PART I: MAJOR CHARACTERS

EDMUND KEAN AND HIS WIFE [ff. 60–65, 62(b)']

I saw little of Edmund Kean except in public: but for years I was intimately acquainted with his widow; who, though she had been heartlessly thrown off by him to the mercy of strangers, was, in her later days, surrounded by all the comforts and elegancies of life, supplied to her by the affectionate son who had been the companion of her poverty. She was a woman of the kindliest disposition, and possessed of a superior natural intelligence. I felt for her a most sincere regard; and I know that it was mutual.— Her maiden name was Mary Chambers; she was a native of Waterford, and respectably connected. In consequence of some family embarrassments, she, along with a sister, had taken to the stage as a means of subsistence; and she was acting (as an amateur, I believe) at the Gloucester Theatre when she first met with Kean. They were married at Stroud in 1808, she being somewhat older than her husband, who then [was] under twenty; and she continued to perform with him at various places in the provinces, having had a few lessons in elocution from Mrs. Mason, a sister of Mrs. Siddons. I remember her telling me that at some country theatre she played Almeria to the Zara of Mrs. Siddons in Congreve's *Mourning Bride*; and that, after the performance, Mrs. Siddons said to her, “My dear, you did well enough,—only you fainted too soon.”¹ In spite of her strong good
sense, her acting, I suspect, was but so-so; nor was it likely to have been rendered more attractive by her decided Irish brogue.

She has frequently assured me that she did not know who was her husband’s father or who was his mother; and that, to the best of her belief, he himself was equally ignorant on both points. She was inclined to think that he had a touch of insanity; in proof of which,—besides the marvellous anecdote of “Cooke’s toe-bone,”—she would cite his behaviour on the death of their eldest son, Howard, a remarkably beautiful and precocious boy, who died of water on the brain at Dorchester in his fifth year, in Nov’ 1813. Kean was deeply attached to Howard: yet when the child was lying a corpse in its little bed, and Mrs. Kean was sitting sadly beside it, he suddenly rushed into the room, frightfully excited,—ran to a cupboard,—took out a bottle of beer,—poured the contents over the dead body,—and then fell down on the floor in a state of utter exhaustion. But this would seem to have been a sort of madness produced by intoxication; for he had just come from a tavern, where, in the hope of forgetting his grief, he had been swallowing quantities of brandy.

The above-mentioned child, Howard, had once or twice appeared on the stage with Kean, in pieces which required an infant performer. Moreover, from hearing his father rehearse at home, he had caught sundry fragments of speeches and songs, with which he used to gratify his admiring parents in private: among other things, he would imitate very amusingly Kean’s striking manner of giving a portion of a song in Arnold’s opera of The Devil’s Bridge,—

“And here stands the murderous wretch—
But, mark me!—’tis but fancy’s sketch.”

Now, it happened that for one of his benefits at Exeter, Kean was to enact a “savage” in some melodramatic after-piece; and Howard, carefully tutored for the part, was to exhibit himself as the savage’s son. The night arrived, and all promised to go off well. Howard, in his first scene, was, on entering, to cross the stage, and kneel to his father on the opposite side; and, at the proper moment, Mrs. Kean, standing at the wing, launched on the boards her infant savage (dressed in blue and silver) with a particular injunction “to walk straight to his papa.” Loud
applause followed his entrance; whereupon Howard, thinking that it would be meritorious to do "more than was set down for him," instead of crossing the stage, marched boldly up to the foot-lights, and throwing himself into an attitude, spouted out at the top of his tiny voice,—

"Here stands the mudrous wretch."

The dismay of the parents, and the surprise of the audience, may be conceived. (After Kean had risen to the height of fame, he played Count Belino in *The Devil's Bridge* at Drurylane Theatre, and was rapturously encored in the song, with a scrap of which poor little Howard had astonished the Exeter audience. The whole runs as follows. . . . Braham—the original Count Belino—was greatly taken by Kean's mode of giving the concluding couplets of these two stanzas, and requested as an especial favour that he would teach him how to give them in the same way. Kean readily consented. Braham came to Clarges Street, received the wished-for lesson, and desired instruction, and went away quite convinced that when he next played Count Belino, he should be able to introduce "the Kean effect." But, no! the Clarges Street lesson proved abortive, and Braham involuntarily relapsed into his old manner of singing the song.)

A bundle of play-bills of the Exeter Theatre, dated Dec' 1812, and Jan', Feb', and March 1813, now lying before me, are not a little curious as showing the variety of characters which Kean used to perform while his talents were as yet confined to the provinces. . . .

Kean was always a sincere admirer of John Kemble's acting, though it differed in style so essentially from his own; and whoever had expressed any contempt for it in Kean's presence with a view of gratifying him would quickly have found out his mistake. Mr. Procter (*Life of Kean*, vol. i. p. 163) notices the "delight" which Kemble and Mrs. Siddons afforded Kean, when he and his wife, in passing through London in the days of their wandering, went to Covent-Garden Theatre to see *Henry the Eighth*; and Mrs. Kean told me that, during the trial scene, she having whispered to her husband some remark, he was so angry at her for distracting his attention from the stage, that "he gave her a punch with his elbow which almost took away her breath."
The first character in which I saw Kean was Richard the Third, when he performed it for about the sixth time in London. The crowd was enormous: the slowly-moving line of carriages on their way to Drurylane Theatre extended from Coventry Street (Piccadilly) to Brydges Street; and, no doubt, the thronging from the city was proportionally great. With all its novelty of conception and unflagging spirit, I must confess that I think Kean's Richard the Third was not unjustly described by John Taylor (the author of "Monsieur Tonson") as "a pot-house Richard." In it so far from being "every inch a king," he was not even one inch a king. It began with a clap-trap of the worst taste imaginable; for in speaking the passage,—

"But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,
I, that am curtail'd of man's fair proportion,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unashionable,
That dogs bark at me as I halt by 'em;"—

Kean most absurdly started, and pointed to the side-scene, as if the dogs were actually barking at him: and it concluded (at least as he originally played it, while his bodily strength was unimpaired) with a melodramatic feat, of prodigious difficulty no doubt, but altogether unworthy of a great tragedian; for after he had fallen on receiving his death-wound, Kean continued to fight, recumbent, round and round the stage, during several minutes, moving himself along by means of his left hand, and thrusting at Richmond with the sword in his right.7

