Charge of the proper Officers. Notwithstanding these Assistances, the Expence of every Play amounted to Fifty Pounds: Which Account, when all was over, was not only allow'd us, but his Majesty was graciously pleas'd to give the Menagers Two Hundred Pounds more for their particular Performance and Trouble in only

<sup>1</sup> From the Lord Chamberlain's Records it is clear that £10 was the fee for a play at Whitehall during the time of Charles I. If the performance was at Hampton Court, or if it took place at such a time of day as to prevent the ordinary playing at the theatre, £20 was allowed.

seven times acting.<sup>1</sup> Which last Sum, though it might not be too much for a Sovereign Prince to give, it was certainly more than our utmost Merit ought to have hop'd for: And I confess, when I receiv'd the Order for the Money from his Grace the Duke of *Newcastle*, then Lord-Chamberlain, I was so surpris'd, that I imagin'd his Grace's Favour, or Recommendation of our Readiness or Diligence, must have contributed to so high a Consideration of it, and was offering my Acknowledgments as I thought them due; but was soon stopt short by his Grace's Declaration, That we had no Obligations for it but to the King himself, who had given it from no other Motive than his own Bounty. Now whether we may suppose that Cardinal *Wolsey* (as you see *Shakespear* has drawn him) would silently have taken such low Acknowledgments to himself, perhaps may be as little worth consideration as my mentioning this Circumstance has been necessary: But if it is due to the Honour and Integrity of the (then) Lord-Chamberlain, I cannot think it wholly impertinent.

Since that time there has been but one Play given at *Hampton-Court*, which was for the Entertainment of the Duke of *Lorrain*; and for which his present

<sup>1</sup> The warrant for the payment of these performances is dated 15th November, 1718. The expenses incurred by the actors amounted to £374 1s. 8d., and the present given by the King, as Cibber states, was £200; the total payment being thus £574 1s. 8d.

Majesty was pleased to order us a Hundred Pounds.

The Reader may now plainly see that I am ransacking my Memory for such remaining Scraps of Theatrical History as may not perhaps be worth his Notice : But if they are such as tempt me to write them, why may I not hope that in this wide World there may be many an idle Soul, no wiser than my self, who may be equally tempted to read them ?

I have so often had occasion to compare the State of the Stage to the State of a Nation, that I yet feel a Reluctancy to drop the Comparison, or speak of the one without some Application to the other. How many Reigns, then, do I remember, from that of *Charles* the Second, through all which there has been, from one half of the People or the other, a Succession of Clamour against every different Ministry for the time being ? And yet, let the Cause of this Clamour have been never so well grounded, it is impossible but that some of those Ministers must have been wiser and honester Men than others : If this be true, as true I believe it is, why may I not then say, as some Fool in a *French* Play does upon a like Occasion—*Justement, comme chez nous !* 'Twas exactly the same with our Menagement ! let us have done never so well, we could not please every body : All I can say in our Defence is, that though many good Judges might possibly conceive how the State of the Stage might have been mended, yet the best of them never pretended to remember the Time when

it was better! or could shew us the way to make their imaginary Amendments practicable.

For though I have often allow'd that our best Merit as Actors was never equal to that of our Predecessors, yet I will venture to say, that in all its Branches the Stage had never been under so just, so prosperous, and so settled a Regulation, for forty Years before, as it was at the Time I am speaking of. The most plausible Objection to our Administration seemed to be, that we took no Care to breed up young Actors to succeed us;<sup>1</sup> and this was imputed as the greater Fault, because it was taken for granted that it was a Matter as easy as planting so many Cabbages: Now, might not a Court as well be reproached for not breeding up a Succession of complete Ministers? And yet it is evident, that if Providence or Nature don't supply us with both, the State and the Stage will be but poorly supported. If a Man of an ample Fortune should take it into his Head to give a younger Son an extraordinary Allowance in order to breed him a great Poet, what might we suppose would be the Odds that his Trouble and Money would be all thrown away? Not more than it would be against the Master of a Theatre who should say, this or that young Man I will take care shall be an excellent Actor! Let it be our

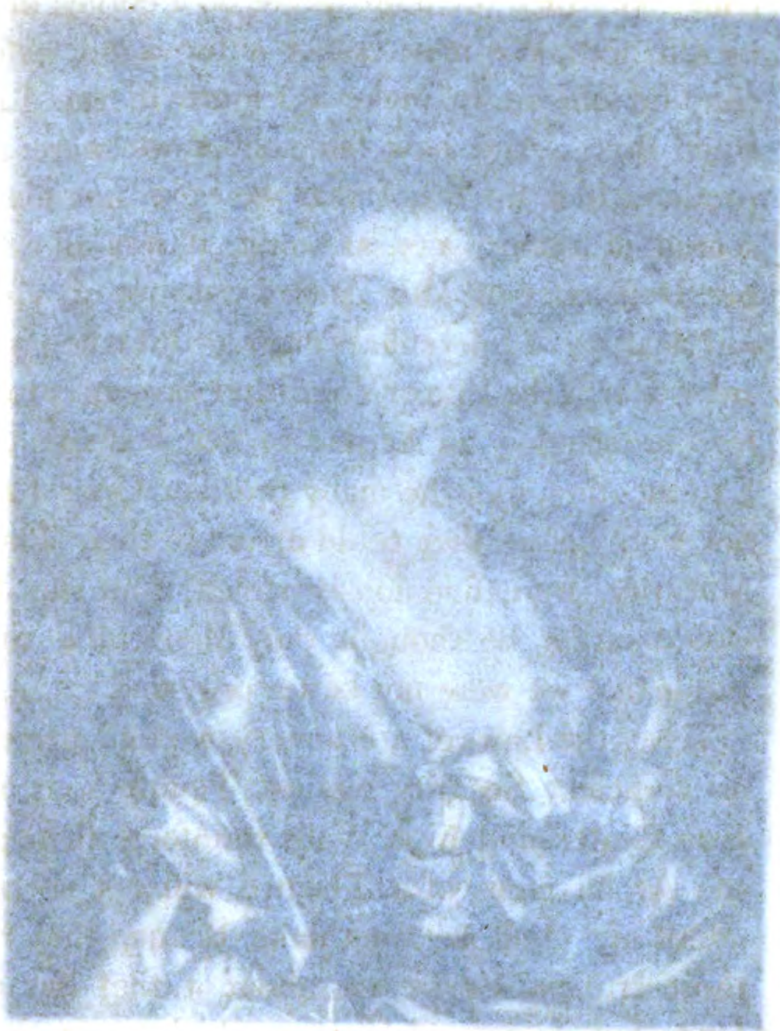
<sup>1</sup> M. Perrin, the late manager of the Theatre Français, was virulently attacked for giving *la jeune troupe* no opportunities, and so doing nothing to provide successors to the great actors of his time.

Excuse, then, for that mistaken Charge against us ; that since there was no Garden or Market where accomplished Actors grew or were to be sold, we could only pick them up, as we do Pebbles of Value, by Chance : We may polish a thousand before we can find one fit to make a Figure in the Lid of a Snuff-Box. And how few soever we were able to produce, it is no Proof that we were not always in search of them : Yet, at worst, it was allow'd that our Deficiency of Men Actors was not so visible as our Scarcity of tolerable Women : But when it is consider'd, that the Life of Youth and Beauty is too short for the bringing an Actress to her Perfection ; were I to mention, too, the many frail fair Ones I remember who, before they could arrive to their Theatrical Maturity, were feloniously stolen from the Tree, it would rather be thought our Misfortune than our Fault that we were not better provided.<sup>1</sup>

Even the Laws of a Nunnery, we find, are thought no sufficient Security against Temptations without Iron Grates and high Walls to inforce them ; which the Architecture of a Theatre will not so properly admit of : And yet, methinks, Beauty that has not those artificial Fortresses about it, that has no Defence but its natural Virtue (which upon the Stage

<sup>1</sup> After the death of Wilks and Booth, and the retirement of Cibber, the stage experienced a period of dulness, which was the natural result of the want of good young talent in the lifetime of the old actors. Such periods seem to recur at stated intervals in the history of the stage.









SUSANNA MARIA CIBBER



has more than once been met with) makes a much more meritorious Figure in Life than that immur'd Virtue which could never be try'd. But alas! as the poor Stage is but the Show-glass to a Toy-shop, we must not wonder if now and then some of the Bawbles should find a Purchaser.

However, as to say more or less than Truth are equally unfaithful in an Historian, I cannot but own that, in the Government of the Theatre, I have known many Instances where the Merit of promising Actors has not always been brought forward, with the Regard or Favour it had a Claim to: And if I put my Reader in mind, that in the early Part of this Work I have shewn thro' what continued Difficulties and Discouragements I myself made my way up the Hill of Preferment, he may justly call it too strong a Glare of my Vanity: I am afraid he is in the right; but I pretend not to be one of those chaste Authors that know how to write without it: When Truth is to be told, it may be as much Chance as Choice if it happens to turn out in my Favour: But to shew that this was true of others as well as myself, *Booth* shall be another Instance. In 1707, when *Swiney* was the only Master of the Company in the *Hay-Market*; *Wilks*, tho' he was then but an hired Actor himself, rather chose to govern and give Orders than to receive them; and was so jealous of *Booth's* rising, that with a high Hand he gave the Part of *Pierre*, in *Venice Preserv'd*, to *Mills* the elder, who (not to undervalue him) was out of Sight in the Pretensions

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that *Booth*, then young as he was, had to the same Part :<sup>1</sup> and this very Discouragement so strongly affected him, that not long after, when several of us became Sharers with *Swiney*, *Booth* rather chose to risque his Fortune with the old Patentee in *Drury-Lane*, than come into our Interest, where he saw he was like to meet with more of those Partialities.<sup>2</sup> And yet, again, *Booth* himself, when he came to be a Menager, would sometimes suffer his Judgment to be blinded by his Inclination to Actors whom the Town seem'd to have but an indifferent Opinion of. This again inclines me to ask another of my odd Questions, *viz.* Have we never seen the same passions govern a Court ! How many white Staffs and great Places do we find, in our Histories, have been laid at the Feet of a Monarch, because they chose not to give way to a Rival in Power, or hold a second Place in his Favour ? How many *Whigs* and *Tories* have chang'd their Parties, when their good or bad Pretensions have met with a Check to their higher Preferment ?

Thus we see, let the Degrees and Rank of Men be ever so unequal, Nature throws out their Passions from the same Motives ; 'tis not the Eminence or Lowliness of either that makes the one, when provok'd, more or less a reasonable Creature than the

<sup>1</sup> "Venice Preserved" was acted at the Haymarket on 22nd February, 1707, but Dr. Burney's MSS. do not give the cast. On 15th November, 1707, Pierre was played by Mills.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of this matter, see *ante*, page 70.

other : The Courtier and the Comedian, when their Ambition is out of Humour, take just the same Measures to right themselves.

If this familiar Stile of talking should, in the Nostrils of Gravity and Wisdom, smell a little too much of the Presumptuous or the Pragmatical, I will at least descend lower in my Apology for it, by calling to my Assistance the old, humble Proverb, *viz.* 'Tis an ill Bird that, &c. Why then should I debase my Profession by setting it in vulgar Lights, when I may shew it to more favourable Advantages? And when I speak of our Errors, why may I not extenuate them by illustrious Examples? or by not allowing them greater than the greatest Men have been subject to? Or why, indeed, may I not suppose that a sensible Reader will rather laugh than look grave at the Pomp of my Parallels?

Now, as I am tied down to the Veracity of an Historian whose Facts cannot be supposed, like those in a Romance, to be in the Choice of the Author to make them more marvellous by Invention; if I should happen to sink into a little farther Insignificancy, let the simple Truth of what I have farther to say, be my Excuse for it. I am obliged, therefore, to make the Experiment, by shewing you the Conduct of our Theatrical Ministry in such Lights as on various Occasions it appear'd in.

Though *Wilks* had more Industry and Application than any Actor I had ever known, yet we found it possible that those necessary Qualities might some-

times be so misconducted as not only to make them useless, but hurtful to our Common-wealth ;<sup>1</sup> for while he was impatient to be foremost in every thing, he frequently shock'd the honest Ambition of others, whose Measures might have been more serviceable, could his Jealousy have given way to them. His own Regards for himself, therefore, were, to avoid a disagreeable Dispute with him, too often complied with : But this leaving his Diligence to his own Conduct, made us, in some Instances, pay dearly for it : For Example ; he would take as much, or more Pains, in forwarding to the Stage the Water-gruel Work of some insipid Author that happen'd rightly to make his Court to him,<sup>2</sup> than he would for the

<sup>1</sup> Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 255) has the following interesting statement regarding Cibber and Wilks, which he gives on Victor's authority :—

"However Colley may complain, in his Apology, of Wilks's fire and impetuosity, he in general was Cibber's great admirer ; he supported him on all occasions, where his own passion or interest did not interpose ; nay, he deprived the inoffensive Harry Carey of the liberty of the scenes, because he had, in common with others, made merry with Cibber in a song, on his being appointed poet laureat ; saying at the same time, he was surprised at his impertinence, in behaving so improperly *to a man of such great merit.*"

<sup>2</sup> John Dennis, in an advertisement to the "Invader of his Country," remarks on this foible. He says :—

"I am perfectly satisfied that any Author who brings a Play to *Drury-Lane*, must, if 'tis a good one, be sacrificed to the Jealousie of this fine Writer, unless he has either a powerful Cabal, or unless he will flatter Mr. *Robert Wilks*, and make him believe that he is an excellent Tragedian." The "fine Writer" is, of course, Cibber.



best Play wherein it was not his Fortune to be chosen for the best Character. So great was his Impatience to be employ'd, that I scarce remember, in twenty Years, above one profitable Play we could get to be reviv'd, wherein he found he was to make no considerable Figure, independent of him: But the *Tempest* having done Wonders formerly, he could not form any Pretensions to let it lie longer dormant: However, his Coldness to it was so visible, that he took all Occasions to postpone and discourage its Progress, by frequently taking up the morning-Stage with something more to his Mind. Having been myself particularly solicitous for the reviving this Play, *Dogget* (for this was before *Booth* came into the Menagement) consented that the extraordinary Decorations and Habits should be left to my Care and Direction, as the fittest Person whose Temper could jossle through the petulant Opposition that he knew *Wilks* would be always offering to it, because he had but a middling Part in it, that of *Ferdinand*: Notwithstanding which, so it happen'd, that the Success of it shew'd (not to take from the Merit of *Wilks*) that it was possible to have good Audiences without his extraordinary Assistance. In the first six Days of acting it we paid all our constant and incidental Expence, and shar'd each of us a hundred Pounds: The greatest Profit that in so little a Time had yet been known within my Memory! But, alas! what was paltry Pelf to Glory? That was the darling Passion of *Wilks's* Heart! and

not to advance in it was, to so jealous an Ambition, a painful Retreat, a mere Shade to his Laurels! and the common Benefit was but a poor Equivalent to his want of particular Applause! To conclude, not Prince *Lewis* of *Baden*, though a Confederate General with the Duke of *Marlborough*, was more inconsolable upon the memorable Victory at *Blenheim*, at which he was not present, than our Theatrical Hero was to see any Action prosperous that he was not himself at the Head of. If this, then, was an Infirmary in *Wilks*, why may not my shewing the same Weakness in so great a Man mollify the Imputation, and keep his Memory in Countenance.

This laudable Appetite for Fame in *Wilks* was not, however, to be fed without that constant Labour which only himself was able to come up to: He therefore bethought him of the means to lessen the Fatigue, and at the same time to heighten his Reputation; which was, by giving up now and then a Part to some raw Actor who he was sure would disgrace it, and consequently put the Audience in mind of his superior Performance: Among this sort of Indulgences to young Actors he happen'd once to make a Mistake that set his Views in a clear Light. The best Criticks, I believe, will allow that in *Shakespeare's Macbeth* there are, in the Part of *Macduff*, two Scenes, the one of Terror, in the second Act, and the other of Compassion, in the fourth, equal to any that dramatick Poetry has produc'd: These Scenes *Wilks* had acted with Success, tho' far short of that happier

Skill and Grace which *Monfort* had formerly shewn in them.<sup>1</sup> Such a Part, however, one might imagine would be one of the last a good Actor would chuse to part with : But *Wilks* was of a different Opinion ; for *Macbeth* was thrice as long, had more great Scenes of Action, and bore the Name of the Play : Now, to be a second in any Play was what he did not much care for, and had been seldom us'd to : This Part of *Macduff*, therefore, he had given to one *Williams*, as yet no extraordinary, though a promising Actor.<sup>2</sup> *Williams*, in the Simplicity of his Heart, immediately

<sup>1</sup> "In the trajedy of *Mackbeth*, where *Wilks* acts the Part of a Man whose Family has been murder'd in his Absence, the Wildness of his Passion, which is run over in a Torrent of calamitous Circumstances, does but raise my Spirits and give me the Alarm ; but when he skilfully seems to be out of Breath, and is brought too low to say more ; and upon a second Reflection, cry, only wiping his Eyes, What, both my Children ! Both, both my Children gone—There is no resisting a Sorrow which seems to have cast about for all the Reasons possible for its Consolation, but has no Recourse. There is not one left, but both, both are murdered ! Such sudden Starts from the Thread of the Discourse, and a plain Sentiment express'd in an artless Way, are the irresistible Strokes of Eloquence and Poetry."—"Tatler," No. 68, September 15th, 1709.

The extraordinary language of Macduff is quoted from Davenant's mutilation of Shakespeare's play. Obviously it is not Shakespeare's language.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Williams was a young actor of great promise, who died in 1731. On the production of Thomson's "Sophonisba" at Drury Lane, on February 28th, 1730, Cibber played Scipio, but was so hissed by a public that would not suffer him in tragic parts, that he resigned the character to Williams. (See Note <sup>1</sup>, vol. i. page 179.) This would seem to indicate that Williams was an actor of some position, for Scipio is a good part.

told *Booth* what a Favour *Wilks* had done him. *Booth*, as he had Reason, thought *Wilks* had here carried his Indulgence and his Authority a little too far; for as *Booth* had no better a Part in the same Play than that of *Banquo*, he found himself too much disregarded in letting so young an Actor take Place of him: *Booth*, therefore, who knew the Value of *Macduff*, proposed to do it himself, and to give *Banquo* to *Williams*; and to make him farther amends, offer'd him any other of his Parts that he thought might be of Service to him. *Williams* was content with the Exchange, and thankful for the Promise. This Scheme, indeed, (had it taken Effect) might have been an Ease to *Wilks*, and possibly no Disadvantage to the Play; but softly—That was not quite what we had a Mind to! No sooner, then, came this Proposal to *Wilks*, but off went the Masque and out came the Secret! For though *Wilks* wanted to be eas'd of the Part, he did not desire to be *excell'd* in it; and as he was not sure but that might be the case if *Booth* were to act it,<sup>1</sup> he wisely retracted his

<sup>1</sup> “In the strong expression of horror on the murder of the King, and the loud exclamations of surprize and terror, *Booth* might have exceeded the utmost efforts of *Wilks*. But, in the touches of domestic woe, which require the feelings of the tender father and the affectionate husband, *Wilks* had no equal. His skill, in exhibiting the emotions of the overflowing heart with corresponding look and action, was universally admired and felt. His rising, after the suppression of his anguish, into ardent and manly resentment, was highly expressive of noble and generous anger.”—“Dram. Misc.,” ii. 183.

own Project, took *Macduff* again to himself, and while he liv'd never had a Thought of running the same Hazard by any farther Offer to resign it.

Here I confess I am at a Loss for a Fact in History to which this can be a Parallel! To be weary of a Post, even to a real Desire of resigning it; and yet to chuse rather to drudge on in it than suffer it to be well supplied (though to share in that Advantage) is a Delicacy of Ambition that *Machiavil* himself has made no mention of: Or if in old *Rome*, the Jealousy of any pretended Patriot equally inclin'd to abdicate his Office may have come up to it, 'tis more than my reading remembers.

As nothing can be more impertinent than shewing too frequent a Fear to be thought so, I will, without farther Apology, rather risque that Imputation than not tell you another Story much to the same purpose, and of no more consequence than my last. To make you understand it, however, a little Preface will be necessary.

If the Merit of an Actor (as it certainly does) consists more in the Quality than the Quantity of his Labour; the other Menagers had no visible Reason to think this needless Ambition of *Wilks*, in being so often and sometimes so unnecessarily employ'd, gave him any Title to a Superiority; especially when our Articles of Agreement had allow'd us all to be equal. But what are narrow Contracts to great Souls with growing Desires? *Wilks*, therefore, who thought himself lessen'd in appealing to any Judgment but

his own, plainly discovered by his restless Behaviour (though he did not care to speak out) that he thought he had a Right to some higher Consideration for his Performance: This was often *Booth's* Opinion, as well as my own. It must be farther observ'd, that he actually had a separate Allowance of Fifty Pounds a Year for writing our daily Play-Bills for the Printer: Which Province, to say the Truth, was the only one we car'd to trust to his particular Intendance, or could find out for a Pretence to distinguish him. But, to speak a plainer Truth, this Pension, which was no part of our original Agreement, was merely paid to keep him quiet, and not that we thought it due to so insignificant a Charge as what a Prompter had formerly executed. This being really the Case, his frequent Complaints of being a Drudge to the Company grew something more than disagreeable to us: For we could not digest the Imposition of a Man's setting himself to work, and then bringing in his own Bill for it. *Booth*, therefore, who was less easy than I was to see him so often setting a Merit upon this Quantity of his Labour, which neither could be our Interest or his own to lay upon him, proposed to me that we might remove this pretended Grievance by reviving some Play that might be likely to live, and be easily acted, without *Wilks's* having any Part in it. About this time an unexpected Occasion offer'd itself to put our Project in practice: What follow'd our Attempt will be all (if any thing be) worth Observation in my Story.

In 1725 we were call'd upon, in a manner that could not be resisted, to revive the *Provok'd Wife*,<sup>1</sup> a Comedy which, while we found our Account in keeping the Stage clear of those loose Liberties it had formerly too justly been charg'd with, we had laid aside for some Years.<sup>2</sup> The Author, Sir *John Vanbrugh*, who was conscious of what it had too much of, was prevail'd upon<sup>3</sup> to substitute a new-written Scene in the Place of one in the fourth Act, where the Wantonness of his Wit and Humour had (originally) made a Rake<sup>4</sup> talk like a Rake in the borrow'd Habit of a Clergyman: To avoid which Offence, he clapt the same Debauchee into the Undress of a Woman of Quality: Now the Character and Profession of a Fine Lady not being so indelibly sacred as that of a Churchman, whatever Follies he expos'd in the Petticoat kept him at least clear of his former Prophaneness,

<sup>1</sup> This revival took place 11th January, 1726. The play was acted eleven times.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Collier specially attacked Vanbrugh and his comedies for their immorality and profanity, and for their abuse of the clergy. Even less strict critics than Collier considered Vanbrugh's pieces as more indecent than the average play. Thus the author of "Faction Display'd," 1704, writes:—

" *Van's* Baudy, Plotless Plays were once our boast,  
But now the Poet's in the Builder lost."

<sup>3</sup> Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 455) says that he supposes Cibber prevailed upon Vanbrugh to alter the disguise which Sir John Brute assumes from a clergyman's habit to that of a woman of fashion.

<sup>4</sup> Sir John Brute.

and were now innocently ridiculous to the Spectator.

This Play being thus refitted for the Stage, was, as I have observ'd, call'd for from Court and by many of the Nobility.<sup>1</sup> Now, then, we thought, was a proper time to come to an Explanation with *Wilks*: Accordingly, when the Actors were summon'd to hear the Play read and receive their Parts, I address'd myself to *Wilks*, before them all, and told him, That as the Part of *Constant*, which he seem'd to chuse, was a Character of less Action than he generally appear'd in, we thought this might be a good Occasion to ease himself by giving it to another.—Here he look'd grave.—That the Love-Scenes of it were rather serious than gay or humourous, and therefore might sit very well upon *Booth*.—Down dropt his Brow, and furl'd were his Features.—That if we were never to revive a tolerable Play without him, what would become of us in case of his Indisposition?—Here he pretended to stir the Fire.—That as he could have no farther Advantage or Advancement in his Station to hope for, his acting in this Play was but giving himself an unprofitable Trouble, which neither *Booth* or I desired to impose upon him.—Softly.—Now the Pill began to

<sup>1</sup> Cibber's meaning is not very clear, but if he intends to convey the idea that it was for this revival that Vanbrugh made these alterations, he is probably wrong, for when the play was revived at the Haymarket, on 19th January, 1706, it was announced as "with alterations."



gripe him.—In a Word, this provoking Civility plung'd him into a Passion which he was no longer able to contain; out it came, with all the Equipage of unlimited Language that on such Occasions his Displeasure usually set out with; but when his Reply was stript of those Ornaments, it was plainly this: That he look'd upon all I had said as a concerted Design, not only to signalize our selves by laying him aside, but a Contrivance to draw him into the Disfavour of the Nobility, by making it suppos'd his own Choice that he did not act in a Play so particularly ask'd for; but we should find he could stand upon his own Bottom, and it was not all our little caballing should get our Ends of him: To which I answer'd with some Warmth, That he was mistaken in our Ends; for Those, Sir, said I, you have answer'd already by shewing the Company you cannot bear to be left out of any Play. Are not you every Day complaining of your being over-labour'd? And now, upon our first offering to ease you, you fly into a Passion, and pretend to make that a greater Grievance than t'other: But, Sir, if your being In or Out of the Play is a Hardship, you shall impose it upon yourself: The Part is in your Hand, and to us it is a Matter of Indifference now whether you take it or leave it. Upon this he threw down the Part upon the Table, cross'd his Arms, and sate knocking his Heel upon the Floor, as seeming to threaten most when he said least; but when no body persuaded him to take it up again, *Booth*, not chusing to push

the matter too far, but rather to split the difference of our Dispute, said, That, for his Part, he saw no such great matter in acting every Day; for he believed it the wholsomest Exercise in the World; it kept the Spirits in motion, and always gave him a good Stomach. Though this was, in a manner, giving up the Part to *Wilks*, yet it did not allow he did us any Favour in receiving it. Here I observ'd Mrs. *Oldfield* began to titter behind her Fan: But *Wilks* being more intent upon what *Booth* had said, reply'd, Every one could best feel for himself, but he did not pretend to the Strength of a Pack-horse; therefore if Mrs. *Oldfield* would chuse any body else to play with her,<sup>1</sup> he should be very glad to be excus'd: This throwing the Negative upon Mrs. *Oldfield* was, indeed, a sure way to save himself; which I could not help taking notice of, by saying, It was making but an ill Compliment to the Company to suppose there was but one Man in it fit to play an ordinary Part with her. Here Mrs. *Oldfield* got up, and turning me half round to come forward, said with her usual Frankness, Pooh! you are all a Parcel of Fools, to make such a rout about nothing! Rightly judging that the Person most out of humour would not be more displeas'd at her calling us all by the same Name. As she knew, too, the best way of ending the Debate would be to help the Weak; she said, she hop'd Mr. *Wilks* would not so far mind what had past as to refuse his acting the Part with

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Oldfield played Lady Brute, whose lover Constant is.

her; for tho' it might not be so good as he had been us'd to, yet she believed those who had bespoke the Play would expect to have it done to the best Advantage, and it would make but an odd Story abroad if it were known there had been any Difficulty in that point among ourselves. To conclude, *Wilks* had the Part, and we had all we wanted; which was an Occasion to let him see, that the Accident or Choice of one Menager's being more employ'd than another would never be allow'd a Pretence for altering our Indentures, or his having an extraordinary Consideration for it.<sup>1</sup>

However disagreeable it might be to have this unsociable Temper daily to deal with; yet I cannot but say, that from the same impatient Spirit that had so often hurt us, we still drew valuable Advantages: For as *Wilks* seem'd to have no Joy in Life beyond his being distinguish'd on the Stage, we were not only sure of his always doing his best there himself, but of making others more careful than without the Rod of so irascible a Temper over them they would have been. And I much question if a more temperate or better Usage of the hired Actors could have so effectually kept them to Order. Not even *Betterton* (as we have seen) with all his good Sense, his great Fame and Experience, could, by being only a quiet Example of Industry himself, save his Company from falling, while neither Gentleness could

<sup>1</sup> *Wilks* played Constant; Booth, Heartfree; and Cibber, Sir John Brute.

govern or the Consideration of their common Interest reform them.<sup>1</sup> Diligence, with much the inferior Skill or Capacity, will beat the best negligent Company that ever came upon a Stage. But when a certain dreaming Idleness or jolly Negligence of Rehearsals gets into a Body of the Ignorant and Incapable (which before *Wilks* came into *Drury-Lane*, when *Powel* was at the Head of them, was the Case of that Company) then, I say, a sensible Spectator might have look'd upon the fallen Stage as *Portius* in the Play of *Cato* does upon his ruin'd Country, and have lamented it in (something near) the same Exclamation, *viz.*

— *O ye Immortal Bards!*

*What Havock do these Blockheads make among  
your Works!*

*How are the boasted Labours of an Age*

*Defac'd and tortur'd by Ungracious Action?<sup>2</sup>*

Of this wicked Doings *Dryden*, too, complains in one of his Prologues at that time, where, speaking of such lewd Actors, he closes a Couplet with the following Line, *viz.*

*And murder Plays, which they miscall Reviving.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Cibber begins the seventh chapter of this work with an account of Betterton's troubles as a manager. See vol. i. p. 227. See also vol. i. p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> "Ye Gods, what Havock does Ambition make  
Among your Works!"—"Cato," act i. sc. 1.

