DORAN JOHN

THEIR MAJESTIES' SERVANTS. ANNALS OF THE ENGLISH STAGE (VOLUME 2 OF 3)

John Doran

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Doran J.

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Содержание

Dr. Doran
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CHAPTER I
MRS. OLDFIELD

Artists who have been wont to look into the *Vicar of Wakefield*, *Gil Blas*, and last century comedies, for picturesque subjects, would find account in referring to the lives of our actresses. Here is not a bad picture of its class. The time is at the close of the seventeenth century; the scene is at the Mitre Tavern in St. James's Market, kept by one Mrs. Voss. It is a quiet summer evening, and after the fatigues of the day are over, and before the later business of the night has commenced, that buxom lady is reclining in an easy chair, listening to a fair and bright young creature, her sister,[1] who is reading aloud, and is enjoying what she reads. Her eyes, like Kathleen's in the song, are beaming with light, her face glowing with intelligence and feeling. Even an elderly lady, their mother, turns away from the picture of her husband, who had ridden in the Guards, and held a commission under James II. – she turns from this, and memories of old days, to gaze with tender admiration on her brilliant young daughter; who, be it said, at this present reading, is only an apprentice to a seamstress in King Street, Westminster.

But the soul of Thalia is under her bodice, into a neater than which, Anadyomene could not have laced herself. She is rapt in the reading, and with book held out, and face upraised, and figure displayed at its very best, she enthrals her audience, unconscious herself that this is more numerous than she might have supposed. On the threshold of the open door stand a couple of guests; one of them has, to us, no name; the other is a gay, rollicking young fellow, smartly dressed, a semi-military look about him, good humour rippling over his face, combined with an air of astonishment and delight. This is Captain Farquhar. His sight and hearing are wholly concentrated on that enchanted and enchanting girl, who, unmindful of aught but the "Scornful Lady," continues still reading aloud that rattling comedy of Beaumont and Fletcher. How the mother listened to it all is not to be told; but nearly a century later Queen Charlotte could listen to her daughters reading "Polly Honeycombe," and no harm done. We may fancy the young reader at the Mitre, whose name is Anne Oldfield, in that silvery voice for which she was famed, half in sadness and half in mirth, reading the lines in which the lady says: —

"All we that are call'd woman, know as well
As men, it were a far more noble thing
To grace where we are graced, and give respect
There where we are respected: yet we practise
A wilder course, and never bend our eyes
On men with pleasure, till they find the way
To give us a neglect. Then we too late
Perceive the loss of what we might have had,
And dote to death."

[1] Her niece.

Captain Farquhar, at whatever passage in the play, betrayed his presence by his involuntary applause. The girl looked towards him more pleased than abashed; and when the captain pronounced that there was in her the stuff for an exquisite actress, the fluttered thing clasped her hands, glowed at the prophecy, and protested in her turn, that of all conditions it was the one she wished most ardently to fulfil. From that moment the glory and the mischief were commenced. The tall girl stood up, her large eyes dilating, the assured future Lady Betty Modish and Biddy Tipkin, Farquhar's own Sylvia and Mrs. Sullen, the Violante and the Lady Townley that were to set the playgoing world mad with delight; the Andromache, Marcia, and Jane Shore, that were to wring tears from them; the supreme lady in all, but chiefest in comedy; and that "genteel," for which she seemed expressly born.

Farquhar talked of her to Vanbrugh, and Vanbrugh introduced her to Rich, and Rich took her into his company, assigned her a beginner's salary, fifteen shillings a week, and gave her nothing to do. She had a better life of it at the seamstress's in King Street. But she had time to spare and leisure to wait. She was barely fifteen, when, in 1700, she played Alinda, in Vanbrugh's adaptation from Beaumont and Fletcher, the "Pilgrim." The next three or four years were those of probation; and when, in the season of 1704-5, Cibber assigned to her the part of Lady Betty Modish, in his "Careless Husband," the town at once recognised in her the most finished actress of such difficult yet effective parts of her day.

The gentle Alinda suited the years and inexperience of Mrs. Oldfield; her youth was in her favour, and her figure, but therewith was such great diffidence, that she had not courage enough to modulate her voice. Cibber watched her; he could see nothing to recommend her, save her graceful person. But there reached his ear occasional silver tones, which seemed to assure him of the rare excellence of the instrument. Still, like "the great Mrs. Barry," her first appearances were failures; and such were those of Sarah Siddons, in after years. Warmed by encouraging applause, however, the promise ripened, and with opportunity, the perfection that came was demonstrated both to watchful Cibber and an expectant public.

In 1703 the company was at Bath, where Queen Anne might have been seen in the Pump Room in the morning, – later in the day, at the play. But the joyous and brilliant queen of comedy was *not* there. Mrs. Verbruggen, the Mrs. Mountfort of earlier days, was ill in town, nursing a baby, whose birth ultimately cost the life of the mother. There was a scramble for her parts. Each of the more influential actresses obtained several; but to young and unobtrusive Mrs. Oldfield, there fell but one, – the mediocre part of Leonora, in "Sir Courtly Nice." Cibber reluctantly ran over the scenes with her, at her request, in which the Knight and the Lady meet. He was careless, from lack of appreciation of the actress; *she* was piqued, and sullenly repeated the words set down for her. There was, in short, a mutual distaste. *But*, when the night came, Colley saw the almost perfect actress before him, and as he says, – "she had a just occasion to triumph over the error of my judgment by the almost amazement that her unexpected performance awaked me to; so sudden and forward 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 experienced actor." Any other player but Cibber, in his place, would have laid Anne Oldfield's success to the instruction he had given her at rehearsal.

Colley Cibber had then in his desk the unfinished manuscript of his "Careless Husband;" it had long lain there, through the author's hopelessness of ever finding an actress who would realise his idea of Lady Betty Modish. He had no longer any doubt. He at once finished the piece, brought it on the stage, and silent as to his own share in the triumph, attributed it all, or nearly all, to Mrs. Oldfield. "Not only to the uncommon excellence of her action; but even to her personal manner of conversing." I must repeat what Cibber tells us, that many of the sentiments were Mrs. Oldfield's, dressed up by him, "with a little more care than when they negligently fell from her lively humour." Respecting what Cibber adds, that "had her birth placed her in a higher rank of life, she had certainly appeared to be, in reality, what in the play she only excellently acted, – an agreeably gay woman of quality, a little

too conscious of her natural attractions," I will remark that, as she really appeared to be so, her birth (she was a gentleman's daughter) could not prevent her from appearing so. And Cibber avows, what the testimony of Walpole confirms, that he had "often seen her in private societies, where women of the best rank might have borrowed some part of her behaviour without the least diminution of their sense of dignity."

In 1702, the merit of Mrs. Oldfield was not recognised by Gildon, who, in his "Comparison between the two Stages," classes her among "the rubbish," of which the stage should be swept. Of Mrs. Verbruggen (Mountfort), he speaks as "a miracle." He could not see that Oldfield would be her successor, and would, in some parts, even excel her. By the year 1706, however, she had risen to be on an equality with such a brilliant favourite as Mrs. Bracegirdle, whom, in the opinion of many, her younger competitor surpassed. The salary of the latter then, and for some years later, was not, however, a large one, if measured by modern rule. Four pounds a week, with a benefit, – in all, little more than £250 a year, cannot be called excessive guerdon. Her own benefit was always profitable; but I am sorry to add, that this joyous-looking creature, apparently brimful of good nature, was very reluctant to play for the benefit of her colleagues. Subsequently, her revenue from the stage-salary and benefit averaged about £500 a year.

A remark of hers to Cibber, shows how she entered into the spirit of her parts. Cibber had replaced Dicky Norris, who was ill, in the part of Barnaby Brittle, in the "Amorous Widow," in which Mrs. Oldfield played Barnaby's wife. The couple are a sort of George Dandin and his spouse. When the play was over, Cibber asked her, in his familiar way, "Nancy, how did you like your new husband?" "Very well," said she; "but not half so well as Dicky Norris." "How so?" asked Cibber. "You are too important a figure," she answered; "but Dicky is so diminutive, and looks so sneaking, that he seems born to be deceived; and when he plays with me, I make him what a husband most dislikes to be, with hearty good will."

Genest cites Cibber, Chetwood, and Davies, in order to describe her adequately. "After her success in Lady Betty Modish," he says, "all that nature had given her of the actress seemed to have risen to its full perfection; but the variety of her powers could not be known till she was seen in variety of characters which, as fast as they fell to her, she equally excelled in. 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 Lady Townley, one of her last new parts, was a proof that she was still able to do more, if more could have been done for her."

Davies, after noticing her figure and expression, says of her "large speaking eyes," that in some particular comic situations she kept them half shut, "especially when she intended to give effect to some brilliant or gay thought. In sprightliness of air and elegance of manner, she excelled all actresses, and was greatly superior in the clear, sonorous, and harmonious tones of her voice."

How are Wilks and the inimitable She photographed for posterity? "Wilks's Copper Captain was esteemed one of his best characters. Mrs. Oldfield was equally happy in Estifania. When she drew the pistol from her pocket, pretending to shoot Perez, Wilks drew back, as if greatly terrified, and in a tremulous voice, uttered, 'What, thine own husband!' To which she replied, with archness of countenance and a half-shut eye, 'Let mine own husband then be in 's own wits,' in a tone of voice in imitation of his, that the theatre was in a tumult of applause."

From Cibber, again, we learn that she was modest and unpresuming; that in all the parts she undertook, she sought enlightenment and instruction from every quarter, "but it was a hard matter to give her a hint that she was not able to improve." With managers she was not exacting; "she lost nothing by her easy conduct; she had everything she asked, which she took care should be always reasonable, because she hated as much to be grudged as to be denied a civility."

Like Mrs. Barry, she entered fully into the character she had to represent, and examined it closely, in order to grasp it effectually. When the "Beaux' Stratagem" was in rehearsal (1707), in which she played Mrs. Sullen, she remarked to Wilks, that she thought the author had dealt too freely

with Mrs. Sullen, in giving her to Archer, without such a proper divorce as would be a security to her honour. Wilks communicated this to the author. "Tell her," said poor Farquhar, who was then dying, "that for her peace of mind's sake, I'll get a real divorce, marry her myself, and give her my bond she shall be a real widow in less than a fortnight."

Mrs. Oldfield was the original representative of sixty-five characters. The greater number of these belong to genteel comedy, as it is called, a career which she commenced as peculiarly her own, in 1703, when chance assigned to her the part of Leonora, in "Sir Courtly Nice." Her wonderful success in this, induced Cibber to trust to her the part of Lady Betty Modish, in the "Careless Husband," the comedy which he had put aside in despair of finding a lady equal to his conception of the character. Her mere conversation in that play intoxicated the house. At a later period, her audiences were even more ecstatic at her Lady Townley, – an ecstasy in which the managers must have shared, for they immediately added fifty guineas to her salary. It was just the sum which the benevolent actress gave annually to that most contemptibly helpless personage, Savage. Her highest salary never, I believe, exceeded three hundred guineas; but this was exclusive of benefits, occasions on which gold was showered into her lap.

Humour, grace, vivacity, – all were exuberant on the stage, when she and Wilks were playing against each other. Indeed, one can hardly realise the idea of this supreme queen of comedy wearing the robe and illustrating the sorrows of tragedy. She, for her own part, disliked the latter vocation. She hated, as she said often, to have a page dragging her tail about. "Why do not they give these parts to Porter? She can put on a better tragedy-face than I can." Earnest as she was, however, in these characters before the audience, she was frolicsome at rehearsal. When "Cato" was in preparation, Mrs. Oldfield was cast for Marcia, the philosophical statesman's daughter. Addison attended the rehearsals, and Swift was at Addison's side, making suggestions, and marking the characteristics of the lively people about him. He never had a good word for woman, and consequently he had his usual coarse epithet for Mrs. Oldfield, speaking of her as "the drab that played Cato's daughter;" and railing at her for her hilarity while rehearsing that passionate part, and, in her forgetfulness, calling merrily out to the prompter, "What next? what next?"

Yet this hilarious actress played Cleopatra with dignity, and Calista with feeling. She accepted with great reluctance the part of Semandra, in "Mithridates," when that tragedy was revived in 1708; but Chetwood says she performed the part to perfection, and became reconciled to tragedy by reason of her success. In these characters, however, she could be excelled by others, but in Lady Betty Modish and Lady Townley she was probably never equalled. In the comedy of lower life she was, perhaps, less original; at least, Anthony Aston remarks, that in free comedy she borrowed something from Mrs. Verbruggen's manner. When Wilks, as Lord Townley, exclaimed "Prodigious!" in the famous scene with his lady, played by Mrs. Oldfield, the house applied it to her acting, and broke into repeated rounds of applause.

"Who should act genteel comedy, perfectly," asks Walpole, "but people of fashion that have sense? Actors and actresses can only guess at the tone of high life, and cannot be inspired with it. Why are there so few genteel comedies, but because most comedies are written by men not of that sphere. Etherege, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Cibber wrote genteel comedy, because they lived in the best company; and Mrs. Oldfield played it so well, because she not only followed, but often set the fashion. General Burgoyne has writ the best modern comedy for the same reason; and Miss Farren is as excellent as Mrs. Oldfield, because she has lived with the best style of men in England. Farquhar's plays talk the language of a marching regiment in country quarters. Wycherley, Dryden, Mrs. Centlivre, &c., wrote as if they had only lived in the *Rose Tavern*; but then the Court lived in Drury Lane, too, and Lady Dorchester and Nell Gwyn were equally good company."

In this there is some injustice against Mrs. Centlivre, for whose name should be supplied that of Aphra Behn. Walpole judges more correctly of the comic writers of the seventeenth century, when he places Molière "Senor Moleiro," as Downes absurdly calls him, at the head of them all. "Who upon

earth," he says, "has written such perfect comedies? for the 'Careless Husband' is but one; the 'Non-juror' was built on the 'Tartuffe,' and if the Man of Mode (Etherege) and Vanbrugh are excellent, they are too indelicate; and Congreve, who beat all for wit, is not always natural, still less, simple."

It has been said of Mrs. Oldfield, that she never troubled the peace of any lady at the head of a household; but I think she may have marred the expectations of some who desired to reach that eminence. She early captivated the heart of Mr. Maynwaring. He was a bachelor, rich, connected with the government, and a hard drinker, according to the prevailing fashion. He was Cymon subdued by Iphigenia. He loved the lady's refinement, and she kept his household as carefully as if she had been his wife, and presided at his table with a grace that charmed him. There was something of Beauty and the Beast in this connection, but the end of the fable was wanting; the animal was never converted to an Azor, and a marriage with Zemira was the one thing wanting.

When Maynwaring died, society almost looked upon her as an honest widow. Indeed, it had never rejected her. The standard of morals was low, and when the *quasi* widow accepted the proposal of General Churchill to place her at the head of his establishment, as she had been in that of Mr. Maynwaring, no one blamed her. Marriage, indeed, seems to have been thought of, and Queen Caroline, who did not at all disdain to stoop to little matters of gossip, one day remarked to Mrs. Oldfield, who had, I suppose, been reading to a court circle, "I hear, Mrs. Oldfield, that you and the General are married?" "Madam," said the actress, playing her very best, "the General keeps his own secrets!"

The two love passages in the life of Anne Oldfield were, in short, founded on sentiment and not on interest. The Duke of Bedford offered her more brilliant advantages than the General or the Squire; but the disinterested actress spurned them, and kept sisterhood with duchesses. She was to be seen on the terrace at Windsor, walking with the consorts of dukes, and with countesses, and wives of English barons, and the whole gay group might be heard calling one another by their Christian names. In later days, Kitty Clive called such fine folk "damaged quality;" and later still, the second Mrs. Barry did not value such companionship at a "pin's fee;" but Anne Oldfield drew from it many an illustration, which she transported to the stage.