Soon after Kean came out as Othello at Drurylane Theatre [5 May 1814], knowing that Mrs. Siddons had been there to see him in that part, he sent his wife to Northcote, to learn from him, if possible, how Mrs. Siddons liked the performance. The answer was, that Mrs. Siddons had made no remarks on it to the painter. This, of course, did not satisfy Kean. "Mary," he said, "you must go back to Northcote, and particularly request that, when Mrs. Siddons next visits him, he will endeavour to ascertain what she thinks of my Othello.” Away went his ever-obedient wife on her second mission: and the opinion of the great actress—given, I believe, very reluctantly—was at last obtained, viz.
“that Mr. Kean’s Othello was, on the whole, far too violent, but that he delivered the farewell\textsuperscript{8} with genuine pathos.”— Many years after, when Kean played Othello at Covent-Garden Theatre (Young being the Iago, and Charles Kemble the Cassio), I sat beside Mrs. Charles Kemble; who, though not disposed to recognize much merit in Kean, declared to me that his speaking of the words “And so she did,”\textsuperscript{9} was so exactly the voice of nature, that “it made her jump.”— I once saw Kean play Othello at Edinburgh to the very graceful and lady-like Desdemona of Mrs. Henry Siddons; whom he said he preferred to all the Desdemonas he had ever acted with; and no doubt she was incomparably superior to his London Desdemonas, Mrs. Bartley, Miss Smithson, &c. (As early as May 1805, Mrs. Henry Siddons was the Desdemona in a rather memorable performance of Othello at Convent-Garden Theatre,—memorable, because it did much towards checking the absurd mania of the public for the Young Roscius, and recalling their attention to those excellent full-grown actors whom they had of late so unjustly neglected. On that occasion Othello was played by John Kemble, Iago by Cooke, Cassio by Charles Kemble, and Emilia by Mrs. Litchfield, for whose benefit the performance took place, and at whose particular request John Kemble—whom Betty had for some time completely shelved—was induced to appear as the noble Moor.)

Mr. Procter, in his critique on Kean’s Sir Giles Overreach, remarks; “The conclusion was as terrific as anything that has been seen upon the stage. It threw ladies in the side-boxes into hysterics, and Lord Byron himself into a ‘convulsion fit.’ One veteran actress was so overpowered by the last dying speech of Sir Giles, that she absolutely fainted upon the stage.” Life of Kean, vol. ii. p. 141. The actress alluded to by Mr. Procter was Mrs. Glover: but is there not some exaggeration in the statement that “she absolutely fainted”? I can, however, myself bear witness to the effect which in the last scene of A New Way to Pay Old Debts was produced by Kean on an actress whose experience of the stage exceeded that of Mrs. Glover. It was at the Edinburgh Theatre, when Mrs. Renaud (well known in London for so many years as Mrs. Powell) was playing Lady Allworth to his Sir Giles: I believe she had never seen him act till that night; and I distinctly recollect the fixed gaze with which she regarded him in the tempest of his passion,—the
real astonishment expressed in her countenance which time had not yet wholly robbed of its original beauty. ¹⁰ (Mrs. Renaud, having been dismissed from Covent-Garden Theatre for refusing the part of Helen Macgregor in Rob Roy, accepted an engagement in Edinburgh, where she continued to perform till age and decrepitude had rendered her a painful spectacle, and where she died in such destitution that she had been compelled to part with some of her scanty wardrobe for a subsistence. Too many of the children of Thespis have ended their days in a similar condition,—suddenly exchanging the glare and tinsel of the stage for the gloom and squalor of poverty.)

For the sake of variety Kean appeared in sundry plays, which being comparatively inferior productions, added little or nothing to his reputation. Yet in these he generally contrived to render certain scenes highly effective: so when he acted Oroonoko in Southern’s disagreeable and unpoetical drama of that name, he threw into the concluding scene an intense pathos.

A great deal of nonsense has been put in print about Kean as an actor. We have been told that “he was such a genius” and that “acting came to him so naturally,” that, beyond getting the words by heart, he scarcely needed to study the characters he performed; and, moreover, that he used to deliver particular passages sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another, according to the impulse of the moment. Now, the very reverse of this was the truth. Before appearing in a new part, he never failed to bestow on it the most careful consideration; and he used to consult his wife, of whose judgment he thought highly, about “the points” he intended “to make” in it. When he and Mrs. Kean were alone together of an evening, he would place the candles on the floor, in imitation of the stage-lights; and after going through a speech, or a portion of a scene, in more ways than one, he would ask, “Well, Mary, which of these do you prefer?” and he was generally guided by her opinion. Having once fully made up his mind about the best mode of giving certain passages, he, as it were, stereotyped them, and never deviated into any other manner.

The greatest actors are seldom free from mannerisms; and Kean had a mannerism which he carried to such excess that it became rather offensive,—a sudden change from measured declamation to rapid and
familiar utterance, accompanied with a quick jerking walk over part of the stage. Yet this invariably elicited rapturous applause, the true value of which may be estimated from what Kean told Charles Kemble. "More than once," he said, "I have amused myself by playing tricks with the audience: on coming to one of those passages in which I am accustomed to pass suddenly from slow to rapid speaking, I sometimes, instead of giving the words, have substituted an indistinct 'bow-wow-wow,' and crossed the stage as usual; and—would you believe it?—the usual applause has always followed."

From my general recollection of Kean's acting I should say that he was seldom uniformly excellent throughout any one character; but that in portions of certain plays he was truly admirable; for instance, in the third act of *The Merchant of Venice*, in the third act of *Othello*, and in the last act of *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, his every tone, his every look, his every gesture, was perfection, his energy tremendous.

Macready—who used to speak of Kean as an actor "with whom none of us can pretend to cope"—thought that one of his finest performances was Sir Edward Mortimer in Colman's *Iron Chest*, as he originally played the part, before it had lost its freshness by repetition, and while his powers were in all their vigour. Indeed, that piece (which ranks among the best of a not good kind) was excellently cast at Drurylane Theatre in those days, when Adam Winterton was acted by Munden, Blanch by Mrs. Orger, Barbara by Mrs. Bland (with her flute-like voice unimpaired by age), Wilford by Wallack, and Samson by Harley.

Though fully conscious of his own extraordinary talents, Kean lived in the dread of being eclipsed by some new tragedian; and he was so alarmed on hearing that David Fisher, who had acquired great fame in Norfolk and Suffolk, was engaged at Drurylane Theatre, that, according to Mrs. Kean's account, it

"took from him
His stomach, pleasure, and his golden sleep."

But his fears proved vain; for the clever actor who had charmed the audiences of Beccles, Bungay, &c, was unable to make the slightest sensation in the metropolis.
When Kean joined the Drurylane company, one of its most prominent members was Rae, who, if overpraised by [Richard] Cumberland in his Memoirs [London, 1807] (vol. [II,] p[p. 383–84]), is undervalued by Mr. Procter in his Life of Kean (vol. i. p.p. 56, 65). Rae was, in fact, a second-rate actor, playing very respectably a variety of characters, and having the advantage of a handsome face and person. During their boyhood he and Kean had been intimate; but, on Kean’s coming to Drurylane, Rae, it appears, chose almost to “cut” his old companion, and Kean ever after disliked him mortally. When Rae, afflicted with a painful disease, and in great poverty, was lying on his deathbed, Kean, then in the receipt of a large income, swore by all the gods and goddesses that “he would not give him a single farthing”: Mrs. Kean, however, at last prevailed on him to assist in relieving the wants of the dying man:—how far was she then from suspecting that at no very distant time she herself would need the intercession of a friend (Charles Young the tragedian) to force a few pounds from her unworthy husband to furnish her and her son with the necessaries of life!