<sup>3</sup> "And, in despair their empty pit to fill,  
Set up some Foreign monster in a bill.

The great Share, therefore, that *Wilks*, by his exemplary Diligence and Impatience of Neglect in others, had in the Reformation of this Evil, ought in Justice to be remember'd ; and let my own Vanity here take Shame to itself when I confess, That had I had half his Application, I still think I might have shewn myself twice the Actor that in my highest State of Favour I appear'd to be. But if I have any Excuse for that Neglect (a Fault which, if I loved not Truth, I need not have mentioned) it is that so much of my Attention was taken up in an incessant Labour to guard against our private Animosities, and preserve a Harmony in our Menagement, that I hope and believe it made ample Amends for whatever Omission my Auditors might sometimes know it cost me some pains to conceal. But Nature takes care to bestow her Blessings with a more equal Hand than Fortune does, and is seldom known to heap too many upon one Man : One tolerable Talent in an Individual is enough to preserve him from being good for nothing ; and, if that was not laid to my Charge as an Actor, I have in this Light too, less to complain of than to be thankful for.

Before I conclude my History, it may be expected I should give some further View of these my last Cotemporaries of the Theatre, *Wilks* and *Booth*, in their different acting Capacities. If I were to paint

Thus they jog on, still tricking, never thriving,  
And murdering plays, which they miscall reviving."  
" Address to Granville, on his Tragedy, *Heroic Love*."

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them in the Colours they laid upon one another, their Talents would not be shewn with half the Commendation I am inclined to bestow upon them, when they are left to my own Opinion. But People of the same Profession are apt to see themselves in their own clear Glass of Partiality, and look upon their Equals through a Mist of Prejudice. It might be imagin'd, too, from the difference of their natural Tempers, that *Wilks* should have been more blind to the Excellencies of *Booth* than *Booth* was to those of *Wilks*; but it was not so: *Wilks* would sometimes commend *Booth* to me; but when *Wilks* excell'd, the other was silent:<sup>1</sup> *Booth* seem'd to think nothing valuable that was not tragically Great or Marvellous: Let that be as true as it may; yet I have often thought that, from his having no Taste of Humour himself,<sup>2</sup> he might be too much inclin'd to depreciate the Acting of it in others. The very slight Opinion

<sup>1</sup> "During Booth's inability to act, . . . Wilks was called upon to play two of his parts—Jaffier, and Lord Hastings in *Jane Shore*. Booth was, at times, in all other respects except his power to go on the stage, in good health, and went among the players for his amusement. His curiosity drew him to the play-house on the nights when Wilks acted these characters, in which himself had appeared with uncommon lustre. All the world admired Wilks, except his brother-manager: amidst the repeated bursts of applause which he extorted, Booth alone continued silent."—Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 256).

<sup>2</sup> Aaron Hill, quoted by Victor in his "Life of Barton Booth," page 32, says: "The Passions which he found in Comedy were not strong enough to excite his Fire; and what seem'd Want of Qualification, was only Absence of Impression."

which in private Conversation with me he had of *Wilks's* acting Sir *Harry Wildair*, was certainly more than could be justified; not only from the general Applause that was against that Opinion (tho' Applause is not always infallible) but from the visible Capacity which must be allow'd to an Actor, that could carry such slight Materials to such a height of Approbation: For, though the Character of *Wildair* scarce in any one Scene will stand against a just Criticism; yet in the Whole there are so many gay and false Colours of the fine Gentleman, that nothing but a Vivacity in the Performance proportionably extravagant could have made them so happily glare upon a common Audience.

*Wilks*, from his first setting out, certainly form'd his manner of Acting upon the Model of *Monfort*; <sup>1</sup> as *Booth* did his on that of *Betterton*. But—*Haud passibus æquis*: I cannot say either of them came up to their Original. *Wilks* had not that easy regulated Behaviour, or the harmonious Elocution of the One, nor *Booth* that Conscious Aspect of Intelligence nor requisite Variation of Voice that made every Line [the Other spoke seem his own natural self-deliver'd Sentiment] Yet there is still room for great Commendation of Both the first mentioned; which will not be so much diminish'd in my having said they were only excell'd by such Predecessors, as it will be

<sup>1</sup> *Wilks* can have seen *Mountfort* only in his early career, for he did not leave Ireland till, at least, 1692; and in that year *Mountfort* was killed.

rais'd in venturing to affirm it will be a longer time before any Successors will come near them. Thus one of the greatest Praises given to *Virgil* is, that no Successor in Poetry came so near *Him* as *He* himself did to *Homer*.

Though the Majority of Publick Auditors are but bad judges of Theatrical Action, and are often deceiv'd into their Approbation of what has no solid Pretence to it; yet, as there are no other appointed Judges to appeal to, and as every single Spectator has a Right to be one of them, their Sentence will be definitive, and the Merit of an Actor must, in some degree, be weigh'd by it: By this Law, then, *Wilks* was pronounced an Excellent Actor; which, if the few true Judges did not allow him to be, they were at least too candid to slight or discourage him. *Booth* and he were Actors so directly opposite in their Manner, that if either of them could have borrowed a little of the other's Fault, they would Both have been improv'd by it: If *Wilks* had sometimes too violent a Vivacity; *Booth* as often contented himself with too grave a Dignity: The Latter seem'd too much to heave up his Words, as the other to dart them to the Ear with too quick and sharp a Vehemence: Thus *Wilks* would too frequently break into the Time and Measure of the Harmony by too many spirited Accents in one Line; and *Booth*, by too solemn a Regard to Harmony, would as often lose the necessary Spirit of it: So that (as I have observ'd) could we have sometimes rais'd the one and



sunk the other, they had both been nearer to the mark. Yet this could not be always objected to them: They had their Intervals of unexceptionable Excellence, that more than balanc'd their Errors. The Master-piece of *Booth* was *Othello*: There he was most in Character, and seemed not more to animate or please himself in it than his Spectators. 'Tis true he owed his last and highest Advancement to his acting *Cato*: But it was the Novelty and critical Appearance of that Character that chiefly swell'd the Torrent of his Applause: For let the Sentiments of a declaiming Patriot have all the Sublimity that Poetry can raise them to; let them be deliver'd, too, with the utmost Grace and Dignity of Elocution that can recommend them to the Auditor: Yet this is but one Light wherein the Excellence of an Actor can shine: But in *Othello* we may see him in the Variety of Nature: There the Actor is carried through the different Accidents of domestick Happiness and Misery, occasionally torn and tortur'd by the most distracting Passion that can raise Terror or Compassion in the Spectator. Such are the Characters that a Master Actor would delight in; and therefore in *Othello* I may safely aver that *Booth* shew'd himself thrice the Actor that he could in *Cato*. And yet his Merit in acting *Cato* need not be diminish'd by this Comparison.

*Wilks* often regretted that in Tragedy he had not the full and strong Voice of *Booth* to command and grace his Periods with: But *Booth* us'd to say, That

if his Ear had been equal to it, *Wilks* had Voice enough to have shewn himself a much better Tragedian. Now, though there might be some Truth in this; yet these two Actors were of so mixt a Merit, that even in Tragedy the Superiority was not always on the same side: In Sorrow, Tenderness, or Resignation, *Wilks* plainly had the Advantage, and seem'd more pathetically to feel, look, and express his Calamity: But in the more turbulent Transports of the Heart, *Booth* again bore the Palm, and left all Competitors behind him. A Fact perhaps will set this Difference in a clearer Light. I have formerly seen *Wilks* act *Othello*,<sup>1</sup> and *Booth* the *Earl of Essex*,<sup>2</sup> in which they both miscarried: Neither the exclamatory Rage or Jealousy of the one, or the plaintive Distresses of the other, were happily executed, or became either of them; though in the contrary Characters they were both excellent.

When an Actor becomes and naturally Looks the Character he stands in, I have often observ'd it to have had as fortunate an Effect, and as much re-

<sup>1</sup> *Wilks* first played *Othello* in this country on June 22nd, 1710, for *Cibber's* benefit. *Steele* draws attention to the event in "Tatler," No. 187, and in No. 188 states his intention of stealing out to see it, "out of Curiosity to observe how *Wilks* and *Cibber* touch those Places where *Betterton* and *Sandford* so very highly excelled." *Cibber* was the *Iago* on this occasion. *Steele* probably found little to praise in either.

<sup>2</sup> The *Earl of Essex*, in *Banks's* "Unhappy Favourite," was one of *Wilks's* good parts, in which *Steele* ("Tatler," No. 14) specially praises him. *Booth* acted the part at *Drury Lane* on November 25th, 1709.

commended him to the Approbation of the common Auditors, as the most correct or judicious Utterance of the Sentiments : This was strongly visible in the favourable Reception *Wilks* met with in *Hamlet*, where I own the Half of what he spoke was as painful to my Ear as every Line that came from *Betterton* was charming ;<sup>1</sup> and yet it is not impossible, could they have come to a Poll, but *Wilks* might have had a Majority of Admirers : However, such a Division had been no Proof that the Præeminence had not still remain'd in *Betterton* ; and if I should add that *Booth*, too, was behind *Betterton* in *Othello*, it would be saying no more than *Booth* himself had Judgment and Candour enough to know and confess. And if both he and *Wilks* are allow'd, in the two above-mention'd Characters, a second Place to so great a Master as *Betterton*, it will be a Rank of Praise that the best Actors since my Time might have been proud of.

I am now come towards the End of that Time through which our Affairs had long gone forward in a settled Course of Prosperity. From the Visible Errors of former Managements we had at last found the necessary Means to bring our private Laws and Orders into the general Observance and Approbation of our Society : Diligence and Neglect were under an equal Eye ; the one never fail'd of its Reward, and the other, by being very rarely excus'd,

<sup>1</sup> See Cibber on *Betterton's Hamlet* and on *Wilks's* mistakes in the part, vol. i. page 100.

was less frequently committed. You are now to consider us in our height of Favour, and so much in fashion with the politer Part of the Town, that our House every *Saturday* seem'd to be the appointed Assembly of the First Ladies of Quality : Of this, too, the common Spectators were so well appriz'd, that for twenty Years successively, on that Day, we scarce ever fail'd of a crowded Audience ; for which Occasion we particularly reserv'd our best Plays, acted in the best Manner we could give them.<sup>1</sup>

Among our many necessary Reformatations ; what not a little preserv'd to us the Regard of our Auditors, was the Decency of our clear Stage ;<sup>2</sup> from whence we had now, for many Years, shut out those idle Gentlemen, who seem'd more delighted to be pretty Objects themselves, than capable of any Pleasure from the Play : Who took their daily Stands where they might best elbow the Actor, and come in for their Share of the Auditor's Attention. In many a labour'd Scene of the warmest Humour and of the most affecting Passion have I seen the best Actors disconcerted, while these buzzing Muscatos have been fluttering round their Eyes and Ears. How was it possible an Actor, so embarrass'd, should keep his Impatience from entering into that different

<sup>1</sup> In the Theatre Français a similar arrangement holds to this day, Tuesday being now the fashionable night. M. Perrin, the late manager, was accused of a too great attention to his *Abonnés du Mardi*, to the detriment of the theatre and of the general public.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, vol. i. page 234.

Temper which his personated Character might require him to be Master of?

Future Actors may perhaps wish I would set this Grievance in a stronger Light; and, to say the Truth, where Auditors are ill-bred, it cannot well be expected that Actors should be polite. Let me therefore shew how far an Artist in any Science is apt to be hurt by any sort of Inattention to his Performance.

While the famous *Corelli*,<sup>1</sup> at *Rome*, was playing some Musical Composition of his own to a select Company in the private Apartment of his Patron-Cardinal, he observed, in the height of his Harmony, his Eminence was engaging in a detach'd Conversation; upon which he suddenly stopt short, and gently laid down his Instrument: The Cardinal, surpriz'd at the unexpected Cessation, ask'd him if a String was broke? To which *Corelli*, in an honest Conscience of what was due to his Musick, reply'd, No, Sir, I was only afraid I interrupted Business. His Eminence, who knew that a Genius could never shew itself to Advantage where it had not its proper Regards, took this Reproof in good Part, and broke off his Conversation to hear the whole *Concerto* play'd over again.

Another Story will let us see what Effect a mistaken Offence of this kind had upon the *French*

<sup>1</sup> Arcangelo Corelli, a famous Italian musician, born 1653, died 1713, who has been called the father of modern instrumental music.

Theatre ; which was told me by a Gentleman of the long Robe, then at *Paris*, and who was himself the innocent Author of it. At the Tragedy of *Zaire*, while the celebrated Mademoiselle *Gossin*<sup>1</sup> was delivering a Soliloquy, this Gentleman was seiz'd with a sudden Fit of Coughing, which gave the Actress some Surprise and Interruption ; and his Fit increasing, she was forced to stand silent so long, that it drew the Eyes of the uneasy Audience upon him ; when a *French* Gentleman, leaning forward to him, ask'd him, If this Actress had given him any particular Offence, that he took so publick an Occasion to resent it ? The *English* Gentleman, in the utmost Surprise, assured him, So far from it, that he was a particular Admirer of her Performance ; that his Malady was his real Misfortune, and if he apprehended any Return of it, he would rather quit his Seat than disoblige either the Actress or the Audience.

This publick Decency in their Theatre I have myself seen carried so far, that a Gentleman in their *second Loge*, or Middle-Gallery, being observ'd to sit forward himself while a Lady sate behind him, a loud Number of Voices call'd out to him from the Pit, *Place à la Dame ! Place à la Dame !* When the

<sup>1</sup> Jeanne Catherine Gaussin, a very celebrated actress of the Comédie Française, was the original representative of *Zaire*, in Voltaire's tragedy, to which Cibber refers. She made her first Parisian appearance in 1731 ; she retired in 1763, and died on 9th June, 1767. Voltaire's "*Zaire*" owed much of its success to her extraordinary ability.

Person so offending, either not apprehending the Meaning of the Clamour, or possibly being some *John Trott* who fear'd no Man alive; the Noise was continued for several Minutes; nor were the Actors, though ready on the Stage, suffer'd to begin the Play 'till this unbred Person was laugh'd out of his Seat, and had placed the Lady before him.

Whether this Politeness observ'd at Plays may be owing to their Clime, their Complexion, or their Government, is of no great Consequence; but if it is to be acquired, methinks it is pity our accomplish'd Countrymen, who every Year import so much of this Nation's gawdy Garniture, should not, in this long Course of our Commerce with them, have brought over a little of their Theatrical Good-breeding too.

I have been the more copious upon this Head, that it might be judg'd how much it stood us upon to have got rid of those improper Spectators I have been speaking of: For whatever Regard we might draw by keeping them at a Distance from our Stage, I had observed, while they were admitted behind our Scenes, we but too often shew'd them the wrong Side of our Tapestry; and that many a tolerable Actor was the less valued when it was known what ordinary Stuff he was made of.

Among the many more disagreeable Distresses that are almost unavoidable in the Government of a Theatre, those we so often met with from the Persecution of bad Authors were what we could never in-

tirely get rid of. But let us state both our Cases, and then see where the Justice of the Complaint lies. 'Tis true, when an ingenious Indigent had taken perhaps a whole Summer's Pains, *invitâ Minervâ*, to heap up a Pile of Poetry into the Likeness of a Play, and found, at last, the gay Promise of his Winter's Support was rejected and abortive, a Man almost ought to be a Poet himself to be justly sensible of his Distress! Then, indeed, great Allowances ought to be made for the severe Reflections he might naturally throw upon those pragmatical Actors, who had no Sense or Taste of good Writing. And yet, if his Relief was only to be had by his imposing a bad Play upon a good Set of Actors, methinks the Charity that first looks at home has as good an Excuse for its Coldness as the unhappy Object of it had a Plea for his being reliev'd at their Expence. But immediate Want was not always confess'd their Motive for Writing; Fame, Honour, and *Parnassian* Glory had sometimes taken a romantick Turn in their Heads; and then they gave themselves the Air of talking to us in a higher Strain—Gentlemen were not to be so treated! the Stage was like to be finely govern'd when Actors pretended to be Judges of Authors, &c. But, dear Gentlemen! if they were good Actors, why not? How should they have been able to act, or rise to any Excellence, if you supposed them not to feel or understand what you offer'd them? Would you have reduc'd them to the meer Mimickry of Parrots and Monkies, that can only



prate, and play a great many pretty Tricks, without Reflection? Or how are you sure your Friend, the infallible Judge to whom you read your fine Piece, might be sincere in the Praises he gave it? Or, indeed, might not you have thought the best Judge a bad one if he had disliked it? Consider, too, how possible it might be that a Man of Sense would not care to tell you a Truth he was sure you would not believe! And if neither *Dryden*, *Congreve*, *Steele*, *Addison*, nor *Farquhar*, (if you please) ever made any Complaint of their Incapacity to judge, why is the World to believe the Slights you have met with from them are either undeserved or particular? Indeed! indeed, I am not conscious that we ever did you or any of your Fraternity the least Injustice!<sup>1</sup> Yet this was not all we had to struggle with; to

<sup>1</sup> Cibber has been strongly censured for his treatment of authors. "The Laureat" gives the following account of an author's experiences: "*The Court sitting, Chancellor Cibber* (for the other two, like M—rs in *Chancery*, sat only for Form sake, and did not presume to judge) nodded to the Author to open his Manuscript. The Author begins to read, in which if he failed to please the *Corrector*, he wou'd condescend sometimes to read it for him: When, if the play strook him very warmly, as it wou'd if he found any Thing new in it, in which he conceived he cou'd particularly shine as an Actor, he would lay down his Pipe, (for the *Chancellor* always smoaked when he made a Decree) and cry, *By G—d there is something in this: I do not know but it may do; but I will play such a Part*. Well, when the Reading was finished, he made his proper Corrections and sometimes without any Propriety; nay, frequently he very much and very hastily maimed what he pretended to mend" (p. 95). The author also accuses Cibber of delighting in repulsing dramatic writers, which he called

supersede our Right of rejecting, the Recommendation, or rather Imposition, of some great Persons (whom it was not Prudence to disoblige) sometimes came in with a high Hand to support their Pretensions; and then, *cout que cout*, acted it must be! So when the short Life of this wonderful Nothing was over, the Actors were perhaps abus'd in a Preface for obstructing the Success of it, and the Town publickly damn'd us for our private Civility.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot part with these fine Gentlemen Authors without mentioning a ridiculous *Disgraccia* that befel one of them many Years ago: This solemn Bard, who, like *Bays*, only writ for Fame and Reputation; on the second Day's publick Triumph of his Muse,

“Choaking of Singing birds.” However, in Cibber's defence, Genest's opinion may be quoted (iii. 346): “After all that has been said against Chancellor Cibber, it does not appear that he often made a wrong decree: most of the good plays came out at Drury Lane—nor am I aware that Cibber is much to be blamed for rejecting any play, except the Siege of Damascus in the first instance.”

<sup>1</sup> In the preface to “The Lunatick” (1705) the actors are roundly abused; but the most amusing attack on actors is in the following title-page: “The Sham Lawyer: or the Lucky Extravagant. As it was *Damnably* Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane.” This play, by Drake, was played in 1697, and among the cast were Cibber, Bullock, Johnson, Haines, and Pinkethman.

Bellchambers notes: “Such was the case in Dennis's ‘Comic Gallant,’ where one of the actors, whom I believe to be Bullock, is most severely handled.” I think he is wrong in imagining Bullock to be the actor criticised. Dennis says that Falstaffe was the character that was badly sustained, and I cannot believe Bullock's position would entitle him to play that part in 1702. Genest (ii. 250) suggests Powell as the delinquent.

marching in a stately full-bottom'd Perriwig into the Lobby of the House, with a Lady of Condition in his Hand, when raising his Voice to the Sir *Fopling* Sound, that *became the Mouth of a Man of Quality*, and calling out—Hey! Box-keeper, where is my Lady such-a-one's Servant, was unfortunately answer'd by honest *John Trott*, (which then happen'd to be the Box-keeper's real Name) Sir, we have dismiss'd, there was not Company enough to pay Candles. In which mortal Astonishment it may be sufficient to leave him. And yet had the Actors refus'd this Play, what Resentment might have been thought too severe for them?

Thus was our Administration often censured for Accidents which were not in our Power to prevent: A possible Case in the wisest Governments. If, therefore, some Plays have been preferr'd to the Stage that were never fit to have been seen there, let this be our best Excuse for it. And yet, if the Merit of our rejecting the many bad Plays that press'd hard upon us were weigh'd against the few that were thus imposed upon us, our Conduct in general might have more Amendments of the Stage to boast of than Errors to answer for. But it is now Time to drop the Curtain.

During our four last Years there happen'd so very little unlike what has been said before, that I shall conclude with barely mentioning those unavoidable Accidents that drew on our Dissolution. The first, that for some Years had led the way to greater, was

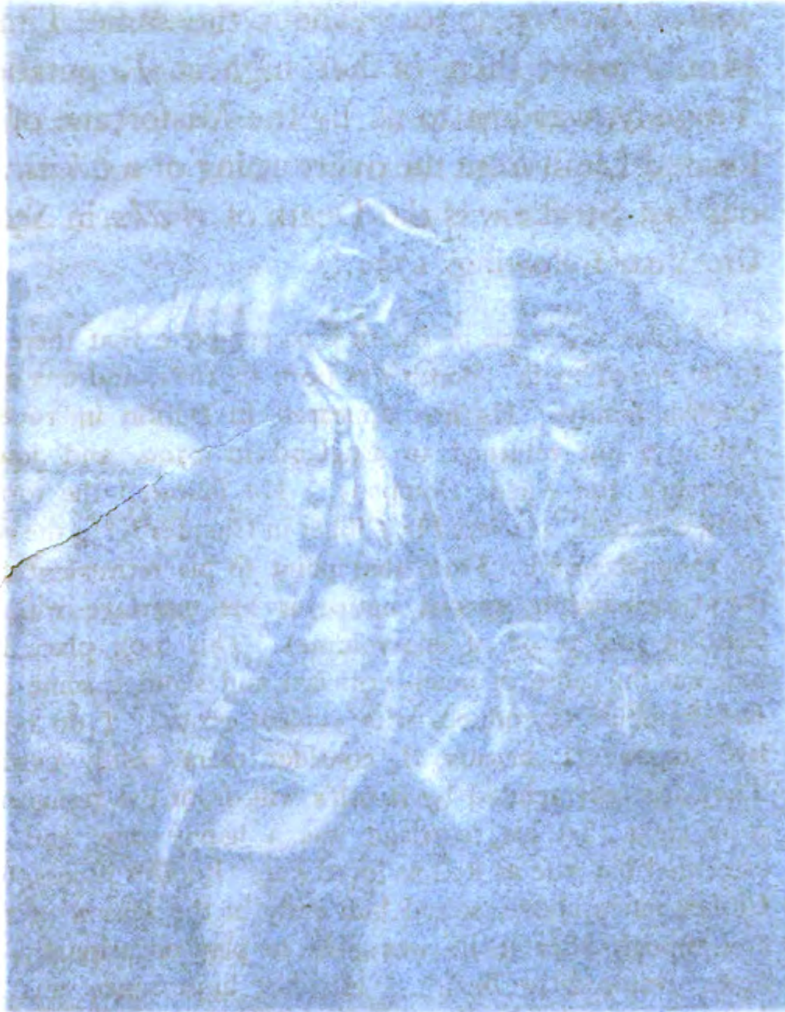
the continued ill State of Health that render'd *Booth*<sup>1</sup> incapable of appearing on the Stage. The next was the Death of Mrs. *Oldfield*,<sup>2</sup> which happen'd on the 23d of *October*, 1730. About the same Time, too, Mrs. *Porter*, then in her highest Reputation for Tragedy, was lost to us by the Misfortune of a dislocated Limb from the overturning of a *Chaise*.<sup>3</sup> And our last Stroke was the Death of *Wilks*, in *September* the Year following, 1731.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cibber's account of Booth is so complete that there is little to be added to it. Booth was born in 1681, and was of a good English family. He first appeared in Dublin in 1698, under Ashbury, but returned to England in 1700, and joined the Lincoln's Inn Fields Company. He followed the fortunes of Betterton until, as related by Cibber in Chapter XII., the secession of 1709 occurred. From that point to his retirement the only event demanding special notice is his marriage with Hester Santlow (see p. 96 of this volume). This took place in 1719, and was the cause of much criticism and slander, some of which Bellchambers reproduces with evident gusto. I do not repeat his statements, because I consider them wildly extravagant. They are fully refuted by Booth's will, from the terms of which it is clear that his marriage was a happy one, and that he esteemed his wife as well as loved her. Booth's illness, to which Cibber refers above, seized him early in the season of 1726-27, and though after it he was able to play occasionally, he was never restored to health. His last appearance was on 9th January, 1728, but he lived till 10th May, 1733.

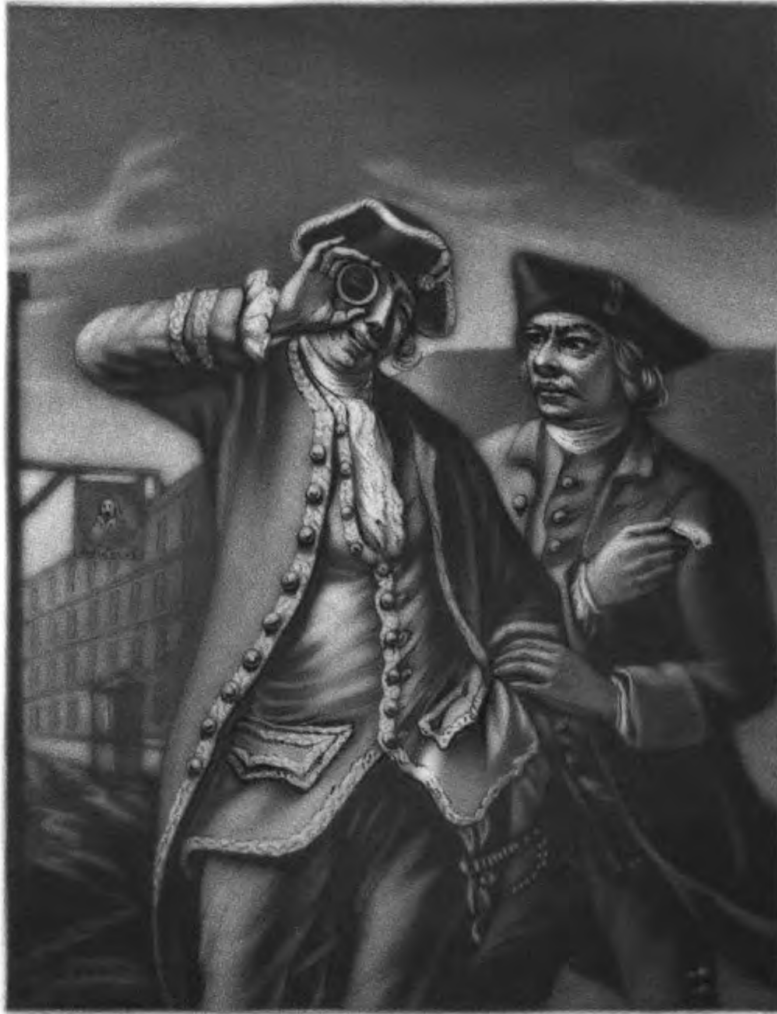
<sup>2</sup> See memoir of Mrs. Oldfield at end of volume.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Porter met with the accident referred to in the summer of 1731. See Davies, "Dram. Misc.," iii. 495. She returned to the stage in January, 1733.

<sup>4</sup> Wilks died 27th September, 1732. He was of English parentage, and was born near Dublin, whither his father had removed, about 1665. He was in a Government office, but







CHARLES FLEETWOOD.