During her last season, her sufferings were often so acute that when the applause was loudest, the poor actress turned aside to hide the tears forced from her by pain. She never gave up till the agony was too great to be endured, and then she refused to receive a salary which, according to her articles, was not to be discontinued in illness. She lingered a few months in her house in Lower Grosvenor Street; the details of her last moments, as given by Pope, mingle a little truth with much error and exaggeration: —

> "'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;
> One would not sure be frightful when one's dead.
> And, Betty, give this cheek a little red!'"

Betty was the ex-actress, Mrs. Saunders, who resided with Narcissa. She had quitted the stage in 1720, and, says Mr. Urban, "attended Mrs. Oldfield constantly, and did the office of priest to the last." Poor Narcissa, after death, was attired in a Holland night-dress, with tucker and double ruffles of Brussels lace, of which latter material she also wore a head-dress, and a pair of "new kid gloves." This, another writer calls being "buried in *full dress*." The report seems to have been founded on Mrs. Oldfield's natural good taste in costume. Flavia, such is her name in the *Tatler*, "is ever well drest, and always the genteelest woman you meet; her clothes are so exactly fitted that they appear part of her person."

It was in the above described dress that the deceased actress received such honour as actress never received before, nor has ever received since. The lady lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, a distinction not unfrequently, indeed, conceded to persons of high rank and small merit, but which, nevertheless, seemed out of place in the case of Anne Oldfield; but had she been really a queen, the public could not have thronged more eagerly to the spectacle.

The solemn lying in state of an English actress in the Jerusalem Chamber, the sorrow of the public over their lost favourite, and the regret of friends in noble, or humble, but virtuous homes, where Mrs. Oldfield had been ever welcome, contrast strongly with the French sentiment towards French players. It has been already said, that as long as Clairon exercised the power, when she advanced to the footlights, to make the (then standing) pit recoil several feet, by the mere magic of her eyes, the pit, who enjoyed the terror as a luxury, flung crowns to her, and wept at the thought of losing her; but Clairon infirm was Clairon forgotten, and to a decaying actor or actress a French audience is the most merciless in the world. The brightest and best of them, as with us, died in the service of the public. Monfleury, Mondory, and Bricourt, died of apoplexy, brought on by excess of zeal. Molière, who fell in harness, was buried with less ceremony than some favourite dog. The charming Lecouvreur, that Oldfield of the French stage, whose beauty and intellect were the double charm which rendered theatrical France ecstatic, was hurriedly interred within a saw-pit. Bishops might be exceedingly interested in, and unepiscopally generous to, living actresses of wit and beauty, but the prelates smote them with a "Maranatha!" and an "Avaunt ye!" when dead. Even Bossuet would attend the theatre to learn grace and elocution from them and their brethren: but when he had profited by the instruction, he denounced them all as "children of the devil!" Louis XVIII., however, put an effectual check on the unseemly practice of treating as dead dogs the geniuses who had been idolised when living. When the priests of the Church of St. Roch closed its doors against the body of Rancourt, brought there for a prayer and a blessing, Paris rose against the insulters; and the King, moved by Christian charity, or dread of a Paris riot, sent his own chaplain to recite the prayer, give the benediction, and to show that an honest player was not a something less than a fellow-creature.

After the lying in state of Mrs. Oldfield, there was a funeral of as much ceremony as has been observed at the obsequies of many a queen. Among the supporters of the pall were Lord Hervey, Lord Delawarr, and Bubb Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe. The first used to ride abroad with Mrs. Oldfield, as Mrs. Delaney has recorded. Lord Delawarr was a soldier who became a great "beau," and went a philandering. His wife and the Countess of Burlington headed the Faustina party at the opera against the faction which supported Cuzzoni. There were anthems, and prayers, and sermon; and Dr. Parker, who officiated, remarked, when all was over, to a few particular friends, and with some equivocation, as it seems to me, that he "buried her very willingly, and with much satisfaction." Her sons Maynwaring and Churchill were present, and the contemporary notices say that she had no other children. Her friends were apt to express a different opinion; and Mrs. Delaney, in one of the very first passages in her *Autobiography* says: – "At six years old I was placed under the care of Mdlle. Puelle, a refugee of a very respectable character, and well qualified for her business. She undertook but twenty scholars at a time, among whom were Lady Catherine Knollys, daughter to the" (self-styled) "Earl of Banbury, and great aunt to the present Lord; Miss Halsey, daughter to a very considerable brewer, and afterwards married to Lord Temple, Earl of Cobham; Lady Jane Douglas, daughter of the Duke of Douglas, and Miss Dye Bertie, a daughter of Mrs. Oldfield the actress, who, after leaving school, was the *pink of fashion* in the *beau monde*, and married a nobleman." Whom did this mysterious Diana marry?[2]

This daughter is not mentioned in Mrs. Oldfield's will; but to the two sons Mrs. Oldfield bequeathed the bulk of a fortune which she had amassed more by her exertions than by the generosity of their respective fathers. She was liberal, too, in leaving memorials to numerous friends; less so

[2] She married J. Cator. —*Doran MS.*

in her bequests to old relations of her sempstress and coffee-house days. A very small annuity was Narcissa's parting gift to her mother, who long survived her.

In such wise went her money; but whither has the blood of Oldfield gone? When Winnifred, the dairymaid, married into the family of the Bickerstaffes, she is said to have spoilt their blood, while she mended their constitutions. The great actress herself was at least an honest man's daughter, a man of fair descent. Her son, Colonel Churchill, once, unconsciously, saved Sir Robert Walpole from assassination, through the latter riding home, from the House, in the Colonel's chariot instead of alone in his own. Unstable Churchill married a natural daughter of Sir Robert, and *their* daughter Mary married, in 1777, Charles Sloane, first Earl of Cadogan. The son of this Mary is the present Earl, the great grandson of charming Anne Oldfield. When Churchill and his wife were travelling in France, a Frenchman, knowing he was connected with poets or players, asked him if he was Churchill the famous poet. "I am not," said Mrs. Oldfield's son. "Ma foi!" rejoined the polite Frenchman, "so much the worse for you!"

I have seen many epitaphs to her memory, but there is not one which is so complete and beautiful as the following, which tells the reader that she lies amid great poets, not less worthy of praise than they, whose works she has illustrated and ennobled. It records the apt universality of her talent, which made her seem not *made*, but born for whatever she undertook. In tragedy, the glory of her form, the dignity of her countenance, the majesty of her walk, touched the rudest spectator. In comedy, her power, her graceful hilarity, her singular felicity, were so irresistible, that the eyes never wearied of gazing at her, nor the hands of applauding her.

"Hic juxta requiescit

Tot inter poetarum laudata nomina,

ANNA OLDFIELD

Nec ipsa minore laude digna,

Quippe quæ eorum opera

In scenam quotidies prodivit,

Illustravit semper et nobilitavit

Nunquam ingenium idem ad parties diversissimas

Habilius fuit

Ita tamen ut ad singulas

Non facta sed nata esse videretur,

In tragœdiis

Formæ splendor, oris dignitas, incessus majestas,

Tanta vocis suavitate temperabantur

Ut nemo esset tam agrestis, tam durus spectator,

Quin in admirationem totus raperetur

"And is the sacred moment then so near,
The moment when yon sun, these heavens, this earth
Shall sink at once, and straight another state,
New scenes, new joys, new faculties, new wonders,
Rise, on a sudden, round?"

These words were first spoken by her, on the last day of February 1730. On the 23rd of the following October she died, in her forty-seventh year. A week later, Dr. Parker "buried her very willingly, and with much satisfaction!"

CHAPTER II
FROM THE DEATH OF ANNE OLDFIELD TO THAT OF WILKS

Between the season of 1729-30, and that of 1733-34, great changes took place. It is correct to say, that the stage "declined;" but if we lose Mrs. Oldfield in the former period, we find some compensation at the beginning of the latter, by first meeting, in Fielding and Hippisley's booth, at Bartholomew and Southwark fairs, with one who was destined to enthral the town, – modest Mrs. Pritchard, playing Loveit, in a "Cure for Covetousness."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Porter reigned supreme; but the stage was deprived, for more than a year, of the presence of her whom Mrs. Oldfield loved to address as "mother," by an accident which dislocated her thigh. Even after her recovery, the tragedy queen was forced to walk the stage with a crutched stick, which, like a true artist, she turned to account in her action.

Of actors of eminence, the greatest whom the stage lost was Wilks, airy and graceful down to the last; – of him, who died in 1732, I will speak more fully presently. Death also carried off quaint, squeaking, little Norris, the excellent comic actor, popularly known as "Jubilee Dicky." After Norris went Boheme, the pillar of the Lincoln's Inn Fields, a dignified and accomplished tragedian, whose Lear was full of antique grandeur and pathos; – it was, perhaps, the only character in which the former young sailor's quarter-deck walk was not discernible. Colley Cibber, too, must be reckoned among the departed, since he retired from the stage, at the end of the season 1732-33, but occasionally returned to it. He was disheartened by the break-up in the old partnership, and the manifest close of a period of prosperity. Booth had sold half of his share in the patent to a rich and silly amateur actor – Highmore. Wilks's widow, who inherited her husband's share, was represented by attorney; Colley was uneasy at having to encounter new partners, and he ultimately sold *his* share to Highmore, for three thousand guineas.

While the stage failed in players, it was not upheld by the poets. The gentlemen of the inns of court hissed Charles Johnson's "Medea," and did not even applaud the satirical allusion contained in it to Pope. The town was weary of classical pieces. The "Eurydice" of Mallet – who had been gate-keeper at the Edinburgh High School, and had picked up learning enough to enable him to efficiently exercise the office of tutor in the Duke of Montrose's family – fared no better,[3] despite Mrs. Porter. The piece was as hard and as dry as granite; but the author thought it had as much pathos as his ballad of "William and Margaret."

In the prologue, tragedy was especially recommended to the patronage of ladies, because therein the character of women is exalted; while in the comedies of the day it was debased. But the epilogue, spoken by Miss Robinson, in boy's clothes – "born for this dapper age – pert, short, and clever" – showed that the poet did not much care for the female character.

Jeffreys' "Merope" had no better success. His cousins of the Chandos family may have laughed at the young collegian's bathos; but on the second night there was not audience enough to make a laugh comfortable; and the curtain did not rise.[4] Critics complained that all tragic action on our stage turned on love; and Jeffreys contrived to make three couple of nymphs and swains sigh or swear in this story of mother and son! "Who could believe," says Voltaire, "that love could have been introduced into such a story? But, since the times of Charles II., love has taken possession of the English stage; and one must acknowledge that no nation in the world has painted that passion so badly." But Voltaire, you will remember, also said that Shakspeare was "a savage!"

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[3] "Eurydice" was played about thirteen times, and was thought worthy of revival in 1759.

[4] This is the story told in the *Biographia Dramatica*, but Genest says "Merope" was acted three times.

A Gloucestershire squire, named Tracy, tried his hand on "Periander," and failed, though he was guiltless of a false quantity; unlike Addison's learned friend, Frowde, who tripped in his penultimates, with the alacrity of Hughes!

It was not altogether because our ancestors were weary of classical tragedies, that a short, fat, one-eyed, and well-to-do dissenter and jeweller, of Moorgate Street, reaped such a triumph, with his modern and domestic tragedy, "George Barnwell." *Mr.* Lillo had previously written a ballad-opera, "Sylvia;" but now he aimed to show the hideousness and consequence of vice. "George Barnwell" was first acted at Drury Lane, at the beginning of the Midsummer holidays of 1731. Theophilus Cibber played the hero; Mrs. Butler, Milwood. The audience looked for fun, and took the old ballad, – there was the flutter of a thousand copies in the house, to compare it with the play. Pope was present, and expressed an opinion that the language was often too elevated for the personages;[5] and the hearers thought only of the story as illustrated by Lillo, and every eye was weeping. It was the first fairly honest attempt made to amend, from the stage, the vices and weaknesses of mankind; and it certainly, in some degree, succeeded. It enlisted the sympathies of honest women. "The distresses of great personages," says a lady, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "have ceased to affect the town," and "none but a prostitute could find fault with this tragedy." Fault, however, was found; but the objection was answered in this way; – that "lowness of action was disallowed in a tragedy, but not lowness of character: the *circumstances* here are all important." One critic holds the story to be improbable; but contemporary journals furnish a parallel. A mercer's apprentice, who sleeps in his master's shop, admits a Milwood, who at a later hour refuses to leave, unless he will cut off satin enough, to make her a robe. Great distress! but, at a happy moment, a virtuous porter arrives, who, on hearing the circumstances, and perhaps having seen the tragedy, lays hold of the lady, who had no more drapery about her than Lady Godiva, claps her into a sack, carries her off, and shoots her into a cart full of grains, standing unguarded. The naughty person is suffocated, if I remember rightly; but the honour of the apprentice is saved!!

"George Barnwell" brought domestic tragedy into fashion, and Charles Johnson closed his dramatic career with "Cœlia, or the perjured Lover," which was a warning to young ladies. Cœlia has a *bad* and a *good* lover, – warring principles! She prefers the former, with ruin for a consequence. He lodges her in a bagnio, where she is swept up by the watch, in the arrest of all the inmates, and taken to Bridewell. Thence her very heavy father takes her home, while the good lover kills the bad one in a duel; but the latter politely requests that the avenger will consider Cœlia as having been his lawful wife. The lady, however, dies in her father's arms; the curtain comes down with a "tag," and then on tripped the epilogue, to ridicule all those present who were disposed to profit by the moral of the drama!

Theophilus Cibber's "Lover" was a sort of pendant to the "Nonjuror," – Granger being in the habit of going regularly to church, and daily breaking the ten commandments. The only enjoyment the audience had, – who fought for or against the piece till blood flowed abundantly, – was in the epilogue, in which Mrs. Theophilus Cibber smartly satirised the failings of her lord! The audience relished it amazingly.

These were the principal novelties of the period about which I am treating; but I must add, that at the Haymarket, and at Goodman's Fields, where Giffard had created in Ayliffe Street a commodious theatre, far superior to the old throwster's shop, which had served an early dramatic purpose, in Leman Street, sterling old plays, with operettas and burlesques, were played at irregular seasons. Fielding especially distinguished and sometimes disgraced himself. He had not yet struck upon the vein which made him the first and most philosophical of English novelists; but he rose from his squibs and farces to the achievement of the "Miser," in itself an adaptation, but done by a master hand, and with a double result of triumph, – to the author, and to Griffin, the clergyman's son, who played Lovegold.

[5] Pope said "in a *few* passages."

There were smaller attempts by smaller men, but these I omit, to record the failure of Quin in Lear, – a character which it was temerity to touch, so soon after Boheme had ceased to *be* the King. Mills made as great a mistake, when, at nearly sixty, he played for the first time – Hamlet. The public cared more for the pantomimic "Harlot's Progress," got up by Theophilus Cibber for Drury Lane, where this piece, preceded by "George Barnwell," must have been as edifying to both sexes as going to church, – a result in which Hogarth had full share with Lillo.