Drinking had always been Kean’s besetting sin; and many were the disagreeable adventures in which it involved him. While “starring” at Norwich, he, one night after the play, got dreadfully drunk, had a battle royal in the street, and fell into the hands of the watchmen. He was to have dined next day with the Bishop of Norwich (Bathurst); but he was so disfigured by the blows he had received on his face, that he was compelled to send an apology to his lordship. A large bump on his nose threatened to be permanent: “No matter, Mary,” said Kean to his wife; “I shall now have a Roman nose as well as John Kemble.”

Kean’s performance of Count Belino in The Devil’s Bridge has been already noticed ([pp. 56–57]); and on one or two other occasions during his London career—as, for instance, when he played Tom Tug in The Waterman—he gave proof to the audience that besides being a great tragedian, he had considerable talents as a singer, who, however unscientific, possessed a sweet voice and a correct ear. But the public were not aware that he could sing sacred music in a style far superior to that of most amateur vocalists: his “Comfort ye my people,” accompanied by himself on the piano, was full of feeling and expression.

The reckless course of profligacy which Kean had been pursuing for
several years not only injured his health, but—a usual consequence—hardened his heart. He conceived a hatred of his unoffending wife, and showed it by an extravagance of behaviour, which kept her in constant alarm: for instance, once, at their house in the island of Bute, he, in the middle of the night, drew a dagger from under his pillow, and brandished it as if about to stab her: upon which, she softly slid out of bed, and retreated to the room of her sister, Miss Chambers (a clever woman, who always resided with them, and who, it appears, was able at times to exercise some influence, for good, over the mind of her brother-in-law). At last, he entirely separated himself from his wife; nor did she see him again till upwards of seven years had elapsed, when, shortly before the death of Kean, a sort of reconciliation took place between them through the kindly offices of their son, who, with true filial affection, had adhered to the fortunes of his mother during all her trials.—Edmund Kean died May 15, 1833.

[f. 62(b)]\(^a\) A Mr. F. W. Hawkins in a *Life of Edmund Kean*, 2 vols., 1869, allows that “there were flaws in his private life” [II, 427]. Flaws, quoth ‘a? My extreme intimacy with the great actor’s wife and son has made me much better acquainted with “his private life” than Mr. F. W. Hawkins can possibly be; and I say decidedly that Edmund Kean was a bad husband and a bad father, in short, a thoroughly bad man, who at last degenerated into a low blackguard.

**CHARLES KEAN** [ff. 66–71]

I had scarcely finished writing the preceding article on Edmund Kean, when I read, with the deepest regret, the newspaper-announcement of the death of his son Charles [22 Jan. 1868], with whom, both long before and long after his marriage, I had been on the most intimate terms, till, in evil hour, an unfortunate circumstance—which need not be related here—completely estranged us from each other. I had not seen him for many years, when I suddenly and unexpectedly found myself beside him at the door of the Athenæum: “Mr. Dyce,” he said—and the formal “Mr.” sounded strange to me—“I start for Australia two days hence [6 July 1863], perhaps never to return; and I
now wish to shake hands with you as one of my oldest friends." I heartily wished him all health and happiness; and, after talking together for a few minutes, we parted to meet no more.

Charles Kean made his first appearance on any stage at Drurylane Theatre, which was then under the management of Price, Oct' 1, 1827, as Young Norval in Home's tragedy of Douglas. His youth—for he was not yet eighteen,—his name, and the notorious fact that he came forward with the view of earning a subsistence for his mother as well as for himself, drew together a very crowded audience on the occasion: but from his want of stage-experience he was unable to produce the effect at which he aimed; and the most that could be said of his inartistic acting was, that it gave a promise of something better,—nor were the newspaper critics willing to allow even that. Though he continued at the theatre during the remainder of the season, repeating Norval several times, and playing some other parts, his reception by the audience was always more or less cold, and his treatment by the public press invariably unmerciful.

In 1833, soon after his return from America, Charles Kean having been engaged, with a salary of thirty pounds a week, by Laporte then manager of Covent-Garden Theatre, and having acted there a few nights with indifferent success,—it occurred to Laporte that if Charles and his father were to perform together in the same piece, a novel and a powerful attraction would be produced. He accordingly entered into arrangements for that purpose with the elder Kean, whose health at that time, in consequence of his excesses, was miserably and incurably impaired; and the play selected for their first appearance in conjunction, March 25th, was Othello,—the Moor by Edmund Kean, Iago by Charles, and Desdemona by Ellen Tree. That in the third act of the tragedy the elder Kean, utterly exhausted, dropt his head on his son's shoulder, and was carried off the stage (never again to appear before an audience), and that Warde (who had been in readiness to take up the part) acted Othello in the subsequent scenes, are particulars which are related with minute detail in various publications: but a circumstance connected with that night's performance which I have now to add on the authority of Charles Kean himself, has never found its way into print. After the sad catastrophe in the third act he was naturally desirous that
some other actor should be substituted for him in the rest of the tragedy: “Surely, sir,” he said to Bartley the stage-manager, “you do not expect me to finish Iago, when in all probability my father is at the point of death.” “Sir,” replied Bartley, “you are bound by your engagement to play Iago, and play it out you must.” This reply was neither feeling nor courteous; but Charles Kean had not yet attained a position which ensured him the respect of the officials of the theatre.— Many years after, when that same Bartley was visited with a succession of domestic calamities, he received from Charles Kean and his wife the most friendly and unremitted attentions.

The reputation and success of Charles Kean date from his reappearance in London, Jan’ 8, 1838, at Drurylane Theatre, then managed by Bunn, who,—in consequence of the applause he was known to have met with in the provinces, while labouring hard at his profession,—engaged him to perform twenty nights at a salary of fifty pounds a night. He now chose Hamlet for his debut; and how enthusiastically he was received, and how greatly he was admired during the whole of that engagement (which was continued for forty-three nights, and would have been still further extended, but for an engagement[?] which Charles had accepted at the Edinburgh Theatre) are matters of stage-history.

Vanity is not unfrequently the innocent weakness of actors, as it is of poets, painters, and musicians: and Charles Kean was assuredly far from being the consummate performer which he believed himself to be, and which, indeed, some obsequious critics latterly endeavoured to persuade the public that he really was: though in voice and manner he bore a strong resemblance to his father, he was only an Edmund Kean shorn of his beams. Yet, on the other hand, he certainly had much more dramatic talent than was acknowledged by those—and they were not a few—who envied his success,—for, bating occasional disappointments, his career was a highly successful one; and after Macready had retired from the scene, he had no rival as a tragedian.— But whatever was thought of Charles Kean as an actor, there could be but one opinion about him as a man. His conduct in private life—the very reverse of his father’s—was not only irreproachable, but exemplary; and his manners were those of a polished gentleman.
There are some persons, unless I am mistaken, who will read not without interest what I now subjoin from the mass of letters which were addressed to me at various dates both by Charles Kean and his mother, and which in consequence of the deep regard I felt both for him and (as already mentioned) for her, I have always been unwilling to destroy.