Notwithstanding such irreparable Losses; whether, when these favourite Actors were no more to be had, their Successors might not be better born with than they could possibly have hop'd while the former were in being; or that the generality of Spectators, from their want of Taste, were easier to be pleas'd than the few that knew better: Or that, at worst, our Actors were still preferable to any other Company of the several then subsisting: Or to whatever Cause it might be imputed, our Audiences were far less abated than our Apprehensions had suggested. So that, though it began to grow late in Life with me; having still Health and Strength enough to have been as useful on the Stage as ever, I was under no visible Necessity of quitting it: But so it happen'd that our surviving Fraternity having got some chimærical, and, as I thought, unjust Notions into their Heads, which, though I knew they were without much Difficulty to be surmounted; I chose not, at my time of Day, to enter into new Contentions; and as I found an Inclination in some of them to purchase the whole Power of the Patent into their own Hands; I did my best while I staid

about 1691 he gave this up, and went on the stage. After a short probation in Dublin he came over to London, and was engaged by Rich, with whom he remained till about 1695. He returned to Dublin, and became so great a favourite there, that it is said that the Lord Lieutenant issued a warrant to prevent his leaving again for London. However, he came to Drury Lane about 1698, and from that time his fortunes are closely interwoven with Cibber's, and are fully related by him.

II.

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with them to make it worth their while to come up to my Price ; and then patiently sold out my Share to the first Bidder, wishing the Crew I had left in the Vessel a good Voyage.<sup>1</sup>

What Commotions the Stage fell into the Year following, or from what Provocations the greatest Part of the Actors revolted, and set up for themselves in the little House in the *Hay-Market*, lies not within the Promise of my Title Page to relate : Or, as it might set some Persons living in a Light they possibly might not chuse to be seen in, I will rather be thankful for the involuntary Favour they have done me, than trouble the Publick with private Complaints of fancied or real Injuries.

*FINIS.*

<sup>1</sup> "The Laureat," p. 96 : "As to the Occasion of your parting with your Share of the Patent, I cannot think you give us the true Reason ; for I have been very well inform'd, it was the Intention, not only of you, but of your Brother Menagers, as soon as you could get the great Seal to your Patent, (which stuck for some Time, the then Lord *Chancellor* not being satisfied in the Legality of the Grant) to dispose it to the best Bidder. This was at first kept as a Secret among you ; but as soon as the Grant was completed, you sold to the first who wou'd come up to your Price."



## SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER.

BY ROBERT W. LOWE.

THE transaction to which Cibber alludes in his last paragraph is one with regard to which he probably felt that his conduct required some explanation. After the death of Steele, a Patent was granted to Cibber, Wilks, and Booth, empowering them to give plays at Drury Lane, or elsewhere, for a period of twenty-one years from 1st September, 1732.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Among the Lord Chamberlain's Papers is a copy of a warrant to prepare this Patent. It is dated 15th May, 1731, and the Patent itself is dated 3rd July, 1731, though it did not take effect till 1st September, 1732. The reason for this is noted on page 196.

Just after it came into operation Wilks died, and his share in the Patent became the property of his wife. Booth, shortly before his death, which occurred in May, 1733, sold half of his share for £2,500, to John Highmore, a gentleman who seems to have been a typical amateur manager, being possessed of some money, no judgment, and unbounded vanity. In making this purchase Highmore stipulated that, with half of Booth's share, he should receive the whole of his authority; and he accordingly exercised the same power of control as had belonged to Booth. Mrs. Wilks deputed Mr. John Ellys, the painter, to be her representative, so that Cibber had to manage the affairs of the theatre in conjunction with a couple of amateurs, both ignorant, and one certainly presumptuous also. He delegated his authority for a time to his scapegrace son, Theophilus, who probably made himself so objectionable that Highmore was glad to buy the father's share in the Patent also.<sup>1</sup> He paid three thousand guineas for it, thus purchasing a whole share for a sum not much exceeding that which he had paid for one-half. Highmore's first purchase took place in the autumn of 1732, his second somewhere about May, 1733; so that, when Drury

<sup>1</sup> "The Grub-Street Journal," 7th June, 1733, says: "One little Creature, only the Deputy and Representative of his Father, was turbulent enough to balk their Measures, and counterbalance all the Civility and Decency in the other scale. . . . To remedy this, the Gentleman who bought into the Patent first, purchased his Father's Share, and set him down in the same obscure Place from whence he rose."

Lane opened for the season 1733-34, he possessed one-half of the three shares into which the Patent was divided. Mrs. Wilks retained her share, but Mrs. Booth had sold her remaining half-share to Henry Giffard,<sup>1</sup> the manager of Goodman's Fields Theatre, at which, eight years later, Garrick made his first appearance. Highmore had scarcely entered upon his fuller authority when a revolt was spirited up among his actors, the chief of whom left him in a body to open the little theatre in the Haymarket. Shameful to relate, the ringleader in this mutiny was Theophilus Cibber; and, what is still more disgraceful, Colley Cibber lent them his active countenance. Benjamin Victor, though a devoted friend of Colley Cibber, characterizes the transaction as most dishonest,<sup>2</sup> and there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of his information or the soundness of his judgment. Davies ("Life of Garrick," i. 76) states that Colley

<sup>1</sup> In "The Case of John Mills, James Quin," &c., given in Theo. Cibber's "Dissertations" (Appendix, p. 48), it is stated that "such has been the Inveteracy of some of the late Patentees to the Actors, that when Mrs. *Booth*, Executrix of her late Husband, *Barton Booth*, Esq; sold her sixth part of the Patent to Mr. *Giffard*, she made him covenant, not to sell or assign it to Actors."

<sup>2</sup> "I must own, I was heartily disgusted with the Conduct of the Family of the *Cibbers* on this Occasion, and had frequent and violent Disputes with Father and Son, whenever we met! It appeared to me something shocking that the Son should immediately render void, and worthless, what the Father had just received Thirty-one Hundred and Fifty Pounds for, as a valuable Consideration."—Victor's "History," i. 14.

Cibber applied to the Duke of Grafton, then Lord Chamberlain, for a new License or Patent in favour of his son; but the Duke, on inquiring into the matter, was so disgusted at Cibber's conduct that he refused the application with strong expressions of disapprobation. The seceders had of course no Patent or License under which to act; but, from the circumstance that they took the name of Comedians of His Majesty's Revels, it is probable that they received a License from the Master of the Revels, Charles Henry Lee. Highmore, deserted by every actor of any importance except Miss Raftor (Mrs. Clive), Mrs. Horton, and Bridgwater, was at his wits' end. He summoned the seceders for an infringement of his Patent, but his case, tried on 5th November, 1733, was dismissed, apparently on some technical plea. He could not prevail upon the Lord Chamberlain to exert his authority to close the Haymarket, so he determined to try the efficacy of the Vagrant Act (12 Queen Anne) against the irregular performers. John Harper accordingly was arrested on 12th November, 1733, and committed to Bridewell. On the 20th of the same month he was tried before the Court of King's Bench as a rogue and vagabond; but, whether from the circumstance that Harper was a householder, or from a decision that playing at the Haymarket was not an act of vagrancy,<sup>1</sup> he was discharged upon his own recogni-

<sup>1</sup> Cibber, in Chapter VIII. (vol. i. p. 283), alludes to this trial, and gives the first of these two suppositions as the reason of

zance, and the manager's action failed. He had therefore to bring actors from the country to make up his company ; but of these Macklin was the only one who proved of any assistance, and the unfortunate Highmore, after meeting deficiencies of fifty or sixty pounds each week for some months, was forced to give up the struggle.<sup>1</sup> Another amateur then stepped into the breach—Charles Fleetwood, who purchased the shares of Highmore and Mrs. Wilks for little more than the former had paid for his own portion. Giffard seems to have retained his sixth of the Patent. Fleetwood first set about regaining the services of the seceders, and, as the majority of them were probably ashamed of following the leadership of Theophilus Cibber, he succeeded at once. The last performance at the Haymarket took place on 9th March, 1734, and on the 12th the deserters reappeared on Drury Lane stage. This transaction ended Colley Cibber's direct interference in the affairs of the theatre, and his only subsequent connection with the stage was as an actor. His first appearance after his retirement was on 31st October, 1734, when he played his great character of Bayes. During the season he acted Lord Foppington, Sir

Harper's acquittal, but Victor ("History," i. 24) says that he has been informed that this is an error.

<sup>1</sup> "He was a Man of Humanity and strict Honour ; many Instances fatally proved, that his Word, when solemnly given, (which was his Custom) was sufficient for the Performance, though ever so injurious to himself."—Victor's "History," i. 25.

John Brute, Sir Courtly Nice, and Sir Fopling Flutter; and on 26th February, 1735, he appeared as Fondlewife for the benefit of his old friend and partner, Owen Swiney.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the season 1734-5, an arrangement was under consideration by which a committee of actors, including Mills, Johnson, Miller, Theo. Cibber, Mrs. Heron, Mrs. Butler, and others, were to rent Drury Lane from Fleetwood, for fifteen years, at £920 per annum; but the arrangement does not appear to have been carried out, and Fleetwood continued Patentee of Drury Lane until 1744-5.

The rival company, under the control of John Rich, acted at Lincoln's Inn Fields from 18th December, 1714, to 5th December, 1732; then they removed to the new Covent Garden Theatre, which was opened on 7th December with "The Way of the World." For several seasons both companies dragged along very uneventfully, so far as the artistic advancement of the stage was concerned, although the passing of the Licensing Act of 1737, already fully commented on, was an event of great historical importance. Artistically the period was one of rest, if not of retrogression; the methods of the older time were losing their meaning and vitality, and were becoming mere dry bones of tradition. The high priest of the stage was James Quin, a great actor, though not of the first order; and among the younger players perhaps the most notable was Charles

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, Chapter IX. (vol. i. p. 330, note <sup>1</sup>).



Macklin, rough in manner as in person, but full of genius and a thorough reformer. Garrick was the direct means of revolutionizing the methods of the theatre, and it was his genius that swept away the formality and dulness of the old school ; but it ought to be remembered that the way was prepared for him by Charles Macklin, whose rescue of Shylock from low comedy was an achievement scarcely inferior to Garrick's greatest. During this dull period Cibber's appearances must have had an importance and interest, which, after Garrick's advent, they lacked.

In the season 1735-6 he acted Sir Courtly Nice and Bayes, and in the next season his play of " Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John," a miserable mutilation of Shakespeare's " King John," was put in rehearsal at Drury Lane. But such a storm of ridicule and abuse arose when this play was announced, that Cibber withdrew it,<sup>1</sup> and it was not seen till 1745, when, the nation being in fear of a Popish Pretender, it was produced at Covent Garden from patriotic motives.

Cibber's implacable foe, Fielding, was one of the ringleaders in the attack on him for mutilating Shakespeare ; and in his " Historical Register for

<sup>1</sup> "The clamour against the author, whose presumption was highly censured for daring to alter Shakspeare, increased to such a height, that Colley, who had smarted more than once for dabbling in tragedy, went to the playhouse, and, without saying a word to any body, took the play from the prompter's desk, and marched off with it in his pocket."—"Dram. Misc.," i. 5.

1736,"<sup>1</sup> in which Colley is introduced as "Ground-Ivy,"<sup>2</sup> gives him the following excellent rebuke:—

"*Medley*. As *Shakspear* is already good enough for People of Taste, he must be alter'd to the Palates of those who have none; and if you will grant that, who can be properer to alter him for the worse?"

In 1738, having, as Victor says ("History," ii. 48), "Health and Strength enough to be as useful as ever," he agreed with Fleetwood to perform a round of his favourite characters. He was successful in comedy, but in tragedy he felt that his strength was no longer sufficient; and Victor relates that, going behind the scenes while the third act of "Richard III." was on, he was told in a whisper by the old man, "That he would give fifty Guineas to be then sitting in his easy Chair by his own Fire-side." Probably

<sup>1</sup> Produced at the Haymarket, 1737.

<sup>2</sup> "Enter Ground-Ivy.

*Ground*. What are you doing here?

*Apollo*. I am casting the Parts in the Tragedy of King *John*.

*Ground*. Then you are casting the Parts in a Tragedy that won't do.

*Apollo*. How, Sir! Was it not written by *Shakespeare*, and was not *Shakespeare* one of the greatest Genius's that ever lived?

*Ground*. No, Sir, *Shakespeare* was a pretty Fellow, and said some things that only want a little of my licking to do well enough; King *John*, as now writ, will not do—But a Word in your Ear, I will make him do.

*Apollo*. How?

*Ground*. By Alteration, Sir; it was a Maxim of mine when I was at the Head of Theatrical Affairs, that no Play, tho' ever so good, would do without Alteration."—"Historical Register," act iii. sc. 1.

he never played in tragedy again until the production of his own "Papal Tyranny"—at least I cannot discover that he did. In 1740-1 he acted Fondlewife for the benefit of Chetwood, late prompter at Drury Lane, who was then imprisoned in the King's Bench for debt; and his reception was so favourable that he repeated the character a second and third time for his own profit.<sup>1</sup> Upon these occasions he spoke an "Epilogue upon Himself," which is given in "The Egotist" (p. 57 *et seq.*), and forms so good an epitome of Cibber's philosophy, besides giving an excellent specimen of his style, that I quote it at length:—

"Now worn with Years, and yet in Folly strong,  
 Now to act Parts, your Grandsires saw when Young!  
 What could provoke me!—I was always wrong.  
 To hope, with Age, I could advance in Merit!  
 Even Age well acted, asks a youthful Spirit:  
 To feel my Wants, yet shew 'em thus detected,  
 Is living to the Dotage, I have acted!  
 T' have acted only Once excus'd might be,  
 When I but play'd the Fool for Charity!  
 But fondly to repeat it!—Senseless Ninny!  
 —No—now—as Doctors do—I touch the Guinea!  
 And while I find my Doses can affect you,  
 'Twere greater Folly still, should I neglect you.  
 Though this Excuse, at *White's* they'll not allow me;  
 The Ralliers There, in Diff'rent Lights will shew me.  
 They'll tell you There: I only act—sly Rogue!  
 To play with *Cocky*!<sup>2</sup>—O! the doting Dog!  
 And howsoe'er an Audience might regard me,

<sup>1</sup> These appearances took place on January 12th, 13th, and 14th, 1741.

<sup>2</sup> Fondlewife's pet name for his wife Lætitia.

One—*tiss ye Nykin*,<sup>1</sup> amply might reward me !  
 Let them enjoy the Jest, with Laugh incessant !  
 For True, or False, or Right, or Wrong, 'tis pleasant !  
 Mixt, in the wisest Heads, we find some Folly ;  
 Yet I find few such happy Fools—as *Colley* !  
 So long t'have liv'd the daily Satire's Stroke,  
 Unmov'd by Blows, that might have fell'd an Oak, }  
 And yet have laugh'd the labour'd Libel to a Joke. }  
 Suppose such want of Feeling prove me dull !  
 What's my Aggressor then—a peevish Fool !  
 The strongest Satire's on a Blockhead lost ;  
 For none but Fools or Madmen strike a Post.  
 If for my Folly's larger List you call,  
 My Life has lump'd 'em ! There you'll read 'em all.  
 There you'll find Vanity, wild Hopes pursuing ;  
 A wide Attempt : to save the Stage from Ruin !  
 There I confess, I have *out-done my own out-doing* !<sup>2</sup>  
 As for what's left of Life, if still 'twill do ;  
 'Tis at your Service, pleas'd while pleasing you :  
 But then, mistake me not ! when you've enough ;  
 One slender House declares both Parties off :  
 Or Truth in homely Proverb to advance,  
 I pipe no longer than you care to dance."

The representative of Lætitia (or *Cocky*) alluded to in this Epilogue was Mrs. Woffington, with whom stage-history has identified the "Susannah" of the following well-known anecdote, which I quote from an attack upon Cibber, published in 1742, entitled "A Blast upon *Bays* ; or, A New Lick at the Laureat." The author writes : "No longer ago than when the *Bedford Coffee house* was in Vogue, and Mr. *Cibber* was writing *An Apology for his own Life*, there was

<sup>1</sup> Lætitia's pet name for Fondlewife. See vol. i. page 206.

<sup>2</sup> An allusion to his own phrase in the Preface to "The Provoked Husband." See vol. i. page 51.

one Mr. S—— (the Importer of an expensive *Hay-market* Comedy) an old Acquaintance of Mr. *Cibber*, who, as well as he, retain'd a Smack of his antient Taste. In those Days there was also a fair smirking Damsel, whose name was *Susannah-Maria* \* \* \*, who happen'd to have Charms sufficient to revive the decay'd Vigour of these two Friends. They equally pursued her, even to the *Hazard of their Health*, and were frequently seen dangling after her, with tottering Knees, at one and the same Time. You have heard, Sir, what a witty Friend of your own said once on this Occasion : *Lo! yonder goes Susannah and the two Elders.*" Even Genest has applied this anecdote to Mrs. Woffington, but the only circumstance that lends confirmation to this view is the fact that Swiney (who is Mr. S——) left her his estate. Against this must be set the important points that *Susannah Maria* was not Mrs. Woffington's name, and that the joke depended for its neatness and applicability on the name *Susannah*. The narrator of the story, also, gives no hint that the damsel was the famous actress, as he certainly would have done; and, most important of all, it must be pointed out that at the period mentioned, that is, while *Cibber* was writing his "Apology," Mrs. Woffington had not appeared in London. The "Apology" was published in April, 1740, and had probably been completed in the preceding November; while Mrs. Woffington made her London *début* on 6th November, 1740.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The name "*Susannah Maria*" naturally suggests *Susanna Maria Arne*, the wife of *Theo. Cibber*; but the anecdote cannot refer to

During the season 1741-2, "At the particular desire of several persons of Quality," Cibber made a few appearances at Covent Garden; the purpose being, in all probability, to oppose the extraordinary attraction of Garrick at Goodman's Fields. In 1743-4 he played at the same theatre as Garrick, being engaged at Drury Lane for a round of his famous characters; but there is no record that Garrick and he appeared in the same play. For the new actor Cibber had, naturally enough, no great admiration. He must have resented deeply the alteration in the method of acting tragedy which Garrick introduced, and is always reported as having lost no opportunity of expressing his low opinion of the new school.<sup>1</sup>

His last appearances on the stage were in direct rivalry with his young opponent. As has been related, Cibber's alteration of "King John," which had been "burked" in 1736-7, was produced, from patriotic motives, in 1745. As the principal purpose her, because she was married in 1734, some years before Cibber began his "Apology."

<sup>1</sup> Davies ("Dram. Misc.," iii. 501) says: "Mr. Garrick asked him [Cibber] if he had not in his possession, a comedy or two of his own writing.—'What then?' said Cibber.—'I should be glad to have the honour of bringing it into the world.'—'Who have you to act it?'—'Why, there are (said Garrick) Clive and Pritchard, myself, and some others,' whom he named.—'No! (said the old man, taking a pinch of snuff, with great nonchalance) it won't do.'" Davies (iii. 502) relates how Garrick drew on himself a rebuke from Cibber. Discussing in company the old school, "Garrick observed that the old style of acting was banishing the stage, and would not go down. 'How do you know? (said Cibber); you never tried it.'"

of the alteration was to make King John resent the insolence of the Pope's Nuncio in a much more emphatic manner than he does in Shakespeare, it may easily be imagined how wretched a production Cibber's play is. Genest's criticism is not too strong when he says (iv. 161): "In a word, Cibber has on this occasion shown himself utterly void of taste, judgment and modesty—well might Fielding call him Ground-Ivy, and say that no man was better calculated to alter Shakspeare for the worse . . . . in the Epilogue (which was spoken by Mrs. Clive) Cibber speaks of himself with modesty, but in the dedication, being emboldened by the favourable reception of his Tragedy, he has the insolence to say '*I have endeavoured to make it more like a play than I found it in Shakspeare.*'" "Papal Tyranny" was produced at Covent Garden on 15th February, 1745,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John."

KING JOHN . . . . .	Mr. Quin.
ARTHUR, his Nephew . . . . .	Miss J. Cibber.
SALISBURY . . . . .	Mr. Ridout.
PEMBROKE . . . . .	Mr. Rosco.
ARUNDEL . . . . .	Mr. Anderson.
FALCONBRIDGE. . . . .	Mr. Ryan.
HUBERT . . . . .	Mr. Bridgewater.
KING PHILIP	} of France . . . . . {
LEWIS the Dauphin	
MELUN, a Nobleman	Mr. Cibber, Jun.
	Mr. Cashell.
PANDULPH, Legate from Pope Innocent . . . . .	Mr. Cibber, Sen.
ABBOT	} of Angiers . . . . . {
GOVERNOR	
	Mr. Carr.
LADY CONSTANCE . . . . .	Mrs. Pritchard.
BLANCH, Niece to King John . . . . .	Mrs. Bellamy.

and, in opposition to it, Shakespeare's play was put up at Drury Lane, with Garrick as King John, Macklin as Pandulph, and Mrs. Cibber (the great Mrs. Cibber, wife of Theophilus) as Constance. Cibber's play was, nevertheless, successful; the profit resulting to the author being, according to Victor, four hundred pounds, which he wisely laid out in a profitable annuity with Lord Mountford. In this play Cibber made his last appearance on the stage, on 26th February, 1745, on which day "Papal Tyranny" was played for the tenth time. "After which," says Victor ("History," ii. 49) "he retired to his easy Chair and his Chariot, to waste the Remains of Life with a chearful, contented Mind, without the least bodily Complaint, but that of a slow, unavoidable Decay."

His state of mind was probably the more "chearful and contented" because of his unquestionable success in his tilt with the formidable author of "The Dunciad;" a success none the less certain at the time, that the enduring fame of Pope has caused Cibber's triumph over him to be lost sight of now. The progress of the quarrel between these enemies has already been related up to the publication of Cibber's "Apology" (see vol. i. p. 36), and on pages 21, 35, and 36 of the first volume of this edition will be found Cibber's perfectly good-natured and proper remarks on Pope's attacks on him. Whether the very fact that Cibber did not show temper irritated his opponent, I do not know; but it probably did so, for in the fourth book



of "The Dunciad," published in 1742, Pope had another fling at his opponent (line 17) :—

"She mounts the throne : her head a cloud conceal'd,  
In broad effulgence all below reveal'd ;  
( 'Tis thus aspiring Dulness ever shines : )  
Soft on her lap her laureate son reclines."

And in line 532 he talks of "Cibberian forehead" as typical of unblushing impudence.

It is not surprising that this last attack exhausted Cibber's patience. He had hitherto received his punishment with good temper and good humour ; but his powerful enemy had not therefore held his hand. He now determined to retaliate. Conscious of the diseased susceptibility of Pope to ridicule, he felt himself quite capable of replying, not with equal literary power, but with much superior practical effect. Accordingly in 1742 there appeared a pamphlet entitled "A Letter from Mr. Cibber, to Mr. Pope, inquiring into the motives that might induce him in his Satyrical Works, to be so frequently fond of Mr. Cibber's name." To it was prefixed the motto : "*Out of thy own Mouth will I judge thee.* Pref. to the *Dunciad.*"

Cibber commences by stating that he had been persuaded to reply to Pope by his friends ; who insisted that for him to treat his attacker any longer with silent disdain might be thought a confession of Dulness indeed. This is a highly probable statement ; for an encounter between the vivacious Cibber and the thin-skinned Pope promised a wealth of

amusement for those who looked on—a promise which was amply fulfilled. Cibber proceeds to assure Pope that, having entered the lists, he will not in future avoid the fray, but reply to every attack made on him.<sup>1</sup> He confesses his vast inferiority to Pope, but adds: “I own myself so contented a Dunce, that I would not have even your merited Fame in Poetry, if it were to be attended with half the fretful Solitude you seem to have lain under to maintain it; of which the laborious Rout you make about it, in those Loads of Prose Rubbish, wherewith you have almost smother’d your *Dunciad*, is so sore a Proof.” On page 17 of his “Letter” Cibber gives an interesting account of a quarrel between Pope and himself, to which he, with sufficient probability, attributes much of Pope’s enmity. The passage is curious and important, so I quote it in full:—

“The Play of the *Rehearsal*, which had lain some few Years dormant, being by his present Majesty (then Prince of *Wales*) commanded to be revived, the Part of *Bays* fell to my share. To this Character there had always been allow’d such ludicrous Liberties of Observation, upon any thing new, or

<sup>1</sup> “On CIBBER’S *Declaration that he will have the last Word with Mr. POPE.*

QUOTH *Cibber* to *Pope*, tho’ in Verse you foreclose,  
I’ll have the last Word, for by G—d I’ll write Prose.  
Poor *Colley*, thy reas’ning is none of the strongest,  
For know, the last Word is the Word that lasts longest.”  
“The Summer Miscellany,” 1742.







ALEXANDER POPE



remarkable, in the state of the Stage, as Mr. *Bays* might think proper to take. Much about this time, then, *The Three Hours after Marriage* had been acted without Success;<sup>1</sup> when Mr. *Bays*, as usual, had a fling at it, which, in itself, was no Jest, unless the Audience would please to make it one: But however, flat as it was, Mr. *Pope* was mortally sore upon it. This was the Offence. In this Play, two Coxcombs, being in love with a learned Virtuoso's Wife, to get unsuspected Access to her, ingeniously send themselves, as two presented Rarities, to the Husband, the one curiously swath'd up like an *Egyptian* Mummy, and the other silyly cover'd in the Paste-board Skin of a Crocodile: upon which poetical Expedient, I, Mr. *Bays*, when the two Kings of *Brentford* came from the Clouds into the Throne again, instead of what my Part directed me to say, made use of these Words, viz. 'Now, Sir, this Revolution, I had some Thoughts of introducing, by a quite different Contrivance; but my Design taking air, some of your sharp Wits, I found, had made use of it before me; otherwise I intended to have stolen one of them in, in the Shape of a *Mummy*, and t'other, in that of a *Crocodile*.' Upon which, I doubt, the Audience by the Roar of their Applause shew'd their proportionable Contempt of the Play they belong'd to. But why am I answerable for that? I did not lead them,

<sup>1</sup> This play was produced at Drury Lane, 16th January, 1717; and the performance of "The Rehearsal" referred to took place on the 7th February.

by any Reflection of my own, into that Contempt : Surely to have used the bare Word *Mummy*, and *Crocodile*, was neither unjust, or unmannerly ; Where then was the Crime of simply saying there had been two such things in a former Play ? But this, it seems, was so heinously taken by Mr. *Pope*, that, in the swelling of his Heart, after the Play was over, he came behind the Scenes, with his Lips pale and his Voice trembling, to call me to account for the Insult : And accordingly fell upon me with all the foul Language, that a Wit out of his Senses could be capable of—How durst I have the Impudence to treat any Gentleman in that manner ? &c. &c. &c. Now let the Reader judge by this Concern, who was the true Mother of the Child ! When he was almost choked with the foam of his Passion, I was enough recover'd from my Amazement to make him (as near as I can remember) this Reply, *viz.* ‘ Mr. *Pope*—You are so particular a Man, that I must be asham'd to return your Language as I ought to do : but since you have attacked me in so monstrous a Manner ; This you may depend upon, that so long as the Play continues to be acted, I will never fail to repeat the same Words over and over again.’ Now, as he accordingly found I kept my Word, for several Days following, I am afraid he has since thought, that his Pen was a sharper Weapon than his Tongue to trust his Revenge with. And however just Cause this may be for his so doing, it is, at least, the only Cause my Conscience can charge me with. Now, as I might



have concealed this Fact if my Conscience would have suffered me, may we not suppose, Mr. *Pope* would certainly have mention'd it in his *Dunciad*, had he thought it could have been of service to him?"

Cibber afterwards proceeds to criticise and reply to allusions to himself in Pope's works, some of which are in conspicuously bad taste. Cibber, of course, does not miss the obvious point that to attack his successful plays was a foolish proceeding on Pope's part, whose own endeavours as a dramatist had been completely unsuccessful, and who thus laid himself open to the charge of envy. Nor is this accusation so ridiculous as it may seem to readers of to-day, for a successful playwright was a notable public figure, and the delicious applause of the crowded theatre was eagerly sought by even the most eminent men. And again, it must be remembered that Pope's fame was not then the perfectly assured matter that it is now.

But Cibber's great point, which made his opponent writhe with fury, was a little anecdote—Dr. Johnson terms it "an idle story of Pope's behaviour at a tavern"—which raised a universal shout of merriment at Pope's expense. The excuse for its introduction was found in these lines from the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot":—

"Whom have I hurt? has poet yet or peer  
Lost the arch'd eyebrow or Parnassian sneer?  
And has not Colley still his lord and whore?  
His butchers Henley? his freemasons Moore?"