I have noticed the actors departing and departed, and the appearance in a booth of Mrs. Pritchard, a name yet to be famous and respected – like Mrs. Betterton's. So during this period I find a young player, Delane, at Goodman's Fields, who will advance to the first rank; but also a greater than he, Macklin, quietly playing any little part given him at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and securing his firm standing ground by the ability with which he acquitted himself at that house, when, in 1731, he was suddenly called upon to play Brazencourt,[6] in Fielding's "Coffee House Politicians." He had only four lines to speak; but those he spoke so well, that the true actor was at once discerned. One may fancy the tone and manner in which the rascal exclaimed: – "I was forced to turn her off for stealing four of my shirts, two pair of stockings, and my Common Prayer Book." With such small opportunity, Mr. Maclean, as he was then called, led up to Shylock and Sir Pertinax Macsycophant!

Macklin was the last of the great actors who played at Lincoln's Inn Fields; and he did not leave Covent Garden until *after* the appearance there of Braham, who was yet among us but yesterday. The first-named house had never rivalled the success of Drury Lane, but Rich had gained enough to enable him to build a new house, and the last play acted in the Fields was Ravenscroft's "Anatomist," one of the worst of a second-rate author of King Charles's days. This was on December 5, 1732. Except for a few nights, irregularly, the old house never opened again. It was the third theatre which had occupied the site since 1662. In 1756 it was converted into a barrack. As late as 1848, it was Copeland's China Repository, when the old stage door and passage, through which Quin had so often passed, still existed.

There had been a long expressed desire for a new theatre; that is, not merely a new edifice, but a new system. The proposal embraced prospective delights for authors, such as they had hitherto never dreamed of. In the published prospectus it was stated that actors and authors should be excluded from the management, which was to be entrusted to individuals, who, at least, knew as little about it, namely, men of quality, taste, figure, and of a fortune varying from ten to twelve hundred pounds. A committee was to be appointed, whose duty it would be, among others, to provide for the efficient reading of new plays, and for their being listened to with reverence and attention. It was calculated that the annual profit of such a theatre would amount to £3000 a year, and that out of it an annuity of £100 might be set aside for every author who had achieved a certain amount of success. In the following year, the *Weekly Miscellany* and the *Grub Street Journal* were very eager on the subject of theatrical reform. The former complained that high comedy and dignified tragedy had deserted the stage; remarked that plays were not intended for tradesmen! and denounced pantomimes and harlequinades as infamous. The Journal was rather practical than reflective. Old Exeter Change was then to let, and the Journal proposed that it should be converted into a theatre; adding a suggestion, which required above a century and a quarter to be carried into realisation, namely, that a college should be founded for decayed actors. This college was to form the two wings of the theatre; which wings were to be inhabited respectively by the *emeriti* among actors, and destitute actresses, whose new home was to be within sound of the old stirring echoes of their joyous days. The direction of the establishment was to be confided to a competent governor and officers selected from among the decayed nobility and gentry; and the glory and profit resulting were calculated at a very high figure indeed!

[6] Genest doubts this story, and gives very strong grounds for doing so. Vol. iii. pp. 306-8.

On one result the *Grub Street* congratulated itself with unctuous pride. If the stage were reformed, the universities and inns of court would supply actors. *Gentlemen*, said the *Grub Street*, with some arrogance, were reluctant to go among the scamps on the stage. Then, as for actresses, *Grub* rudely declared that every charity school could supply a dozen wenches of more decent education and character, of better health, brighter youth, more brilliant beauty, and more exalted genius, than the common run of hussies then on the stage; and a season's training, he added, would qualify them for business. This was a hard hit at men, among whom there were many well born; and at women, who, whatever they lacked, possessed the happy gifts of health, youth, beauty, and genius; but *Grub Street's* cynicism was probably founded on the fact, that he was not invited by the men, nor smiled on by the women.

A reform before the curtain was, however, now as loudly called for as behind it. One of the greatest grievances complained of this year was the insolence of the footmen. Occupying their masters' places, they lolled about with their hats on, talked aloud, were insolent on rebuke from the audience, and when they withdrew, on their masters' arrival, to their own gallery, they kept up a continual tumult there, which rendered their presence intolerable. What with the fine gentlemen on the stage, and their lacqueys, selected for their size, personal good looks, or fine hair, in the gallery, the would-be attentive audience in the pit were driven well nigh to desperation.

Much of this last grievance was amended when Covent Garden Theatre was opened on the 7th of December 1732. The first piece acted was Congreve's "Way of the World;" Fainall by Quin, Mirabel by Ryan, who, with Walker, Hippisley, Milward, Chapman, and Neal, Mrs. Younger, Mrs. Bullock, and Mrs. Buchanan, formed the principal members of the company. Gay was not now alive to increase his own and Rich's fortune in this elegant and well-appointed theatre; but Rich produced Gay's operatic piece "Achilles," which represented the hero when lying disguised as a girl. By the treatment of the subject, Gay did not manifest the innocency to which he laid claim, nor show himself either in wit a man, or in simplicity a child. Theobald's adaptation of Webster's "Duchess of Malfy" (Bosola, by Quin; the Duchess, Mrs. Hallam), brought no credit on "King Log." Generally, indeed, the novelties were failures, or unimportant. The only incident worth recording is the debut of Miss Norsa, as Polly. But before greeting new comers, let us say a word or two of greater than they who have gone – of Wilks dead, and, by and by, of Cibber withdrawn. The loss of such actors seemed irreparable; but during this past season there had been a lad among the audience at either house, who was to excel them all. Meanwhile, he studied them deeply, and after times showed that the study had not been profitless to this boy of sixteen, whose name was David Garrick.

Quin's most brilliant days lay between this period and the ripening into manhood of this ardent boy. Before we accompany him through that time of triumph, let us look back at the career of Wilks.

CHAPTER III
ROBERT WILKS

In Mr. Secretary Southwell's office, in Dublin, there sits the young son of one of the Pursuivants of the Lord Lieutenant; he is not writing a *précis*, he is copying out the parts of a play to be acted in private. His name is Robert Wilks, and the wise folk of Rathfarnham, near Dublin, where he was born in 1665, shake their heads and declare that he will come to no good.

The prophecy seemed fulfilled when the Irish wars between James and William forced him, an unwilling volunteer, into the army of the latter. As clerk to the camp he is exempt from military duty; but he tells a good story, sings a good song, and the officers take him for a very pretty fellow.

Anon, he is back in the old Dublin office. At all stray leisure hours he may, however, be seen fraternising with the actors. He most affects one Richards; he hears Richards repeat his parts, and he speaks the intervening sentences of the other characters. This he does with such effect that Richards swears he is made for an actor, and the young Government clerk, fired by the fame of Betterton, is eager to leap from the stool, which his father considered the basis of his fortune, and to don sock and buskin.

His old comrades of the camp were then about to vary the monotony of life at the Castle, by getting up a play to inaugurate the new theatre, re-opened, like the Temple of Janus, at the restoration of peace. Judicious and worthy Ashbury was the only professional player. Young Wilks had privately acted with him as the Colonel in the "Spanish Friar." Ashbury now offered to play Iago to his Othello, and the officers were well pleased to meet again with their old clerk of the camp. The tragedy was acted accordingly. "How were you pleased?" asked Richards, who thought Wilks took it as a pastime. "I was pleased with all but myself," answered the Government clerk, who was thoroughly in earnest.

Wilks had gone through many months of probation, watched by good Joseph Ashbury, and honest Richards, when one morning the latter called on the young actor, with an introductory letter to Betterton in his hand. Wilks accepted the missive with alacrity, bade farewell to secretaries and managers, and in a brief space of time was sailing over the waters, from the Pigeon House to Parkgate.

The meeting of Wilks and Betterton, in the graceful costume of those days, the young actor travel-worn, a little shabby, anxious, and full of awe; the elder richly attired, kind in manner, his face bright with intellect, and his figure heightened by the dignity of a lofty nature and professional triumph, borne with a lofty modesty, is another subject for a painter.

Betterton instructed the stranger as to the course he should take, and, accordingly, one bright May morning of 1690,[7] a handsome young fellow, with a slight Irish accent, presented himself to Christopher Rich as a light comedian. He was a native of Dublin county, he said, had left a promising Government clerkship, to try his fortune on the Irish stage; and, tempted by the renown of Betterton, had come to London to see the great actor, and to be engaged, if that were possible, in the same company.

Christopher Rich was no great judge of acting, but he thought there was something like promise of excellence in the easy and gentleman-like young fellow; and he consented to engage him for Drury Lane, at the encouraging salary of fifteen shillings a week, from which half a crown was to be deducted for instruction in dancing! This left Wilks twelve and sixpence clear weekly income; and he had not long been enjoying it, when he married Miss Knapton, daughter of the Town Clerk of Southampton. Young couple never began life upon more modest means; but happiness, hard work, and good fortune came of it.

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[7] All dates regarding Wilks are difficult to determine; but as his appearance in Othello, previously referred to, took place at the end of the Irish Revolution – (Hitchcock says in December 1691) – this date, 1690, must be wrong. Besides, Rich does not seem to have obtained a footing in the theatre till March 1691.

For a few years, commencing with 1690,[8] Wilks laboured unnoticed, at Drury Lane, by all save generous Betterton, who seeing the young actor struggling for fame, with a small salary, and an increasing family, recommended him to return to Ashbury, the Dublin manager, who, at Betterton's word, engaged him at £50 a year,[9] and a clear benefit. "You will be glad to have got him," said Betterton to Ashbury. "You will be sorry you have lost him," said he, to Christopher Rich. *Sorry!* In three or four years more, Rich was imploring him to return, and offering him Golconda, as salaries were then understood. But Wilks was now the darling of the Dublin people, and, at a later period, so universal was the desire to keep him amongst them, that the Duke of Ormond, Lord Lieutenant, issued a warrant to prohibit his leaving the kingdom. But, on the other hand, £4 per week awaited him in London. It was nearly as high a salary as Betterton's![10] Wilks, however, caring less for the terms than for the opportunity of satisfying his inordinate thirst for fame, contrived to escape, with his wife. With them came a disappointed actor, soon to be a popular dramatist, Farquhar; who, in the year 1699, after opening the season with his "Love and a Bottle," produced his "Constant Couple," with Wilks as Sir Harry Wildair. On the night of Wilks's first appearance, in some lines written for him by Farquhar, and spoken by the *debutant*, the latter said: —

"Void of offence, though not from censure free,
I left a distant isle, too kind to me;"

and confessing a sort of supremacy in the London over the *Dublin* stage, he added: —

"There I could please, but there my fame must end,
For hither none must come to boast – but mend."

This the young actor did apace. Applauded as the latter had been the year before, in old parts, the approbation was as nothing compared with that lavished on him in this his first original character. From the first recognition of Vizard down to the "tag" with which the curtain descends, and including even the absurd and unnatural scene with Angelica, he kept the audience in a condition of intermittent ecstasy. The piece established his fame, gave a name to Norris, the frequently mentioned "Jubilee Dicky," and made the fortune of Rich. It seems to have been played nearly fifty times in the first season. In its construction and style it is far in advance of the comedies of Aphra Behn and Ravenscroft; and yet it is irregular; not moral; as often flippant as witty; improbable, and not really original. Madam Fickle is to be traced in it, and the denouement, as far as Lurewell and Standard are concerned, is borrowed from those of Plautus and Terence.

Wilks, now the great favourite of the town, justified all Betterton's prognostications. Like Betterton, he was to the end convinced that he might become more perfect by study and perseverance. Taking the extant score of judgments recorded of him, I find that Wilks was careful, judicious, painstaking in the smallest trifles; in comedy always brilliant, in tragedy always graceful and natural. For zeal, Cibber had not known his equal for half a century; careful himself, he allowed no one else to be negligent; so careful, that he would recite a thousand lines without missing a single word. The result of all his labour was seen in an ease, and grace, and gaiety which seemed perfectly spontaneous. His taste in dress was irreproachable; grave in his attire on the streets, on the stage he was the glass of fashion. On the stage, even in his last season, after a career of forty years, he never lost his buoyancy, or his young graces. From first to last he was perfection in his peculiar line. "Whatever he did upon the stage," says an eminent critic, quoted by Genest, "let it be ever so trifling, whether it consisted in

[8] See previous note.

[9] Chetwood says sixty pounds.

[10] It was apparently the same salary as Betterton's.

putting on his gloves, or taking out his watch, lolling on his cane, or taking snuff, every movement was marked by such an ease of breeding and manner, everything told so strongly the involuntary motion of a gentleman, that it was impossible to consider the character he represented in any other light than that of reality; but what was still more surprising, that person who could thus delight an audience, from the gaiety and sprightliness of his character, I met the next day in a street hobbling to a hackney-coach, seemingly so enfeebled by age and infirmities that I could scarcely believe him to be the same man."

The grace and bearing of Wilks were accounted of as natural in a man whose blood was not of the common tap. "His father, Edward Wilks, Esq., was descended from Judge Wilks, a very eminent lawyer, and a gentleman of great honour and probity. During the unhappy scene of our civil wars he raised a troop of horse, at his own expense, for the service of his royal master." A brother of the judge was in Monk's army,[11] with the rank of Colonel, and with more of honest intention than of commonplace discretion. The civil wars took many a good actor from the stage, but they also contributed the sons and daughters of many ancient but impoverished families to the foremost rank among distinguished players. Some of the daughters of these old and decayed houses thought it no disparagement to wed with these players, or to take humble office in the theatre. Wilks's first wife, Miss Knapton, was the daughter of the Town Clerk of Southampton, and Steward of the New Forest, posts of trust, and, at one time, of emolument. The Knaptons had been Yorkshire landholders, the estate being valued at £2000 a year; and now we find one daughter marrying Wilks, a second espousing Norris, "Jubilee Dicky," and a third, Anne Knapton, filling the humble office of dresser at Drury Lane, and probably not much flattered by the legend on the family arms, "*Meta coronat opus*."

The greatest trouble to Wilks during the period he was in management, arose from the "ladies" of the company. There was especially Mrs. Rogers, who, on the retirement of Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle, played the principal serious parts. It was the whim of this lady to act none but virtuous characters; her prudery would not admit of her studying others. In the epilogue to the "Triumphs of Virtue," in which she played the innocent Bellamira, she pronounced with great effect the lines, addressed to the ladies, for whose smiles, she said,

> "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,
> And strive to live the character I play."

In this, however, she did not succeed; but Mrs. Rogers congratulated herself by considering that her failure saved Wilks's life, who, when a widower, protested that he should die of despair if she refused to smile upon him; but, as Cibber remarks, Mrs. Rogers "could never be reduced to marry."

Her ambition was great, for she not only looked on herself as the successor of Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle; but when the lively and graceful Mountfort (Mrs. Verbruggen) died, in giving birth to an infant, Mrs. Rogers aspired to the succession of her parts also. Wilks, then in power, preferred Mrs. Oldfield. A public clamour ensued; but, says Victor, somewhat confusedly, "Mr. Wilks soon reduced this clamour to demonstration, by an experiment of Mrs. Oldfield and Mrs. Rogers playing the same part, that of Lady Lurewell in the "Trip to the Jubilee;" but though obstinacy seldom meets conviction, yet from this equitable trial the tumults in the house were soon quelled (by public authority), greatly to the honour of Mr. Wilks. I am," adds the writer, "from my own knowledge, thoroughly convinced that Mr. Wilks had no other regard for Mrs. Oldfield but what arose from the excellency of her performances. Mrs. Rogers' conduct might be censured by some for the earnestness

[11] Chetwood says that he commanded a troop in the King's army.

of her passion towards Mr. Wilks, but in the polite world the fair sex has always been privileged from scandal."