"My dear Sir,

I have had bad, very bad news from Scotland; disappointments of all sorts. I will tell you all on Sunday next, when I hope to see you. Poor Charles is quite desponding: it has made me really melancholy. He has had a good deal of sunshine, and must bear clouds and darkness,—for, I trust, only a little time. I long for Sunday to tell you all my troubles. God bless you!

M*[ary] Kean.

Wednesday 29th
*[London, Park Street]"

"My dear Sir,

I am about to ask a great favour of you; which if you refuse, I shall feel hurt and very much mortified. It is to accept, as a testimony of my son's and my regard and esteem for you, the pictures in my dressing-room,—Hamlet and Macbeth. You will keep them for our sake, and remember, when you look at them, you have two sincere, very sincere friends * * * *

Yours very truly

Mary Kean.

Tuesday Morning,

Decr 7, 1841.
*[London, Park Street]"

"My dear Sir,

Do not forget Sunday: it would not be Sunday to me if you were absent.

I have had a letter from Ireland: things are going on tolerably,—I
mean, theatricals; as to the other affair, he says it will end in nothing; I hope so

Yours very truly,
Mary Kean.

January 19, 1842.

*[London, Park Street]”

“My dear Dyce,

My mother received your letter just as we were starting for Brighton, where we are now all ensconced at Harrison's Hotel. Her hand is so bad, she has requested me to write for her, and to say she hopes next summer to see you at Keydell, being quite sure the air there would benefit you quite as much as Ramsgate. Why don't you run down and see her while we are away? You would find a comfortable room, board and lodging, a hearty welcome; and you might write and criticize there quite as well as in that wretched, lonely, suffocating square. Go and stay a fortnight with her on her return next week. At any rate you are engaged to us next summer.

We find Brighton very dull, for all our people are dead, buried, married, or gone. The Horace Smith family, our last tie, have fled to Leamington.

After this engagement, we proceed to Birmingham, Liverpool, and Dublin; which will occupy us until 1st January. Little or nothing shall we see of our home before next spring!

I think on the whole both my mother and wife are better. (My mother says, that's not true,—she will never be better.)

Your sincere friend
Charles Kean

Brighton, Harrison's Hotel,
6 October, 1844.”

“Sheffield,
7 April, 1845.

My dear Dyce,

**** My address is always the theatre, wherever I may be. **** I saw Richard 3* at Sadler's Wells *** Clarence's dream was
an awful bore; the swearing of Queen Margaret very revolting; and the whole play very dull and heavy, more especially the last act, which is not to be compared in effect to Colley Cibber's. The *two* tents were ludicrous, and looked very like two large shower-baths\*\*\*\*\*\* I only got to London at 5 o'clock, and saw *Richard*, and left the next morning at 8; so I could not call on you \*\*\*\n
I remain, Ever Yours,
Charles Kean."

"Philadelphia,
30 Dec. 1845

My dear Dyce,

Rehearsals every morning, and acting every night, leave me little time for correspondence; but thinking you are one of those who will most rejoice at my success, I scribble this hasty despatch to let you know that two or three years more of this 'fun,' and I may hang up my hat at Keydell. Pounds, shillings and pence always tell the *true* history of an actor's success. We commenced here on the 1st of September, and have already *sent home* three thousand, five hundred pounds sterling! - - - - - Of course, with such prospects before us, we shall not dream of returning before the summer of 1847, and it will be a glorious two years. I have not ventured yet to tell my mother of our intended long absence, though I believe she suspects it. I wish you would run down to see her in the summer: there is no one she would be so happy to see.

We return to New York next week to bring out *Richard the Third*, as you saw me do it at Drurylane, and as they never had an exhibition of the kind in this country, we anticipate great results. After that we proceed to the South, viz. Charleston, New Orleans, &c.

I wish you would write to me and tell me how you are going on. Entrust your letter to the care of Mr. Miller, bookseller, in Henrietta St., Covent-garden: he forwards all letters to me from our home, from whence, thank God, we hear nothing but good news.

My dear Dyce, we shall receive, God giving us health, and *no war.* this year alone £10,000, and I believe nearly as much the next. But I dread this Oregon question. The feeling here is so anti-English and so
belligerent. My hope of peace is entirely placed in the coolness of our Ministry.

I shall be so anxious to hear from you! Remember me very kindly to Harness; and believe me ever

Your sincere friend,

Charles Kean.

P. S. We commenced our third engagement here last night to a house crowded to the roof. Ion was the play, and I acted Adrastus!!

Write a line to my mother: it would be such a comfort to her in her solitude.”

"Boston,
31st Oct. 1846

My dear Dyce,

The Mail Steamer leaves this place to-morrow for England, so I will scribble a few lines to let you know that our bark continues to 'sail freely both with wind and stream.' We have added to our list the new five-act play which you may remember I purchased of the author, George Lovell, before I left England. (He wrote The Provost of Bruges, and Love's Sacrifice.) It is called The Wife's Secret, and has made a great hit. Indeed, but one opinion seems to prevail about its merits, and that is unqualified praise. It is a sweet play, and has the great merit of being very short. Wherever we act it, its attraction increases nightly.

We have just concluded here a most brilliant engagement, and last evening on the occasion of my benefit the theatre was choke full, and crowds went away disappointed. The Merchant of Venice was the play; and I don't think I ever received so much applause in Shylock before. Our very great attraction is the more wonderful, as the opposition is so powerful. There are no less than three theatres now open in this city. The country is now over-run with tragedy heroes. Mr. Forrest had a very successful fortnight as a welcome home again, and a public dinner at the end of it. I hear that he prays Macready may be some day induced to revisit the States, that he may resent the injuries done to him in London by the 'clique.' He ascribes his failure,
and above all the interruptions, hissing, &c to that gentleman’s party; and seriously I don’t think his ‘eminence’ could attempt an appearance in N. York again in consequence.

We are re-engaged for another week here, and then return to New York to re-produce *The Wife’s Secret*; and, after that, we bring out *King John* in a manner that has never been seen here, or indeed anywhere else, for Macready was outrageously wrong in his costume. We shall have in one scene 150 persons on the stage. I find the wardrobe and the manager the scenery. Every dress will be from authority, and each authority will be published. We expect it will run some weeks, commencing on the 16th November: it will deserve to do so.

We continue to hear most excellent accounts from Keydell; but have not heard as yet about your visit there.

If you can spare me a letter, need I say how much pleasure it will give me? but be sure you pay the postage, or it will never leave England. The Mail leaves on the 1st of every month. Now tell me as much about yourself as I have written on the subject of

Your very sincere friend,

Charles Kean.”

“My dear Mr. Dyce,

What would I not give to be back in my solitary retreat in Park-street—you coming every now and then to visit me! I feel here quite out of my element. But the place is very pretty, and will be prettier—I am glad you do not come till next year, when you will see it in perfection.

Sir Charles Napier is, I may say, next door to us—in short, the neighbourhood is full of naval people—How delighted I should be to see you walking up the avenue! I should not know how to make you comfortable enough. Take care of yourself till we meet. God bless you!

Mary Kean.