Cibber's anecdote cannot be defended on the ground of decency, but it is extremely ludicrous, and in the state of society then existing it must have been a knock-down blow to the unhappy subject of it. There can be little doubt that it was this pamphlet which Pope received on the occasion when the Richardsons visited him, as related by Johnson in his *Life of the poet*: "I have heard Mr. Richardson relate that he attended his father the painter on a visit, when one of Cibber's pamphlets came into the hands of Pope, who said, 'These things are my diversion.' They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his features writhing with anguish: and young Richardson said to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope." How deeply Pope was galled by Cibber's ludicrous picture of him is manifested by the extraordinary revenge he took. And even now we can realize the bitterness of the provocation when we read the maliciously comic story of the vivacious Colley:—

"As to the first Part of the Charge, the *Lord*; Why—we have both had him, and sometimes the *same* Lord; but as there is neither Vice nor Folly in keeping our *Betters* Company; the *Wit* or *Satyr* of the *Verse*! can only point at my Lord for keeping such *ordinary* Company. Well, but if so! then *why* so, good Mr. *Pope*? If either of us could be *good* Company, our being professed Poets, I hope would be no Objection to my Lord's sometimes making

one with us? and though I don't pretend to write like you, yet all the Requisites to make a good Companion are not confined to Poetry! No, Sir, even a Man's inoffensive Follies and Blunders may sometimes have their Merits at the best Table; and in those, I am sure, you won't pretend to vie with me: Why then may not my Lord be as much in the Right, in his sometimes choosing *Colley* to laugh at, as at other times in his picking up *Sawney*, whom he can only admire?

"Thus far, then, I hope we are upon a par; for the Lord, you see, will fit either of us.

"As to the latter Charge, the *Whore*, there indeed, I doubt you will have the better of me; for I must own, that I believe I know more of *your* whoring than you do of *mine*; because I don't recollect that ever I made you the least Confidence of *my* Amours, though I have been very near an Eye-Witness of *Yours*—By the way, gentle Reader, don't you think, to say only, *a Man has his Whore*, without some particular Circumstances to aggravate the Vice, is the flattest Piece of Satyr that ever fell from the formidable Pen of Mr. *Pope*? because (*defendit numerus*) take the first ten thousand Men you meet, and I believe, you would be no Loser, if you betted ten to one that every single Sinner of them, one with another, had been guilty of the same Frailty. But as Mr. *Pope* has so particularly picked me out of the Number to make an Example of: Why may I not take the same Liberty, and even single him out for another

to keep me in Countenance? He must excuse me, then, if in what I am going to relate, I am reduced to make bold with a little private Conversation: But as he has shewn no Mercy to *Colley*, why should so unprovok'd an Aggressor expect any for himself? And if Truth hurts him, I can't help it. He may remember, then (or if he won't I will) when *Button's* Coffee-house was in vogue, and so long ago, as when he had not translated above two or three Books of *Homer*; there was a late young Nobleman (as much his *Lord* as mine) who had a good deal of wicked Humour, and who, though he was fond of having Wits in his Company, was not so restrained by his Conscience, but that he lov'd to laugh at any merry Mischief he could do them: This noble Wag, I say, in his usual *Gayetè de Cœur*, with another Gentleman still in Being,<sup>1</sup> one Evening sily seduced the celebrated Mr. *Pope* as a Wit, and myself as a Laugher, to a certain House of Carnal Recreation, near the *Hay-Market*; where his Lordship's Frolick propos'd was to slip his little *Homer*, as he call'd him, at a Girl of the Game, that he might see what sort of Figure a Man of his Size, Sobriety, and Vigour (in Verse) would make, when the frail Fit of Love had got into him; in which he so far succeeded, that the smirking Damsel, who serv'd us with Tea, happen'd to have Charms sufficient to tempt the

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Warwick was the young nobleman, and it is said in Dillworth's "Life of Pope" that "the late Commissioner Vaughan" was the other gentleman.

little-tiny Manhood of Mr. *Pope* into the next Room with her : at which you may imagine, his Lordship was in as much Joy, at what might happen within, as our small Friend could probably be in Possession of it : But I (forgive me all ye mortified Mortals whom his fell Satyr has since fallen upon) observing he had staid as long as without hazard of his Health he might, I,

*Prick'd to it by foolish Honesty and Love,*

As *Shakespear* says, without Ceremony, threw open the Door upon him, where I found this little hasty Hero, like a terrible *Tom Tit*, pertly perching upon the Mount of Love ! But such was my Surprize, that I fairly laid hold of his Heels, and actually drew him down safe and sound from his Danger. My Lord, who staid tittering without, in hopes the sweet Mischief he came for would have been compleated, upon my giving an Account of the Action within, began to curse, and call me an hundred silly Puppies, for my impertinently spoiling the Sport ; to which with great Gravity I reply'd ; pray, my Lord, consider what I have done was, in regard to the Honour of our Nation ! For would you have had so glorious a Work as that of making *Homer* speak elegant *English*, cut short by laying up our little Gentleman of a Malady, which his thin Body might never have been cured of ? No, my Lord ! *Homer* would have been too serious a Sacrifice to our Evening Merri-ment. Now as his *Homer* has since been so happily

completed, who can say, that the World may not have been obliged to the kindly Care of *Colley* that so great a Work ever came to Perfection?

“And now again, gentle Reader, let it be judged, whether the *Lord* and the *Whore* above-mentioned might not, with equal Justice, have been apply'd to sober *Sawney* the Satyrist, as to *Colley* the Criminal?

“Though I confess Recrimination to be but a poor Defence for one's own Faults; yet when the Guilty are Accusers, it seems but just, to make use of any Truth, that may invalidate their Evidence: I therefore hope, whatever the serious Reader may think amiss in this Story, will be excused, by my being so hardly driven to tell it.”

In the remainder of Cibber's pamphlet there is not much that is of any importance, though an allusion to one of Pope's victims having hung up a birch in Button's Coffee House, wherewith to chastise his satirist, was skilfully calculated to rouse Pope's temper. Cibber thoroughly succeeded in this object,<sup>1</sup> perhaps to a degree that he rather regretted. Pope made no direct reply to his banter, but in the following year (1743) a new edition of “The Dunciad” appeared, in which Theobald was deposed from the throne of Dulness, and Cibber elevated in his place.

<sup>1</sup> “But Pope's irascibility prevailed, and he resolved to tell the whole English world that he was at war with Cibber; and, to show that he thought him no common adversary, he prepared no common vengeance; he published a new edition of the ‘Dunciad,’ in which he degraded Theobald from his painful pre-eminence, and enthroned Cibber in his stead.”—Johnson's “Life of Pope.”

By doing this Pope gratified his vengeance, but injured his poem, for the carefully painted peculiarities of Theobald, a slow and pedantic scholar, sat ill on the pert and vivacious Colley.<sup>1</sup> To this retaliation Cibber, as he had promised,<sup>2</sup> replied with another pamphlet, entitled "Another Occasional Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope. Wherein the New Hero's Preferment to his Throne, in the *Dunciad*, seems not to be Accepted. And the Author of that Poem His more rightful Claim to it, is Asserted. With An Expostulatory Address to the Reverend Mr. *W. W—n*, Author of the new Preface, and Adviser in the curious Improvements of that Satire." The motto on the title-page was:—

"— *Remember Sauney's Fate!*  
*Bang'd by the Blockhead, whom he strove to beat.*  
Parodie on Lord *Roscommon*."

There is little that is of any note in this production, which is characterized by the same real or affected good-nature as marked the former pamphlet. The most interesting passages to us are those alluding to the effect of Cibber's previous attack, and exulting over Pope's distress at it. For instance (on page 7) :—

"And now, Sir, give me leave to be a little sur-

<sup>1</sup> "Unhappily the two heroes were of opposite characters, and Pope was unwilling to lose what he had already written; he has therefore depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the old pedantry, and the sluggish pertinacity of Theobald."—Johnson's "Life of Pope."

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, p. 272.

priz'd at the impenetrable Skull of your Courage, that (after I had in my first Letter) so heartily teiz'd, and toss'd, and tumbled you through all the Mire, and Dirt, the madness of your Muse had been throwing at other People, it could still, so Vixen like, sprawl out the same feeble Paw of its Satyr, to have t'other Scratch at my Nose: But as I know the Vulgar (with whose Applause I humbly content my self) are apt to laugh when they see a curst Cat in a Kennel; so whenever I observe your *Grimalkin* Spirit shew but the least grinning Gasp of Life, I shall take the honest liberty of old *Towser* the House-dog, and merrily lift up my Leg to have a little more Game with you.

“Well Sir, in plainer Terms, I am now, you see, once more willing to bring Matters to an Issue, or (as the Boxers say) to answer your Challenge, and come to a Trial of Manhood with you; though by our slow Proceedings, we seem rather to be at *Law*, than at *Loggerheads* with one another; and if you had not been a blinder Booby, than my self, you would have sate down quietly, with the last black Eye I gave you: For so loath was I to squabble with you, that though you had been snapping, and snarling at me for twenty Years together, you saw, I never so much as gave you a single Growl, or took any notice of you. At last, 'tis true, in meer Sport for others, rather than from the least Tincture of Concern for my self, I was inticed to be a little wanton, not to say waggish, with your Character; by which



having (you know) got the strong Laugh on my Side, I doubt I have so offended the Gravity, and Greatness of your Soul, that to secure your more ample Revenge, you have prudently taken the full Term of thirteen Months Consideration, before you would pour it, upon me! But at last, it seems, we have it, and now Souse! out comes your old *Dunciad*, in a new Dress, like fresh Gold, upon stale Gingerbread, sold out in Penny-worth's of shining King *Colley*, crown'd the Hero of Immortal Stupidity!"

And again (on page 15): "At your Peril be it, little Gentleman, for I shall have t'other Frisk with you, and don't despair that the very Notice I am now taking of you, will once more make your Fame fly, like a yelping Cur with a Bottle at his Tail, the Jest and Joy of every Bookseller's Prentice between *Wapping* and *Westminster*!"

To this pamphlet Pope, whose infirmities were very great, made no reply, and Cibber had, as he had vowed, the last word. Round the central articles of this quarrel a crowd of supplementary productions had gathered, a list of which will be found in the Bibliography of Cibber a few pages on.

Cibber's position of Poet Laureate furnished him with a steady income during his declining years, and his Odes were turned out as required, with mechanical precision and most unpoetic spirit. They were the standing joke of the pamphleteers and news-sheet writers, and were always accompanied with a running

fire of banter and parody. Those curious in the matter will find excellent specimens, both of the Odes and the burlesques, in the early volumes of the "Gentleman's Magazine."

After the termination of his quarrel with Pope, Cibber's life was very uneventful ; and, although it extended far beyond the allotted span, he continued to enjoy it to the very end. Horace Walpole greeted him one day, saying, "I am glad, Sir, to see you looking so well." "Egad, Sir," replied the old man, "at eighty-four it is well for a man that he can look at all." On 11th December, 1757, he died, having attained the great age of eighty-six.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Doran ("Their Majesties' Servants," 1888 edition, ii. 235) says: "I read in contemporary publications that there 'died at his house in Berkeley Square, Colley Cibber, Esq., Poet Laureate;'" and although it has been stated that he died at Islington, I see no reason to doubt Dr. Doran's explicit statement. Cibber was buried in the Danish Church, Wellclose Square.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has been generally stated that Cibber died on 12th December, 1757, but "The Public Advertiser" of Monday, 12th December, announces his death as having occurred "Yesterday morning." The "Gentleman's Magazine" and the "London Magazine," in their issues for December, 1757, give the 11th as the date.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Laurence Hutton, in his "Literary Landmarks of London" (p. 54), gives the following interesting particulars regarding Cibber's last resting-place: "Cibber was buried by the side of his father and mother, in a vault under the Danish Church, situated in Wellclose Square, Ratcliff Highway (since named St. George Street). This church, according to an inscription

So far as we know, only two of Cibber's children survived him, his ne'er-do-well son Theophilus, and his equally scapegrace daughter Charlotte, who married Charke the musician. The former was born in 1703, and was drowned in the winter of 1758, while crossing to Ireland to fulfil an engagement in Dublin. As an actor he was chiefly famous for playing Ancient Pistol, but he was also excellent in some of his father's characters, such as Lord Fopington, Bayes, and Sir Francis Wronghead. His private life was in the last degree disreputable, and especially so in his relations with his second wife, Susanna Maria Arne—the great Mrs. Cibber. The literature regarding Theophilus Cibber is considerable in quantity and curious in quality. Some account of it will be found in my "Bibliographical Account of English Theatrical Literature," pp. 52-55.

placed over the doorway, was built in 1696 by Caius Gabriel Cibber himself, by order of the King of Denmark, for the use of such of his Majesty's subjects as might visit the port of London. The church was taken down some years ago (1868-70), and St. Paul's Schools were erected on its foundation, which was left intact. Rev. Dan. Greatorex, Vicar of the Parish of St. Paul, Dock Street, in a private note written in the summer of 1883, says:—

“Colley Cibber and his father and mother were buried in the vault of the old Danish Church. When the church was removed, the coffins were all removed carefully into the crypt under the apse, and then bricked up. So the bodies are still there. The Danish Consul was with me when I moved the bodies. The coffins had perished except the bottoms. I carefully removed them myself personally, and laid them side by side at the back of the crypt, and covered them with earth.’”

Charlotte Charke, who was born about 1710, and died in April, 1760, was of no note as an actress. Her private life, however, was madly eccentric, and her autobiography, published in 1755, is a curious and scarce work.

Cibber's principal plays have been noted in the course of his "Apology;" but, for the sake of convenience, I give here a complete list of his regular dramatic productions:—

Love's Last Shift—Comedy—Produced at Drury Lane, 1696.

Woman's Wit—Comedy—Drury Lane, 1697.

Xerxes—Tragedy—Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1699.

Richard III.—Tragedy (alteration of Shakespeare's play)—Drury Lane, 1700.

Love Makes a Man—Comedy—Drury Lane, 1701.

The School Boy—Comedy—Drury Lane, 26th October, 1702.

She Would and She Would Not—Comedy—Drury Lane, 26th November, 1702.

The Careless Husband—Comedy—Drury Lane, 7th December, 1704.

Perolla and Izadora — Tragedy — Drury Lane, 3rd December, 1705.

The Comical Lovers — Comedy — Haymarket, 4th February, 1707.

The Double Gallant—Comedy—Haymarket, 1st November, 1707.

The Lady's Last Stake—Comedy—Haymarket, 13th December, 1707.

The Rival Fools—Comedy—Drury Lane, 11th January, 1709.

The Rival Queens — Comical-Tragedy — Haymarket, 29th June, 1710.

Ximena—Tragedy—Drury Lane, 28th November, 1712.

Venus and Adonis—Masque—Drury Lane, 1715.

Bulls and Bears—Farce—Drury Lane, 1st December, 1715.

Myrtillo—Pastoral Interlude—Drury Lane, 1716.

The Nonjuror—Comedy—Drury Lane, 6th December, 1717.

The Refusal—Comedy—Drury Lane, 14th February, 1721.

Cæsar in Egypt—Tragedy—Drury Lane, 9th December, 1724.

The Provoked Husband—Comedy (in conjunction with Vanbrugh)—Drury Lane, 10th January, 1728.

Love in a Riddle—Pastoral—Drury Lane, 7th January, 1729.

Damon and Phillida — Pastoral Farce — Haymarket, 1729.

Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John—Tragedy (alteration of Shakespeare's "King John")—Covent Garden, 15th February, 1745.

Of these, his alteration of "Richard III." had practically undisputed possession of the stage, until the taste and judgment of Mr. Henry Irving gave us back the original play.<sup>1</sup> But in the provinces, when

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's "Richard III." was produced at the Lyceum

stars of the old school play a round of legitimate parts, the adulterated version still reigns triumphant, and the great effect of the night is got in Cibber's famous line :—

“Off with his head ! So much for Buckingham !”

In “The Hypocrite,” a comedy still played at intervals, Cibber's “Nonjuror” survives. Bickerstaffe, who was the author of the alteration, retained a very large portion of the original play, his chief change being the addition of the inimitable Mawworm.

That another of Cibber's plays survives is owing to the taste of an American manager and to the

Theatre on 29th January, 1877. It was announced as “strictly the original text, without interpolations, but simply with such omissions and transpositions as have been found essential for dramatic representation.” In Richard Mr. Irving's great powers are seen to special advantage.

The cast of Cibber's play in 1700 was—

KING HENRY VI., <i>designed for</i> . . .	Mr. Wilks.
EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES . . .	Mrs. Allison.
RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK . . .	Miss Chock.
RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER . .	Mr. Cibber.
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM . . . . .	Mr. Powel.
LORD STANLEY . . . . .	Mr. Mills.
DUKE OF NORFOLK . . . . .	Mr. Simpson.
RATCLIFF . . . . .	Mr. Kent.
CATESBY . . . . .	Mr. Thomas.
✓ HENRY, EARL OF RICHMOND . . .	Mr. Evans.
OXFORD . . . . .	Mr. Fairbank.
QUEEN ELIZABETH . . . . .	Mrs. Knight.
LADY ANN . . . . .	Mrs. Rogers.
CICELY . . . . .	Mrs. Powel.



The  
ber.  
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SUSANNA MARIA CIBBER AS CORDELIA.



genius of an American company of comedians. Mr. Augustin Daly's company includes among its repertory Cibber's comedy of "She Would and She Would Not," and has shown in London as well as in New York how admirable a comedy it is. It goes without saying to those who have seen this company, that much of the success was due to Miss Ada Rehan, who showed in Hypolita, as she has done in Katharine ("Taming of the Shrew"), that she is mistress of classical comedy as of modern touch-and-go farce.<sup>1</sup>

Cibber was the cause of quite a considerable literature, mostly abusive. The following list, taken from my "Bibliographical Account of English Theatrical Literature" (1888), is, I believe, a complete catalogue of all separate publications by, or relating to, Colley Cibber:—

A clue to the comedy of the Non-Juror. With some hints of consequence relating to that play. In a letter to N. Rowe, Esq; Poet Laureat to His Majesty. London (Curll): 1718. 8vo. 6d.

Cibber's "Non-Juror," produced at Drury-Lane, December 6, 1717, was written in favour of the Hanoverian succession. Rowe wrote the prologue, which was very abusive of Nonjurors. This tract is not an attack on the play, but a satire on, it is said, Bishop Hoadly.

A lash for the Laureat: or an address by way of Satyr; most humbly inscrib'd to the unparallel'd

<sup>1</sup> A beautiful Portfolio of Sketches of Mr. Daly's Company has been published, in which is a portrait of Miss Rehan as Hypolita, with a critical note by Mr. Brander Matthews.

Mr. Rowe, on occasion of a late insolent Prologue to the Non-Juror. London (J. Morphew): 1718. folio. Title, 1 leaf: Pref. 1 leaf. pp. 8. 6d.

A furious attack on Rowe on account of his Prologue. A tract of extreme rarity.

A compleat key to the Non-Juror. Explaining the characters in that play, with observations thereon. By Mr. Joseph Gay. The second edioion (*sic*). London (Curll): 1718. 8vo. pp. 24 including title and half-title.

3rd edition: 1718. Joseph Gay is a pseudonym. Pope is said to be the author of the pamphlet, which is very unfriendly to Cibber.

The Theatre-Royal turn'd into a mountebank's stage. In some remarks upon Mr. Cibber's quack-dramatical performance, called the Non-Juror. By a Non-Juror. London (Morphew): 1718. 8vo. Title 1 leaf. pp. 38. 6d.

The Comedy call'd the Non-Juror. Shewing the particular scenes wherein that hypocrite is concern'd. With remarks, and a key, explaining the characters of that excellent play. London (printed for J. L.): 1718. 8vo. pp. 24, including title. 2d.

Some cursory remarks on the play call'd the Non-Juror, written by Mr. Cibber. In a letter to a friend. London (Chetwood) 1718. 8vo.

Dated from Button's Coffee-House and signed "H. S." Very laudatory.

A journey to London. Being part of a comedy written by the late Sir John Vanbrugh, Knt. and

printed after his own copy : which (since his decease) has been made an intire play, by Mr. Cibber, and call'd The provok'd husband, &c. London (Watts) : 1728. 8vo. pp. 51, including title.

“The Provok'd Husband,” by Vanbrugh and Cibber, was produced at Drury Lane, January 10, 1728; and though Cibber's Nonjuror enemies tried to condemn it, was very successful. This tract shows how much of the play was written by Vanbrugh.

Reflections on the principal characters in the Provoked Husband. London : 1728. 8vo.

An apology for the life of Mr. Colley Cibber, comedian, and late patentee of the Theatre-Royal. With an historical view of the stage during his own time. Written by himself. London (Printed by John Watts for the author) : 1740. 4to. Port.

Second edition, London, 1740, 8vo., no portrait; third edition, London, 1750, 8vo., portrait; fourth edition, 1756, 2 vols. 12mo., portrait. A good edition was published, London, 1822, 8vo., with notes by E. Bellchambers and a portrait. The “Apology” forms one of Hunt's series of autobiographies, London, 1826. One of the most famous and valuable of theatrical books.

An apology for the life of Mr. T . . . . . C . . . . ., comedian. Being a proper sequel to the Apology for the life of Mr. Colley Cibber, comedian. With an historical view of the stage to the present year. Supposed to be written by himself. In the stile and manner of the Poet Laureat. London (Mechell) : 1740. 8vo. 2s. ✓

The object of this pamphlet, ascribed to Fielding, is chiefly to ridicule Colley Cibber's “Apology.” Herman, 22s.

A brief supplement to Colley Cibber, Esq; his lives of the late famous Actors and Actresses. *Si tu scis, melior ego.* By Anthony, Vulgò Tony Aston. Printed for the Author, N.P. (London) : N.D. (1747-8). 8vo. pp. 24 including title.

A pamphlet of extreme rarity. Isaac Reed purchased a copy in 1769; and in 1795 he notes on it that, though he has had it twenty-six years, he has never seen another copy. Reed's copy was bought by Field for 65s., at whose sale, in 1827, Genest bought it for 36s.

The tryal of Colley Cibber, comedian, &c. for writing a book intituled An apology for his life, &c. Being a thorough examination thereof; wherein he is proved guilty of High Crimes and Misdemeanors against the English language, and in characterising many persons of distinction. . . . Together with an indictment exhibited against Alexander Pope of Twickenham, Esq; for not exerting his talents at this juncture : and the arraignment of George Cheyne, Physician at Bath, for the Philosophical, Physical, and Theological heresies, uttered in his last book on Regimen. London (for the author) : 1740. 8vo. pp. vii. 40. 1s.

With motto—"Lo ! He hath written a Book !" The Dedication is signed "T. Johnson."

The Laureat : or, the right side of Colley Cibber, Esq; containing explanations, amendments, and observations, on a book intituled, An apology for the life, and writings of Mr. Colley Cibber. Not written by himself. With some anecdotes of the Laureat,

which he (thro' an excess of modesty) omitted. To which is added, The history of the life, manners and writings of Æsopus the tragedian, from a fragment of a Greek manuscript found in the Library of the Vatican; interspers'd with observations of the translator. London (Roberts): 1740. 8vo. 1s. 6d.

A furious attack on Cibber. The Life of Æsopus is a burlesque Life of Cibber. Daniel. 7s. 6d.

The history of the stage. In which is included, the theatrical characters of the most celebrated actors who have adorn'd the theatre. Among many others are the following, *viz.* Mr. Betterton, Mr. Montfort, Mr. Dogget, Mr. Booth, Mr. Wilks, Mr. Nokes. Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Montfort, Mrs. Gwin, Mrs. Bracegirdle, Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Oldfield. Together with, the theatrical life of Mr. Colly Cibber. London (Miller): 1742. 8vo.

A "boil-down" of Cibber's Apology.

A letter from Mr. Cibber, to Mr. Pope, inquiring into the motives that might induce him in his satyrical works, to be so frequently fond of Mr. Cibber's name. London (Lewis): 1742. 8vo. 1s.

Second edition, London, 1744, 8vo.; reprinted, London, 1777, 8vo. The sting of this pamphlet lies in an anecdote told of Pope at a house of ill-fame, in retaliation for his line:

"And has not Colley still his lord and whore?"

A letter to Mr. C—b—r, on his letter to Mr. P..... London (Roberts): 1742. 8vo. 26 pp. 6d.

Very scarce. Abusive of Pope—laudatory towards Cibber.

Difference between verbal and practical virtue. With a prefatory epistle from Mr. C...b...r to Mr. P. London (Roberts): 1742. Folio. Title 1 leaf: Epistle 1 leaf: pp. 7.

Very rare. A rhymed attack on Pope.

A blast upon Bays; or, a new lick at the Laureat. Containing, remarks upon a late tatling performance, entitled, A letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope, &c. *And lo there appeared an old woman!* Vide the Letter throughout. London (Robbins): 1742. 8vo. pp. 26. 6d.

A bitter attack on Cibber.

Sawney and Colley, a poetical dialogue: occasioned by a late letter from the Laureat of St. James's, to the Homer of Twickenham. Something in the manner of Dr. Swift. London (for J. H.): n.d. (1742). Folio. Title 1 leaf: pp. 21. 1s.

Very scarce. A coarse and ferocious attack on Pope in rhyme.

The egotist: or, Colley upon Cibber. Being his own picture retouch'd, to so *plain* a likeness, that no one, *now*, would have the face to own it, but himself. London (Lewis): 1743. 8vo. pp. 78 including title. 1s.

Anonymous, but undoubtedly by Cibber himself.

Another occasional letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope. Wherein the new hero's preferment to his throne, in the Dunciad, seems not to be accepted. And the author of that poem his more rightful claim



to it, is asserted. With an expostulatory address to the Reverend Mr. W. W——n, author of the new preface, and adviser in the curious improvements of that satire. By Mr. Colley Cibber. London (Lewis): 1744. 8vo. 1s.

The Rev. W. W——n is Warburton. This tract was reprinted, Glasgow, n. d., 8vo. The two "Letters" were reprinted, London, 1777, with, I believe, a curious frontispiece representing the adventure related by Cibber at Pope's expense in the first "Letter." I am not certain whether the frontispiece was issued with the London or Glasgow reprint, having seen it in copies of both. In Bohn's "Lowndes" (1865) is mentioned a parody on this first "Letter," with the same title, except that "Mrs. Cibber's name" is substituted for "Mr. Cibber's name." Lowndes says: "A copy is described in Mr. Thorpe's catalogue, p. iv, 1832, 'with the frontispiece of Pope surprized with Mrs. Cibber.'" I gravely doubt the existence of any such work, and fancy that this frontispiece is the one just mentioned, but wrongly described. Herman (two Letters, with scarce front.), 4os.

A letter to Colley Cibber, Esq; on his transformation of King John. London. 1745. 8vo.

Cibber's mangling of "King John," entitled "Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John," was produced at Covent Garden, February 15, 1745.

A new book of the Dunciad: occasion'd by Mr. Warburton's new edition of the Dunciad complete. By a gentleman of one of the Inns of Court. With several of Mr. Warburton's own notes, and likewise Notes *Variorum*. London (J. Payne & J. Bouquet): 1750. 4to. 1s.

Cibber dethroned and Warburton elevated to the throne of Dulness.

Shakspeare's tragedy of Richard III., considered dramatically and historically; and in comparison with Cibber's alteration as at present in use on the stage, in a lecture delivered to the members of the Liverpool Literary, Scientific and Commercial Institution, by Thos. Stuart, of the Theatre Royal. (Liverpool): n. d. (about 1850). 12mo.

Cibber published in 1747 a work entitled "The Character and Conduct of Cicero, considered from the history of his life by Dr. Middleton;" but it is of little value or interest.

A B R I E F  
S U P P L E M E N T  
T O  
*Colley Cibber, Esq;*  
H I S  
L I V E S

Of the late F A M O U S

ACTORS and ACTRESSES.

---

*Si tu scis, melior ego.*

---

By *ANTHONY,* } *ASTON.*  
Vulgò *TONY* }

---



Printed for the A U T H O R.

\* \* \* \* \*

**M**R. CIBBER *is guilty of Omission,*  
*that he hath not given us any De-*  
*scription of the several Personages'*  
*Beauties, or Faults—Faults (I say) of the*  
*several ACTORS, &c. for*

Nemo sine crimine vivit.

*Or, as the late Duke of Buckingham says of*  
*Characters, that, to shew a Man not defective,*

————— were to draw  
A faultless Monster, that the World ne'er saw.

\* \* \* \* \*



A BRIEF SUPPLEMENT  
To COLLEY CIBBER, Esq; HIS  
LIVES  
OF THE LATE FAMOUS  
ACTORS AND ACTRESSES.