As great a tumult ensued when Mrs. Oldfield was cast for Andromache, a character claimed by her rival, who, being refused by Wilks, "she raised a posse of profligates, fond of tumult and riot, who made such a commotion in the house, that the Court hearing of it, sent four of the royal messengers and a strong guard to suppress all disorder." Cibber laments having "to dismiss an audience of £150 from a disturbance spirited up by obscure people, who never gave any better reason for it than 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."

A green-room scene, painted by Colley Cibber, reveals to us something of the shadowy side of Wilks's character, while that of Booth and Mrs. Oldfield stand out, as it were, "in the sun." Court and city in 1725 had demanded the revival of Vanbrugh's "Provoked Wife," with alterations, to suit the growing taste for refinement. These alterations had taken something from the sprightliness of the part of Constant, which Wilks had been accustomed to play, and Cibber proposed to give it to Booth, for whom its gravity rendered it suitable. Wilks, who was eager to play every night, at first looked grave, then frowned; as Cibber hinted, that if he were to play in every piece, a sudden indisposition on his part might create embarrassment, he sullenly stirred the fire; but when the chief manager suggested that as he had accomplished all he could possibly aim at in his profession, occasional repose would become him more than unremitting labour, he took Cibber's counsel and Booth's acquiescence for satire, and retorted with a warmth of indignation which included some strong expletives not to be found in the best poets.

Cibber then accused him of inconsistency, and expressed indifference whether he accepted or rejected the part which he then held in his hand, and which Wilks at once threw down on the table whereupon the angry player sate, with crossed arms, and "knocking his heel upon the floor, as seeming to threaten most when he said least." Booth, good-naturedly, struck in with a cheerful comment, to the effect that, "for his part, he saw no such great matter in acting every day, for he believed it the wholesomest exercise in the world; it kept the spirits in motion, and always gave *him* a good stomach."

At this friendly advance Mrs. Oldfield was seen laughing behind her fan, while Wilks, after a few hesitating remarks, which showed some little jealousy of Booth, proposed that Mrs. Oldfield should herself select which of the two she would have play with her. He would be glad to be excused if she selected another.

"This throwing the negative upon Mrs. Oldfield," says Cibber, "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 displeased at her calling us all by the same name."

Finally, Wilks accepted the part, at Mrs. Oldfield's suggestion, and all went well. Irascible as he was, yet he was more remarkable for his zeal and industry, for the carefulness with which he superintended rehearsals, and for the elaborate pains-concealing labour, which distinguished him on the public stage. Cibber renders him full measure of justice in this respect, and generously confesses: "Had *I* had half his application I still think I might have shown myself twice the actor that, in my highest state of favour, I appear to be."

Cibber, indeed, has painted his colleague Wilks with great elaboration. From Colley we learn that Wilks excelled Powell, and that hot-headed Powell challenged him to the duello in consequence. So painstaking was the young Irishman, that in forty years he was never once forgetful of a single word in any of his parts. "In some new comedy he happened 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." The good-

natured author cut the whole of the speech out; but "Wilks thought it such an indignity to his memory that anything 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." Cibber praises his sober character, but hints at his professional conceit, and somewhat overbearing temper; and he calls him "bustle master-general of the company." If he was jealous and impatient, "to be employed on the stage was the delight of his life;" and of his unwearied zeal, unselfishly exercised for the general good, Cibber cannot speak too highly. Nothing came amiss to Wilks that was connected with the stage. He even undertook the office of writing the bills of performance; but he charged £50 a year for the trouble.

In the plaintive and tender, this light comedian excelled even Booth, who used to say that Wilks lacked ear and not voice to make a great tragedian.[12] Wilks's greatest successes were in his friend Farquhar's heroes, – Sir Harry Wildair, Mirabel, Captain Plume, and Archer. He played equally well, but with less opportunity for distinction, the light gentlemen of Cibber's comedies. In Don Felix, in Mrs. Centlivre's "Wonder," he almost excelled the reputation he had gained in Sir Harry. "When Wilks dies," Farquhar once remarked, "Sir Harry may go to the Jubilee." Of the above characters he was the original representative, as he was of some fourscore others of less note, – among them Dumont, in "Jane Shore," for which he may be said to have been cast by Mrs. Oldfield. "Nay!" she cried to him, in her pretty way; "if you will not be my husband, I will act Alicia, I protest." And accordingly, the two most brilliant and gleesome actors of their day, enacted married tribulation, and kept their wreathed smiles for the crowd which clustered round them at the wings.

Few men ever loved acting for acting's sake more than Wilks. At the same time, no one ever warned others against it with more serious urgency. He had a nephew, who was in fair prospect of such good fortune as could be built up in an attorney's office. How little the young fellow merited the fortune, and how ill he understood the duties and advantages of attorneyship he manifested fully, by a madness for appearing on the stage. No counsel availed against his resolution; and, in 1714, Wilks despatched him to Dublin, with a letter to Ashbury, the manager. "He was bred an attorney," wrote the uncle, despondingly, "but is unhappily fallen in love with that fickle mistress, the stage; and no arguments can dissuade him from it. I have refused to give him any countenance, in hopes that time and experience might cure him; but since I find him determined to make an attempt somewhere, no one, I am sure, is able to give him so just a notion of the business as yourself. If you find my nephew wants either genius or any other necessary qualification, I beg you will freely tell him his disabilities; and then it is possible he may be more easily persuaded to return to his friends and business, which I am informed he understands perfectly well."

Young Wilks proved as poor an actor as he probably was an attorney; but his uncle received him at Drury Lane, after a year's novitiate in Dublin, where he played, at first, better "business" than Quin himself. But he never advanced a step, and died at the age of thirty, having never obtained above that number of shillings a week. And for that, he deserted his vocation as an attorney, in the practice of which he might have gained, if not earned, at a low estimate, twice that amount in a single morning.

There was a pious young Duke of Orleans, who, to keep a fair character, was obliged to assume the fashionable vices of his day. Wilks, with all his love of home, was a fine gentleman among the fine gentlemen. His appreciation of matrimony was shown by the haste with which he espoused the widow Fell, daughter of Charles II.'s great gun-founder, Browne, in April 1715, after losing his first wife in the previous year. During the first union, he must have trod the stage with many a heart-ache, while he was exciting hilarity, for eleven of his children died early, and the airy player was for ever in mourning. His stepson, Fell, married the granddaughter of William Penn, and brought his bride to the altar of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, not to be married, but christened. Wilks and his wife were the

[12] In the 2d edition Dr. Doran adds: – "He was not altogether original; for the *Tatler*, in 1710, advises him to 'wholly forget Mr. Betterton, for that he failed in no part of Othello but when he has him in view.' Thomson says of him, as the hero in Sophonisba, 'Whatever was designed as amiable and engaging in Masinissa, shines out in Mr. Wilks's action.'"

gossips to the pretty quakeress; and the former, probably, never looked more imposing than when he pronounced the names of the fair episcopalian, —*Gulielma Maria*.

Betterton used to rusticate in Berkshire; Booth, at Cowley; Cibber, at Twickenham; his son, at Brook Green. Wilks, too, had his villa at Isleworth. He is said to have kept a well-regulated and extremely cheerful home. He had there seen so much of death that we are told he was always prepared to meet it with decency. His generosity amounted almost to prodigality. "Few Irish gentlemen," says his biographer, "are without indigent relatives." Wilks had many, and they never appealed to him in vain. He died, after a short illness and four doctors, in September 1732,[13] leaving his share in the Drury Lane Patent, and what other property he possessed, to his wife. Throughout his life, I can only find one symptom of regret at having abandoned the Irish Secretary's office for the stage. "My successor in Ireland," he once said to Cibber, "made by his post £50,000."

Exceeding benevolence is finely exhibited in an incident connected with Farquhar. When the latter was near the end of his gay yet chequered career in 1707, – death, the glory of his last success, and the thought of his children pressing hard upon him, he wrote this laconic, but perfectly intelligible, note to Wilks: – "Dear Bob, – I have not anything to leave thee, to perpetuate my memory, but two helpless girls; look upon them, sometimes; and think of him that was, to the last moment of his life, thine, – George Farquhar." Farquhar's confidence in his friend was like that of La Fontaine, who, having lost a home, was met in the street by a friend who invited him to *his*. "I was going there!" said the simple-minded poet. Wilks did not disappoint Farquhar's expectations.

Wilks could be as modest as he was generous. After playing, for the first time, the Ghost to Booth's Hamlet,[14] the latter remarked, "Why, Bob, I thought you were going to knock me down. When I played the Ghost to Mr. Betterton's Hamlet, awe-stricken as he seemed, I was still more so of him."

"Mr. Betterton and Mr. Booth," said Wilks, "noble actors, could always play as they pleased. I can only play to the best of my ability."[15] Once only do I find Wilks in close connection with royalty, – namely, when he took, by command, the manuscript of "George Barnwell" to St. James's, and read that lively tragedy to Queen Anne.[16] On some like occasion, King William once presented Booth with five pounds for his reward, but history does not note the guerdon with which Wilks retired from the presence of "Great Anna!"[17]

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[13] "5 Oct. 1732. Robert Wilks in the Church on the north side of the north aisle, under the pews Nos. 9 and 10" (*Reg. Burials, St. Paul, Covent Garden*). —*Doran MS.*

[14] This should be "playing *Hamlet* to Booth's *Ghost*," which makes all speculations whether Booth played Hamlet or not unnecessary. In point of fact, I do not think he ever did.

[15] Dr. Doran adds, in the 2d edition: "A writer in the *Prompter*, however, says that Booth would have been too solemn for the lighter parts of Hamlet, 'if he had ever played the character.' Wilks's Hamlet was good only in the light and gayer portions, and in the scene in which at Ophelia's feet, Hamlet watches the king, Wilks's reading was perfection. In 'I say away! – Go on; I'll follow thee!' he addressed the whole line to the Ghost with a flourish of his sword; whereas, the first three words should be spoken to the two friends who struggle to keep him from following the apparition."

[16] Queen Caroline (2d edition).

[17] Caroline Dorothea (2d edition).

CHAPTER IV
ENTER GARRICK

Great was the confusion in, and small the prosperity of, the theatres after the death of Wilks, and withdrawal of Cibber. Highmore, now chief patentee, opened Drury; but Theophilus Cibber, with all the principal Drury Lane performers, except Mrs. Clive (for Miss Raftor was now the wife of Judge Clive's brother), Mrs. Horton, and Mrs. Bridgewater,[18] opened the Haymarket against him, under the title of "Comedians of His Majesty's Revels." Highmore had recourse to the law to keep the seceders to their engagements, and Harper, a deserter to the Haymarket, was prosecuted as a stroller; but the law acquitted him, after solemn discussion. Highmore's chief actor was Macklin, who first appeared as Captain Brazen, Cibber's old part in the "Recruiting Officer," and he subsequently played Marplot, Clodio, Teague, Brass, and similar characters, with success; but he was cast aside when the companies became reconciled.

There was no other actor of note in the Drury Lane company, where good actresses were not wanting. Mrs. Clive alone furnished perpetual sunshine, and Mrs. Horton warmed the thin houses by the glow of her beauty. No piece of permanent merit was produced, and, sad change in the Drury Lane annals, the patentee was at a heavy weekly loss.

On the first night that the seceders opened the Haymarket, 21st September[19] 1733, with "Love for Love," Mrs. Pritchard played Nell, in the after-piece ("Devil to Pay"). The *Daily Post* had already extolled the "dawning excellence" she had exhibited in a booth, and prophesied that she would charm the age. She played light comic parts throughout the season; but her powers as a tragedian do not seem to have been suspected. Mrs. Pritchard thus entered on her long and honourable career, a married woman, with a large family, and an excellent character, which she never tarnished. Cibber's daughter, Mrs. Charke, played a round of male parts during the same season,[20] Roderigo, in "Othello," being one of them. In the March of 1734, the seceders closed the Haymarket, and joined the wreck of the old company at Drury Lane, on which Mrs. Pritchard, like Macklin, was laid aside for a time. But while those eminent players were "under a cloud," there appeared Miss Arne, whose voice charmed all hearers, whose beauty subdued Theophilus Cibber, but who was not yet recognised as the tragic actress, between whom and Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Yates, critics, and the town generally, were to go mad with disputation.

Meantime, no new drama was produced at Covent Garden, which lived in the public memory a month; but Quin shed a glory on the house, and quite eclipsed the careful, but heavy and decaying actor, Mills, who aspired to the parts which Booth's death had left unappropriated. In Macbeth and Othello, Thersites, Cato, Apemantus, and Gonzales, in the "Mourning Bride," he had at least no living rival. The contest for superiority had commenced before Booth's death; but Mills was never a match for Quin, and his name has not been preserved among us as that of a great actor.

As it is otherwise with Quin, let us recapitulate some details of his previous career, before we accompany him over that period which he filled so creditably, till he was rudely shaken by the coming of Garrick.

The father of James Quin was a barrister of a good Irish family, and at one time resided in King Street, Covent Garden, where James was born in 1693. Mrs. Quin happened to be the wife of two husbands. The first, who had abandoned her, and who, after years of absence, was supposed to

[18] Bridgewater, not Mrs. Bridgewater.

[19] Should be 26th September.

[20] It would be more accurate to say that she played several "breeches" parts.

be dead, re-appeared after Quin's birth, and carried off the boy's mother as his own lawful wife.[21] Thereby, the boy himself was deprived of his inheritance; the Quin property, which was considerable, passed to the heir at law, and at the age of twenty-one, the young man, intelligent but uneducated, his illusions of being a *squireen* in Ireland being all dissipated, and being specially fitted for no vocation, went at once upon the stage. His time of probation was first spent on the Dublin boards, in 1714, where he played very small parts with such great propriety, that in the following year, on the recommendation of Chetwood, the prompter, he was received, still as a probationer, into the company then acting at Drury Lane. Booth, Cibber, Mills, and Wilks were the chief players at that theatre, and the young actor was at least among noble professors. Among, but not of them, he remained for at least two seasons, acting the walking gentlemen, and fulfilling "general utility," without a chance of reaching a higher rank. One night, however, in 1716, when the run of the revived "Tamerlane" was threatened with interruption by the sudden illness of the most ferocious of Bajazets, Quin was induced, most reluctantly on the foolish fellow's side, to read the part. In doing this with conscientiousness and judgment, he received such testimonies of approval, that he made himself master of the words by the following night, and when the curtain fell, found himself famous. The critics in the pit, and the fine gentlemen who hung about the stage, united in acknowledging his merits; the coffee-houses tossed his name about pleasantly as a novelty, and Mr. Mills paid him the compliment of speedily getting well.

When Mr. Mills resumed Bajazet, young Quin sank down to the Dervise; and though, subsequently, his cast of characters was improved, his patience was so severely tried, that in the succeeding season he passed over to the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Modestly entering there in the part of Benducar, in "Don Sebastian,"[22] he at once established himself in the public favour, and before the close of the season 1718-19, the chivalry of his Hotspur, the bluntness of his Clytus, the fire of his Bajazet, the grandeur of his Macbeth, the calm dignity of his Brutus, the unctuousness of his Falstaff,[23] the duplicity of his Maskwell, and the coarse comedy of his Sir John Brute, were circumstances of which the town talked quite as eagerly as they did of the Quadruple Alliance, and the musket shot which had slain the royal Swede in the trenches before Frederickshall.