P.S. Charles says your book is a treasure. He talks of you continually.

*[Not dated. Written from Keydell.]*

“My dear Dyce,

Your letter, directed to Leeds, has followed me here, and I hasten to reply to its contents.
In the first place, I have an engagement at the Haymarket commencing about the same time that this Benefit is proposed; and therefore to direct the public attention to the one night by such increased attraction would be to the prejudice of the rest. Such an arrangement is never to the advantage of an engagement, but especially prejudicial when advertised at its commencement; and were I, therefore, ever disposed to comply, it would assuredly not be until I had finished all previous arrangements.

Independent of this, however, I have private motives which induce me at once to decline the proposal altogether: but that the Committee may be assured that the object of this Benefit has my best wishes, I enclose you a cheque for ten pounds, which I beg you will hand to them in my name.

I remain, My dear Dyce,
Ever Yours sincerely,
Charles Kean.

Manchester, 7th May,
1848."

("Dear Mr. Dyce,
I fear your old friend Mrs. Kean is breaking fast. She has been very ill, and now lies dangerously ill: indeed, my dear sir, I do not think there is a chance of her ultimate recovery; and I have thought it right, in the midst of my troubles, to let you know this much, lest you should be shocked by some sudden news.

Yours faithfully
Ellen Kean.

*[Not dated. Written from Keydell.]")

"My dear Dyce,
I have been very anxious to see you for some time past. I hope you are not laid up again.

We go down to Keydell every Saturday since my poor mother's illness, returning on the Sunday evening. She cannot now, poor soul, last more than three weeks. Yesterday she received with me the holy sacra-
ment. Her mind was perfectly clear, and she thoroughly understood what was going on. She has not tasted food for three weeks.

That I should lose her now is in the natural course of events; but, my dear friend, it is a hard struggle. We have been so together all our lives, so inseparably connected one with the other, and under such peculiar circumstances, that it is more difficult to bow to the will of God with that resignation which I feel I ought, than it would be under ordinary circumstances.

My heart is so full I can write no more. Come and see me, and I will tell you all.

Ever Yours,

Charles Kean.

Athenæum Club,
11 March, 1849.”

“My dear Dyce,
My beloved mother expired calmly and quietly at ½ past one o'clock to-day.

Your afflicted friend
C. Kean.

Keydell, near Horndean, Hants,
Friday 30th March, 1849.”

JOHN KEMBLE [ff. 73–85*, 85A’]

When we see upon the stage the representatives of kings and heroes, we generally feel that they do not fully realize, in their personal appearance, our ideas of the illustrious dead; but Kemble, in this respect, completely satisfied the demands of the most extravagant imagination. His face and form were such as poetry and sculpture have attributed to the chiefs of the heroic times. If his features, from being so strongly marked, were seen to less advantage in a private room, they were, on that account, more admirably adapted to the stage: the prevailing expression of his countenance was one of gentle melancholy, and his full dark eyes were radiant with a dreamy brightness. His dignity of man-
ner was natural, not assumed; and in his lofty carriage and his measured step you might read his consciousness of the physical advantages he possessed;

“Like a Titan stepped he,
Proud of his divinity.”

If Mrs. Siddons was worthy of being painted as the Tragic Muse, Kemble might as fitly have sat to Sir Joshua as the male personification of Tragedy. Though his voice was not powerful, yet so exquisitely did he manage it, and so distinct was his enunciation in passages of the most rapid delivery, that scarce one word of what he uttered was lost by that portion of the audience who were farthest from the stage, even in the overgrown theatres of the metropolis.¹⁹

Coriolanus was undoubtedly his greatest performance. It was a piece of acting, of which (as of his sister’s Lady Macbeth or Queen Katharine) the theatres cannot now present a shadow; and we believe that those who have seen it derive a pleasure from reading that tragedy which the most ardent admirer of Shakespeare, who has never witnessed it, can hardly feel. How striking was his first coming on the stage! We have it before us at this moment: we see the Roman mob, in all their dirt and raggedness, headed by little Simmons,—now they are running out to kill Marcius, but perceiving him approach, they retreat in terror, and huddling together like sheep, squeeze themselves up to the opposite wing,—and now, after a pause, in rushes Kemble, wrapt in the graceful foldings of his scarlet robe, an antique Roman from top to toe! During the first three acts, his proud patrician bearing contrasted admirably with the vulgar insolence of the rabble, who kept thronging about him, and then retiring, like the waves of the sea dashing about some stately rock. To enumerate all the points he made, would require whole pages, though, no doubt, he thought less of them than of the general effect of the performance. His appearance, as he stood, covered by a black mantle, beneath the statue of Mars in the dwelling of Aufidius, has been well preserved by the friendly pencil of Lawrence. How touching was the scene, where he sat, with heaving breast and averted face, listening to the supplications of his wife and
mother, till nature's holiest feelings overcame the thirst for vengeance on his ungrateful country! His acting grew more and more excellent towards the conclusion of the play. When Aufidius said to him, "You may depart in safety," with what indignation he drew back his lofty form, and slowly surveyed him from head to foot,—what scorn flashed from his eye and quivered on his lip, ere he deigned an answer to the insult! When the Volscian leader called him "boy of tears," the manner in which he rushed up to him and spoke the following lines, while the veins of his neck seemed bursting with the effort,—

“If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Flutter'd your Volsces in Corioli;
Alone I did it—boy!”—

and, above all, the checking of his vehemence at the word boy, and the triumphant sneer with which he uttered it, composed the ne plus ultra of histrionic art.

Brutus is a Roman of a very different stamp from Coriolanus, and the part does not afford such scope to the talents of an actor; but no one could have made more of it than Kemble did. In the orchard-scene he spoke the short soliloquies like a man whose mind was really busied about “the acting of a dreadful thing”; and his tenderness to Portia never went beyond what we may suppose the stoic patriot would have allowed himself to show. The truly classical imagination of Akenside could not have presented to him, when he composed the following passage, a grander figure and attitude than Kemble displayed, as he held his dagger over the body of him “who bled for justice’ sake”;

“When Brutus rose
Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar’s fate,
Amid the crowd of patriots, and his arm
Aloft extending like eternal Jove
When guilt brings down the thunder, call’d aloud
On Tully’s name, and shook his crimson steel,
And bade the father of his country hail,
For, lo! the tyrant prostrate in the dust,
And Rome again is free.”
In the famous tent-scene we thought he expressed his contempt of Cassius with too much bitterness; and his rising from his seat, and walking carefully on tiptoe, to take the lute from the sleeping Lucius, appeared to us to be a little out of character. "Talk no more of her" (Portia), he spoke in the true tones of that sorrow which lies too deep for tears, and the words fell upon the heart with an icy coldness.

When I saw Kemble in Hamlet, so many years had passed over him, that he wore an aspect too aged for the royal Dane: but his accomplished mind remained unchanged, and he exhibited in his own unequalled style the soul of Hamlet, and all the irresolution of the melancholy, meditative prince. As Boaden has given a detailed account of this performance, I shall merely observe that Kemble was the only actor I have ever seen, who kept up the high-bred dignity of the part from beginning to end.