**M**R. *BETTERTON* (although a superlative good Actor) labour'd under ill Figure, being clumsily made, having a great Head, a short thick Neck, stoop'd in the Shoulders, and had fat short Arms, which he rarely lifted higher than his Stomach. —His Left Hand frequently lodg'd in his Breast.

between his Coat and Waist-coat, while, with his Right, he prepar'd his Speech.—His Actions were few, but just.—He had little Eyes, and a broad Face, a little Pock-fretten, a corpulent Body, and thick Legs, with large Feet.—He was better to meet, than to follow ; for his Aspect was serious, venerable, and majestic ; in his latter Time a little paralytic.—His Voice was low and grumbling ; yet he could Tune it by an artful *Climax*, which enforc'd universal Attention, even from the *Fops* and *Orange-Girls*.—He was incapable of dancing, even in a Country-Dance ; as was Mrs. *BARRY* : But their good Qualities were more than equal to their Deficiencies.—While Mrs. *BRACEGIRDLE* sung very agreeably in the *LOVES* of *Mars* and *Venus*, and danced in a Country-Dance, as well as Mr. *WILKS*, though not with so much Art and Foppery, but like a well-bred Gentlewoman.—Mr. *Betterton* was the most extensive Actor, from *Alexander* to Sir *John Falstaff* ; but, in that last Character, he wanted the Wagery of *ESTCOURT*, the Drollery of *HARPER*, the Sallaciousness of *JACK EVANS*.—But, then, *Estcourt* was too trifling ; *Harper* had too much of the *Bartholomew-Fair* ; and *Evans* misplac'd his Humour.—Thus, you see what *Flaws* are in *bright Diamonds* :—And I have often wish'd that Mr. *Betterton* would have resign'd the Part of *HAMLET* to some young Actor, (who might have Personated, though not have Acted, it better) for, when he threw himself at *Ophelia's* Feet, he appear'd a little too

grave for a young Student, lately come from the University of *Wirtemberg*; and his *Repartees* seem'd rather as *Apothegms* from a *sage Philosopher*, than the *sporting Flashes* of a Young HAMLET; and no one else could have pleas'd the Town, he was so rooted in their Opinion.—His younger Coteremporary, (*Betterton* 63, *Powel* 40, Years old) *POWEL*, attempted several of *Betterton's* Parts, as *Alexander*, *Jaffier*, &c. but lost his Credit; as, in *Alexander*, he maintain'd not the Dignity of a King, but *Out-Heroded* HEROD; and in his poison'd, mad Scene, *out-raw'd all Probability*; while *Betterton* kept his Passion under, and shew'd it most (as Fume smoaks most, when stifled) *Betterton*, from the Time he was dress'd, to the End of the Play, kept his Mind in the same Temperament and Adaptness, as the present Character required.—If I was to write of him all Day, I should still remember fresh Matter in his Behalf; and, before I part with him, suffer this facetious Story of him, and a Country Tenant of his.

Mr. *Betterton* had a small Farm near *Reading*, in the County of *Berks*; and the Countryman came, in the Time of *Bartholomew-Fair*, to pay his Rent.—Mr. *Betterton* took him to the Fair, and going to one *Crawley's* Puppet-Shew, offer'd *Two Shillings* for himself and *Roger*, his Tenant.—*No, no, Sir*, said *Crawley*; *we never take Money of one another*. This affronted Mr. *Betterton* who threw down the Money, and they enter'd.—*Roger* was hugely diverted with *Punch*, and bred a great Noise, say-

ing, that he would drink with him, for he was a merry Fellow.—Mr. *Betterton* told him, he was only a Puppet, made up of *Sticks and Rags*: However, *Roger* still cried out, that he would go and drink with *Punch*.—When Master took him behind, where the Puppets hung up, he swore, he thought *Punch* had been alive.—*However*, said he, *though he be but Sticks and Rags, I'll give him Six-pence to drink my Health*.—At Night, Mr. *Betterton* went to the *Theatre*, when was play'd the ORPHAN; Mr. *Betterton* acting *Castalio*; Mrs. *Barry*, *Monimia*.—*Well* (said Master) *how dost like this Play, Roger? Why, I don't know*, (says *Roger*) *its well enough for Sticks and Rags*.

To end with this *Phœnix* of the Stage, I must say of him, as *Hamlet* does of his Father: “He was a Man (take him for all in all) I cannot look upon his Like again.”

His Favourite, Mrs. *BARRY*, claims the next in *Æstimation*. They were both never better pleas'd, than in Playing together.—Mrs. *Barry* outshin'd Mrs. *Bracegirdle* in the Character of *ZARA* in the *Mourning Bride*, altho' Mr. *Congreve* design'd *Almeria* for that Favour.—And yet, this fine Creature was not handsome, her Mouth op'ning most on the Right Side, which she strove to draw t'other Way, and, at Times, composing her Face, as if sitting to have her Picture drawn.—Mrs. *Barry* was middle-siz'd, and had darkish Hair, light Eyes, dark Eye-brows, and was indifferently plump:—Her Face somewhat preceded her Action, as the latter did her Words,



her Face ever expressing the Passions ; not like the Actresses of late Times, who are afraid of putting their Faces out of the Form of Non-meaning, lest they should crack the Cerum, White-Wash, or other Cosmetic, trowel'd on. Mrs. *Barry* had a Manner of drawing out her Words, which became her, but not Mrs. *Braidshaw*, and Mrs. *Porter*, (Successors.)—To hear her speak the following Speech in the ORPHAN, was a Charm :

*I'm ne'er so well pleas'd, as when I hear thee speak,  
And listen to the Music of thy Voice.*

And again :

*Who's he that speaks with a Voice so sweet,  
As the Shepherd pipes upon the Mountain,  
When all his little Flock are gath'ring round him ?*

Neither she, nor any of the Actors of those Times, had any Tone in their speaking, (too much, lately, in Use.)—In *Tragedy* she was solemn and august—in *Free Comedy* alert, easy, and genteel—pleasant in her Face and Action; filling the Stage with Variety of Gesture.—She was Woman to Lady *Shelton*, of *Norfolk*, (my Godmother)—when Lord *Rochester* took her on the Stage; where for some Time, they could make nothing of her.—She could neither sing, nor dance, no, not in a Country-Dance.

Mrs. *BRACEGIRDLE*, that *Diana* of the Stage, hath many Places contending for her Birth—The most received Opinion is, that she was the Daughter

of a Coachman, Coachmaker, or Letter-out of Coaches, in the Town of *Northampton*.—But I am inclinable to my Father's Opinion, (who had a great Value for her reported Virtue) that she was a distant Relation, and came out of *Staffordshire*, from about *Walsal* or *Wolverhampton*.—She had many Assailants on her Virtue, as Lord *Lovelace*, Mr. *Congreve*, the last of which had her Company most ; but she ever resisted his vicious Attacks, and, yet, was always uneasy at his leaving her ; on which Observation he made the following Song :

PIOUS Celinda goes to Pray'rs,  
 When'er I ask the Favour ;  
 Yet, the tender Fool's in Tears,  
 When she believes I'll leave her.  
 Wou'd I were free from this Restraint,  
 Or else had Power to win her !  
 Wou'd she cou'd make of me a Saint,  
 Or I of her a Sinner !

And, as Mr. *Durfey* alludes to it in his Puppet Song—in *Don Quixot*,

Since that our Fate intends  
 Our Amity shall be no dearer,  
 Still let us kiss and be Friends,  
 And sigh we shall never come nearer.

She was very shy of Lord *Lovelace's* Company, as being an engaging Man, who drest well : And as, every Day, his *Servant* came to her, to ask her how she did, she always return'd her *Answer* in the most

obeisant Words and Behaviour, *That she was indifferent well, she humbly thank'd his Lordship.*—She was of a lovely Height, with dark-brown Hair and Eye-brows, black sparkling Eyes, and a fresh blushy Complexion; and, whenever she exerted herself, had an involuntary Flushing in her Breast, Neck and Face, having continually a chearful Aspect, and a fine Set of even white Teeth; never making an *Exit*, but that she left the Audience in an Imitation of her pleasant Countenance. Genteel Comedy was her chief Essay, and that too when in Men's Cloaths, in which she far surmounted all the Actresses of that and this Age.—Yet she had a Defect scarce perceptible, *viz.* her Right Shoulder a little protended, which, when in Men's Cloaths, was cover'd by a long or Campaign Peruke.—She was finely shap'd, and had very handsome Legs and Feet; and her Gait, or Walk, was free, manlike, and modest, when in Breeches.—Her Virtue had its Reward, both in Applause and *Specie*; for it happen'd, that as the Dukes of *Dorset* and *Devonshire*, Lord *Hallifax*, and other Nobles, over a Bottle, were all extolling Mrs. *Bracegirdle's* virtuous Behaviour, *Come*, says Lord *Hallifax*—*You all commend her Virtue, &c. but why do we not present this incomparable Woman with something worthy her Acceptance?* His Lordship deposited 200 Guineas, which the rest made up 800, and sent to her, with **Encomiums** on her Virtue.—She was, **when on the Stage**, diurnally Charitable, going often into *Clare-Market*, and giving Money to the poor

unemploy'd Basket-women, insomuch that she could not pass that Neighbourhood without the thankful Acclamations of People of all Degrees; so that, if any Person had affronted her, they would have been in Danger of being kill'd directly; and yet this good Woman was an Actress.—She has been off the Stage these 26 Years or more, but was alive *July 20. 1747*; for I saw her in the *Strand, London*, then—with the Remains of charming *Bracegirdle*.

Mr. *SANDFORD*, although not usually deem'd an Actor of the first Rank, yet the Characters allotted him were such, that none besides, then, or since, ever topp'd; for his Figure, which was diminutive and mean, (being Round-shoulder'd, Meagre-fac'd, Spindle-shank'd, Splay-footed, with a sour Countenance, and long lean Arms) render'd him a proper Person to discharge *Jago, Foresight, and Ma'lignij*, in the VILLAIN. But he fail'd in succeeding in a fine Description of a triumphant Cavalcade, in *Alonzo*, in the MOURNING BRIDE, because his Figure was despicable, (although his Energy was, by his Voice and Action, enforc'd with great Soundness of Art, and Justice.)—This Person acted strongly with his Face,—and (as King *Charles* said) was the best Villain in the World.—He proceeded from the *Sandfords* of *Sandford*, that lies between *Whitchurch* and *Newport*, in Shropshire.—He would not be concern'd with Mr. *Betterton*, Mrs. *Barry*, &c. as a Sharer in the Revolt from *Drury-Lane* to *Lincoln's*







CAVE UNDERHILL





*Inn-Fields*; but said, *This is my Agreement.*—To Samuel Sandford, *Gentleman*, Threescore Shillings a Week.—Pho! pho! said Mr. Betterton, *Three Pounds a Week.*—No, no, said Sandford;—To Samuel Sandford, *Gentleman*, Threescore Shillings a Week. For which *Cave Underhill*, who was a  $\frac{3}{4}$  Sharer, would often jeer *Sandford*; saying, *Samuel Sandford, Gent. my Man.*—Go, you Sot, said *Sandford.*—To which t'other ever replied, *Samuel Sandford, my Man Samuel.*

*CAVE UNDERHILL*, and Mr. *DOGGET*, will be the next treated of.

*CAVE UNDERHILL*, though not the best Actor in the Course of Precedency, was more admired by the Actors than the Audience—there being then no Rivals in his dry, heavy, downright Way in Low Comedy.—His few Parts were, The first Grave-digger in *HAMLET*,—*Sancho Pancha*, in the first Part of *DON QUIXOT*,—*Ned Blunt*, in the *ROVER*,—*Jacomo*, in the *LIBERTINE*, and the *Host*, in the *VILLAIN*:—All which were dry, heavy Characters, except in *Jacomo*; in which, when he aim'd at any Archness, he fell into downright Insignificance.—He was about 50 Years of Age the latter End of King *William's* Reign, about six Foot high, long and broad-fac'd, and something more corpulent than this Author; his Face very like the *Homo Sylvestris*, or *Champanza*; for his Nose was flattish and short, and his Upper Lip very long and thick, with a wide

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Mouth and short Chin, a churlish Voice, and awkward Action, (leaping often up with both Legs at a Time, when he conceived any Thing waggish, and afterwards hugging himself at the Thought.)—He could not enter into any serious Character, much more Tragedy; and was the most confin'd Actor I ever saw: And could scarce be brought to speak a short *Latin* Speech in *DON QUIXOT*, when *Sancho* is made to say, *Sit bonus Populus, bonus ero Gubernator*; which he pronounced thus:

*Shit bones and bobble arse,  
Bones, and ears Goble Nature.*

He was obliged to Mr. *Betterton* for thrusting him into the Character of *Merryman* in his *Wanton Wife*, or *Amorous Widow*; but *Westheart Cave* was too much of a Dullman.—His chief Atchievement was in *Lolpoop*, in the '*Squire of Alsatia*'; where it was almost impossible for him to deviate from himself: But he did great Injustice to Sir *Sampson Legend* in *Love for Love*, unless it had been true, that the Knight had been bred a Hog-driver.—In short, *Underhill* was far from being a good Actor—as appear'd by the late *Ben. Johnson's* assuming his Parts of *Jacomo*—the Grave-digger in *Hamlet*—and Judge *Grypus* in *Amphytrion*.—I know, Mr. *Underhill* was much cry'd up in his Time; but I am so stupid as not to know why.

Mr. *DOGGET*, indeed, cannot reasonably be so

censur'd; for whoever decry'd him, must inevitably have laugh'd much, whenever he saw him act.

Mr. *Dogget* was but little regarded, 'till he chopp'd on the Character of *Solon* in the *Marriage-Hater Match'd*; and from that he vegetated fast in the Parts of *Fondle-wife* in the *Old Batchelor—Colignii*, in the *Villain—Hob*, in the *Country Wake*—and *Ben the Sailor*, in *Love for Love*.—But, on a Time, he suffer'd himself to be expos'd, by attempting the serious Character of *Phorbas* in *Oedipus*, than which nothing cou'd be more ridiculous—for when he came to these Words—(*But, oh! I wish Phorbas had perish'd in that very Moment*)—the Audience conceived that it was spoke like *Hob* in his Dying-Speech.—They burst out into a loud Laughter; which sunk *Tom Dogget's* Progress in Tragedy from that Time.

*Fælix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.*

But our present LAUREAT had a better Opinion of himself;—for, in a few Nights afterwards, COLLEY, at the old Theatre, attempted the same Character; but was hiss'd,—his Voice sounding like Lord *Foppington's*—*Ne Sutor ultra Crepidam.*

Mr. *Dogget* was a little, lively, spract Man, about the Stature of Mr. L——, Sen. Bookseller in B—h, but better built.—His Behaviour modest, chearful, and complaisant.—He sung in Company very agreeably, and in Public very comically.—He danc'd the *Cheshire Round* full as well as the fam'd Capt. *George*,

but with much more Nature and Nimbleness.—I have had the Pleasure of his Conversation for one Year, when I travell'd with him in his strolling Company, and found him a Man of very good Sense, but illiterate; for he wrote me Word thus—*Sir, I will give you a hole instead of (whole) Share.*—He dress'd neat, and something fine—in a plain Cloth Coat, and a brocaded Waistcoat:—But he is so recent, having been so often at *Bath*,—*satis est.*—He gave his Yearly Water-Badge, out of a warm Principle, (being a *staunch Revolution-Whig.*)—I cannot part with this *Nonpareil*, without saying, that he was the most faithful, pleasant Actor that ever was—for he never deceiv'd his Audience—because, while they gaz'd at him, he was working up the Joke, which broke out suddenly in involuntary Acclamations and Laughter.—Whereas our modern Actors are fumbling the dull Minutes, keeping the gaping Pit in Suspence of something delightful a coming,—*Et parturiunt Montes, nascitur ridiculus Mus.*

He was the best Face-player and Gesticulator, and a thorough Master of the several Dialects, except the *Scots*, (for he never was in *Scotland*) but was, for all that, a most excellent *Sawney*. Whoever would see him pictur'd, may view his Picture, in the Character of *Sawney*, at the *Duke's Head* in *Lynn-Regis*, in *Norfolk*.—While I travell'd with him, each Sharer kept his Horse, and was every where respected as a Gentleman.

*Jack Verbruggen*, in Point of Merit, will salute you next.

*JACK VERBRUGGEN*, that rough Diamond, shone more bright than all the artful, polish'd Bril-lants that ever sparkled on our Stage.—(*JACK bore the BELL* away.)—He had the Words perfect at one View, and Nature directed 'em into Voice and Action, in which last he was always pleasing—his Person being tall, well-built and clean ; only he was a little In-kneed, which gave him a shambling Gate, which was a Carelessness, and became him.—His chief Parts were *Bajazet*, *Oroonoko*, *Edgar* in *King Lear*, *Wilmore* in the *Rover*, and *Cassius*, when Mr. *Betterton* play'd *Brutus* with him.—Then you might behold the grand Contest, *viz.* whether Nature or Art excell'd—*Verbruggen* wild and untaught, or *Betterton* in the Trammels of Instruction.—In *Edgar*, in *King Lear*, *Jack* shew'd his Judgment most ; for his Madness was unlimited : Whereas he sensibly felt a Tenderness for *Cordelia*, in these Words, (speaking to her)—*As you did once know Edgar!*—And you may best conceive his manly, wild Starts, by these Words in *Oroonoko*,—*Ha! thou hast rous'd the Lyon [in] his Den ; he stalks abroad, and the wild Forest trembles at his Roar :—*Which was spoke, like a Lyon, by *Oroonoko*, and *Jack Verbruggen* ; for Nature was so predominant, that his second Thoughts never alter'd his prime Performance.—The late Marquess of *Hallifax* order'd *Oroonoko* to be taken from *George Powel*, saying to Mr. *Southern*, the Author,—That *Jack* was the unpolish'd Hero, and wou'd do it best.—In the *Rover*

(*Wilmore*) never were more beautiful Scenes than between him, and Mrs. *Bracegirdle*, in the Character of *Helena*; for, what with *Verbruggen's* untaught *Airs*, and her smiling *Repartees*, the Audience were afraid they were going off the Stage every Moment.—*Verbruggen* was Nature, without Extravagance—Freedom, without Licentiousness—and vociferous, without bellowing.—He was most indulgently soft, when he says to *Imoinda*,—*I cannot, as I wou'd, bestow thee; and, as I ought, I dare not.*—Yet, with all these Perfections, *Jack* did, and said, more silly Things than all the Actors besides; for he was drawn in at the common Cheat of Pricking at the Girdle, Cups and Balls, &c. and told his Wife one Day that he had found out a Way to raise a great Benefit.—*I hope*, said she, *you'll have your Bills printed in Gold Letters.*—*No, no, better than that*, said he; *for I'll have the King's-Arms all in Gold Letters.*—As Mr. *Verbruggen* had Nature for his Directress in Acting, so had a known Singer, *Jemmy Bowen*, the same in Music :—He, when practising a Song set by Mr. PURCELL, some of the Music told him to grace and run a Division in such a Place. *O let him alone*, said Mr. *Purcell*; *he will grace it more naturally than you, or I, can teach him.*—In short, an Actor, like a Poet,

*Nascitur, non fit.*

And this Author prizes himself on that Attempt, as he hath had the Judgment of all the best Critics

in the Character of *Fondlewife* in the *Old Batchelor*.—*If you wou'd see Nature*, say they, *see Tony Aston—if Art*, Colley Cibber;—and, indeed, I have shed mock Tears in that Part often involuntarily.

Mrs. *VERBRUGGEN* claims a Place next. She was all Art, and her Acting all acquir'd, but dress'd so nice, it look'd like Nature. There was not a Look, a Motion, but what were all design'd; and these at the same Word, Period, Occasion, Incident, were every Night, in the same Character, alike; and yet all sat charmingly easy on her.—Her Face, Motion, &c. chang'd at once: But the greatest, and usual, Position was Laughing, Flirting her Fan, and *je ne scay quois*,—with a Kind of affected Twitter.—She was very loath to accept of the Part of *Weldon* in *Oroonoko*, and that with just Reason, as being obliged to put on Men's Cloaths—having thick Legs and Thighs, corpulent and large Posterious;—but yet the Town (that respected her) compounded, and receiv'd her with Applause; for she was the most pleasant Creature that ever appear'd: Adding to these, that she was a fine, fair Woman, plump, full-featur'd; her Face of a fine, smooth Oval, full of beautiful, well-dispos'd Moles on it, and on her Neck and Breast.—Whatever she did was not to be call'd Acting; no, no, it was what she represented: She was neither more nor less, and was the most easy Actress in the World. The late Mrs. *OLDFIELD* borrow'd something of her Manner in free Comedy;

—as for Tragedy, Mrs. *Verbruggen* never attempted it. *Melanthe* was her Master-piece; and the Part of *Hillaria* in *Tunbridge-Walks* cou'd not be said to be Acted by any one but her.—Her Maiden-Name was *Percival*; and she was the Widow of Mr. *Mountford*, (who was kill'd by Lord *Mohun*) when Mr. *Verbruggen* married her.—She was the best Conversation possible; never captious, or displeas'd at any Thing but what was gross or indecent; for she was cautious, lest fiery *Jack* shou'd so resent it as to breed a Quarrel;—for he wou'd often say,—*Dammee! tho' I don't much value my Wife, yet no Body shall affront her, by G—d*; and his Sword was drawn on the least Occasion, which was much in Fashion at the latter End of King *William's* Reign;—at which Time I came on the Stage, when Mr. *Dogget* left it; and then the facetious *Joe Haines* was declining in Years and Reputation, tho' a good Actor and Poet, his Prologues exceeding all ever wrote.—[*Vide* Love and a Bottle.]

*JOE HAINES* is more remarkable for the witty, tho' wicked, Pranks he play'd, and for his Prologues and Epilogues, than for Acting.—He was, at first, a Dancer.—After he had made his Tour of *France*, he narrowly escaped being seiz'd, and sent to the *Bastile*, for personating an *English* Peer, and running 3000 Livres in Debt in *Paris*; but, happily landing at *Dover*, he went to *London*, where in *Bartholomew-Fair*, he set up a Droll-Booth, and acted a



new Droll, call'd, *The Whore of Babylon, the Devil, and the Pope*. This was in the first Year of King James II. when *Joe* was sent for, and roundly admonish'd, by Judge *Pollixfen* for it. *Joe* reply'd, *That he did it in Respect to his Holiness; for, whereas many ignorant People believed the Pope to be a Beast, he shew'd him to be a fine, comely old Gentleman, as he was; not with Seven Heads, and Ten Horns, as the Scotch Parsons describe him.* However, this Affair spoil'd *Joe's* expiring Credit; for next Morning, a Couple of Bailiffs seiz'd him in an Action of 20*l.* as the Bishop of *Ely* was passing by in his Coach.—Quoth *Joe* to the Bailiffs,—*Gentlemen, here's my Cousin, the Bishop of Ely, going into his House; let me but speak to him, and he'll pay the Debt and Charges.* The Bailiffs thought they might venture that, as they were within three or four Yards of him. So, up goes *Joe* to the Coach, pulling off his Hat, and got close to it. The Bishop order'd the Coach to stop, whilst *Joe* (close to his Ear) said softly, *My Lord, here are two poor Men, who have such great Scruples of Conscience, that, I fear, they'll hang themselves.*—Very well, said the Bishop. So, calling to the Bailiffs, he said, *You two Men, come to me Tomorrow Morning, and I'll satisfy you.* The Men bow'd, and went away. *Joe* (hugging himself with his fallacious Device) went also his Way. In the Morning, the Bailiffs (expecting the Debt and Charges) repair'd to the Bishop's; where being introduced,—*Well,* said the Bishop, *what are your*

*Scruples of Conscience?—Scruples!* (said the Bailiffs) *we have no Scruples: We are Bailiffs, my Lord, who, Yesterday, arrested your Cousin, Joe Haines, for 20l. Your Lordship promised to satisfy us To-day, and we hope your Lordship will be as good as your Word.*—The Bishop, reflecting that his Honour and Name would be expos'd, (if he complied not) paid the Debt and Charges.—There were two Parts of Plays (*Nol Bluff* in the *Old Batchelor*, and *Roger* in *Æsop*) which none ever touch'd but *Joe Haines*.—I own, I have copied him in *Roger*, as I did Mr. *Dogget* in *Fondlewife*.—But, now, for another Story of him.

In the long Vacation, when Harlots, Poets, and Players, are all poor,—*Joe* walking in *Cross-Street*, by *Hatton-Garden*, sees a fine Venison-Pasty come out of *Glassop's*, a Pastry-Cook's Shop, which a Boy carried to a Gentleman's House thereby.—*Joe* watch'd it; and seeing a Gentleman knock at the Door, he goes to the Door, and ask'd him if he had knock'd at it: *Yes*, said the Gentleman; *the Door is open'd*.—In goes the Gentleman, and *Joe* after him, to the Dining-Room.—Chairs were set, and all ready for the Pasty. The Master of the House took *Joe* for the Gentleman's Friend, whom he had invited to Dinner; which being over, the Gentleman departed. *Joe* sat still.—Says the Master of the House to *Joe*, *Sir, I thought you would have gone with your Friend!*—*My Friend*, said *Joe*; *alas! I never saw him before in my Life.*—*No, Sir*, replied the other:

*Pray, Sir, then how came you to Dinner here?—Sir,* said *Joe*, *I saw a Venison-Pasty carried in here; and, by this Means, have din'd very heartily of it. My Name is Joe Haines,* (said he) *I belong to the Theatre.*—*Oh, Mr. Haines,* (continued the Gentleman) *you are very welcome; you are a Man of Wit: Come, bring t'other bottle;* which being finish'd, *Joe*, with good Manners, departed, and purposely left his Cane behind him, which he design'd to be an Introduction to another Dinner there: For, next Day, when they were gone to Dinner, *Joe* knock'd briskly at the Door, to call for his Cane, when the Gentleman of the House was telling a Friend of his the Trick he play'd the Day before.—*Pray call Mr. Haines in.*—*So, Mr. Haines,* said he; *sit down, and partake of another Dinner.*—*To tell you the Truth,* said *Joe*, *I left my Cane Yesterday on purpose:* At which they all laugh'd.—Now *Joe* (altho' while greedily eating) was very attentive to a Discourse on Humanity begun, and continued, by the Stranger Gentleman; wherein he advanced, that every Man's Duty was to assist another, whether with Advice, Money, Cloaths, Food, or whatever else. This Sort of Principle suited *Joe's* End, as by the Sequel will appear. The Company broke up, and *Joe*, and the Gentleman, walk'd away, (*Joe* sighing as he went along.) The Gentleman said to him, *What do you sigh for?—Dear Sir,* (quoth *Joe*) *I fear my Landlord will, this Day, seize my Goods for only a Quarter's Rent, due last Week.*—*How much is the Money?* said the Gentleman.—

*Fifty Shillings, said Joe, and the Patentees owe me Ten Pounds, which will be paid next Week.—Come, said the Gentleman, I'll lend thee Fifty Shillings on your Note, to pay me faithfully in three Weeks. Which Joe, with many Promises and Imprecations, sign'd.—But Joe, thereafter, had his Eyes looking out before him ; and, whenever he saw the Gentleman, would carefully avoid him ; which the Gentleman one Day perceiv'd, and going a-cross *Smithfield*, met *Joe* full in the Face, and, in the Middle of the *Rounds*, stopp'd him. Taking him by the Collar, *Sirrah*, said he, *pray pay me now, you impudent, cheating Dog, or I'll beat you into a Jelly.—Joe* fell down on his Knees, making a dismal Outcry, which drew a Mob about them, who enquir'd into the Occasion, which was told them ; and they, upon hearing it, said to the Gentleman, *That the poor Man could not pay it, if he had it not.—Well, said he, let him kneel down, and eat up that thin Sirreverence, and I'll forgive him, and give up his Note.—Joe* promis'd he would, and presently eat it all up, smearing his Lips and Nose with the human Conserve. The Gentleman gave him his Note ; when *Joe* ran and embrac'd him, kissing him, and bedaubing his Face, and setting the Mob a hollowing.*

*The SECOND PART of their LIVES, with the Continuation of JOE HAINES's Pranks, the Author hopes a fresh Advance for.—In the Interim, he thanks his Friends.*

FINIS.

MEMOIRS OF THE ACTORS AND ACTRESSES  
MENTIONED BY CIBBER,  
TAKEN FROM EDMUND BELLCHAMBERS'S EDITION OF  
THE "APOLOGY," 1822.

WILLIAM SMITH.

THIS judicious actor, who is said to have been originally a barrister, came into the Duke's Company, when acting under Sir William D'Avenant, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, about the year 1663. He rose soon after to the duties of *Buckingham*, in "King Henry the Eighth," and subsequently filled a range of characters distinguished by their variety and importance. *Sir William Stanley*, in Caryl's wretched play of the "English Princess," procured him additional estimation and applause, which were still farther enlarged by his performance of *Stanford* in Shadwell's "Sullen Lovers." Mr. Smith was the original *Chamont* in Otway's "Orphan," and played many parts of as much local consequence in pieces that are now forgotten.