It was Quin's success in Bajazet at Drury Lane that really cost Bowen his life. I have noticed the subject before, but it will admit of some further detail. Bowen had taunted Quin with being tame in Bajazet, and Quin retorted by speaking disparagingly of Bowen in Jacomo in the "Libertine," preferring Johnson in that part. Bowen was the more deeply stung as he prided himself on his acting in Jacomo, and the company agreed with the adverse critic. The quarrel, commenced by envy, was aggravated by politics. Bowen boasted of his honesty and consistency, a boast, the worthlessness of which was speedily shown by Quin's remark, that Bowen had as often drunk the Duke of Ormond's health as he had refused it. The disputants parted angrily, only to meet more incensed. They met, on the invitation of Bowen, and passed from one tavern to another, till they could find a room which less suited Quin's purpose than that of his irate companion – that of "fighting it out." Indeed, the younger player seems to have been hardly aware of his elder's definite purpose; for when they entered the room Bowen fastened the door, clapped his back to it, drew his sword, and threatened to run Quin through the body if he did not out with his rapier and defend himself. Remonstrance from the latter was of no avail, and he drew simply to keep Bowen off. But the latter impetuously pressed forward till he ultimately fell mortally wounded. Before his death, however, which occurred within three days, he justly and generously took the blame of the whole transaction upon himself. This, with corroborative evidence, secured the acquittal of Quin on his trial for manslaughter. So died poor, foolish Bowen, at the age of fifty-two, leaving a widow, for whom the public had not sufficient sympathy to render

[21] Although Dr. Doran states this as if it were undoubtedly accurate, it is not certain that it is so. It is only one of several stories to account for Quin's requiring to earn a living on the stage.

[22] I can find no authority for this. He made his first appearance as Hotspur on 7th January 1718. He played Benducar on 26th September 1718.

[23] He did not play Falstaff until 1720-21.

her "benefit" profitable, and a son, known in the London streets as "Ragged-and-Tough," and whose exploits, recorded in the *Old Bailey Calendar*, sent him to the colonies to found in another hemisphere a line of Bowens more honest and less angry than the latter scions of the race in England.

This was a transition period, terminated by the coming of Garrick. Quin passed over to Drury Lane, tempted by the annual £500 offered by Fleetwood, a wealthy personage, who had purchased the chief share in the patent. "No actor," said Rich, "is worth more than £300 a year," and declining to retain Quin at the additional required outlay, he brought forward a "citizen," named Stephens, to oppose him. Stephens had caught the exact sound of Booth's cadences and much of his manner. For a time audiences were delighted, but the magic of mere imitation soon ceased to attract; and Quin decidedly led the town in old characters, but with no opportunity yet offered him of a "creation." Mrs. Clive enchanted her hearers at Drury Lane, while Mrs. Horton took her beauty and happy assurance to Covent Garden. A greater than either, Mrs. Pritchard, played mere walking ladies, and made no step in advance till 1735, when she acted Lady Townley at the Haymarket. Old Cibber longing again for a smell of the lamps, and a sound of applause, played a few of his best parts during this season, and Macklin slowly made progress according to rare opportunity. Covent Garden chiefly depended on Ryan; but suddenly lost his services when they could be least spared. He was returning home, on the 15th of March 1735, when he was shot by a ruffian in Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, who robbed him of his sword. "Friend," said the generous actor, who was badly wounded in the face and jaw-bone, "you have killed me; but I forgive you!" In about six weeks, however, he was sufficiently recovered to appear again, after a general sympathy had been shown him, from the Prince of Wales down to the gallery visitors.

Drury Lane, too, lost, but altogether, an useful actor, Hallam. He and Macklin had quarrelled about a theatrical wig, and impetuous Macklin, raising his stick, thrust with it, in such blind fury, that it penetrated through Hallam's eye to the brain, and the unfortunate player died the next day. An Old Bailey jury let the rasher, but grief-stricken man, lightly off under a verdict of "Manslaughter."

From being a Queen of Song, Mrs. Cibber, the second wife of Theophilus, first took ground as an actress this season,[24] at Drury Lane, in Aaron Hill's adaptation of Voltaire's "Zara." Mrs. Cibber was the sister of Dr. Thomas Arne, the composer of "Artaxerxes," and daughter of an upholsterer in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. Handel thought so well of her that he arranged one of his airs in the "Messiah" expressly to suit her voice. Her ambition, however, was to be a tragic actress, and Colley Cibber, who had sternly opposed her marriage with his son, overcome by her winning ways, not only was reconciled to her, but instructed her in her study for Zara, and some part of her success was owing to so accomplished a teacher.

Milward played Lusignan, a part in acting which a young actor, named Bond, overcome by his feelings, died on the stage, while blessing his children.[25] This occurred at a private theatre, in Great Villiers Street, where the tragedy was represented, by sanction of the author, or, as Reed would have it, of the stealer of it from Voltaire. Bond was not the only actor who died in harness this year. Obese Hulett, rival of Quin, in Falstaff, proud of the strength of his lungs, which he was for ever exercising to the terror of those who suddenly experienced it, in making some extraordinary effort of this sort, broke a blood-vessel, and straightway died, when only thirty-five years of age; and he was buried at the expense of his stage-manager, Giffard, who rented Lincoln's Inn Fields, for awhile, of Rich.

The success of Mrs. Cibber stirred Rich at Covent Garden, and when she acted Hermione, the old but able Mrs. Porter played the part against her, at the latter house, as she also did Zara.[26]

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[24] Should be "next season." Ryan's accident and Hallam's death took place in 1734-35; Mrs. Cibber's appearance in 1735-36.

[25] Bond was not an actor, but apparently a distressed author. Davies expressly says that he was aged and infirm. It is scarcely correct to say that he died on the stage. He fainted on the stage and died the next morning.

[26] Mrs. Cibber did not play Hermione. "The Distressed Mother" was played on 23d March 1736 for Theophilus Cibber's benefit, when Mrs. Cibber played Andromache. The Zara which Mrs. Porter acted was quite a different part from Aaron Hill's Zara, being the part in Congreve's "Mourning Bride."

Mrs. Horton was opposed to her in the part of Jane Shore.[27] In high comedy, Mrs. Cibber attempted Indiana, in the "Conscious Lovers," and forthwith Covent Garden put up the same piece. But the latter house was inferior in its company; there was no one there to shed sunshine like Mrs. Clive. Delane and Walker together were not equal to Quin. Of novelty, Covent Garden produced nothing. Giffard's young troop, on the other hand, in the east, and afterwards at Lincoln's Inn Fields, produced much that was worthless, not excepting another levy on Voltaire by Hill, in his "Alzira." Indeed, the new authors of this period were more remarkable than their pieces. Mrs. Cooper, now forgotten, was the widow of an auctioneer; and Stirling, author of the "Parricide," is, perhaps, better remembered in Maryland, where he was a "popular parson," than he is here. What is known of him here, indeed, is not favourable. When he and Concanen came together from Ireland, to live by their pens, as political writers, they tossed up as to the "side" they should take. As it fell to Concanen to support, and to Stirling to abuse the ministry, the former was enabled to acquire an ample fortune as Attorney General of Jamaica, his seventeen years' tenure of which, Matthew owed to the appreciation of him by the Duke of Newcastle. But Matthew was a wit, and a gentlemanlike fellow; whereas the Rev. Jack Stirling, whose "Parricide" was hissed at Goodman's Fields,[28] was an unsuccessful parson, who did very well for a transatlantic minister.

The Haymarket was open in the spring and summer of 1736, under Fielding, with his "Great Mogul's Company of Comedians." Fielding, greatly improved by many failures, found the town in laughter; and Lillo drowned it in tears. At "Pasquin," that hot, fierce, hard-hitting, mirth-moving satire, London "screamed," night after night, for nearly two months; and at the "Fatal Curiosity," that most heart-rending of domestic dramas, the same London wept as if it had the tenderest feelings in the world. In it Cibber's daughter, erratic Mrs. Charke, condescended to play a female part; and Davies, the bookseller and dramatic historian, the part of her son, young Wilmot. By such means and appliances did the stage support itself through this year, in which Mrs. Pritchard is seldom heard of, and Yates and Woodward are only giving promise of the Sir Bashful Constant and Mercutio, to come.

And now we reach 1736-7, with Quin especially eminent in Shakspeare's characters, Mrs. Cibber, stirring the town as Statira, Monimia, or Belvidera, and Mrs. Clive – who had quarrelled with her as to the right to play Polly – beaming like sunshine through operatic farce and rattling comedy, as gaily as if her brow had never known a frown. The old colleague of Quin – Mills (the original representative of characters so opposite as Zanga and Aimwell, Pylades and Colonel Briton), died all but on the stage, which lost in him a heavy "utility," whose will was better than his execution. A lady "utility," too, withdrew after this season, – Mrs. Thurmond, the original representative, also, of opposite characters, to wit – Myris, in Young's "Busiris," and Lady Wronghead.

The same Drury to which these were lost, gained this season a new author, in the person of Dodsley, – whose life is comprised in the words, – footman, poet, bookseller, honest man. As yet, he is only at the second step, – a poor poet; when he published books instead of writing them, he became a wealthy, but remained, as ever, a worthy fellow. It is due to this ex-lacquey to say, that in his satirical piece, the "Toy Shop," and in his hearty little drama, the "King and the Miller of Mansfield," both helped towards the stage by Pope, Dodsley gave wholesome food to satisfy the public appetite; and the man who had not long before stripped off a livery, showed more respect for decency than any wit or gallant of them all.

He was the only successful author of the season at Drury. The Rev. Mr. Miller broke a commandment, in his "Universal Passion," – stolen from Shakspeare and Molière; and classical Mr. Cooke manifested no humour in converting Terence's "Eunuchus," into a satirical farce, the "Eunuch, or the Derby Captain," – levelled at those English *emeriti* whose regiments were disbanded after the peace of Utrecht, and who sipped their Derbyshire ale at a famous tavern in Covent Garden.

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[27] I cannot trace that Mrs. Cibber ever played Jane Shore. Alicia was her part.

[28] It was played five times.

The chief incident before the curtain was a riot, caused by the footmen who had been excluded from their gallery, on the night of Macklin's benefit, – 5th May 1737. But of this incident I shall speak in another page. Of Mrs. Pritchard there is barely an appearance; her great opportunity had not yet arrived.

At Covent Garden there was no new piece, but something better, – a revival of Shakspeare's "King John," in which Delane played the King, and Walker, Falconbridge, – a character for which he was personally and intellectually fitted, and in which, as in Hotspur, he gained more laurels than he ever acquired by his Macheath.

They who pursued novelty might find it with Giffard's company, playing at the Lincoln's Inn Fields, where, however, the only successful piece was "King Charles I.," a tragedy by Havard, a young actor, already known by his "Scanderbeg," and who succeeded to the place left vacant by Mills. Giffard played Charles, a character which is rather exaggerated by the author, who acted Juxon. Chesterfield said, in reference to this piece, that "the catastrophe was too recent, too melancholy, and of too solemn a nature to be heard of anywhere but in the pulpit." However this may be, the way in which the tragedy was composed was anything but solemn. Desultory Havard had been commissioned by Giffard to write the piece. It was done to order, and under constraint; for the patron locked up the poet in a garret, near Lincoln's Inn, during a certain number of hours, daily, from which he was not suffered to emerge till he had repeated, from behind the door, to Giffard, who was on the landing, a certain number of newly-written lines, – till the whole was completed, when the poet became free.

At the Haymarket, Fielding and satire reigned, but not supreme, – for his pieces were as often hissed as applauded; but the political allusions in "Tumble-down Dick, or Phaeton in the Suds," pleased, and those in the "Historical Register for 1736," made the audience laugh, and Sir Robert Walpole, satirised as Quidnunc,[29] winced. The government had for some time contemplated a restriction of the licence of the stage. Hitherto, the Lord Chamberlain could stop a play in its career. It was now proposed to establish a licenser, according to whose report the Chamberlain might prohibit the play from entering on a career at all. The proposal arose out of an officious act of Giffard's, who took the manuscript of a satirical piece, called the "Golden Rump," to the minister, at which piece the latter was so shocked, that the bill for gagging the stage was at once proceeded with.

It was indecorously hurried through the Commons and tossed to the Lords, at the close of the session of 1737. There it met the sturdy opposition of Chesterfield. He looked upon the bill as an attempt, through restraining the licence of the stage, to destroy the liberty of the press; for what was seditious to act, it would be seditious to print. And, if the printing of a play could be stopped, there would soon be a gag on pamphlets and other works.

The very act of Giffard showed that the players were anxious not to come in collision with government; and the existing laws could be applied against them if they offended. But those laws were not applied, or Mr. Fielding would have been punished for his "Pasquin," wherein the three great professions – religion, physic, and law – were represented as inconsistent with common sense. Chesterfield thought that the same law might have been put in force against Havard, for his "King Charles I."

If ministers dreaded satire or censure all they had to do was so to act as not to deserve it. If they deserved it, it would be as easy to turn passages of old plays against them, as to make them, in new. When the Roman actor, Diphilus, altered the words "Nostrâ miseriâ tu es magnus!" – a phrase from an old play – the eyes of the audience were turned on Pompeius Magnus, who was present; and the speaker was made to repeat the phrase a hundred times. Augustus, indeed, subsequently restored "order" in Rome; but God forbid that order should be restored here, at such a price as was paid for it in Rome!

[29] Should be Quidam.

False accusations, too, could be lightly made. Molière complained that "Tartuffe" was prohibited on the ground of its ridiculing religion, which was done nightly on the Italian stage; whereas he only satirised hypocrites. "It is true, Molière," said the Prince de Conti, "Harlequin ridicules heaven and exposes religion; but you have done much worse, – you have ridiculed the first minister of religion."

Against the power of prohibition being lodged in one single man, Chesterfield protested, but in vain. One consequence, he said, would be, that all vices prevalent at court would come to be represented as virtues. He told the Lords that they had no right to put an excise upon wit; and said, finely, "Wit, my Lords, is the property of those who have it, – and too often the only property they have to depend on. It is, indeed, but a precarious dependence. Thank God!" he said, "we, my Lords, *have a dependence of another kind*!"

Such is the substance of his famous but unavailing remonstrance. The bill, not to protect morality, but to spare the susceptibilities of statesmen and place-men, passed; and the result was a "job." In the ensuing spring, Chetwynd was appointed, under the Chamberlain, licenser of plays, with a salary of £400 per annum; and to help him in doing little, Odell was named a deputy-licenser, with £200 yearly; – and therewith the job was consummated; and the deputy-licenser began to break the law he was appointed to see strictly observed. When the Act was passed, his most sacred majesty, who commanded unsavoury pieces occasionally to be played before him, prorogued the parliament, after lamenting the spirit of insubordination and licentiousness which pervaded the community!

The government made use of its authority, by prohibiting plays, and the public took their revenge, by hissing those that were licensed. Among the prohibited, were Brooke's "Gustavus Vasa;" Thomson's "Edward and Eleanora;" and Fielding's "Miss Lucy in Town;"[30]– the first, as dangerous to public order; the second, as too freely alluding to royal family dissensions; the third (after it had been licensed) as satirising "some man of quality!" To these must be added "Arminius," by Paterson, Thomson's deputy in his post of Surveyor of the Leeward Islands. The deputy had copied out his principal's "Edward and Eleanora;" and as "Arminius" was in the same hand, it was forbidden, as being, probably, an equally objectionable piece by the same author! The prohibition applied to it was profitable; for he published his play by subscription, and gained £1000 by it, – not for the reason that it was a good, but because it was a forbidden drama.[31]

Audiences amused themselves by hissing the permitted plays, sometimes with the additional luxury of personal feeling against the author, – as in the case of the Rev. Mr. Miller's "Coffee House," "Art and Nature," and "Hospital for Fools." Thomson was fortunate in saving his "Agamemnon" from the censors, for it is not unworthy of ranking with the "Iphigenia" of Racine; and its merit saved it. Mallet was still more lucky with his "Mustapha;" and the audience were too pleased to hiss a piece, the licensers of which were too dull to perceive that Sultan Solyman and his vizier, Rustan, were but stage portraits of George II. and Sir Robert Walpole. They had no such tenderness for the "Parricide" of William Shirley, – a gentleman who understood the laws of trade better than those of the drama. A French company, at the Haymarket, were of course hissed out of the country. There was no ill-will against them, personally. It was sufficient that the Licensing Act authorised them to play, and the public would not tolerate them, accordingly! If they bore with Lillo's "Marina," it was, perhaps, because it was a re-cast of "Pericles;" and if they applauded his licensed "Elmeric," the reason may have been, that the old dissenting jeweller, who set so brave an example in writing "moral" pieces, was then dead; and the "author's nights" might be of advantage to his impoverished family.