Wolsey never had so good a representative as Kemble. His dressing of the part was rich in pictorial beauty. He did not appear, as Wolsey has appeared of late, an old man with sallow face, creeping along with stealthy tottering steps; but he was indeed the aspiring Cardinal, with florid cheeks and arrogant demeanor, who dined each day from plate of gold, and to whom, when he washed his hands, a nobleman of England held the towel. His agitation on perusing the fatal papers—the sinking of his soul under the calamity—his lamentation over his vanished greatness—the rising of his proud spirit at the taunts of the courtiers, and the rage and sarcasm of his replies—were all most true to nature. His look and attitude, as he exclaimed,

"My robe and my integrity to heaven
Are all I now can call mine own,"

while his eyes were cast upwards, his left hand slightly raising his crimson gown, and his right arm extended above his head, composed a truly beautiful picture. In the banquet scene his beckoning to Campeius to take precedence of him, and then brushing out before that grave personage who was about to obey the sign, was, perhaps, a stage-trick unworthy of Kemble; as was also the whii! he uttered, and his imitation of snuffing a candle with his fingers at the words
"This candle burns not clear: ’tis I must snuff it;
Then out it goes!"

Kemble’s Macbeth was equal in finish to his best pieces of acting. In the murder scene he was more frozen with terror, more bewildered, and less noisy, than his successors in the part: “Wake Duncan with thy knocking! [I] would thou couldst!” he uttered in the piercing accents of despair. At the banquet, on the vanishing of the Ghost, he exclaimed, “So, being gone, I am a man again,” like one who had really been delivered suddenly from some intolerable burden that weighed down his very soul. In the recitation of “tomorrow and tomorrow,” &c his voice sounded like a soft and mournful music; and his horror on hearing that Birnam wood was on its way to Dunsinane—the vain effort of his terror-palsied arm to draw his sword & stab the bearer of such dreadful tidings—and his tremulous tones when he recovered the use of speech—all showed the consummate artist.²²

Though Young’s Revenge was written when nature was banished from the stage, and, as a whole, is stiff and bombastic, it contains one or two passages of great power, and some situations eminently striking. In Zanga there is something grand, which Kemble rendered absolutely sublime: he maintained excellently the solemn mysteriousness of the part, from his first appearance under the archway in the glare of the lightning, till he trampled on the body of his swooning master. Young’s turgid lines enabled him to display that elaborate declamation in which he was unrivalled, and which he now and then relieved by some exquisite touch of nature the more admired because unlooked for. “Know, then, twas I!” [V, ii] was one of his most successful bursts: it was not very loud, but given with an energy indescribable: well might Alonzo fall senseless to the ground, for, as Kemble spoke it, the effect was blasting,—each word was like a poisoned arrow winged with certain death! His minute attention to propriety of costume was seen in this play: when he wrote on his tablets [II, i], instead of holding the pencil between his fingers and thumb, he clutched it in his hand in the oriental style.

To those who have never seen Kemble as Penruddock in The Wheel of Fortune, Cumberland’s [. . .]²³ sketch can convey no
idea of the picture into which the actor worked it up. To point out the excellencies of this performance, it would be necessary to mention particularly every scene. His remark to Henry W[oodville,] “You bear a strong resemblance to your mother” [IV, ii], has been often & justly praised, but I thought it less affecting than his reply to Mrs. Woodville, “You see, madam, what a philosopher I am” [V], during which he burst into tears, & buried his face in his handkerchief. . . .

In his zeal to form a collection of old English plays, Kemble gave prices which were then unprecedented, but which (I too well know) were trifling in comparison of the prices given for copies of the same plays by more recent collectors. This excited an ill-natured attack from Gifford in the following passage of The Baviad;

“Others, like Kemble, on black-letter pore,
And what they do not understand, adore;
Buy at vast sums the trash of ancient days,
And draw on prodigality for praise.
These, when some lucky hit, or lucky price,
Has bless’d them with ‘The Boke of gode advice,’
For ekes and algates only deign to seek,
And live upon a whilome for a week.”

“Note. Others, like Kemble, &c. Though no great catalogue-hunter, I love to look into such marked ones as fall in my way. That of poor Dodd’s books amused me not a little. It exhibited many instances of black-letter mania; and, what is more to my purpose, a transfer of much ‘trash of ancient days’ to the fortunate Mr. Kemble. For example,—

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How are we ruined!”

25
The reader will naturally think that such satire comes with a bad grace from a man who, in illustrating the drama of the reigns of Elizabeth and James, has himself not unfrequently had recourse to "the trash of ancient days." Now, the truth is, that when Gifford wrote *The Baviad* he had not yet taken to the study of our early playwrights; and that he afterwards regretted this attack on Kemble is beyond a doubt. When he reprinted *The [Baviad]*\(^{26}\) in 1811 [8th ed.], he was careful to omit the note just quoted, in [ . . . ] "the trash of ancient days" might not be understood as [?] containing any allusion to dramatic pieces: and in an "Advertisement" prefixed to the second edition of Massinger's *Works*, 1813, speaking of the above lines of *The Baviad*, he is disin­genuous enough to say,—"That I ridiculed the purchase of old plays, is a mere conceit of the Edinburgh Reviewers —— I have even specified the object of my satire, the 'Boke of gode advice,'\(^{27}\) which happens not to be a play" [I, iv, v] :—very true, Mr. Gifford,—it is a [ . . . ]; but *Selimus*, and *Look About You*, and *Nero* "happen to be plays," and moreover, are perhaps hardly such trash as you pronounce them to be!

Soon after quitting the stage, Kemble sold his collection of dramas to the late Duke of Devonshire. Previous to their removal to Devonshire House, they were lying on the floor of Mess" Payne and Foss's shop in Pall-Mall, when several persons, including Joe Kelly (the ex-singer and composer) came in to look at them.\(^{28}\) A gentleman, examin­ing a volume which consisted partly of very old and partly of very modern pieces, remarked that he considered it injudicious to bind up together plays of such different dates. "O," cried Irish Joe, "what does it matter? Fifty years hence, the one will be as ould as the other."

That Kemble was an excellent actor is certain. That he was very far from excellent as a writer is equally certain, though his education (un­like that of players in general) had been what is called classical, and he possessed a knowledge of Latinity which had some pretensions to criti­cal exactness. "To those," says Boaden, "who remember Mr. Kemble's latter diffidence as an author, it may excite surprise that, on his just attaining manhood, he should venture before an audience a tragedy of his own composition. On the 29\(^{th}\) of December, this year *[1778]*, he brought out his tragedy of Belisarius for his own benefit *[at Hull]. As I have never seen a line of this play, I cannot speak to its merits: it
appears to have been well received, to have been thought creditable to his talents, and to have acquired for him both money and reputation" [Life of Kemble, I, 22]. Belisarius was never printed: but many years ago I read it in a manuscript copy (then belonging to Mr. J. P. Collier) which had been sent in to the licenser: and I could not but wonder that so poor an attempt at dramatic composition should have met with anything like success even at a country theatre, and with an audience pre-disposed in favour of the author.  