Chetwood informs us that Mr. Smith was zealously attached to the interests of King James the Second, in whose army, attended by two servants, he entered as a volunteer. Upon the abdication of that monarch, he returned to the stage, by the persuasions of many friends, who admired his performances, and resumed his original part of *Wilmore* in the "Rover;" but having been received with considerable disapprobation, on account of his party

NOTE.—All passages enclosed in square brackets are by the present editor, who is also responsible for the notes marked (L.).

principles, the audience was dismissed, and he departed from public life in the manner already mentioned. It is difficult to reconcile these discrepancies. Chetwood's minuteness looks like credibility, and Cibber has committed a mistake in stating that Mr. Smith "entirely quitted" the stage at this secession, he having returned in 1695, when at the earnest solicitations of his sincere friends Mr. Betterton and Mrs. Barry, strengthened by the influence of Congreve over many of his connections in high life, he consented to sustain the part of *Scandal* in that author's comedy of "Love for Love," upon its production at the new theatre in Little Lincoln's Inn Fields, when his inimitable performance imparted an extra charm to that admirable play. Continued peals of applause attested the satisfaction which his auditors felt at the return of their old favourite, and it seems singular that Congreve should have wholly overlooked this memorable event, in the "prologue" at least, where the defection of Williams and Mrs. Mountfort is thus obscurely stated :

Forbear your wonder, and the fault forgive  
If in our larger family we grieve  
One falling Adam, and one tempted Eve.

Mr. Smith continued on the stage till about twelve months after this period, when, according to Downes, having a long part in Banks's tragedy of "Cyrus," 1696, he fell sick on the fourth day of performance, and died from a cold, as Chetwood relates, occasioned by cramp, which having seized him while in bed, he rose to get rid of it, and remained so long in his naked condition, that a fever ensued from disordered lungs, and, in three days, put an end to his existence.

We have but a slender clue to the stage-management of Mr. Smith, which was exercised over the Duke's Company in Dorset-garden, conjointly with Betterton and Dr. D'Avenant, when the famous agreement which bears their signatures was concluded with Hart and Kynaston, for an

union of the theatres. It has been said that Booth [who wrote an epitaph on Smith] applied to him for an engagement, which was refused from a fear of offending his relatives, but with that kindness of expression and deportment so warmly distinguished in his epitaph. This assertion, however, is unfounded, for when Mr. Smith died, Barton Booth was a Westminster scholar, and in the fourteenth year of his age; the character of this eminent comedian must, accordingly, have been drawn up from such intelligence as the writer acquired at a subsequent period.

It only remains to be remarked, that Chetwood has placed Mr. Smith's original return to the stage in the year 1692; but, not to insist upon the known looseness of this writer's information, let us ask if a political offence would be so vehemently remembered, after the lapse of four years, as to drive an estimable actor from the harmless pursuance of his ordinary duties? Cibber is doubtless correct in the floating date of this fact, which must have happened *previous* to the revolution. Mr. Smith was a principal actor in Lee's later tragedies, but in the "Princess of Cleve," 4to, 1689, we find the part he would naturally have played to Betterton's *Nemours*, supported by Mr. Williams.

Smith's value as an actor, may be immediately felt by a reference to the parts he enjoyed under Betterton, with whom he lived till death in the most cordial manner, enhancing his fame by honourable emulation, and promoting his interests by unbroken amity. No instance has been recorded of their dissention or dispute, and from the notice which Betterton extended to Booth, he very possibly communicated that high account of his departed friend, which the latter has recorded with such spirit and fidelity.

From Cibber's admission, it appears, that Smith's moral qualities and professional excellence, procured him an extensive reception among people of rank, a patronage which his polished manners continued to exact, till society, by his death, sustained one of its deepest deprivations. (B.) Chet-

wood's story is now incapable either of proof or disproof. The known facts about Smith's retirement are, that his name appears to Constantine the Great, to Courtine in Otway's "Atheist," and to Lorenzo in Southerne's "Disappointment," in 1684; that it then disappears, and does not again occur till 1695. It is probable that he retired in 1684, as it is unlikely that his name should not appear in one or other of the 1685 bills. (L.)

#### CHARLES HART.

Charles Hart was the great nephew of Shakspeare, his father, William, being the eldest son of our poet's sister Joan. Brought up as an apprentice under Robinson, a celebrated actor, he commenced his career, conformably to the practice of that time, by playing female parts, among which the *Duchess*, in Shirley's tragedy of the "Cardinal," was the first that exhibited his talents, or enhanced his reputation.

Puritanism having gathered great strength, opposed theatrical amusements as vicious and profane institutions, which it was at length enabled to abolish and suppress. On the 11th day of February, 1647,<sup>1</sup> and the subsequent 22d of October, two ordinances were issued by the Long Parliament, whereby all stage-players were made liable to punishment for following their usual occupation. Before the appearance of this severe edict, most of the actors had gone into the army, and fought with distinguished spirit for their unfortunate master; when, however, his fate was determined, the surviving dependants on the drama were compelled to renew their former efforts, in pursuance of which they returned, just before the death of Charles, to act a few plays at the "Cockpit" theatre, where, while per-

<sup>1</sup> This is a specimen of that commonest of blunders, the confusing of the dates of the first month or two of the year. The edict was issued February, 1647-8, that is, 1648. What Bellchambers calls the "subsequent" October was therefore the preceding October. (L.)



forming the tragedy of "Rollo," they were taken into custody by soldiers, and committed to prison.<sup>1</sup> Upon this occasion, Hart, who had been a lieutenant of horse, under Sir Thomas Dallison, in Prince Rupert's own regiment, sustained the character of *Otto*, a part which he afterwards relinquished to Kynaston, in exchange for the fierce energies of his ambitious brother.

At the Restoration, Hart was enrolled among the company constituting his Majesty's Servants, by whom the new Theatre Royal, Drury-lane, was opened on the 8th of April, 1663, with Beaumont and Fletcher's play of the "Humourous Lieutenant," in which he sustained a principal character for twelve days of successive representation.

About the year 1667,<sup>2</sup> Hart introduced Mrs. Gwyn upon the dramatic boards, and has acquired the distinction of being ranked among that lady's first felicitous lovers, by having succeeded to Lacy, in the possession of her charms. Nell had been tutored for the stage by these admirers in conjunction, and after testifying her gratitude to both, passed into the hands of Lord Buckhurst, by whom she was transferred to the custody of King Charles the Second.

The principal parts, according to Downes, sustained by Mr. Hart, were *Arbaces*, in "King and No King;" *Amintor*, in the "Maid's Tragedy;" *Othello*, *Rolla*, *Brutus*, and *Alexander the Great*. Such was his attraction in all these characters, that, to use the language of that honest prompter, "if he acted in any one of these but once in a fortnight, the house was filled as at a new play; especially *Alexander*, he acting that with such grandeur and agreeable majesty, that one of the court was pleased to honour him with this commendation—'that Hart might teach any king on earth how to comport himself.'" His merit has also been specified as *Mosca*, in the "Fox," *Don John*, in the "Chances," and

<sup>1</sup> See "Historia Histrionica."

<sup>2</sup> Nell Gwyn made her first appearance not later than 1665. Pepys, on the 3rd of April, 1665, mentions "Pretty, witty Nell, at the King's House." (L.)

*Wildblood*, in an "Evening's Love;" which, however, according to the same authority, merely harmonised with his general efforts, in commanding a vast superiority over the best of his successors.

Rymer has said that Hart's action could throw a lustre round the meanest characters, and, by dazzling the eyes of the spectator, protect the poet's deformities from discernment. He was taller, and more genteelly shaped than Mohun, on which account he probably claimed the choice of parts, and was prescriptively invested with the attributes of youth and agility. He possessed a considerable share in the profits and direction of the theatre, which were divided among the principal performers; and besides his salary of £3 a week, and an allowance as a proprietor, amounting to six shillings and three-pence a day, is supposed to have occasionally cleared about £1000 per annum.

[On the 14th of October, 1681, a memorandum was signed between Dr. Charles Davenant, Betterton, and Smith, of the one part, and Hart and Kynaston, of the other, by which the two last mentioned, in consideration of five shillings each for every day on which there shall be a play at the Duke's Theatre, undertake to do all they can to break up the King's Company. The result of this agreement was the Union of 1682. This agreement is given in Gildon's "Life of Betterton" (p. 8), and in Genest (i. 369). I suppose it is a genuine document, but I confess to some doubts, based chiefly on my belief that Betterton was too honest to enter into so shabby an intrigue.]

Declining age had rendered Hart less fit for exertion than in the vigour of life, and certain of the young actors, such as Goodman and Clark, became impatient to get possession of his and Mohun's characters. A violent affliction, however, of the stone and gravel, compelled him to relinquish his professional efforts, and having stipulated for the payment of five shillings-a day, during the season,<sup>1</sup> he retired from the stage, and died a short time after.

<sup>1</sup> Should be for the remainder of his life. (L.)

Hart was always esteemed a constant observer of decency in manners, and the following anecdote will evince his respect for the clergy. That witty, but abandoned fellow, Jo Haynes, had persuaded a silly divine, into whose company he had unaccountably fallen, that the players were a set of people, who wished to be reformed, and wanted a Chaplain to the Theatre, an appointment for which, with a handsome yearly income, he could undertake to recommend him. He then directed the clergyman to summon his hearers, by tolling a bell to prayers every morning, a scheme, in pursuance of which Haynes introduced his companion, with a bell in his hand, behind the scenes, which he frequently rang, and cried out, audibly, "Players! players! come to prayers!" While Jo and some others were enjoying this happy contrivance, Hart came into the theatre, and, on discovering the imposition, was extremely angry with Haynes, whom he smartly reprehended, and having invited the clergyman to dinner, convinced him that this buffoon was an improper associate for a man of his function.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vide Davies's "Dramatic Miscellanies," vol. iii. p. 264.

Another anecdote of the same kind is found in a "Life of the late famous comedian, J. Haynes," 8vo. 1701, which, as it preserves a characteristic trait of this valuable actor, is worth repeating.

"About this time [1673] there happened a small pick between Mr. Hart and Jo, upon the account of his late negotiation in France,\* and there spending so much money to so little purpose, or, as I may more properly say, to no purpose at all.

"There happened to be one night a play acted, called 'Cataline's Conspiracy,' wherein there was wanting a great number of senators. Now Mr. Hart being chief of the house, would oblige Jo to dress for one of these senators, although his salary, being 50s. per week, freed him from any such obligation. But Mr. Hart, as I said before, being sole governor of the playhouse, and at a small variance with Jo, commands it, and the other must obey.

"Jo being vexed at the slight Mr. Hart had put upon him, found out this method of being revenged on him. He gets a Scaramouch dress,

\* Soon after the theatre in Drury-lane was burnt down, Jan. 1671-2, Haynes had been sent to Paris by Mr. Hart and Mr. Killegrew, to examine the machinery employed in the French Operas.—*Malone*.

## MICHAEL MOHUN.

The life of Michael Mohun, though passed in its early stages beneath a different teacher, was chequered by the very shades which distinguished that of Hart, with whom he acquired his military distinctions, and reverted to a theatrical life. He was brought up with Shatterel, under Beeston, at the "Cock-pit," in Drury-lane, where, in Shirley's play of "Love's Cruelty," he sustained the part of *Bellamente*, among other female characters,<sup>1</sup> and held it even after the Restoration.

Having attained the rank of captain in the royal forces, Mohun went to Flanders upon the termination of the civil war, where he received pay as a major, and acquitted himself with distinguished credit. At the Restoration, he resumed his pristine duties, and became an able second to Hart, with whom he was equally admired for superlative knowledge of his arduous profession.

a large full ruff, makes himself whiskers from ear to ear, puts on his head a long Merry-Andrew's cap, a short pipe in his mouth, a little three-legged stool in his hand ; and in this manner follows Mr. Hart on the stage, sets himself down behind him, and begins to smoke his pipe, laugh, and point at him, which comical figure put all the house in an uproar, some laughing, some clapping, and some hollaing. Now Mr. Hart, as those who knew him can aver, was a man of that exactness and grandeur on the stage, that let what would happen, he'd never discompose himself, or mind any thing but what he then represented ; and had a scene fallen behind him, he would not at that time look back, to have seen what was the matter ; which Jo knowing, remained still smoking. The audience continued laughing, Mr. Hart acting, and wondering at this unusual occasion of their mirth ; sometimes thinking it some disturbance in the house, again that it might be something amiss in his dress : at last turning himself toward the scenes, he discovered Jo in the aforesaid posture ; whereupon he immediately goes off the stage, swearing he would never set foot on it again, unless Jo was immediately turned out of doors, which was no sooner spoke, but put in practice."

<sup>1</sup> Bellamente is not a female, but a male character. By referring to the mention of this matter in the "Historia Histrionica," it will at once be seen how Bellchambers's blunder was caused. (L.)

He is celebrated by Lord Rochester, as the great Æsopus of the stage ; praise, which, though coming from one of so capricious a temper, may be relied on, since it is confirmed by more respectable testimony. He was particularly remarkable for the dignity of his deportment, and the elegance of his step, which mimics, said his lordship, attempted to imitate, though they could not reach the sublimity of his elocution. The Duke's comedians, it would seem, endeavoured to emulate his manner, when reduced by age and infirmity, a baseness which the same noble observer has thus warmly reprehended :—

Yet these are they, who durst expose the Age  
Of the great Wonder of the English Stage.  
Whom Nature seem'd to form for your delight,  
And bid him speak, as she bid Shakespeare write.  
These Blades indeed are Cripples in their Art,  
Mimick his Foot, but not his speaking part.  
Let them the *Traytor* or *Volpone* try,  
Could they  
Rage like *Cethegus*, or like *Cassius* die ?  
(Epilogue to Fane's "Love in the Dark.")

Mohun, from his inferior height and muscular form, generally acted grave, solemn, austere parts, though upon more than one occasion, as in *Valentine*, in "Wit without Money," and *Face*, in the "Alchemist,"—one of his most capital characters,—he was frequently seen in gay and buoyant assumptions to great advantage. He was singularly eminent as *Melantius*, in the "Maid's Tragedy ;" *Mardonius*, in "King and No King ;" *Clytus*, *Mithridates*, and the parts alluded to by Lord Rochester. No man had more skill in putting spirit and passion into the dullest poetry than Mohun, an excellence with which Lee was so delighted, that on seeing him act his own King of Pontus, he suddenly exclaimed, "O, Mohun, Mohun, thou little man of mettle, if I should write a hundred plays, I'd write a part for thy mouth !" And yet Lee himself was so exquisite a reader, that Mohun once threw down a part in despair of ap-

proaching the force of the author's expression. The "Tatler" has adverted to his singular science ;<sup>1</sup> "in all his parts, too," says Downes, "he was most accurate and correct ;" and perhaps no encomium can transcend the honours of unbroken propriety.

About the year 1681, there are some reasons to suspect that the king's company was divided by feuds and animosities, which their adversaries in Dorset-garden so well improved, as to produce an union of the separate patents. Hart and Kynaston were dexterously detached from their old associates, by the management of Betterton, whose conduct, though grounded upon maxims of policy, can derive no advantage from so unfair an expedient. Upon the completion of this nefarious treaty, Mohun, who found means to retain the services of Kynaston, with the remnant of the royal company, continued to act in defiance of the junction just concluded, as an independent body. Downes, in his "Roscius Anglicanus," so far as the imperfect structure of its sentences can be relied on, expressly asserts this ; and yet if "the patentees of each company united patents, and, by so incorporating, the duke's company were made the king's, and immediately removed to the Theatre Royal in Drury-lane," what field did Mohun and his followers select for their operations, to pitch their tents, and hoist their standard? Till some period, at least, of the year 1682, this party were in possession of their antient domicile, as Mohun at that time, acted *Burleigh*, in Banks's "Unhappy Favourite," and sustained a principal character in Southern's "Loyal Brother," with, for his heroine, in both pieces, the famous Nell Gwyn.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "My old friends Hart and Mohun, the one by his natural and proper force, the other *by his great skill and art*, never failed to send me home full of such ideas as affected my behaviour, and made me insensibly more courteous and human to my friends and acquaintance."—"Tatler," No. 99.

<sup>2</sup> The following extract from a pamphlet, called "A Comparison

[Bellchambers is here very inaccurate. The union of 1682 was, no doubt, opposed by some of the King's Company, from November, 1681, when the memorandum between Davenant, Betterton, Hart, and others, was executed, and the date of the actual conclusion of the union. This is clearly indicated in Dryden's Prologue on the opening of Drury Lane by the united company on 16th November, 1682. But, whatever the opposition had been, it had ceased then, because in the cast of the "Duke of Guise," produced less than three weeks later, appear the names of Kynaston and Wiltshire, whom Bellchambers represents as supporting Mohun in his supposed opposition theatre. (L.)]

#### CARDELL GOODMAN.

Cardell Goodman, according to his own admissions, as detailed by Cibber elsewhere, was expelled the university of Cambridge, for certain political reasons, a disgrace, however, which did not disqualify him for the stage. He came

between the Two Stages," will amply evince the popular estimation in which Hart and Mohun were held :—

"The late Duke of Monmouth was a good judge of dancing, and a good dancer himself ; when he returned from France, he brought with him St. André, then the best master in France. The duke presented him to the stage, the stage to gratify the duke admitted him, and the duke himself thought he would prove a mighty advantage to them, though he had nobody else of his opinion. A day was published in the bills for him to dance, but not one more, besides the duke and his friends came to see him ; the reason was, the plays were then so good, and Hart and Mohun acted them so well, that the audience would not be interrupted, for so short a time, though 'twas to see the best master in Europe."

I suspect that Mohun was born about the year 1625, from the circumstance of his acting *Bellamante*, the heroine of Shirley's "Love's Cruelty," in 1640, when he had probably reached, and could hardly have exceeded, the age of fifteen years. (B.) As has been before pointed out, *Bellamante* is not a female character. He is the husband of *Clariana*, and could scarcely be played by a boy. If Mohun represented the character in 1640, he must have been considerably older than Bellchambers imagines. (L.)

upon it, accordingly, by repairing to Drury-lane theatre, where Downes has recorded [what was probably] his first appearance, as *Polyperchon*, in the "Rival Queens," 4to. 1677. Here, although we cannot trace his success in any character of importance, Mr. Cibber has adverted to his rapid advances in reputation. He followed the fortunes of Mohun in opposing the united actors, but, about three years afterwards, resorted to them, (in 1685,) and sustained the hero of Lord Rochester's "Valentinian." It is about this period that his excellence must have blazed out as *Alexander the Great*, since Cibber, who went upon the stage in 1690, says Goodman had retired before the time of his appearance.

The highest salary enjoyed at that period we are now treating of, was six shillings and three pence per diem, a stipend that was by no means equal to the strong passions and large appetites of a gay, handsome, inconsiderate young fellow. He was consequently induced to commit a robbery on the highway, and sentenced upon detection, to make a summary atonement for his fatal error; but this being the first exploit of that kind to which the scantiness of his income had urged him, King James was persuaded to pardon him, a favour for which Goodman was so grateful, that, in the year 1696, he shared with Sir John Fenwick in a design to assassinate King William, who spared his life in consideration of the testimony he was to render against his accomplice. This condition, however, Goodman did not fulfil, as he withdrew clandestinely to the continent, to avoid giving evidence, and died in exile.

Having been selected as a fit instrument for her abandoned pleasures by the Duchess of Cleveland, Goodman, long before his death, became so happy in his circumstances, that he acted only at intervals, when his titled mistress most probably desired to see him; for he used to say, he would not even act *Alexander*, unless his Duchess were in front to witness the performance.



## RICHARD ESTCOURT.

Richard Estcourt, according to the biographical notice of Chetwood, was born at Tewksbury, in Glostershire, in the year 1668, and received a competent education at the Latin grammar-school of his native town. Influenced by an early attachment to the stage, he left his father's house, in the fifteenth year of his age, with an itinerant company, and on reaching Worcester, to elude the possibility of detection, made his first appearance as *Roxana*, in the "Rival Queens." Having received a correct intimation of this theatrical purpose, his father sent to secure the fugitive, who slipped away in a suit of woman's clothes, borrowed from one of his kind-hearted companions, and travelled to Chipping-Norton, a distance of five-and-twenty miles, in the course of the day.

To prevent such excursions for the future, he was quickly carried up to London, and apprenticed to an apothecary in Hatton-garden, with whom, according to some authorities, he continued till the expiration of his indentures, and duly entered into business ; which, either from want of liking or success he soon afterwards renounced, and returned to his favourite avocation.<sup>1</sup> Chetwood, on the contrary, asserts that he broke away from his master's authority, and after strolling about England for two years, went over to Dublin, where his performances were sanctioned by ardent and universal applause.

About the opening of the eighteenth century [that is, 18th October, 1704], Mr. Estcourt was engaged at Drury-lane Theatre, where he made his débüt as *Dominic*, in the "Spanish Friar," and established his efforts, it is said, by a close imitation of Leigh, the original possessor of that part. In the year 1705 [should be 1706], such was his merit or

<sup>1</sup> This account, though generally rejected, appears to me more deserving of credit than Chetwood's notoriously neglectful habits, in gleaning intelligence, or making assertion.

reputation, that Farquhar selected him for *Sergeant Kite*, in the "Recruiting Officer," a character to which Downes has alluded in terms of unqualified praise. It is asserted in the "Biographia Dramatica," that Mr. Estcourt was "mostly indebted for his applause to his powers of mimicry, in which he was inimitable; and which not only at times afforded him opportunities of appearing a much better actor than he really was,—by enabling him to copy very exactly several performers of capital merit, whose manner he remembered and assumed,—but also, by recommending him to a very numerous acquaintance in private life, secured him an indulgence for faults in his public profession, that he might otherwise, perhaps, never have been pardoned." As if an actor, in defiance of peculiar incapacity, associated emulation, and public disgust, could maintain, for twelve successive years, the very highest station in the Drury-lane company, attainable by talents, such as he was only flattered with possessing!

That Estcourt was happy in a "very numerous acquaintance," there is no reason to conceal or deny. He was remarkable for the promptitude of his wit, and the permanence of his pleasantry, qualifications that recommended him to the most cordial intercourse with Addison, Steele, Parnell, who has honoured him in a Bacchanalian poem, by the name of Jocus, and other choice spirits of the age, who enjoyed the variety of his talents, and acknowledged the goodness of his heart. He was highly in favour with the great Duke of Marlborough, but those who know his grace's character, will hardly be surprised to learn that he did not improve his fortune by that dazzling distinction. Estcourt's honours, indeed, were strictly nominal, for though constituted providore of the Beef-steak Club,—an assemblage comprising the chief wits and greatest men of the nation,—he gained nothing by the office but their badge of employment,—a small golden gridiron, suspended from his neck by a bit of green riband.

If the foregoing remarks should be held sufficient to redeem his dramatic character from the obloquy with which it has so long been attended, the following anecdote will perhaps be accepted as ample evidence of his great talent for private mimicry.

Secretary Craggs, when very young, in company with some of his friends, went, with Estcourt, to Sir Godfrey Kneller's, and whispered to him that a gentleman present was able to give such a representation of many among his most powerful patrons, as would occasion the greatest surprise. Estcourt accordingly, at the artist's earnest desire, mimicked Lords Somers, Halifax, Godolphin, and others, so exactly, that Kneller was delighted, and laughed heartily at the imitations. Craggs gave a signal, as concerted, and Estcourt immediately mimicked Sir Godfrey himself, who cried out in a transport of ungovernable conviction, "Nay, there you are out, man! By G—, that's not me!"

About a twelvemonth before his death, having retired from the stage, Estcourt opened the Bumper tavern, in Covent-garden, and by enlarging his acquaintance, most probably shortened his days. He died in the year 1713 [should be 1712], and was buried near his brother comedian, Jo Haynes, in the church-yard of St. Paul's, Covent-garden.

#### THOMAS BETTERTON.

Thomas Betterton was born in Tothill-street, Westminster, in the year 1635 [baptized 11th August, 1635], his father at that time being under-cook to King Charles the First. He received the rudiments of a genteel education, and testified such a propensity to literature, that it was the steadfast intention of his family to have had him qualified for some congenial employment. This design, the confusion and violence of the times most probably prevented, though a fondness for reading induced them to consult his inclinations, and he was accordingly apprenticed to Mr. Rhodes,

a respectable bookseller, residing at the Bible, in Charing-cross.

This person, who had been wardrobe-keeper to the theatre in Blackfriars, before the suppression of dramatic amusements, on General Monk's approach to London, in the year 1659, obtained a license from the [governing powers] to collect a company of actors, and employ them at the "Cockpit," in Drury-lane. Here, while Kynaston, his fellow-apprentice, sustained the principal female parts, Betterton was distinguished by the vigour and elegance of his manly personations. The fame of Beaumont and Fletcher was then at its zenith, and in their plays of the "Loyal Subject," and the "Mad Lover," added to "Pericles," the "Bondman," and the "Changeling," Mr. Betterton established the groundwork of his great reputation.

Sir William D'Avenant having been favoured with a patent before the civil wars broke out, obtained a renewal of that royal grant upon the Restoration, and in the spring of 1662 [should be June, 1661], after rehearsing various plays at Apothecaries'-hall, he opened a new theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, where Rhodes's comedians, with the addition of Harris, and three others, were sworn before the Lord Chamberlain, as servants of the crown, and honoured by the sanction of the Duke of York.

Here Sir William D'Avenant produced his "Siege of Rhodes," a play in two parts, embellished with such scenery and decorations as had never been before exhibited on the boards of a British theatre. The parts were strongly cast, and this drama, assisted by its splendid appendages, was represented for twelve days, successively, with unbounded approbation.

At this period Mr. Betterton first assumed the part of *Hamlet*, deriving considerable advantage from the hints of Sir William D'Avenant, to whom the acting of Taylor [who had been instructed by Shakespeare] had been formerly familiar. Downes expressly declares that this cha-

acter enhanced Mr. Betterton's reputation to the utmost, and there is much collateral evidence to substantiate its brilliant superiority.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Betterton was so favourably considered by Charles the Second, that, upon his performance of *Alvaro*, in "Love and Honour," he received that monarch's coronation-suit for the character, as a token of esteem. Public opinion kept pace with his efforts to secure it, and by evincing unparalleled talent in such diversified parts as *Mercutio*, *Sir Toby Belch*, and *Henry the Eighth*, (the last of which was adopted from his manager's remembrance of Lowin) he speedily attained to that eminence in his art, above which no human exertion can probably ascend.

At the king's especial command, it has been asserted by some of his biographers that Mr. Betterton went over to Paris to take a view of the French stage, and suggest such means as might ensure a corresponding improvement upon our own. They even go so far as to term him the first who publicly introduced our moving scenes, though Sir William D'Avenant, to whom that honour decidedly belongs, had attached them, less perfectly, perhaps, in 1658, to his "Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru."

<sup>1</sup> "I have lately been told by a Gentleman who has frequently seen Mr. *Betterton* perform this Part of *Hamlet*, that he has observ'd his Countenance (which was naturally ruddy and sanguin) in this Scene of the fourth Act where his Father's Ghost appears, thro' the violent and sudden Emotions of Amazement and Horror, turn instantly on the Sight of his Father's Spirit, as pale as his Neckcloth, when every Article of his Body seem'd to be affected with a Tremor inexpressible; so that, had his Father's Ghost actually risen before him; he could not have been seized with more real Agonies; and this was felt so strongly by the Audience, that the Blood seemed to shudder in their Veins likewise, and they in some Measure partook of the Astonishment and Horror, with which they saw this excellent Actor affected."—"Laureat," 1740, p. 31.

— "I have seen a pamphlet, written above forty years ago, by an intelligent man, who greatly extols the performance of Betterton in this last scene, commonly called the closet scene."—Davies's "Dramatic Miscellanies," vol. iii. p. 112, ed. 1784.

By or before 1663, Mr. Betterton had married Mrs. Saunderson, a performer in the same company, of matchless merit and unsullied virtue, though that event, by the "Biographia Dramatica," and other incautious compilations, is referred to the year 1670. This lady, it may be remarked, was single, while denominated mistress; the appellation of miss not being made familiar to the middle classes, till after the commencement of the ensuing century.

The duke's company, notwithstanding the favour and excellence to which Betterton, Harris, Smith, and other members were admitted, began to feel its want of attraction so forcibly, that Sir William D'Avenant was induced to try the effects of a new theatre, which was accordingly opened, with unparalleled magnificence, in Dorset-garden, Salisbury-court, notwithstanding an earnest opposition by the city of London, in November, 1671. Opinion, however, still inclining to their antagonists, dramatic operas were invented, and soon enabled the players at this place to achieve a triumph over merit unassisted by such expensive frivolity.