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[30] It is very questionable whether this farce was prohibited. There is nothing in the bills to show that it was; and the *Biog. Dram.*, which says it was prohibited after having been played for some nights, is probably wrong. Fielding published "A Letter" to the Lord Chamberlain, on the subject of this farce; but the point of it is, why was "Miss Lucy" licensed, when less objectionable matter was condemned?

[31] Dr. Doran must refer to Brooke, who made £1000 by publishing "Gustavus Vasa." Paterson, I think, was not likely to be equally lucky.

But there were licensed dramas at which the public laughed too heartily, to have cared to hiss, or which so entranced them that they never thought of it. Thus, Dodsley's merry pieces, "Sir John Cockle," and the "Blind Beggar;" Carey and Lampe's hilarious burlesque-opera, the "Dragon of Wantley," and its sequel, "Margery;" with "Orpheus and Eurydice," one of Rich's burlesques and pantomimes – the comic operatic scenes not preceding, but alternating with those of the harlequinade – in which, by the way, the name of Grimaldi occurs as pantaloon, – rode riotously triumphant through the seasons, which were otherwise especially remarkable, by numerous revivals of Shakspeare's plays, according to the original text; and not less so by that of Milton's "Comus," in which graceful Mrs. Cibber played and sang the Lady, and sunny Kitty Clive gladdened every heart, as Euphrosyne.

As far as new pieces are concerned, thus stood the stage till Garrick came. In further continuing to clear it for his coming, I have to record the death of Bowman, the best dressed old man at eighty-eight, and the cheeriest that could be seen. My readers, I hope, remember him, in the chapter on Betterton. Miller is also gone, – a favourite actor, in his day, whose merit in Irish characters is set down in his *not* having a brogue, which, at that period, was unintelligible to English ears. Miller played a wide range of characters; and he married for the very singular reason that, being unable to read the manuscript copy he had to get by heart, his wife might read it to, and beat it *into*, him. Bullock, too, the original Boniface and Gibby; and Harper, the original Jobson; and Ben. Griffin, quaint in Simon Pure, comic and terrific in Lovegold; with Milward, the original Lusignan; and Ben Jonson, always correct and natural, – have now departed. With them has gone Mrs. Hallam, an actress of repute, – the original Duchess of Malfy, in the revival of Webster's tragedy of horrors. By her death, the boards of old Drury were relieved from a load of fourteen stone weight! – almost as great as that of Mademoiselle Georges.

Of those that were left, Quin was the great chief; but he received a rude shock from Macklin, when the latter, after playing Roxana, in a burlesque of the "Rival Queens," achieved his first triumph, by taking Shylock from low comedy, and playing it as a serious character.[32] The managers were as nervously afraid of a riot as those of the Ambigu were, when Frederic Lemaître, making no impression as the villain, Robert Macaire, during the first act of "L'Auberge des Adrets," played it through the rest of the piece as a comic part! In either case, the greatest success ensued, but that of Macklin was most honestly earned; and he took rank forthwith as one of the noble actors of his time.

Turning to other players, I find Mrs. Pritchard progressing from Lady Macduff to Isabella, – from Lucy to Viola and Rosalind. Walker meets a rival in the Macheath of mellifluous Beard. Woodward and Yates are rising to fame. Young Mrs. Cibber disappears for awhile, carrying with her the charms that strike the sight, and the merit that wins the soul. There is a terrible scandal in the cause of her disappearance. "Pistol," her worthless husband, has something more than pushed her into temptation, that he may make money by the offence to which he is the prompter. The public voice condemns him; a jury awards him damages, which show their contempt for his "sense of honour;" and the lady, running away from the house in which he had shut her up, while he was absent, playing that congenial character, Scrub – took for her better friend the man who had fallen in love with her through her husband's contrivance.

As if to compensate for the loss of Mrs. Cibber's honied tones, the stage was wakened to a new delight, by the presence of Margaret Woffington. This Irish actress made her first appearance at Covent Garden, on the 6th of November, 1740, as Sylvia, in the "Recruiting Officer;" and when, a few nights later, she played Sir Harry Wildair, – the ecstatic town were ready to confess, that in the new and youthful charmer they had at once recovered both Mrs. Oldfield and Robert Wilks. And yet this enchantress, so graceful, so winning, so natural, so refined, had commenced her public career as one of the children who were suspended by a rope from the ancles of Madame Violanti, when that wonder of her day exhibited her powers in Dublin on the tight-rope.

[32] Macklin played Roxana on 17th May, 1738; Shylock on 14th February, 1741.

Loth to leave entirely, Colley Cibber now and then, at £50 a night, played a round of characters, always to crowded houses, but most so when he enacted some of his old beaux and fops. His Richard did not so well please; and one night, when playing this character, he whispered to Victor that he would give £50 to be in his easy chair again, by his fireside.

There was a Richard at hand who was likely to drive him there, and keep all others from the stage. The season of 1741-42 opened at Drury, on September 5, with "Love for Love," and the "Mock Doctor." The additions to the company, of note, were Delane, Theophilus Cibber, and Mrs. Woffington. Quin was absent starring in Ireland. Covent Garden opened on October 8th with the "Provoked Wife." On the 19th of the latter month, while Drury was giving "As You Like It," and Covent Garden was acting the same piece, the little theatre in Ayliffe Street, Goodman's Fields, announced the "Life and Death of King Richard III.," "the part of King Richard by a gentleman who never appeared on any stage."

At last! the hour and the man had come. Throughout this season no new piece was produced at either of the patent theatres,[33] so influenced were they by the consequences of this first appearance of a nameless actor at Goodman's Fields. Of course, the new actor was David Garrick.

[33] "Miss Lucy in Town" was produced at Drury Lane this season.

CHAPTER V
GARRICK, QUIN, MRS. PORTER

He had selected the part of Richard III., for reasons which now appear singular. "He had often declared," says Davies, "he would never choose a character that was not suitable to his person; for, said he, if I should come forth in a hero, or in any part which is generally acted by a tall fellow, I shall not be offered a larger salary than 40s. a week. In this," adds the biographer, "he glanced at the follies of those managers who used to measure an actor's merit by his size."

On that 19th of October 1741, there was no very great nor excitedly expectant audience at Goodman's Fields. The bill of the day first promises a concert of vocal and instrumental music, to begin exactly at six o'clock; admission by tickets "at 3s., 2s., and 1s." Between the two parts of the concert, it is further announced that the historical play of the "Life and Death of Richard III.," with the ballad-opera of "The Virgin Unmasked," would be "performed *gratis* by Persons for their Diversion." The part of King Richard, "by a gentleman who never appeared on any stage," is an announcement, not true to the letter; but the select audience were not troubled therewith. From the moment the new actor appeared they were enthralled. They saw a Richard and not an actor of that personage. Of the audience, he seemed unconscious, so thoroughly did he identify himself with the character. He surrendered himself to all its requirements, was ready for every phase of passion, every change of humour, and was as wonderful in quiet sarcasm as he was terrific in the hurricane of the battle-scenes. Above all, his audience were delighted with his "nature." Since Betterton's death, actors had fallen into a rhythmical, mechanical, sing-song cadence. The style still lingers among conservative French tragedians. Garrick spoke not as an orator, but as King Richard himself might have spoken in like circumstances. The chuckling exultation of his "So much for Buckingham!" was long a tradition on the stage. His "points," indeed, occurred in rapid succession. We are told that the rage and rapidity with which he delivered

> "Cold friends to me! What do they in the North,
> When they should serve their sovereign in the West?"

made a wonderful impression on the audience. Hogarth has shown us how he *looked*, when starting from his dream; and critics tell us that his cry of "Give me another horse!" was the cry of a gallant, fearless man; but that it fell into one of distress as he said, "Bind up my wounds," while the "Have mercy, Heaven," was moaned piteously, on bended knee. The battle-scene and death excited the utmost enthusiasm of an audience altogether unused to acting like this. The true successor of Betterton had, at last, appeared. Betterton was the great actor of the days of Charles II., James II., William, and of Anne. Powell, Verbruggen,[34] Mills, Quin, were unequal to the upholding of such a task as Betterton had left them. Booth was more worthy of the inheritance; but after him came the true heir, David Garrick, the first tragic actor who gave extraordinary lustre to the Georgian Era.

And yet, for seven nights, the receipts averaged but about £30 a night; and Garrick only slowly made his way at first. Then suddenly the town was aroused. The western theatres were abandoned. "Mr. Garrick," says Davies, "drew after him the inhabitants of the most polite parts of the town. Goodman's Fields were full of the splendour of St. James's and Grosvenor Square. The coaches of the nobility filled up the space from Temple Bar to Whitechapel." Among these, even bishops might have been found. Pope came up from Twickenham, and without disparaging Betterton, as some old stagers were disposed to do, only "feared the young man would be spoiled, for he would have no

[34] Verbruggen died before Betterton.

competitor." Quin felt his laurels shaking on his brow, and declared that if this young man was right, he and all the old actors must be wrong. But Quin took courage. Dissent was a-foot, and he compared the attraction of Garrick to the attraction of Whitfield. The sheep would go astray. The throwster's shop-theatre was, in his eyes, a sort of conventicle. It would all come right by-and-bye. The people, he said, who go to chapel will soon come to church again.

Meanwhile let us trace the new actor through his first and only season in the far east. During that season, from the 19th of October 1741, to the 29th of May 1742, Garrick acted more comic than tragic characters; of the latter he played Richard (eighteen times), Chamont, Lothario, the Ghost in "Hamlet" (Giffard, the manager, playing the Dane), Aboan, King Lear, and Pierre. In comedy, he played Clodio ("Love Makes a Man"), Fondlewife, Costar Pearmain, Witwoud, Bayes, Master Johnny ("School Boy"), Lord Foppington ("Careless Husband"), Duretete, Captain Brazen, and two characters in farces, of which he was the original representative; Jack Smatter in "Pamela," and Sharp in the "Lying Valet." This is, at least, a singular selection.

The most important of his comic essays in his first busy season, when he frequently played in tragedy and farce, on the same night, without affecting to be wearied, was in the part of Bayes. His wonderful powers of mimicry, or imitation, were not known till then; and in displaying them, his Bayes was a triumph, although other actors excelled him in that part, as a whole.

His great scene was at the rehearsal of his play, when he corrected the players, and instructing them how to act their parts, he gave imitations of the peculiarities of several contemporary actors. Garrick began with Delane, a comedian of merit, good presence, and agreeable voice, but, we are told, a "declaimer." In taking him off, Garrick retired to the upper part of the stage, and drawing his left arm across his breast, rested his right elbow upon it, raising a finger to his nose; he then came forward in a stately gait, nodding his head as he advanced, and in the exact tone of Delane, spoke the famous simile of the "Boar and the Sow." This imitation is said to have injured Delane in the estimation of the town; but it was enjoyed by no one more than by tall and handsome Hale of Covent Garden, where his melodious voice was nightly used in the character of lover. But when Hale recognised himself in the soft, plaintive accents of a speech delivered without feeling, he was as disgusted as Giffard, who was so nettled by Garrick's close mimicry of *his* striking peculiarities that he is said to have challenged the mimic, fought with him, and wounded him in the sword-arm. Ryan, more wisely, let Garrick excite what mirth he might from the imitation of the hoarse and tremulous voice of the former; and Quin, always expecting to be "taken off," was left untouched, salient as were his points, on the ground, according to Murphy, of Quin's excellence in characters suited to him.

From a salary of £1 a night, Garrick went up at once to half profits. The patent theatres remained empty when he played at Goodman's Fields, and accordingly the patentees, threatening an application to the law in support of their privileges, shut up the house, made terms with Giffard, and Garrick was brought over to Drury Lane, where his salary was speedily fixed at £600 per annum, being one hundred more than that of Quin, which hitherto had been the highest ever received by any player.

His first appearance at Drury Lane was on May 11, 1742, when he played gratuitously for the benefit of Harper's widow, taking what was then considered the inferior part of Chamont, in the "Orphan," of which he made the principal character in the play. With Bayes, on the 29th,[35] Lear and Richard, each part played once, he brought his preliminary performances at Drury to a close. In June, 1742, after playing triumphantly during the brief remainder of the spring season at Drury Lane, Garrick, in company with Mrs. Woffington, crossed, by invitation, to Dublin. During an unusually hot summer he drew such thickly-packed audiences that a distemper became epidemic among those who constantly visited the ill-ventilated theatre, which proved fatal to many, and which received the distinction of being called the Garrick fever. Of course, Garrick had not equally affected all the

[35] Should be on the 26th.

judges. Neither Gray nor Walpole allowed him to be the transcendent actor which the town generally held him to be, from the first night of his appearance. "Did I tell you about Mr. Garrick, that the town are horn-mad after?" writes Gray to Chute; "There are a dozen dukes of a night at Goodman's Fields, sometimes; and yet I am stiff in the opposition." In May, 1742, Walpole writes in like strain to Mann: – "All the run is now after Garrick, a wine-merchant, who is turned player at Goodman's Fields. He plays all parts, and is a very good mimic. His acting I have seen, and may say to you, who will not tell it again here, I see nothing wonderful in it; but it is heresy to say so. The Duke of Argyll says he is superior to Betterton." The old Lord Cobham, who was then at Stowe nursing Jemmy Hammond, the poet, who was then dying for love of the incomparable Miss Dashwood, was of the same opinion with the Duke; but they could only contrast Betterton in his decline with Garrick in his young and vigorous manhood.

In November of the last-named year, Mrs. Pendarves (Delany) saw the new actor in Richard III. "Garrick acted," she says, "with his usual excellence; but I think I won't go to any more such deep tragedies, they shock the mind too much, and the common objects of misery we daily meet with are sufficient mortification." This lady, too, records the great dissensions that raged among critics with respect to his merits.

Before we accompany this great actor in his career of thirty years and upwards, let us close the present chapter by looking back over the path he has already passed, and which comes towards us, singularly enough, from Versailles, and the cabinet of the Great King!

Yes! When Louis XIV., on the 22nd of October, 1685, signed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he lost 800,000 Protestant subjects, filled Spitalfields, Soho, St. Giles, and other parts of England, with 50,000 able artizans, and gave David Garrick to the English stage!

The grandfather of David was among the fugitives. That he moderately prospered may be believed, since his son ultimately held a captain's commission in the English army. Captain Garrick married a lady named Clough, the daughter of a Lichfield vicar; and the most famous son of this marriage, David, was born at Hereford, his father's recruiting quarters, in February, 1716. In the same city was born Nell Gwyn, if that, and not Margaret Simcott, be her proper name. Her great grandson, Lord James Beauclerk, was not yet bishop of the place when Garrick was born, but a much more dramatic personage, Philip Bisse, *was*. This right reverend gentleman was the audacious individual who, catching the Duchess of Plymouth in the dark, kissed her, and then apologised, on the ground that he had mistaken her for a Maid of Honour. The lively Duchess, who was then the widow of Charles Fitz-Charles, natural son of Charles II., by Catherine Peg, married the surpliced Corydon. Their life was a pleasant comedy; and under this very dramatic episcopate was Roscius born.