Towards the end of 1816, when it was generally understood that Kemble would ere long take leave of the public, I wrote to him from Exeter College, Oxford, requesting to be informed of the exact time of his final performance, that I might make such arrangements as would enable me to be present on that occasion. He replied to me as follows:

"Sir,

If I knew on what day I am to appear on the stage for the last time, it would give me great pleasure to acquaint you with it. I believe nothing is at present determined about it: when it is fixed, the public advertisements will inform the town of it, as soon as I shall have heard of it myself.

With many thanks for your obliging note, I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. P. Kemble.

Saturday.

P.S. Your letter was left, as letters to me sometimes are, at the Theatre, and was not sent till just now."

For his last performance, June 23, 1817, he selected the part of Coriolanus. Wishing to be as near the stage as possible on that night, I stationed myself, a little before one o'clock P.M., at the pit-door of Covent-Garden Theatre, to wait patiently till it should be opened at half-past six. About a dozen persons were already assembled there; and before the time of admittance arrived, I was wedged in among a crowd more numerous by some hundreds than the pit could hold. When the door opened, the rush along the lobby was fearful: but I attained my object,
—a place next to the orchestra; and just as I was sitting down, I saw several gentlemen—among whom was my friend Harness with young Dallas in his arms—drop from the lower tier of boxes into the pit, they having bribed the attendants to let them in. Before the commencement of the overture, Talma, accompanied by Horace Twiss, entered the orchestra, where places were reserved for some of Kemble's particular friends; and I, being quite close to them, heard Talma say in very good English, as he surveyed the densely packed house, "Ah, he well deserves such an audience!" Deafening and prolonged applause greeted the first appearance of Kemble; who probably never played Coriolanus more exquisitely than he did that night: it was, indeed, a performance of which—now that tragic acting is a lost art—the play-goers of the present day cannot form a conception.

[. . .] were eagerly applied by the spectators to the representative of Coriolanus, and the more vehemently applauded because they [had] not forgotten that certain partisans of Kean, with disgusting want of feeling and of good taste, had gone so far as to hiss Kemble both in Richard the Third and in Sir Giles Overreach.

In the closing scene Kemble—who more recently when acting Coriolanus had been caught in the arms of the conspirators after they had stabbed him—fell at full length on the boards, thinking it now unnecessary to husband his strength.

On the conclusion of the play there was a loud cry of "No farewell from Kemble!" and a satin scroll on a roller containing, as I understood, a written request that he would sometimes gratify his admirers by re-appearing in some of his favourite characters, was handed to Talma, who threw it from the orchestra on the stage. Kemble, however, had wisely made up his mind to act no more: and, under the conviction, as he expressed it, that "some little parting word would be expected from him on that occasion," he came forward, and took leave of the public in a short, simple, and touching prose-address. While he spoke, his agitation was extreme: he kept nervously twisting his pocket-handkerchief round and round his fingers, and now and then used it, with a trembling hand, to wipe away the tears that trickled down his cheeks. The most enthusiastic cheers followed him, as with profound obeisances and faltering steps, he retired from the view of the audience; who, in
compliment to him, unanimously determined that they would have no afterpiece that night: in consequence of which, though the curtain rose and discovered Mrs. Gibbs and Miss Carew ready to begin *The Portrait of Cervantes*, it descended again almost immediately, and before they had uttered a single word.

Kemble was generally most attentive to the business of the scene, and whether the spectators were few or numerous, went through his part to the utmost of his ability. Not so, however, on a particular occasion at Limerick, while he was acting Zanga in *The Revenge*: the house was all but empty—the very scanty audience vulgar, riotous, and evidently incapable of comprehending the play; and Kemble was so disgusted with their rudeness and their ignorance, that he turned the conclusion of the tragedy into a sheer burlesque, giving the prostrate Alonzo a kick, and bidding him “get up!” This I was told by Lady Becher (Miss O’Neill), the Leonora of that night. (She was then a provincial actress, never dreaming of the laurels which awaited her in Covent-Garden.)

A Miss Douglas—a woman neither young nor handsome, but a tolerable actress, who had performed in London and elsewhere—happened to belong to the Edinburgh company while Kemble was playing an engagement there; and being a person of great eccentricity (or, in plain terms, *maddish*), she chose to fall violently in love with him, not concealing her romantic passion either from him or from others. To all this tenderness he showed himself utterly insensible, not taking the slightest notice of it by word or look; till one evening, just before the curtain rose, when he was in the green-room dressed for Coriolanus, and when she (his Volumnia), after vainly endeavouring to attract his attention, had declared aloud that “she had rather be treated with indifference by Mr. Kemble than courted by others”—he, standing before the mirror, and arranging the folds of his scarlet robe, glanced at her over his shoulder, and said in a careless tone, “You must be very drunk indeed.”

About [. . .] years before his retirement, Kemble was announced at the bottom of the bills for the character of Falstaff in *The First Part of King Henry IV*.; and he certainly rehearsed it (perhaps several times), for I know that during one rehearsal, while he was going through a scene with unusual sluggishness, he said to Conway, who was cast for
the Prince, "Mr. Conway, you understand, of course, that I intend to be much more jocose in the evening than I am at present." But he never appeared as the fat knight; nor were the public ever informed why he did not. He alleged, indeed, to a friend of mine, that his chief reason for not attempting the character was his dread of the "stuffing" which was necessary to make up the figure of Sir John: "I was in terror," he said, "of dropping down on the stage under the weight of the wicker and the padding." There might have been some truth in this, for he was very asthmatic: but I apprehend that he was deterred more by the intellectual than by the corporeal requisites of Falstaff, and that he was afraid of failing in a part which so few actors have been able to master. Yet Kemble, with his grand tragic face and form, undoubtedly possessed very considerable comic powers; an evidence of which was his ludicrous assumption of idiocy, as Don Leon, in the earlier scenes of Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*.

Kemble was always courteous towards debutants; and if he saw anything faulty in their performances, he would notice it to them in the most delicate manner. He not unfrequently, however, found them impracticable. When Sinclair the singer (who had served as a common soldier in Scotland) first came out at Covent-Garden Theatre and with great success, he was intolerably awkward in his gestures and gait. Hence Kemble took occasion to say to him; "It appears to me, Sinclair, that you are sometimes at a loss to know what to do with your arms; which, indeed, was the case with myself when a young actor: now, I got over that difficulty by taking lessons in stage-deportment from Le Picq; and I would particularly recommend you to put yourself under the tuition of a ballet-master." "O," replied Sinclair in his semi-Scottish dialect, "I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Kemble, for the advice; but I raly can't see any reason why I should follow it; for I'm encored every night, and my frends assure me that I'm verra graceful."