At the death of D'Avenant, on the 17th of April, 1668, Mr. Betterton succeeded to a portion of the management, and so great was the estimation in which both he and his lady were held, that in the year 1675, when a pastoral, called "Calisto; or, the Chaste Nymph," written by Mr. Crown, at the request of King Charles's consort, was to be performed at court by persons of the greatest distinction, they were appointed to instruct them in their respective parts. In 1682, an union was effected with the rival company, which Mr. Betterton continued to direct, till Rich, in 1690, obtained possession of the patent, and dispossessed him of importance and authority.

Exasperated by ill treatment, Mr. Betterton confederated with the principal performers to procure an independent license, which being granted by King William, they built a new theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, by subscription, and

opened it on the 30th of April, 1695, with Congreve's comedy of "Love for Love."

In 1705, enfeebled by age and infirmity, this distinguished veteran transferred his license to Sir John Vanbrugh, who erected a handsome theatre in the Haymarket, at which, divested of influence or control, he accepted an engagement as an actor.

Mr. Betterton's salary never exceeded eighty shillings a-week, and having sustained the loss of more than £2,000, by a commercial venture to the East Indies, in 1692, necessity compelled him to pursue his professional avocations. On Thursday, April the 13th, 1709,<sup>1</sup> the play of "Love for Love" was performed for his benefit, an occasion which summoned Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle from their retirement, to aid this antient coadjutor by the resumption of those parts they had originally sustained. Congreve is said to have furnished a prologue, though withdrawn and never submitted to print, which was delivered by the latter lady, the former reciting an epilogue from the pen of Rowe, which remains in lasting testimony of his affectionate regard. From this address the following lines are worthy of transcription :

But since, like friends to wit, thus thron'd you meet,  
Go on, and make the generous work complete ;  
Be true to merit, and still own his cause,  
Find something for him more than bare applause.  
In just remembrance of your pleasures past,  
Be kind and give him a discharge at last ;  
In peace and ease life's remnant let him wear,  
And hang his consecrated buskin here.

This hint, however, proved unavailing, and "Old Thomas "

<sup>1</sup> In Gildon's "Life," &c., 1710, there is a copy of Rowe's "Epilogue," stated to have been spoken by Mrs. Barry "at the Theatre Royal, in Drury-lane, April the 7th," and this mistaken date has been perpetuated by the "Biographia Dramatica." [In spite of this contradiction of Gildon and the "Biographia Dramatica," they are right, and Bell-chambers is wrong. The date was 7th April, 1709.]

still continued to labour, when permitted by intermissions of disease, for that subsistence his age and his services should long before have secured.

Mr. Betterton accordingly performed at intervals in the course of the ensuing winter, and on the 25th of April, 1710 [should be 13th April], was admitted to another benefit, which, with the patronage bestowed upon its predecessor, is supposed to have netted nearly £1000. Upon this occasion, he was announced for his celebrated part of *Melantius*, in the "Maid's Tragedy," from the performance of which he ought, however, upon strict consideration, to have been deterred; for having been suddenly seized with the gout, a determination not to disappoint the expectancy of his friends, induced him to employ a repellatory medicine, which lessened the swelling of his feet, and permitted him to walk in slippers. He acted, accordingly, with peculiar spirit, and was received with universal applause; but such were the fatal effects of his laudable anxiety, that the distemper returned with unusual violence, ascended to his head, and terminated his existence, in three days from the date of this fatal assumption. On the 2nd of May his remains were deposited with much form in the cloisters of Westminster-abbey.

Mr. Betterton was celebrated for polite behaviour to the dramatic writers of his time, and distinguished by singular modesty, in not presuming to understand the chief points of any character they offered him, till their ideas had been asked, and, if possible, adopted. He is also praised in some verses published with the "State Poems," for extending pecuniary assistance to embarrassed writers, till the success of a doubtful production might enable them to remunerate their generous creditor. Indeed, Mr. Betterton's benevolence was coupled with such magnanimity, that upon the death of that unhappy friend to whose counsels his little fortune had been sacrificed, he took charge of a surviving daughter, educated her at considerable expense, and



not only made her an accomplished actress, but a valuable woman.<sup>1</sup>

Among many testimonies of deference to his judgment, and regard for his zeal, the tributes of Dryden and Rowe have been brilliantly recorded. He was naturally of a cheerful temper, with a pious reliance upon the dispensations of providence, and nothing can yield a higher idea of his great affability, than the effect his behaviour produced upon Pope, who must have been a mere boy, when first admitted to his society. He sat to the poet for his picture, which Pope painted in oil,<sup>2</sup> and so eager was the bard to perpetuate his memory, that he published a modernization of Chaucer's "Prologues," in this venerable favourite's name, though palpably the produce of his own elegant pen.<sup>3</sup> As an author, Mr. Betterton's labours were confined to the drama, and if his original pieces are not entitled to much praise, his alterations exhibit some judicious amendments.

#### EDWARD KYNASTON.

Edward Kynaston made his first appearance in 1659, at the "Cockpit" in Drury-lane, under the management of Rhodes, to whom, in his trade of bookselling, he had previously been apprenticed. Here he took the lead in personating female parts, among which he sustained *Calis*, in the "Mad Lover;" *Ismenia*, in the "Maid in the Mill;" the

<sup>1</sup> This lady, who was remarkably handsome, married Boman, the actor.

<sup>2</sup> This curiosity, I believe, is still preserved in the Earl of Mansfield's mansion, at Caen-wood.

<sup>3</sup> Pope, in the postscript of a letter to Cromwell, writes thus :—

"— This letter of death puts me in mind of poor Betterton's, over whom I would have this sentence of Tully for an epitaph, which will serve for his moral as well as his theatrical capacity :

*' Vita bene acta jucundissima est recordatio.'*"

In another part of his correspondence, he intimates that Betterton's "remains" had been taken care of, alluding, I suppose, to this posthumous forgery.

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heroine of Sir John Suckling's "Aglaura;" *Arthiophe*, in the "Unfortunate Lovers;" and *Evadne*, in the "Maid's Tragedy." The three last of these parts have been distinguished by Downes and our author as the best of his efforts, and being then but a "mannish youth," he made a suitable representative of feminine beauty. Kynaston's *forte*, at this period, appears to have consisted in moving compassion and pity, "in which," says old Downes, "it has since been disputable among the judicious, whether any woman that succeeded him so sensibly touched the audience as he."

At the Restoration, when his majesty's servants re-opened the "Red Bull" playhouse, in St. John-street, next shifted to Gibbons's tennis-court, in Clare-market, and finally settled, in 1663, at their new theatre in Drury-lane, Kynaston was admitted to their ranks, and played *Peregrine*, in Jonson's comedy of the "Fox." He also held *Sir Dauphine*, a minor personage, in the same author's "Silent Woman," and soon after succeeded to *Otto*, in the "Duke of Normandy," a part which was followed by others of variety and importance.

In derogation of Cibber's panegyric, we are assured by Davies, upon the authority of some old comedians, that, from his juvenile familiarity with female characters, Kynaston contracted some disagreeable tones in speaking, which resembled the whine or cant that genuine taste has at all times been impelled to explode. When George Powel was once discharging the intemperance of a recent debauch from his stomach, Kynaston asked him if he still felt sick. "How is it possible to be otherwise," said Powel, "when I hear you speak?" Much as Kynaston, however, might have been affected by the peculiarities of early practice, we cannot consent, upon evidence such as this, to rob him of the laurels that have sprung from respectable testimony.

In 1695 he followed the fortunes of Betterton to Lincoln's-inn-fields, and supported a considerable character in John Banks's "Cyrus the Great," produced the year after this

removal. The time of his retirement is not known, but it appears from our author that he continued upon the stage till his memory and spirit both began to fail him. He had left it, however, before 1706, when Betterton and Underhill have been specified by Downes, as "being the only remains of the Duke of York's servants," at that time before the public. Kynaston died wealthy, and was buried in the church-yard of St. Paul's, Covent-garden.

Kynaston bore a great resemblance to the noted Sir Charles Sidley, a similitude of which he was so proud, that he endeavoured to display it by the most particular expedients. On one occasion, he got a suit of laced clothes made in imitation of the baronet's, and appearing publicly in it, Sir Charles, whose wit very seldom atoned for his ill-nature, punished this vain propensity in his usual mischievous manner. He hired a bravo to accost Kynaston in the Park, one day when he wore his finery, pick a quarrel with him on account of a pretended affront from his prototype, and beat him unmercifully. This scheme was duly put in practice, and though Kynaston protested that he was not the person his antagonist took him for, the ruffian redoubled his blows, on account of what he affected to consider his scandalous falsehood. When Sir Charles Sidley was remonstrated with upon the cruelty of this transaction, he told the actor's friends that their pity was misplaced, for that Kynaston had not suffered so much in his bones as *he* had in his character, the whole town believing that it was he who had undergone the disgrace of this chastisement.

#### WILLIAM MOUNTFORT.

William Mountfort, according to Cibber's estimate, was born in 1660, and having, I suppose, joined the king's company at a very early age, about the year 1682, "grew," in the words of old Downes, "to the maturity of a good actor." At Drury-lane theatre, he sustained *Alfonso Corso*, in the "Duke of Guise," in 1682. His rise was so rapid, that in 1685

we find him selected for the hero of Crowne's "Sir Courtly Nice," "which," says Downes, "was so *nicely* performed," that none of his successors, but Colley Cibber, could equal him. Perhaps the last new character assumed by Mountfort was *Cleanthes*, in Dryden's "Cleomenes," a play to which he spoke the prologue.

I here present the reader with a narrative of those circumstances attending the death of Mountfort, which have so long been misunderstood and misrepresented.

A Captain Richard Hill had made proposals of marriage to Mrs. Bracegirdle, which were declined from what Hill appeared to consider an injurious preference for Mountfort, between whom, though a married man, and the lady, at least a platonic attachment was often thought to subsist. Enraged at Mountfort's superior success, and affecting to treat him as the only obstacle to his wishes, Hill expressed a determination at various times, and before several persons, to be revenged upon him, and as it was proved upon the trial, coupled this threat with some of the bitterest invectives that could spring from brutal animosity. Among Hill's associates was Lord Mohun, a peer of very dissolute manners, whose extreme youth afforded but a faint palliative for his participation in the act of violence and debauchery to which Hill resorted. This nobleman, however, who seems to have felt a chivalric devotion to the interests of his friend, engaged with Hill in a cruel and perfidious scheme for the abduction of Mrs. Bracegirdle, whom Hill proposed to carry off, violate, and afterwards marry. They arranged with one Dixon, an owner of hackney carriages, to provide a coach and six horses to take them to Totteridge, and appointed him to wait with this conveyance over against the Horse-shoe tavern in Drury-lane. A small party of soldiers was also hired to assist in this notable exploit, and as Mrs. Bracegirdle, who had been supping at a Mr. Page's in Prince's-street, was going down Drury-lane towards her lodgings in Howard-street,

Strand, about ten o'clock at night, on Friday the 9th of December, 1692, two of these soldiers pulled her away from Mr. Page, who was attending her home, nearly knocked her mother down, and tried to lift her into the vehicle. Her mother, upon whom the blow given by these ruffians had providentially made but a short impression, hung very obstinately about her neck, and prevented the success of their endeavours. While Mr. Page was calling loudly for assistance, Hill ran at him with his sword drawn, and again endeavoured to get Mrs. Bracegirdle into the coach, a task he was hindered from accomplishing, by the alarm that Page had successfully given. Company came up, on which Hill insisted on seeing Mrs. Bracegirdle home, and actually led her by the hand to the house in which she resided. Lord Mohun, who during this scuffle was seated quietly in the coach, joined Hill in Howard-street, the soldiers having been previously dismissed, and there they paraded, with their swords drawn, for about an hour and a half, before Mrs. Bracegirdle's door. Hill's scabbard, it ought to be remarked, was clearly proved to have been lost during the scuffle in Drury-lane, and Lord Mohun, when challenged by the watch, not only sheathed his weapon, but offered to surrender it. These were strong points at least in his lordship's favour, and deserve to be noted, because the prescriptive assertion that Mountfort was treacherously killed, is weakened by the establishment of those facts. Mrs. Brown, the mistress of the house where Mrs. Bracegirdle lodged, went out on her arrival, to expostulate with Lord Mohun and his confederate, and after exchanging a few words of no particular importance, dispatched her maid servant to Mountfort's house,<sup>1</sup> hard by in Norfolk-street, to apprise Mrs. Mountfort of the danger to which, in case of coming home, he would be subjected. Mrs. Mountfort sent in search of her husband, but without

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Brown swore she went herself, but appears to have been mistaken.

success, and the watch on going their round, between eleven and twelve o'clock, found Lord Mohun and Hill drinking wine in the street, a drawer having brought it from an adjacent tavern. At this juncture Mrs. Brown, the landlady, hearing the voices of the watch, went to the door with a design of directing them to secure both Lord Mohun and Hill, and some conversation passed upon that subject, although her directions were not obeyed. Seeing Mountfort, just as he had turned the corner into Howard-street, and was apparently coming towards her house, Mrs. Brown hurried out to meet him, and mention his danger, but he would not stop, so as to allow her time for the slightest communication. On gaining the spot where Lord Mohun stood, Hill being a little farther off, he saluted his lordship with great respect, and was received by him with unequivocal kindness. Lord Mohun hinted to Mountfort that he had been sent for by Mrs. Bracegirdle, in consequence of her projected seizure, a charge which Mountfort immediately denied. Lord Mohun then touched upon the affair, and Mountfort expressed a hope, with some warmth, that he would not vindicate Hill's share in the business, against which, while disclaiming any tenderness for Mrs. Bracegirdle, he protested with much asperity. Hill approached in time to catch the substance of Mountfort's remark, and having hastily said that he could vindicate himself, gave him a blow on the ear, and at the same moment a challenge to fight. They both went from the pavement into the middle of the road, and after making two or three passes at each other, Mountfort was mortally wounded. He threw down his sword, which broke by the fall, and staggered to his own house, where Mrs. Page, who had gone to concert with Mrs. Mountfort for her husband's safety, hearing a cry of "murder" in the street, threw open the door, and received him pale, bleeding, and exhausted, in her arms. Hill fled and escaped, but Lord Mohun, having surrendered himself, was arraigned before parliament as an accomplice, on the 31st of January, 1693, and, after a laborious, patient, pro-

tracted, and impartial trial, acquitted of the crime, in which he certainly bore no conspicuous part. Mountfort languished till noon the next day, and solemnly declared, at the very point of death, that Hill stabbed him with one hand while he struck him with the other, Lord Mohun holding him in conversation when the murder was committed. From the fact, however, of Mountfort's sword being taken up unsheathed and broken, there is no doubt, without insisting upon the testimony to that effect, that he used it; and that he could have used it after receiving the desperate wound of which he died, does not appear, by his flight and exhaustion, to have been possible. Some of his fellow-players, it seems, had sifted the evidence of a material witness, the day after his death, and at this evidence they openly expressed their dissatisfaction. Mountfort, it was indisputably shown, too, *went out of the way to his own house*, in going down Howard-street at all, as he ought to have crossed it, his door being the second from the south-west corner. These circumstances will perhaps support a conjecture that some part of the odium heaped upon Lord Mohun and Hill has proceeded from the cowardice and exasperation of a timid and vindictive fraternity, coupled with the individual artifices of Mrs. Bracegirdle, to redeem a character which the real circumstances of Mountfort's death, dying as her champion, severely affected. Cibber's assurance of her purity, may merely prove the extent of his dulness or dissimulation, for on calmly reviewing this case in all its aspects, chequered as it is by Hill's impetuosity, Mrs. Bracegirdle's lewdness, and Mountfort's presumption, I cannot help inferring that he fell a victim, not unfairly, to one of those casual encounters which mark the general violence of the times. The record of his murder is therefore erroneous, and we may hope to see it amended in every future collection of theatrical lives.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bellchambers seems to have had a craze on the subject of Mrs. Bracegirdle's character, which he vilifies on every possible opportunity. His opinion here appears to me very questionable.

## SAMUEL SANDFORD.

Samuel Sandford made his first appearance upon the stage, under D'Avenant's authority, in the year 1663,<sup>1</sup> at the time when that company was strengthened by the accession of Smith and Matthew Medbourn. The first part for which he has been mentioned by Downes, is *Sampson*, in "Romeo and Juliet;" he soon after sustained a minor part in the "Adventures of Five Hours," fol. 1663; and when D'Avenant produced his comedy of the "Man's the Master," he and Harris sung an eccentric epilogue in the character of two street ballad-singers. Sandford was the original *Foresight*, in "Love for Love," and though Mr. Cibber has exclusively insisted upon his tragic excellence, he must have been a comedian of strong and diversified humour. When Betterton and his associates seceded to the new theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, he refused to join them as a sharer, but was engaged at a salary of three pounds per week. As Sandford is not enumerated by Downes among the actors transferred to Swiney, in the latter end of 1706, when Betterton and Underhill, indeed, are mentioned as "the only remains" of the duke's company, it is clear he must have died during the previous six years, having been referred to by Cibber, as exercising his profession in 1700. His ancestors were long and respectably settled at Sandford, a village in Shropshire; and he seems to have prided himself, absurdly, upon the superiority of his birth.

## JAMES NOKES.

James Nokes formed part of the company collected at the "Cockpit," in 1659, and is first mentioned by Downes for *Norfolk*, in "King Henry the Eighth," some time after D'Avenant's opening in Lincoln's-inn-fields. Upon this assumption Mr. Davies has expressed a very reasonable

<sup>1</sup> Sandford played Worm in "The Cutter of Coleman Street" as early as 1661. (L.)



doubt, and conjectured, with much plausibility, that it was sustained by Robert Nokes.

In Cowley's "Cutter of Coleman-street" [1661], the part of *Puny* was allotted to Nokes, whose reputation at that period appears to have been but feebly established, as the more important comic characters were intrusted to Lovel and Underhill. We find the name of Nokes affixed to *Lovis*, in Etherege's "Comical Revenge," 1664, but his performance of that part, whatever merit it might have evinced, acquired no distinction. [This is wrong; Nokes played Sir Nicholas Cully : the part of Lovis was acted by Norris.] The plague then beginning to rage, theatrical exhibitions were suspended, in May, 1665, and the company ceased to act, on account of the great fire, till [about] Christmas, 1666, when their occupation was resumed in Lincoln's-inn-fields, and Lord Orrery produced his play of "Mr. Antony." In this piece there was an odd sort of duel between Nokes and Angel, in which one was armed with a blunderbuss, and the other with a bow and arrow. Though this frivolous incident procured Nokes some accession of public notice, it was Dryden's "Sir Martin Mar-all," [1667,] which developed his powers to their fullest extent, and raised him to the highest pitch of popularity.

According to Downes, the Duke of Newcastle gave a literal translation of Molière's "Etourdi" to Dryden, who adapted the part of *Sir Martin Mar-all* "purposely for the mouth of Mr. Nokes;" and the old prompter has corroborated Mr. Cibber's assertion of his success. Nokes added largely to his reputation, in [1668], by performing *Sir Oliver*, in "She would if she could;" and strengthened Shadwell's "Sullen Lovers," by accepting the part of *Poet Ninny*.

Nokes acted *Barnaby Brittle* at the original appearance—about 1670—of Betterton's "Amorous Widow," and [in 1671] performed *Old Jorden*, in Ravenscroft's "Citizen turned Gentleman," a part which the king and court were said to

have been more delighted with than any other, except *Sir Martin Mar-all*. His *Nurse*, in "Caius Marius," 1680, excited such uncommon merriment, that he carried the name of Nurse Nokes to his grave. In 1688, he supported the hero of Shadwell's "'Squire of Alsatia," a play which was acted in every part with remarkable excellence, and enjoyed the greatest popularity. We find no farther mention of him, subsequent to this period, though included by Cibber among those who were performing under the united patents, in 1690, when he first came into the company. According to Brown, who has peculiarly marked out his "gaiety and openness" upon the stage, he kept a "nicknackatory, or toy-shop," opposite the spot which has since received the denomination of Exeter Change. The date of his death is uncertain, but there is some reason to presume that it happened about the year 1692.<sup>1</sup>

#### WILLIAM PINKETHMAN.

The first mention of Pinkethman, by Downes, is for the part of *Ralph*, in "Sir Salomon," when commanded at court, in the beginning of [1704], but he had been alluded to, two years before, in Gildon's "Comparison between the Two Stages," as the "flower of Bartholomew-fair, and the idol of the rabble. A fellow that overdoes every thing, and spoils many a part with his own stuff." [He was on the stage as early as 1692.] He is again mentioned in the "Roscius Anglicanus" for *Dr. Caius*, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," and continued to act in the Drury-lane company till his death, about the year 1725.

Pinkethman was a serviceable actor, notwithstanding his irregularities, and performed many characters of great importance. He was the original *Don Lewis*, in "Love makes a Man," 1701, a proof that his talents were soon and greatly

<sup>1</sup> Cibber says that Nokes, Mountfort, and Leigh, "died about the same year," *viz.* 1692

appreciated. His eccentric turn led him, in too many instances, from the sphere of respectability, and we find him in the constant habit of frequenting fairs, for the low purpose of theatrical exhibition. His stage talents were marred, it is true, by an extravagant habit of saying more than had been "set down" for him; and though this abominable blemish is fully admitted, still its toleration proves that Pinkethman must have been an actor of uncommon value. His son was a comedian of merit, who played *Waitwell*, in the "Way of the World," at the opening of Covent-garden theatre, in December, 1732, and died in May, 1740.

#### ANTHONY LEIGH.

The "famous Mr. Antony Leigh," as Downes denominates him, came into the duke's company, about the year [1672], upon the deaths of several eminent actors, whose places he and others were admitted to supply. He played *Bellair, sen.*, in Etherege's "Man of Mode," at its production in 1676. In 1681, Leigh supported *Father Dominic*, in Dryden's "Spanish Friar;" a piece, which, according to the "Roscius Anglicanus," was "admirably acted, and produced vast profit to the company." Leigh's success was so great in this character, that a full-length portrait was taken of him in his clerical habit, by Sir Godfrey Kneller, for the Earl of Dorset, from which a good mezzotinto engraving is now in the hands of theatrical collectors. In 1685, we find him allotted to *Sir Nicholas Calico*, in "Sir Courtly Nice;" in 1688 he supported *Sir William Belfond*, in Shadwell's "Squire of Alsatia," and these parts, with a few others, appear to have constituted his peculiar excellence.

The satirical allusions of such a random genius as Brown, are rarely to be relied upon, or we might suspect Leigh, from the following extract, to have been distinguished by pious hypocrisy :—

“At last, my friend Nokes, pointing to a little edifice, which exactly resembles Dr. Burgess’s conventicle in Russel-court, says he, ‘your old acquaintance Tony Leigh, who turned presbyterian parson upon his coming into these quarters, holds forth most notably here every Sunday.’”—“Letters from the Dead to the Living” [1744, ii. 77].

#### CAVE UNDERHILL.

Cave Underhill was a member of the company collected by Rhodes, and which, soon afterwards, submitted to the authority of Sir William D’Avenant. He is first mentioned by Downes, for his performance of *Sir Morglay Thwack*, in the “Wits,” after which he sustained the *Grave-digger*, in “Hamlet,” and soon testified such ability, that the manager publicly termed him “the truest comedian” at that time upon his stage.<sup>1</sup> Underhill, about this time, strengthened the cast of “Romeo and Juliet,” by playing *Gregory*, and though the custom of devoting the best talent which the theatres afford, to parts of minor importance, has ceased, it is a practice to which the managers, were public amusement consulted, might safely recur. In Shakspeare’s “Twelfth Night,” which, says Downes, “had mighty success by its well performance,” Underhill soon after supported the *Clown*, a character in which the latter attributes delineated by Cibber, could alone have been employed. Underhill’s reputation appears to have been speedily established, as we find him intrusted by Cowley, in [1661], with the hero of his “Cutter of Coleman-street;” and he is mentioned by Downes for especial excellence in performing *Fodelet*, in D’Avenant’s “Man’s the Master.” His first new part after the accession of James, was *Hothead*, in “Sir Courtly Nice;” on the 30th of April, 1695, he distinguished himself by his chaste and spirited performance of *Sir Sampson Legend*, in

<sup>1</sup> “Roscius Anglicanus.”

Congreve's "Love for Love," and in 1700, closed a long, arduous, and popular career of original parts, by playing *Sir Wilful Witwou'd*, in the "Way of the World." [He continued on the stage till 1710.]

A brief account of this valuable comedian has been furnished by Mr. Davies, which, for the satisfaction of our readers, we shall proceed to transcribe.

"Underhill was a jolly and droll companion, who, if we may believe such historians as Tom Brown, divided his gay hours between Bacchus and Venus, with no little ardour. Tom, I think, makes Underhill one of the gill-drinkers of his time; men who resorted to taverns, in the middle of the day, under pretence of drinking Bristol milk, (for so good sherry was then called) to whet their appetites, where they indulged themselves too often in ebriety. Underhill acted till he was past eighty. He was so excellent in the part of Trinculo, in the *Tempest*, that he was called Prince Trinculo.<sup>1</sup> He had an admirable vein of pleasantry, and told his lively stories, says Brown, with a bewitching smile. The same author says, he was so afflicted with the gout, that he prayed one minute and cursed the other. His shambling gait, in his old age, was no hindrance to his acting particular parts. He retired from the theatre in 1703."—"Dram. Misc.," iii. 138.

On the 31st of May, 1709, Underhill applied for a benefit, and procured it, upon which occasion he played his favourite part of the *Grave-digger*, and received the following cordial recommendation from Sir Richard Steele:—

"My chief business here [Will's Coffee House] this evening, was to speak to my friends in behalf of honest Cave Underhill, who has been a comic for three generations; my father admired him extremely when he was a boy. There is certainly nature excellently represented in his manner of action; in which he ever avoided that general fault in

<sup>1</sup> I find, on looking over the "Roscius Anglicanus," that *Trinculo* is termed *Duke Trinculo*, in a short reference to the "Tempest."

players, of doing too much. It must be confessed, he has not the merit of some ingenious persons now on the stage, of adding to his authors; for the actors were so dull in the last age, that many of them have gone out of the world, without having ever spoken one word of their own in the theatre. Poor Cave is so mortified, that he quibbles and tells you, he pretends only to act a part fit for a man who has one foot in the grave; *viz.* a *Grave-digger*. All admirers of true comedy, it is hoped, will have the gratitude to be present on the last day of his acting, who, if he does not happen to please them, will have it then to say, that it is the first time.—“Tatler,” No. 22.

#### GEORGE POWELL.

The father of George Powell was an actor in the king's company at the time of its junction, in 1682, with the duke's. Powell's access to the theatre was, therefore, easy; and we are intitled to suspect, though the time is not to be ascertained, that he began to act at a very early period.

Even, according to Cibber's allowance, when Powell was appointed to the principal parts abandoned by Betterton and his revolvers, they were parts for which, whether serious or comic, he had both elocution and humour. It is remarked by Davies,<sup>1</sup> that Cibber “seems to have hated Powell,” and if so, we have a ready clue to the neglect and asperity with which he has treated him.

Powell succeeded Betterton, it is supposed, in the part of *Hotspur*, when that excellent comedian exchanged its choleric attributes, in his declining years, for the gaiety and humour of *Falstaff*. *Edgar*, in “King Lear,” was also one of his most successful characters, but of this, owing to his irregularities, he was dispossessed by Wilks. To such a height, indeed, was the intemperance of this actor carried,

<sup>1</sup> “Dramatic Miscellanies,” vol. ii. p. 323.

that Sir John Vanbrugh, in his preface to the "Relapse," 4to, 1697, speaking of Powell's *Worthy*, has exposed it in following manner :

One word more about the bawdy, and I have done. I own the first night this thing was acted, some indecencies had like to have happened ; but it was not my fault. The fine gentleman of the play, drinking his mistress's health in Nantes brandy, from six in the morning to the time he waddled on upon the stage in the evening, had toasted himself up to such a pitch of vigour, I confess I once gave up *Amanda* for gone, and am since, with all due respect to Mrs. Rogers, very sorry she escaped : for I am confident a certain lady, (let no one take it to herself that is handsome) who highly blames the play, for the barrenness of the conclusion, would then have allowed it a very natural close.

To the folly of intoxication he added the horrors of debt, and was so hunted by the Sheriffs' officers, that he usually walked the streets with a sword (sheathed) in his hand, and if he saw any of them at a distance, he would roar out, "Get on the other side of the way, you dog !" The bailiff, who knew his old customer, would obligingly answer, "We do not want you *now*, Master Powell." Harassed by his distresses, and unnerved by drink, it is hardly to be wondered at if his reputation decreased, and his ability slackened ; but that his efforts were still marked by a possession of the very highest qualities that criticism can attest, is proved by the following extract from the "Spectator :"

Having spoken of Mr. Powell as sometimes raising himself applause from the ill taste of an audience, I must do him the justice to own, that he is excellently formed for a tragedian, and, when he pleases, deserves the admiration of the best judges.—No. 40.