His boyhood was passed at Lichfield, where he became more remarkable for his mania for acting than for application to school studies. At the age of eleven years, chief of a boyish company of players, he acted Kite, in the "Recruiting Officer," in which one of his sisters represented the Chambermaid, and to which Master Samuel Johnson refused to supply an introductory address. From Lichfield he made a trip to Lisbon, and therewith an attempt to fix himself in a vocation. His failure was no source of regret to himself. His uncle, a wine-merchant in the Portuguese capital, was not disposed to initiate the volatile lad into the mysteries of his craft, and David returned to Lichfield, with such increase of taste for the drama, that "several of his father's acquaintances," says Davies, "who knew the delight which he felt in the entertainment of the stage, often treated him with a journey to London, that he might feast his appetite at the playhouse." By this singular liberality, the ardent youth was enabled to see old Mills and Wilks, the two Cibbers, Ryan (of whose Richard, Garrick always spoke with admiration), and Quin. Booth was then stricken with the illness which ultimately killed him, and Garrick thus failed to study the greatest of actors between the era of Betterton and the coming time of Garrick himself. Of actresses the most important whom he saw, were Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Cibber, with whom he was destined to rouse the passions of many an audience, and Miss Raftor, who, as Mrs. Clive, was afterwards to rouse and play with his own.

This ardent youth returned to Lichfield with more eager desire than ever to achieve fame and fortune on the stage. To supply what had been lacking in his education, he became the pupil of Samuel Johnson; but master and scholar soon wearied of it, and they together left Lichfield for London, Garrick with small means and great hopes, Johnson with means as small, and his tragedy of "Irene."

The resources of David were speedily increased by the death of his uncle, who bequeathed him a thousand pounds, with the interest of which David paid the cost of instruction which he received from the Rev. Mr. Colson. Other opportunities failing, he joined with his brother Peter in the wine trade, in Durham Yard, where, said Foote, in after years, and with his characteristic ill-nature, "David lived, with three quarts of vinegar in the cellar, calling himself a wine-merchant." Had the father of David been at home, instead of on service at Gibraltar, the latter would probably have been a Templar student; but Garrick hated the study of the law, and, out of deference to his mother, the vicar's daughter, he refrained from appearing on the stage; but when both parents had passed away, within the same year, Garrick, who had studied each living actor of mark, and even recorded his judgment of them, anonymously and honestly, in the public papers, left the stock in trade at Durham Yard to his senior partner and brother. In 1741, a diffident young gentlemen, calling himself Lyddell,[36] made his first appearance on the stage; at Ipswich. He selected the part of Aboan for two reasons: that it was a secondary character, and that Aboan was a "black." The attempt presented less difficulty, for the first reason; and failure need not be followed by recognition, seeing that his features would be half-concealed under "colour." The attempt, however, was fairly successful, but not a triumph. David went earnestly into training. He played every species of character, solemn tragedy heroes, high and low comedy, and even that incarnation of the monkey in man, as Alphonse Karr calls him, the bustling, glittering, active, and potent Harlequin.

His career of a few months at Ipswich was as the preparatory canter of the high-mettled racer over the course. All who witnessed it augured well of the young actor; and Giffard, the manager, agreed to bring him out in London in the autumn of the same year, 1741, at that theatre, in Goodman's Fields, which had been made, twelve years previously, out of a throwster's shop. It had been opened, without competent licence, by Odell, the dramatist, and subsequently deputy licenser of plays under the famous Act which Walpole introduced and Chesterfield opposed. Odell was so conscientious, or so prudent, that in consequence of a sermon preached against the theatre, in one of the Aldgate churches, he sold his interest to Giffard, who enlarged the house, and opened it in 1732. After a struggle of three seasons' duration, the determined opposition of the Eastern puritans drove him to Lincoln's Inn Fields. He returned, however, at the end of two years; and maintained his position with varying fortunes, till at length, in 1741, he brought Mr. Lyddell,[37] now Mr. Garrick, from the banks of the Orwell to the neighbourhood of the old gate, where the statues of Love and Charity still stood, and near which, crowds soon awoke such echoes as had not been heard in the vicinity since the godlike effigies were first erected.

In the season of 1742-43, Garrick acted about eighty nights, – Hamlet, thirteen times; Richard and Bayes, eleven; Archer, nine; Lear, six; Fondlewife and Hastings, four; Chamont, three; Plume, Clodio, and Pierre, twice; Abel Drugger, once; Wildair, created by him in Fielding's "Wedding Day," Lothario, Millamour,[38] and Sharp, occasionally.[39] Of *these*, Wildair was a decided failure.

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[36] Davies and Murphy both give the name as "Lyddal."

[37] Lyddal.

[38] Should read: – "Millamour, created by him in Fielding's 'Wedding Day,' Lothario, Wildair."

[39] This list is very inaccurate. It is obviously taken from Genest, iv. 38, but Dr. Doran has mistaken the meaning of Genest's list, which includes only those nights for which the bill is not given in the text. The record should stand thus: – Hamlet, fifteen times; Richard and Bayes, fourteen; Archer, eleven; Lear, seven; Fondlewife and Hastings, five; Chamont, four; Plume, five; Clodio, four; Pierre, three; Abel Drugger, four or five times, it cannot be decided which. Then the Schoolboy must be added to the list of occasional characters; and it should be noted that there are no bills for April 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

Quin played against him at Covent Garden, Richard, Chamont, Lear, and Pierre, but in these he proved no competitor. He fell back on his general repertory, and, among many other characters, played Falstaff, Macbeth, Othello, and Brutus, none of which Garrick assumed this year. Garrick's Fondlewife was opposed by that of Hippisley at Covent Garden, and that of Cibber, the younger, at Lincoln's Inn Fields. His Hamlet was encountered by that of Ryan, at Covent Garden, to Quin's Ghost; and a counter-attraction to his Lothario was set up in those of Ryan and of the silly amateur, Highmore, the latter at Lincoln's Inn Fields. From all competition, Garrick came out triumphant.

Of Lincoln's Inn Fields, this was the "positively final" season. Giffard managed the house with judgment, but he lost there some of the wealth which he had acquired at Goodman's Fields, and out of which he purchased the ground on which he built Coventry Court, locality of gloomy reputation, near the Haymarket. Dulwich College was a wiser investment of money acquired in the theatre.

Covent Garden lost, this year, a great actress in Mrs. Porter, who commenced her theatrical career as theatrical attendant to Mrs. Barry, and was one of the old players of King William's days. Among the most marked of her original representations were Araminta, in the "Confederacy;" Hermione, Lucia, in "Cato;" Alicia, in "Jane Shore;" Lady Woodville, in the "Nonjuror;" Leonora, in the "Revenge;" and Lady Grace, in the "Provoked Husband." Few details of her life are known.

Genest combines the testimonies of Victor and Davies in describing Mrs. Porter as the genuine successor of Mrs. Barry, to whom the former had long played the "confidantes" in tragedy, and from the great mistress learned her noble art. We are told that Mrs. Porter was tall and well made, of a fair complexion, but far from handsome; her voice, which was naturally tender, was by labour and practice enlarged into sufficient force to fill the theatre, but by that means a tremor was contracted to which nothing but custom could have reconciled the audience. She elevated herself above all personal defects by an exquisite judgment. In comedy, her acting was somewhat cold and inefficient; but in those parts of tragedy where the passions predominate, she seemed to be another person, and to be inspired with that noble and enthusiastic ardour which was capable of raising the coldest auditor to animation. She had a dignity in her mien, and a spirited propriety in all characters of rage; but when grief and tenderness possessed her, she subsided into the most affecting softness. She acted the tragic parts of Hermione and Belvidera with great applause. Booth, who was no admirer of Mrs. Oldfield in tragedy, was in raptures with Mrs. Porter's Belvidera. She excelled particularly in her agony, when forced from Jaffier, in the second act, and in her madness.

After the dislocation of her limb, and in advanced age, she still acted with vigour and success. In Queen Elizabeth ("Albion Queens"), she turned the cane she used on account of her lameness, to great advantage. After signing Mary's death warrant, she "struck the stage," says Davies, "with such characteristic vehemence that the audience reiterated applause."

On Valentine's night, 1743, the Prince and Princess of Wales were present at her farewell benefit, when she played this Queen Elizabeth, under august patronage. The fine old lady seems to have fallen into some distress, for in 1758 she published, by five shillings subscriptions, for her benefit, the comedy of "The Mistakes, or the Happy Resentment," which had been given to her by Pope's Lord Cornbury, the son, but not destined to be the heir, of the last of the Hydes, who bore the title of Earls of Clarendon. He was a dull writer, but so good a man, that Walpole says, in reference to Pope's line —

"Disdain what Cornbury disdains" —

"it was a test of virtue to disdain what he disdained." After his death, by falling from a horse in France, the decayed tragedy queen published the play. The old and favoured servant of the public modestly says, that her "powers of contributing to their amusement are no more," but that she "always retains a grateful sense of the indulgence she had received from those who have had the goodness to accept her inclination and endeavours to please, as real merit." Nothing could be more modest, but the

truth is that this was written *for* Mrs. Porter by Horace Walpole. The subscription list was well filled, – the Countess Cowper, whose letters figure in Mrs. Delany's memoirs, taking fourscore copies.

Let us now return to the renewed struggles of the rival houses, made fiercer by the rise of a new actor.

FOOTNOTES:

CHAPTER VI
RIVALRY; AND ENTER, SPRANGER BARRY

Hitherto, under the mismanagement of the lazy and reckless patentee, Fleetwood, Drury Lane had fallen to a level with Sadler's Wells – tumblers and rope-dancers being put forward as the chief attractions. Even after Garrick's accession, gross mismanagement continued, and drove the principal actors, whose salaries were often unpaid, into open rebellion. They sought permission from the Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Grafton, to open the theatre in the Haymarket on their own account. But the grandson of Charles II. sneered at the fact of an actor earning £600 a year, when a relative of his own, in the navy, repeatedly exposed his life, in the kings service, for half that sum. The duke put constraint on them to return to their allegiance to Fleetwood. The latter dictated hard terms to most of them, except to Garrick, and he flatly refused to receive Macklin at all. This exclusion brought on a remarkable theatrical riot. The confederate actors had agreed to triumph or to fall together. To allow Macklin to be sacrificed to the resentment of Fleetwood, was a betrayal on their part of the compact. Macklin appealed to the town, and Roscius would have been driven from the stage but for Fleetwood's hired pugilists, who pummelled one portion of the audience into silence, and enabled the whole house to enjoy, after all, what they most cared for – the acting of Garrick, undisturbed. In this season, 1743-4, Roscius did not appear till the 6th of December,[40] when he acted Bayes. Between that night, and the close of the season, on the 31st of May, he played in all seventy times. His most marked success was in Macbeth, in the tragedy "written by Shakspeare," when he had Mrs. Giffard for his Lady; he repeated this part thirteen times. Covent Garden opposed to him, first Quin, in Davenant's alteration of Shakspeare, and subsequently Sheridan, who on the 31st of March 1744, made his first appearance at Covent Garden, in opposition to Garrick, as Hamlet.

The force of the two theatres will be better understood, perhaps, if I show the exact amount of the opposition brought to bear against each other. Garrick's Richard was met by that of Ryan; the Lord and Lady Townley of Garrick and Mrs. Woffington, by those of Ryan and Mrs. Horton; the Hamlet and Ophelia of the former two, by those of Ryan (and afterwards of Sheridan) and Mrs. Clive. Garrick and Mrs. Giffard, in "Macbeth," were opposed, first by Quin, then by Sheridan and Mrs. Pritchard, who played everything, from the Thane's wife to Kitty Pry. To oppose to him an amateur, like Highmore, in Lothario, was absurd; Quin's Lear had no weight against the mad old king by his young rival; and Mrs. Charke's Plume, one of the many male characters which Cibber's daughter loved to play, was pale, compared with that of the universal actor.

All the above were honourable competitors; but there also appeared this season an actor, who became Garrick's personal enemy – namely, Foote. The latter commenced his career at the Haymarket, February 6, 1744, as Othello, to the Iago of Macklin, who had opened that house with a "scratch company," including "pupils" – while he was disengaged at Drury Lane. Foote also played Hamlet,[41] to the Ghost and First Gravedigger of Macklin; and did not find his vocation, as he thought, in such parts as Lord Foppington.

At both patent houses the "Beggars' Opera" was produced; at Drury, the Macheath and Polly were Blakes and Miss Budgell, an illegitimate daughter of Eustace Budgell; at the Garden, Cashell's Macheath gave way to that of Beard, while the Polly and Lucy of Kitty Clive and Mrs. Pritchard, at the same theatre, charmed the auditors for a time, and gave them pleasant memories for a long period to come.

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[40] There is some obscurity about this date. Garrick's handbill in answer to Macklin's "case" says that the latter was published in order to prejudice him *that night*, and the bill is dated 5th December 1743; but, in succeeding advertisements, the disturbance is alluded to as "Tuesday night's" riot. Now Tuesday was certainly the 6th, not the 5th.

[41] It is extremely improbable that Foote was the unnamed "Gentleman" who played Hamlet on this occasion.

The literature of the stage did not make progress this season. Classical Cooke selected an assize case of murder in Kent, and spoiled its terrible simplicity in his "Love the Cause." To Havard's cold, declamatory tragedy, "Regulus," Garrick gave warmth and natural eloquence; but even *his* Zaphna, admirable as it was in "Mahomet," would not have saved the Rev. Mr. Miller's adaptation from Voltaire, had that part of the public who hated the adapter, known to whom they were indebted for it. Miller ended his uneasy life, during the run of the play, a representation of which, after his death, contributed a hundred pounds to the relief of his widow and children.

In the season of 1744-45, the old opposition was feebly sustained on the part of Covent Garden, but with some novelty appended – especially in the case of a ballad-singer like Cashell, attempting Hamlet against Garrick![42] Further, the King John of the latter in Shakspeare's play was opposed to old Cibber's alteration of the same piece, produced at Covent Garden, as "Papal Tyranny," in which Quin played the King, and toothless, nerveless Cibber, Pandulph. The indulgent audience pitied the quavering old player.

Garrick's King John was a fine, but not the most perfect of his performances; he was happy in such a Constance as Mrs. Cibber. Quin congratulated himself on having such a Hubert as Bridgewater, the ex-coal-dealer. The value of Cibber's mangling of Shakspeare, got up to abuse the Pope, because of the Pretender, may be conjectured by a single instance – that John is too shy to hint at the murder of Arthur till Hubert has "shut the window-shutters." The modesty of the mangler may be more than guessed at from the fact, that Cibber – in his own words – "endeavoured to make it more like a play than I found it in Shakspeare!"

Quin, to witness his rival's impersonation of Othello to the Iago of Macklin, went to Drury, in company with Bishop Hoadley's son, the doctor. Foote, in the previous February, had announced that his Othello would "be new dressed, after the manner of his country." Garrick, on his entrance, looked so ill in Quin's jealous eyes, that he compared him to Hogarth's black boy, and said to Hoadley, "Why doesn't he bring in the tea-kettle and lamp?" Great as Quin was in mere declamation, Garrick excelled him in the address to the senate.[43] Victor describes the falling into, and the recovery from, the trance, as "amazingly beautiful;" but he honestly told Garrick that the impersonation was short of perfection. Murphy states that Garrick had the passions at command, and that in the sudden violence of their transitions he was without a rival.

Garrick attempted Scrub with less success, and Quin had no reason to be disquieted by his rival's Sir John Brute. Quin's Othello was a favourite with the town; but in that part Garrick had a more formidable rival in Sheridan, and the most formidable in Barry. The only original character he played this season was Tancred, in Thomson's "Tancred and Sigismunda," a play too sentimental and stilted, too poor in incident, and too little varied in character, in spite of its occasional richness and sweetness, to interest an audience, in these days. It was otherwise, at the time of its first appearance, when with Garrick, Tancred; Sheridan, Siffredi; Delane, Osmond; and Mrs. Cibber, Sigismunda; the town sighed, wept, and moaned over the love trials of the celebrated pair. Garrick's Tancred is warmly eulogised by Davies, who describes Garrick and Mrs. Cibber as "formed by nature for the illustration of each other's talents. In their persons," he says, "they were both somewhat below the middle size. He was, though short, well made; she, though in her form not graceful, and scarcely genteel, was, by the elegance of her manners and symmetry of her features, rendered very attractive. From similarity of complexion, size, and countenance, they could have been easily supposed brother and sister; but in the powerful expression of the passions, they approached to a still nearer resemblance. He was master of all the passions, but more particularly happy in the exhibition of parts where anger, resentment, disdain, horror, despair, and madness predominated. In love, grief, and tenderness, she greatly excelled all competitors, and was also unrivalled in the more ardent emotions of jealous love

[42] Cashell's Hamlet was a personal eccentricity on his benefit night; not an attempt on the part of the theatre to oppose Garrick.

[43] Very doubtful. The statement rests on Victor's authority.

and frantic rage, which she expressed with a degree of sensibility in voice, look, and action, that she never failed to draw tears from the most unfeeling."

A change of proprietorship in the Drury Lane patent afforded Garrick an excuse for repairing to Dublin. His rival, Sheridan, invited him, not concealing his dislike, but professing readiness to meet all his requirements. With some difficulty the terms were arranged, and Garrick appeared in various characters, alternating them with Sheridan, and playing frequently with a new actor, young Barry, who was afterwards to become the most dreaded and the most brilliant of his rivals.

For a long series of years the Irish stage had been, with rare exceptions, in a pitiable condition. At one time three houses were open, with a public only sufficient for one. Managing committees of noblemen made the confusion worse confounded, and seven managers, known as the "seven wise men," only exhibited their folly and incapacity. There were performers of merit at from twelve shillings to a guinea a week, who seldom obtained half their salaries. On one occasion, we hear of the acting managers coming down to the theatre, one evening, when, on comparing notes, they were all found to be dinnerless, for want of cash and of credit. With the first money that was paid at the doors they obtained a loin of mutton, with the next they sent for bread, and with a third supply they procured the generous beverage they most required; and then dined behind the scenes while the performance was in progress.

Sheridan's management produced a thorough reformation; and when Garrick appeared, on the 9th of December 1745, as Hamlet, the sensation was extraordinary; but it was increased when Garrick, Barry, and Sheridan acted in the same plays – the "Orphan" and the "Fair Penitent." Then, the enthusiasm was unbounded. In the latter play, Barry is said to have so distinguished himself in Altamont as to have raised that character to a level with those of Lothario and Horatio, played respectively by Garrick and Sheridan. This was the most successful season ever known in Dublin. During its progress Garrick played but one character he had never played before, – Orestes,[44] and that he never repeated in England. His objection to wear the old classical costume, or what then passed for it, was extreme. His sojourn in Dublin was otherwise not void of incident. There was one thin house, and that by command of a leading lady of fashion, on the night of his playing Faulconbridge to Sheridan's King John. The part of Constance belonged by right to that sparkling young beauty, Mrs. Bellamy. Garrick thought her too youthful to enact the mother of Arthur, and he persuaded Sheridan to give the part to an older actress, Mrs. Furnival. The angry Bellamy flew to lay her wrongs before the most influential woman then in Dublin, the Hon. Mrs. Butler, whose word, throughout the Irish world of fashion, passed for law. Mrs. Butler espoused the suppliant's case warmly, and issued her decree, prohibiting the world over which she ruled from visiting the theatre on the night "King John" was to be played. As she gave excellent dinners and exquisite balls, she was obeyed by all ages and both sexes, and the "quality," at least, left the actors to play to empty boxes.

Garrick had recovered from the attendant mortification, when he asked Mrs. Bellamy to play Jane Shore to his Hastings, for his benefit. The lady declined. If she was too young for Constance, she was too young for Jane Shore. Garrick applied to Mrs. Butler to use her influence, but it availed nothing. He addressed a high-flown letter to Mrs. Bellamy: "To my soul's idol, the beautified Ophelia;" but the epistle fell into wrong hands and found its way into the papers.

Roscius, before leaving Ireland, paid homage to the Hon. Mrs. Butler, by taking leave of her in a formal visit. With equal formality, as the visitor was about to depart, the lady placed in his hands a small packet. It contained, she said, her own sentiments and convictions, and, in presenting it to Mr. Garrick, all that she requested was, that he would abstain from too curiously inquiring into its contents until he had sailed out of Dublin Bay. The actor had vanity enough to lead him to think that, within the mysterious packet might be enclosed some token of affection, perhaps an acknowledgment of love. He obeyed the lady's injunctions till the ship, which was conveying him to Holyhead, had

[44] Faulconbridge and Iago seem also to have been new characters this season.

passed the Hill of Howth, then, "by your leave, fair seal!" and he arrived at the heart of the mystery. Carefully unfolded, he found a copy of *Wesley's Hymns* and of *Swift's Discourse on the Trinity*. In his disappointment he is said to have flung both books into the sea; but I think he may have had better taste, and that he took Mrs. Butler's remembrances with him to London.

Before proceeding to chronicle the leading events of the next London season, it remains to be stated that in the last season at Covent Garden, there was one first appearance of note; that of George Anne Bellamy, on the 22d of November, 1744, as Monimia, in the "Orphan." Rich persuaded this gifted but self-willed girl to become an actress, greatly to the displeasure of Quin, who objected to perform Chamont to such a child. In the first three acts her terrors rendered her so incapable, that old Quin's objections seemed justified; but, recovering her power with her courage, the brilliant young creature played with such effect that Quin embraced her after the act-scene dropped, pronounced her "divine," and declared that she was of the "true spirit." She sensibly strengthened a company already strong, in Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Clive, and Mrs. Horton. On the 15th of April, 1745, Shuter, from Richmond, appeared at Covent Garden, in the "Schoolboy," under the designation of *Master* Shuter.

At the Haymarket, Theophilus Cibber revived some of Shakspeare's plays, and produced his daughter Jane in Juliet and other parts; but Colley compelled him to withdraw his daughter, and the Lord Chamberlain forced him to close an unlicensed house, which, however, his eccentric sister, Mrs. Charke, contrived to keep open for a while, playing there Captain Macheath and other male characters before she attempted to pass herself off on the world, or hide herself from it, as a man.

There is this irregularity in the season of 1745-46, that neither Garrick, nor Quin, nor Mrs. Cibber was engaged at either house. The public was more concerned with the Scottish Rebellion than with the drama. Loyal Lacy, who had succeeded the incapable Fleetwood in the patent, applied for leave to raise 200 men in defence of King and Government; and the whole Company of Drury Lane players expressed their willingness to engage in it. The spirit which some hundred years before had animated the loyal actors, now moved Delane, and Luke and Isaac Sparks, with Barrington – all three newly come from Ireland – Mills, with orthodox Havard, Bridges, Giffard, Yates, Macklin, Neale, and Foote. The ladies, Clive, Woffington, Macklin, mother and daughter, Mrs. Giffard, and the rest, applauded the loyal confederacy. The "Nonjuror" was revived with Luke Sparks as Dr. Wolf, because of its political allusions. Macklin in six weeks wrote his "Henry VII., or the Popish Impostor," and distributed it act by act for study, and he sent the Pretender, Perkin Warbeck, to execution without much succouring King George. Ford's ultra-monarchical piece, on the same subject, was revived at Goodman's Fields, and Covent Garden rehearsed another to no effect, as the Rebellion was over before the piece could suppress it. The "Massacre at Paris," with its story of the pretensions of the Duke de Guise (Ryan) and its famous Protestant prologue, was among the Covent Garden revivals. The Scottish rebellion being over, Theophilus Cibber congratulated the audience thereon at Drury; and Mrs. Pritchard, at the Garden, after acting Arpasia in "Tamerlane," recited an exulting prologue, which Dodsley printed in his best type. Both houses gave benefits for the "Veteran Scheme" at Guildhall, for which scheme Mrs. Cibber offered to play three nights, *gratis*, but was snubbed by a hyper-Protestant in the papers. The handsome Catholic actress indignantly replied, that her love for King George was not diminished by her faith in the Romish religion. The whole matter ended merrily by George II. and the entire royal family repairing to Covent Garden, where "Macbeth" was performed, and a rebel and regicide put to death to the great satisfaction of the royal, noble, gentle, and simple audience there congregated.

I do not know which of the new comers, named above, so struck Lady Townshend, that she told Horace Walpole, in September, 1745, "she had seen a new fat player, who looked like everybody's husband." Walpole replied, "I could easily believe that from seeing so many women who looked like everybody's wives!"

In all other respects, there is little worthy of notice, save that, at the close, when all was jubilee again, and Charles Edward no longer an object of fear, Garrick re-appeared in London. He arrived

in town in May, 1746. Rich and Lacy were both eager to engage him, but the former succeeded, and Garrick closed the season at Covent Garden, by playing six nights at £50 per night. Thus he gained more in a week than Betterton, ere he was a "master," had gained in a year. Lacy, meanwhile, had secured Barry, and the town were eager to hear him of the silver-tongue. Garrick generously said of him, in answer to a query respecting the merits of the Irish actor, that he was the most exquisite lover that had ever been seen on the stage. Barry proved the truth of this criticism, by excelling Garrick in Romeo, in which the latter was so fervent, the former so winning and so seductive.

Before we proceed to notice the coming struggle, let us cast back a glance at the stage from whence this master came.

CHAPTER VII
THE OLD DUBLIN THEATRE

But for a murder in the house of a Mrs. Bungy, Dublin would not have had its famous old theatre in that locality, which the popular voice *would* call by the name of *Smock Alley* (from the handsome hussies who lived there), long after Mrs. Bungy's house and those adjacent to it had been swept away, and the newer and finer edifices were recorded as standing in "Orange Street." The first theatre in this questionable locality was erected soon after the Restoration; but at the period named, this house and theatricals, generally, were opposed with as much bitterness in Dublin as in Edinburgh.

I learn from Gilbert's "History of Dublin" that, in 1662, the Chapter of Christchurch expressed its horror at "one of the stipendiaries of the church having sung among the stage-players in the play-house, to the dishonour of God's service and disgrace to the members and ministers of the church." The ultra-religious portion of the Dublin community hated the theatre, with all their hearts, and to such persons two little incidents occurred to the play-house in Smock Alley, which must have been peculiarly pleasant to their humane yet indignant hearts. One was, that in 1671, the gallery of the above-mentioned house being over-crowded, fell into the pit. The consequences, of course, were lamentable, but, you see, those godless players were acting Jonson's "Bartholomew Fair," and what could be expected when that satire on the super-righteous was raising a laugh in the throats of the Philistines? Again, in 1701, a part of the same house fell in during a representation of Shadwell's "Libertine," and nothing could seem more natural than this catastrophe, to the logical bosoms of the upright; for at the devil's jubilee, Satan himself was present, and carried home with him the lost souls of his children. Even the play-going public grew a little suspicious of the stability of the building, but they were re-assured by the easy certificate of a "Surveyor-general," who asserted that there was no chance of a failure in the holdfasts and supports of the edifice, *for several years*! In half-a-dozen years, however, the house was down; and, in seven months, the new house was open to an eager public. The latter, however, were not quite so eager to enter as the managers were to receive them. "So eager were they to open, that they began to play before the back part of the house was tiled in, which, the town knowing, they had not half an audience the first night, but mended leisurely by degrees."[45] It was in the old house that Elrington, the great support of Drury Lane when Booth was indisposed, ruled supreme in the hearts and houses of his enthusiastic Irish admirers. His old patrons never forgot him. "I have known," says one already quoted, "Tom Elrington in the part of Bajazet to be heard all over the Blind Quay; and I do not believe you could hear Barry or Mossop out of the house."

We are here, however, anticipating events. Let us return to chronological order. In the old houses, heavy classical tragedy seems to have been most popular; and when Dublin was tired of it, the company took it to Edinburgh. Rough times of war closed the house; but when William's authority was firmly established, theatrical matters looked up again, and in March, 1692, Ashbury, who, with Mr. and Mrs. Betterton, had instructed the Princess Anne how to speak and act Semandra, in "Mithridates," when that piece was played at Whitehall, opened the house with "Othello," playing Iago to the Moor of Robert Wilks. Among this early company are also to be noted Booth, Estcourt, Norris, Bowen, and Trefusis, contributions from England, and the latter so admirable for dancing the rustic clown, that General Ingoldsby once handed him a £5 note from his box, and gave him a second when Joe went up to the Castle to thank him, – the General not recognising him till Trefusis imitated his dialect and action of the night before.

The ladies were not in force; Mrs. Knightly, Mrs. Ashbury, and Mrs. Hook, were the principal under Ashbury, who added the names of Quin and the two Elringtons, and Mrs. Thurmond, to his

[45] This refers to the new Smock Alley, 1735.

company, before he closed a management of about thirty years. In that period, Ashbury raised the Irish stage to a prosperous and respectable position. His son-in-law, Thomas Elrington, succeeded him in the management.

Under Ellington's rule, young Stirling first awaked the Irish muse to tragedy, and Charles Shadwell furnished the house with half-a-dozen pieces of very inferior merit. Meanwhile, in 1727, Madame Violanti opened a booth, with her wondrous rope-dancing, and her Lilliputian company, whose representation of the "Beggar's Opera" excited a perfect sensation. The Macheath was a Miss Betty Barnes; Polly, Miss Woffington; Peachum, Master Isaac Sparks; and Filch, Master Barrington, – all of these were, subsequently, players of more or less renown.

Up to this time, the best native actor was Wilks, now we have Peg Woffington; in 1728 appeared the handsome, young Delane, of Trinity College; his graceful figure, full-toned voice, added to his zeal and application (both too short-lived), rendered him an unusual favourite. In the same company were Mr. and Mrs. Ward, whose daughter, born at Clonmel, was the mother of "the Kembles."

Elrington died in 1732. He was the first actor who played Zanga in Dublin; much to the admiration of Dr. Young, who thought Mills mouthed and growled the character overmuch. After Elrington's death, disorder sprung up. Smock Alley was opposed by a new theatre, erected in Rainsford Street, in the "Earl of Meath's Liberty," and beyond the jurisdiction of the mayor. At the former, the company, including, occasionally, some of the best actors from London, was better than the house which was so decayed, that a new, a much grander, but in every other way a less efficient house, was erected in Aungier Street, at which the tall, cold beauty, the ex-quakeress, Mrs. Bellamy, mother of George Anne Bellamy, was a principal actress. A committee of noblemen managed this house, with the usual result of enormous loss. Dublin having more theatres than could prove profitable, the old theatre in Smock Alley was pulled down; but a new one was erected, which was opened in December 1735, with "Love for Love."[46]

[46] Should be, "Love Makes a Man."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.