Addison and Steele continued their regard for this unhappy man as long as they could render him any service, and that he acted *Portius*, in "Cato," on its appearance in 1713, must have been with the author's approbation. The last trace we have of Powell is confined to a playbill, for his benefit, in the year 1717, since when no vestige has been

found of his career. He lies buried, it has been said, in the vault of St. Clement-Danes ; but though the period of his death may be fixed not far from the date of this document, it cannot be minutely ascertained. [Genest says Powell died 14th December, 1714.]

In the intervals of excess Powell found time for repeated literary labour, having written four plays, and superintended the publication of three more. His fault was too great a passion for social pleasure, but though the irregularities this passion produced, disabled him from exerting the talents he was allowed to possess, still his excellence on the stage is not to be disputed. He was esteemed at one period of his life a rival to Betterton, and had the prudence of his conduct been equal to the vigour of his genius, he would have held, as well as reached, that lofty station for which nature had designed him.

If the testimony of Aston can be relied on, Powell was born in the year 1658, being incidentally mentioned by that facetious writer, as Betterton's junior by three and twenty years.

#### JOHN VERBRUGGEN.

John Verbruggen, it appears from the assertion of Mr. Davies, was a dissipated young fellow, who determined, in opposition to the advice of his friends, to be an actor, and accordingly loitered about Drury-lane theatre, at the very time when Cibber was also endeavouring to get admittance, in expectation of employment. On the death of Mountfort, whose widow he married, Verbruggen was intrusted, I have no doubt, with the part of *Alexander*, his fondness for which was such, that he suffered the players and the public, for many years, to call him by no other name. [He seems to have been called Alexander from his first appearing on the stage, till 1694.] It is mentioned in more than one pamphlet, that Cibber and Verbruggen were at variance, and



hence the animosity and unfairness with which the latter has been treated.<sup>1</sup>

The first part to which Verbruggen can be traced, is *Aurelius*, in "King Arthur," 4to, 1691 [he played *Ter-magant* ("Squire of Alsatia") in 1688]: in the year 1696, Mr. Southern assigned him the character of *Oroonoko*, by the special advice of William Cavendish, the first Duke of Devonshire; and as the author informs us in his preface, "it was Verbruggen's endeavour, in the performance of that part, to merit the duke's recommendation." A further proof of Mr. Cibber's partiality, is the constant respect paid to Verbruggen by such judges of ability as Rowe and Congreve, for whose pieces he was uniformly selected. His *Mirabel*, in the "Way of the World," and *Bajazet*, in "Tamerlane," were parts of the highest importance, and it will be difficult to show that an ordinary actor could have been intrusted, by writers of equal power and fastidiousness, with duties of which he was not thoroughly deserving. When

<sup>1</sup> "That Verbruggen and Cibber did not accord, is plainly insinuated by the author of the *Laureat*. It was known that the former would resent an injury, and that the latter's valour was entirely passive. The temper of Verbruggen may be known, from a story which I have often been told by the old comedians as a certain fact, and which found its way into some temporary publication.

"Verbruggen, in a dispute with one of King Charles's illegitimate sons, was so far transported by sudden anger, as to strike him, and call him a son of a whore. The affront was given, it seems, behind the scenes of Drury-lane. Complaint was made of this daring insult on a nobleman, and Verbruggen was told, he must either not act in London, or submit publicly to ask the nobleman's pardon. During the time of his being interdicted acting, he had engaged himself to Betterton's theatre. He consented to ask pardon, on liberty granted to express his submission in his own terms. He came on the stage dressed for the part of *Oroonoko*, and, after the usual preface, owned that he had called the Duke of St. A. a son of a whore. 'It is true,' said Verbruggen, 'and I am sorry for it.' On saying this, he invited the company present to see him act the part of *Oroonoko*, at the theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields."—"Dramatic Miscellanies," vol. iii. p. 447.

II.

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Verbruggen died it is impossible to ascertain. He played *Sullen*, in the "Beaux' Stratagem," at its production in 1707, and as Elrington made his appearance in *Bajazet*, in 1711, there is some reason to conclude that Verbruggen's death occurred during that interval. [He died before April, 1708.]

Though Gildon, a scribbler whose venality was only exceeded by his dulness, has mentioned Verbruggen in the most derogatory terms,<sup>1</sup> there is ample evidence in the bare record of his business, to justify the most unqualified merit we may incline to ascribe. Chetwood alludes to him, in pointing out Elrington's imitation of his excellencies, as "a very great actor in tragedy, and polite parts in comedy,"<sup>2</sup> and the author of the "Laureat" enumerates a variety of important characters, in which he commanded universal applause.

#### JOSEPH WILLIAMS.

Joseph Williams,<sup>3</sup> who was bred a seal-cutter, came into the duke's company, about the year 1673, when but a boy, and according to the practice of that period, being apprenticed to an eminent actor, "served Mr. Harris." I find him first mentioned by Downes, for *Pylades*, in the serious opera of "Circe;" his next character of importance being *Polydore*, in the "Orphan," 1680; and, same year, *Theodosius*, in Lee's tragedy of that name. The Union in 1682, without diminishing his merit, appears to have lessened his value, by the introduction of Kynaston and others, who had more established pretensions to parts of importance.

<sup>1</sup> "A fellow with a crackt voice: he clangs his words as if he spoke out of a broken drum."—"Comparison, &c.," 1702.

<sup>2</sup> "History of the Stage," p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> There was also a David Williams; perhaps the person who played the *2d Grave-digger*, in "Hamlet." (B.) [Genest gives this part to Joseph Williams.]

The secession of Williams from Betterton's company, just before the opening in 1695, has been noticed and explained by Mr. Cibber, in a subsequent passage. Greatly, as I have no doubt, he has depreciated the merit of this actor, no materials remain of a more recent date than those already quoted, by which we may conjecture his talents, or enforce his estimation. Williams is not to be confounded with an actor of the same appellation, who was at Drury-lane theatre in the year 1730, and relieved Cibber of *Scipio*, in Thomson's "Sophonisba," a curious account of which is given in the "Dramatic Miscellanies."

#### ELIZABETH BARRY.

Elizabeth Barry, it is said, was the daughter of Edward Barry, Esq., a barrister, who was afterwards called Colonel Barry, from his having raised a regiment for the service of Charles the First, in the course of the civil wars. The misfortunes arising from this engagement, involved him in such distress, that his children were obliged to provide for their own maintenance. Lady D'Avenant, a relation of the noted laureat, from her friendship to Colonel Barry, gave this daughter a genteel education, and made her a constant associate in the circle of polite intercourse. These opportunities gave an ease and grace to Mrs. Barry's behaviour, which were of essential benefit, when her patroness procured her an introduction to the stage. This happened in the year 1673, when Mrs. Barry's efforts were so extremely unpropitious, that the directors of the duke's company pronounced her incapable of making any progress in the histrionic art. Three times, according to Curll's "History of the Stage," she was dismissed, and by the interest of her benefactor, re-instated. When Otway, however, produced his "Alcibiades," in 1675, her merit was such, as not only to excite the public attention, but to command the author's praise, which has been glowingly bestowed upon her in the

preface to that production. We find her, next season, filling the lively character of *Mrs. Lovit*, in Etherege's "Man of Mode ;" and in 1680, her performance of *Monimia*, in the "Orphan," seems to have raised that reputation to its greatest height, which had been gradually increasing. The part of *Belvidera*, two years afterwards, and the heroine of Southern's "Fatal Marriage," in 1694, elicited unrivalled talent, and procured her universal distinction.

When Mrs. Barry first resorted to the theatre, her pretensions to notice were a good air and manner, and a very powerful and pleasing voice. Her ear, however, was so extremely defective, that several eminent judges, on seeing her attempt a character of some importance, gave their opinion that she never could be an actress. Upon the authority of Curll's historian, Mr. Davies<sup>1</sup> has compiled what appears to me an apocryphal tale of her sudden rise to the pinnacle of excellence, though there is no reason to dispute her criminal intimacy with the Earl of Rochester. I am not inclined, while doubting the precise anecdote of his assistance, to deny that much advantage might have been derived from his general instructions.

Mrs. Barry was not only remarkable for the brilliancy of her talent, but the earnestness of her zeal, and the ardour of her assiduity. Betterton, that kind, candid, and judicious observer, bore this testimony to her eminent abilities, and unyielding good-nature, that she often exerted herself so greatly in a pitiful character, that her acting has given success to plays which would disgust the most patient reader.<sup>2</sup> When she accepted a part, it was her uniform practice to consult the author's intention. Her last new character was the heroine of Smith's "Phædra and Hippolytus," and though Mrs. Oldfield and the poet fell out concerning a few lines in the part of *Ismena*, Mrs. Barry

<sup>1</sup> "Dramatic Miscellanies," vol. iii. p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> "Life of Betterton," p. 16.

and he were in perfect harmony. [*Valide*, in Goring's "Irene," 1708, was her last new part.]

Mrs. Barry must have closed her career with this performance, being mentioned by Steele, in the "Tatler," when assisting at Betterton's benefit, on Thursday, April 7th, 1709, as "not at present concerned in the house." She died on the 7th of November, 1713, aged fifty-five years, and was buried in Acton church-yard. Mr. Davies ascribes her death to the bite of a favourite lap-dog, who, unknown to her, had been seized with madness, and there seems to be no grounds for disturbing his supposition.

#### MRS. BETTERTON.

When Sir William D'Avenant undertook the management of the duke's company, he lodged and boarded four principal actresses in his house, among whom was Mrs. Saunderson, the subject of this article.

Mrs. Saunderson's first appearance in D'Avenant's company, was made as *Ianthe*, in the "Siege of Rhodes," on the opening of his new theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, in April, 1662 [should be June, 1661]. She played *Ophelia* soon afterwards, and that part being followed by Shakspeare's *Juliet*, evinces the consideration in which her services were held. [About] 1663, she married Mr. Betterton, and not in 1670, as it is erroneously mentioned in the "Biographia Dramatica," and other worthless compilations.<sup>1</sup>

The principal characters sustained by Mrs. Betterton, were *Queen Catharine*, in "Henry the Eighth;" the *Duchess of Malfy*; the *Amorous Widow*; those enumerated in the text, and many others, not less remarkable for their impor-

<sup>1</sup> Downes expressly mentions her as Mrs. Betterton for *Camilla* [should be *Portia*], in the "Adventures of Five Hours," 1663; and she also acted by that name, a few months after, in the "Slighted Maid." This error originated with the "Biographia Britannica," but Mr. Jones, the late slovenly editor of the book alluded to, had ample means to correct it. (B.)

tance than their variety. On the death of her husband, in April, 1710, she was so strongly affected by that event, as to lose her senses, which were recovered, however, a short time previous to her own decease. Mr. Cibber may be right in stating that she only enjoyed the bounty of her royal mistress for about half a year; but, in that case, the pension could not have been granted directly he died, as we find that Mrs. Betterton was alive on the 4th of June, 1711, more than thirteen months after, and had the play of "Sir Fopling Flutter," performed at Drury-lane for her benefit. Mrs. Betterton, though prevented from performing, by age and infirmity, enjoyed a sinecure situation in Drury-lane theatre, till she withdrew from it, in 1709, and was paid at the rate of [one pound] a-week. The "Biographia Britannica" says she survived her husband eighteen months, but the precise date of her decease has never been discovered. [Mrs. Betterton made a will on 10th March, 1712. In all probability Bellchambers is right in supposing that the annuity was not granted till some time after her husband's death.]

#### BENJAMIN JOHNSON.

This excellent actor, who was familiarly known by the appellation of his great namesake, Ben Jonson, came into the Theatre Royal, from an itinerant company, as Mr. Cibber relates, about the year 1695. He was bred a sign painter, but took more pleasure in hearing the actors, than in handling his pencil or spreading his colours, and, as he used to say in his merry mood, left the saint's occupation at last to take that of the sinner.

Johnson's merit was evinced as *Sir William Wisewould*, in Cibber's comedy of "Love's Last Shift," 4to, 1696; but I find him first mentioned by Downes, for *Justice Wary*, in Caryl's "Sir Salomon" [about 1704 or 1705]; the old prompter, in a species of postscript to his valuable tract,

then terms him "a true copy of Mr. Underhill," and instances his *Morose*, *Corbaccio*, and *Hothead*, as very admirable efforts. Johnson passed over to the management of old Swiney, in 1706, with other members of Betterton's company, and established a very high reputation by his chaste and studied manner of acting. When Rich, in 1714, opened his new theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, the managers of Drury-lane, solicitous to retain in their service comedians of merit, paid a particular respect to Johnson, by investing him with such parts of Dogget, who had taken leave of them, as were adapted to his powers. Here he continued with fame and profit, till August, 1742, when he expired in the seventy-seventh year of his age. Mr. Davies, who appears to have been familiar with his excellencies, has given a description of Johnson, which, for its evident taste and candour, I shall do myself the pleasure to transcribe.

"That chaste copier of nature, Ben Johnson, the comedian, for above forty years, gave a true picture of an arch clown in the *Grave-digger*. His jokes and repartees had a strong effect from his seeming insensibility of their force. His large, speaking, blue eyes he fixed steadily on the person to whom he spoke, and was never known to have wandered from the stage to any part of the theatre."—"Dram. Misc.," iii. 140.

#### WILLIAM BULLOCK.

This excellent actor came to London, as we see, about 1695, deriving his engagement from the distress in which Drury-lane theatre was involved by the desertion of Betterton, and other principal performers. He quitted this establishment in 1714, owing, as Mr. Cibber insinuates, to the ungovernable temper of Wilks; and passed over to John Rich, at the opening of Lincoln's-inn-fields. He is first mentioned by Downes, for the *Host*, in Shakspeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor" [about 1704 or 1705], and appears to be pointed at in Dennis's "Epistle Dedicatory" to the "Comical

Gallant," where the irascible writer thus addresses the Hon. George Granville :—

"Falstaff's part, which you know to be the principal one of the play, and that which on all the rest depends, was by no means acted to the satisfaction of the audience, upon which several fell from disliking the action, to disapproving the play." [As noted before, p. 252, Bullock was probably not the actor aimed at.]

This piece was printed in 1702, as acted "at the Theatre Royal in Drury-lane ;" with a list of the *dramatis personæ*, but the names of the actors not annexed. Bullock, however, sustained the part of *Sir Tunbelly Clumsy*, in Vanbrugh's "Relapse," which had been previously performed under the same auspices, and from its nature, most probably by the same actor.

William Bullock was a comedian of great glee and much vivacity, and in his person large, with a lively countenance, full of humourous information. Steele, in the "Tatler," with his usual kind sensibility, very often adverts to Bullock's faculty of exciting amusement, but sometimes censures his habit of interpolation.<sup>1</sup> In Gildon's "Comparison between the Two Stages," 1702 [p. 199], he is termed the "best comedian since Nokes and Leigh, and a fellow that has a very humble opinion of himself." Bullock's abilities have been ratified by the sanction of Macklin, who denominated him a true theatrical genius ; and Mr. Davies saw him act several parts with great applause, and particularly the *Spanish Friar*, when beyond the age of eighty. He died on the 18th of June, 1733. [Genest, iii. 593, points out that Bullock was acting in 1739.]

#### JOHN MILLS.

Our first notice of this actor is found in the "Roscius

<sup>1</sup> "You'll have Pinkethman and Bullock helping out Beaumont and Fletcher."—Tatler," No. 89.



Anglicanus," where Downes, who seems anxious to dispatch his subject, says summarily that "he excels in tragedy," but without making the remotest allusion to any characters in which his talent had been displayed.

John Mills the elder was, in person, inclined to the athletic size; his features were large, though not expressive; his voice was full, but not flexible; and his deportment was manly, without being graceful or majestic. He was considered one of the most useful actors that ever served in a theatre, but though invested by the patronage of Wilks with many parts of the highest order, he had no pretensions to quit the secondary line in which he ought to have been placed. Steele<sup>1</sup> taxes him very broadly with a want of "sentiment," and insinuates that by making gesture too much his study, he neglected the better attributes of his art.

On the death of Betterton, or soon after, Wilks, who took upon himself to regulate the theatrical cast, gave *Macbeth*, with great partiality, to Mills, while Booth and Powell were condemned to represent the inferior parts of *Banquo* and *Lenox*. Mills, though he spoke the celebrated soliloquy on time,—

To-morrow, and to-morrow, etc.,

with propriety, feeling, and effect, wanted genius to realise the turbulent scenes in which this character abounds. So much, indeed, was his deficiency perceived, that the indignation of a country gentleman broke out one night, during the performance of this play, in a very odd manner. The squire, after having been heartily tired with Mills, on the appearance of his old companion, Powell, in the fourth act, exclaimed, loud enough to be heard by the audience, "For God's sake, George, give us a speech, and let me go home."<sup>2</sup>

I recollect an incident of the same sort occurring at Bristol, where a very indifferent actor, declaimed so long

<sup>1</sup> "Tatler," No. 201.

<sup>2</sup> "Dramatic Miscellanies," vol. ii. p. 133.

and to such little purpose, that an honest farmer, who sat in the pit, started up with evident signs of disgust, and waving his hand, to motion the speaker off, cried out, "Tak' un away, tak' un away, and let's have another."

One of the best parts sustained by Mills, was that of *Pierre*, which he acted so much to the taste of the public, that the applause it produced him exceeded all that was bestowed upon his best efforts in every thing else. He also acted *Ventidius* with the true spirit of a rough and generous old soldier, and in *Bajazet*, by the aid of his strong, deep, melodious voice, he displayed more than ordinary power.

It is supposed that Mills died in [December], 1736, respected by the public as a decent actor, and beloved by his friends as a worthy man.

#### THEOPHILUS KEEN.

Theophilus Keen received his first instructions in acting from Mr. Ashbury, of the Dublin theatre, in which he made his appearance about the year 1695. He most probably came into the Drury-lane company with Johnson and others, when Rich had beaten up for recruits. On the opening of the new house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, he went over to it, and, according to Chetwood, had a share not only of the management, but in the profit and loss, which latter speculation proved so disastrous to him, that he died in the year 1719, of a broken heart. He was buried in the church of St. Clement-Danes, and so much does he seem to have been respected, that more than two hundred persons in deep mourning, attended his funeral.

The influence he possessed in the theatre sometimes led him to assume such parts as *Edgar*, *Oroonoko*, and *Essex*, while his excellence lay in *Clytus*, and characters of a similar cast. His figure and voice, though neither elegant nor soft, were good, and his action was so complete, that it

obtained for him the epithet of majestic, and when he spoke those lines of the *King*, in "Hamlet," where he descants upon the dignity that "doth hedge" a monarch, his look and whole deportment were so commanding, that the audience accompanied them always with the loudest applause.

#### MRS. MARY PORTER.

This valuable and respected actress, who was not only an honour to the stage, but an ornament to human nature, obtained the notice of Betterton by performing, when a child, the *Genius of Britain*, in a Lord Mayor's pageant, during the reign of Charles or James the Second. It was the custom for fruit-women in the theatre formerly to stand fronting the pit, with their backs to the stage, and their oranges, &c. covered with vine leaves, under one of which Betterton threatened to put his little pupil, who was extremely diminutive, if she did not speak and act as he would have her.

Mrs. Porter was the genuine successor of Mrs. Barry, and had an elevated consequence in her manner, which has seldom been equalled. One of her greatest parts was Shakspeare's *Queen Catherine*, in which her sensibility and intelligence, her graceful elocution and dignified behaviour, commanded applause and attention in passages of little importance. When the scene was not agitated by passion, to the general spectator she failed in communicating equal pleasure; her recitation of fact or sentiment being so modulated as to resemble musical cadence rather than speaking. Where passion, however, predominated, she exerted her powers to a supreme degree, and exhibited that enthusiastic ardour which filled her audience with animation, astonishment, and delight.

The dislocation of her thigh-bone, in the summer of 1731, was attended with a circumstance that deserves to

be recorded. She lived at Heywood-hill, near Hendon, and, after the play, went home every night in a one-horse chaise, prepared to defend herself against robbery, with a brace of pistols. She was stopped on one of those occasions by a highwayman, who demanded her money, and having the courage to level one of her pistols at him, the assailant, who was probably unfurnished with a similar weapon, assured her that he was no common thief, and had been driven to his present course by the wants of a starving family. He told her, at the same time, where he lived, and urged his distresses with such earnestness, that she spared him all the money in her purse, which was about ten guineas. The man left her, on which she gave a lash to the horse, who suddenly started out of the track, overturned her vehicle, and caused the accident already related. Let it be remembered to this good woman's credit, that notwithstanding the pain and loss to which he had, innocently, subjected her, she made strict inquiry into the highwayman's character, and finding that he had told the truth, she raised about sixty pounds among her acquaintance, and sent it, without delay, to the relief of his wretched family. There is a romantic generosity in this deed that captivates me more than its absolute justice.

About the year 1738, Mrs. Porter returned to the stage, and acted many of her principal characters, with much vigour and great applause, though labouring under advanced age and unconquerable infirmity. She had the misfortune to outlive an annuity upon which she depended, and died in narrow circumstances, about the year 1762. [She published Lord Cornbury's comedy of "The Mistakes," in 1758, by which she realized a large sum of money.]

Though her voice was harsh and displeasing, she surmounted its defects by her exquisite judgment. In person she was tall and well shaped; her complexion was fair; and her features, though not handsome, were made susceptible of all that strong feeling could desire to convey.

Her deportment was easy, and her action unaffected ; and the testimony upon which the merits of Mrs. Porter are placed, entitles us to rank her in the very first class of theatrical performers.

MRS. ANNE OLDFIELD.

Anne Oldfield was born in the year 1683, and would have possessed a tolerable fortune, had not her father, a captain in the army, expended it at a very early period. In consequence of this deprivation, she went to reside with her aunt, who kept the Mitre tavern, in St. James's-market, where Farquhar, the dramatist, one day heard her reading a few passages from Beaumont and Fletcher's "Scornful Lady," in which she manifested such spirit, ease, and humour, that being struck by her evident advantages for the stage, he framed an excuse to enter the room, a little parlour behind the bar, in which Miss Nancy was sitting.

Vanbrugh, who frequented the house, and was known to Mrs. Oldfield's mother, received a communication from that lady of the very great warmth with which his friend Farquhar had extolled her daughter's abilities. Vanbrugh, who seems to have been a zealous and sincere friend to all by whom his assistance was courted, immediately addressed himself to our heroine, and having ascertained that her fancy tended to parts of a sprightly nature, he recommended her to Rich, the manager of Drury-lane, by whom she was immediately engaged, at a salary of fifteen shillings *per* week. Her qualifications soon rendered her conspicuous among the young actresses of that time, and a man of rank being pleased to express himself in her favour, Mr. Rich increased her weekly terms to the sum of twenty shillings.

The rise of Mrs. Oldfield was gradual but secure, and soon after the death of Mrs. Verbruggen she succeeded to the line of comic parts so happily held by that popular actress. Her *Lady Betty Modish*, in 1704, before which

she was little known, and barely suffered, discovered accomplishments the public were not apprised of, and rendered her one of the greatest favourites upon whom their sanction had ever been bestowed. She was tall, genteel, and well shaped; her pleasing and expressive features were enlivened by large speaking eyes, which, in some particular comic situations, were kept half shut, especially when she intended to realise some brilliant idea; in sprightliness of air, and elegance of manner, she excelled all actresses; and was greatly superior in the strength, compass, and harmony of her voice.

Though highly appreciated as a tragic performer, Mrs. Oldfield, in the full round of glory, used to slight her best personations of that sort, and would often say, "I hate to have a page dragging my train about. Why don't they give Porter those parts? She can put on a better tragedy face than I can." The constant applause by which she was followed in characters of this description, so far reconciled her to Melpomene, that the last new one in which she appeared was Thomson's *Sophonisba*. Upon her action and deportment the author has expressed himself with great ardour in the following lines:

Mrs. Oldfield, in the character of *Sophonisba*, has excelled what, even in the fondness of an author, I could either wish or imagine. The grace, dignity, and happy variety, of her action have been universally applauded, and are truly admirable.

Thomson's praise, indeed, is not more liberal than just, for we learn, that in reply to some degrading expression of *Massinissa*, relating to Carthage, she uttered the following line,—

Not one base word of Carthage, for thy soul!—

with such grandeur of port, a look so tremendous, and in a voice so powerful, that it is said she even astonished Wilks, her *Massinissa*; it is certain the audience were struck, and

expressed their feelings by the most uncommon applause.<sup>1</sup> Testimony like this is sufficient to protect her claim to tragic excellence, eclipsed as it certainly is by the superiority of her comic reputation.

*Lady Townly* has been universally adduced as her *ne plus ultra* in acting. She slid so gracefully into the foibles, and displayed so humourously the excesses, of a fine woman too sensible of her charms, too confident in her strength, and led away by her pleasures, that no succeeding *Lady Townly* arrived at her many distinguished excellencies in the character. By being a welcome and constant visitor to families of distinction, Mrs. Oldfield acquired a graceful carriage in representing women of high rank, and expressed their sentiments in a manner so easy, natural, and flowing, that they appeared to be of her own genuine utterance. Notwithstanding her amorous connexions<sup>2</sup> were publicly known, she was invited to the houses of women of fashion, as conspicuous for unblemished character as elevated rank. Even the royal family did not disdain to see Mrs. Oldfield at their levees. George the Second and Queen Caroline, when Prince and Princess of Wales, often condescended to converse with her. One day the Princess told Mrs. Oldfield, she had heard that General Churchill and she were married: "So it is said, may it please your royal highness," replied Mrs. Oldfield, "but we have not owned it yet."

In private, Mrs. Oldfield was generous, humane, witty, and well-bred. Though she disliked the man, and disapproved of his conduct, yet the misfortunes of Savage recommended him to her pity, and she often relieved him

<sup>1</sup> "Dramatic Miscellanies," vol. iii. p. 465.

<sup>2</sup> It is supposed that she was engaged in a tender intercourse with Farquhar, and was the "Penelope" of his amatory correspondence. She lived successively with Arthur Mainwaring, one of the most accomplished characters of his age, and General Churchill; by each of whom she had a son.

by a handsome donation. Her influence with Walpole contributed to procure his pardon when convicted, on false evidence, of murder, and adjudged to death, a fate which his most unnatural mother did her utmost to enforce. It is not true that she either allowed this poet an annuity, or admitted his conversation,<sup>1</sup> but still the benefits she did confer upon him were quite numerous enough to warrant his celebration of her memory. The goodness of her heart, and the splendour of her talents, were topics upon which Savage might have ventured to insist, without endangering his piety or wounding his pride. Dr. Johnson has sanctioned the silence of this author,<sup>2</sup> on the grounds of Mrs. Oldfield's condition; but that dogmatic man would have shown a truer taste for benevolence, had he recommended the most ardent devotion to individuals of any stamp, who were actuated by so glorious a principle.

Pope, who seems to have persecuted the name of player with a malignancy unworthy of his genius, has stigmatised the conversation of Mrs. Oldfield by the word "*Oldfieldismos*," which he printed in Greek characters; nor can there be a doubt that he meant her by the dying coquette, in one of his epistles. That Mrs. Oldfield was touched by the vanity of weak minds, and drew an absurd importance from the popularity of her low station, may be fairly inferred, and might have been fairly derided;<sup>3</sup> but Pope, with his usual want of candour, has appealed to less

<sup>1</sup> This fact is firmly denied in Cibber's "Lives of the Poets," and with a pointed reference to Johnson's admission of it.—Vol. v. p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Savage, however, was *not* silent; though he abstained from putting his name to the poem, he indisputably wrote upon Mrs. Oldfield's death. It is preserved in Chetwood's "History."

<sup>3</sup> What can be more ridiculous than the following anecdote?

Mrs. Oldfield happened to be in some danger in a Gravesend boat, and when the rest of the passengers lamented their imagined approaching fate, she, with a conscious dignity, told them their deaths would be only a private loss;—"But I am a public concern."—"Dramatic Miscellanies," vol. i. p. 227.



tangible failings, and tried, as in most cases, much more to ridicule the person than correct the fault. I do not dispute the brilliancy of his sarcasm, but I would rather hail the rigour of his justice.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Oldfield died on the 23d of October, 1730, most sincerely lamented by those to whom her general value was not unknown.

<sup>1</sup> The bitterness of Pope's muse subsided upon no occasion, where the name of Mrs. Oldfield might be aptly introduced. Thus in the "Sober Advice from Horace," one of his inedited poems :

Engaging Oldfield ! who, with grace and ease,  
Could join the arts to ruin and to please.

II.

A A



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