Chiefly owing to an asthmatic complaint, Kemble's acting of a particular part would be very different at one time from what it would be at another. I once was at Covent-Garden Theatre when he acted Penruddock in Cumberland's *Wheel of Fortune* with a tameness at which Mrs. Powell and Abbot (Mrs. [. . .]) were scarcely able to conceal their surprise: but, long after that date, I have seen him play
Penruddock in his finest style. So too, from the same cause, he would sometimes be utterly spiritless in the earlier scenes of a tragedy and all animation in the later ones. I remember Macready's saying to me, "The last time I saw Kemble in Macbeth, he seemed, during the first three acts, to be half asleep; but in the fourth and fifth acts he did blaze out indeed."

When Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, after quitting the stage, were staying for a while at Paris, some members of the Théâtre Français (not including Talma), paid them a visit at their lodgings, and made it a particular request to be favoured with a specimen of English acting. Accordingly, Kemble and Mrs. Siddons recited a short scene; which was greatly applauded by the foreign artists, though they ventured to mention, in the politest manner possible, what appeared to them objectionable,—"Vous parlez trop vite." Whereupon (as I was told by Thomas Campbell, who was present), Kemble turned to his sister, and said with a smile, "Well, Sally, this is the first time that we were ever blamed for too-fast speaking!"

[f. 854'] The following anecdote rests on the authority of Kemble's nephew, the late Horace Twiss, who related it to me as a fact.—From some passage or lobby in the old Drurylane Theatre it was possible to get a partial view of the interior of Kemble's dressing-room by looking through some sort of aperture; which, during the run of Pizarro, used to be nightly besieged by ladies of a certain description, whose constant cry was, "Do, Kemble, like a good fellow, come a little forward when you have dressed yourself, and let us have a sight of you." But Kemble continued to turn a deaf ear to their importunities; with an account of which he regularly amused his wife on returning from the theatre. One night, however, he came home seemingly in rather low spirits. "What's the matter?" asked Mrs. Kemble: "has anything happened? or have the ladies ceased their flattering requests to see you?"—"No, P[riscilla]," he replied, "no; not exactly: but there has been a-a-a slight mistake."—"How so?"—"Why, to-night, after dressing myself, I was foolish enough to comply with their wishes by coming a little forward before leaving the room; when immediately I heard a shrill voice exclaim in a tone of disappointment, "Law, girls, we're all wrong! it isn't Charles! it's only the old 'un!"
Of Kemble's conviviality we have received the following anecdote from unquestionable authority. A medical gentleman was asked to dine at the house of a friend in order to meet the tragic hero, but was unable to accept the invitation. He, however, called on the entertainer, about 12 o'clock in the forenoon of the day after the dinner, and found the party still at table. "You have lost much," said the host to him, "by being absent, for Mr. K., last night, favoured us with Collins's Ode on the Passions." Our friend, of course, expressed his regret. "Nay," said K., "you sha'nt lose it, for I'll speak it again"; & accordingly, having first washed his face to refresh himself, he once more recited the whole ode with admirable spirit.

Mrs. Charles Kemble (Miss De Camp) [ff. 72°F, 90–95]

In the society of this very intelligent lady, and most accomplished actress, who was equally at home in ballet, opera, comedy, and farce, I have passed many pleasant hours.

When only six years old, she was engaged at the Opera-house, Haymarket, to play Cupid and other fairy personages in ballets; and I have heard her mention, that a grand ballet on the story of Bacchus and Ariadne having been brought out, in which she figured as the little god of love, the chief dancer of the day who represented Bacchus wore his hair in full curl, pomatumed and powdered, and surmounted by a wreath of grapes and vine-leaves.—Her Irene in Colman's Blue Beard, a part she acted originally to the Fatima of Mrs. Crouch, and many years after to the Fatima of Miss Stephens, enabled her to display to advantage both her melodramatic and her vocal powers; and few things were more amusing than her assumption of consequence as the sister-in-law of the bashaw,—for instance, in the illuminated garden-scene, as she passed by the kneeling slaves, her pushing down their heads to increase their prostration. In another melodrama by Colman, The Forty Thieves, her performance of Morgiana, ending with the tambourine-dance and the stabbing of the robber-chief, fascinated the town for many a night. But her melodramatic chef-d['oeuvre] was Julio in Deaf and Dumb, a five-
act drama, taken from the French of Bouilly by Holcroft, in which, without the aid of language, she carried mimetic gesture and expression of countenance to the utmost perfection: "The novelty of the task imposed upon Miss De Camp," says Holcroft in his Preface, "and the admirable manner in which she executed it, would make it inexcusable, not individually to mention her merits."

— Her Lucy in Gay's *Beggar's Opera* was a very striking picture of that shrewish damsel.— Of Miss Sterling in Colman and Garrick's *Clandestine Marriage*, she made, I believe, much more than any actress ever did: the scene [I, ii] in which she tries to mortify her sister Fanny by displaying her jewels and by describing the grandeur that awaits her when she marries Sir John Melvil invariably drew down the heartiest applause.— To conclude this imperfect list of her performances with the notice of a very important character,—I have no hesitation in saying that her Beatrice in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* was, beyond all comparison, the best which the stage could boast of in my recollection.

[f 93'/95']

"Weybridge
Sept' 5th, 1825"

I wish you had learnt to write, and I to read before we had both become grey headed. I need not then have requir'd the combin'd assistance of all my family to enable me to decypher your Epistle; we have but lamely made it out amongst us; but I gather, that you are well and happy, and I assure you, we were all truly glad to hear it. Your mind must indeed have been in a pitable state of disorganization had it been otherwise, surrounded as you are by every thing which can charm the eye, and captivate the understanding. Is there a house in England (or elsewhere) in which so rare a combination of beauty, taste and intellect, is to be met with? but shall you not henceforward, deem all ordinary society, stale, flat and unprofitable? and what is to become of us?— I heard of your calling in Soho Square, where you no doubt were inform'd of my residence here and Charles's departure for Germany—he wish'd very much that I had accompanied him, and indeed seeing so little of him as I do thro' the Winter the temptation was a strong one—but with my boys and girls growing up into men and women, I thought it neither prudent nor affectionate to absent myself; so here have we
been rusticating, and I hope getting in a stock of health to carry us thro' the ensuing season. I am glad you like Miss Mitford's play. I hope it possesses *movement*. The subject is a fine one but I am afraid will want incident—she must not dare to invent any; and all which are historical are so well known, that there can be no surprise excited. The pathetic however there is great scope for—and if she can make the people cry, the play will no doubt answer the purpose well. I shou'd like to have read it, but I shall be obliged to suspend my curiosity 'till my husband returns, as I have determin'd to keep my mind clear from all theatraels (which God knows I have had enough of) 'till he comes back. I know not whether it has arriv'd or not, for I have heard nothing about it—but I conclude it has, and is by this time ranged in order amongst a dozen others which have been sent for 'early inspection.' I shall be in town on Wednesday to receive Mrs. Kemble when if it shou'd not be amongst the rest, I will write to let you know.—Charles shall hear your message about Mr. Fitzharris—but I confess I do not think he will obtain an engagement—I know that unseen, unheard, and untried, I shou'd not give him one! We are overstock'd with mediocrity, and unless the gentleman possess very first rate qualifications, it were useless to saddle the concern with an additional salary. It is true he is very well spoken of by his friends of Reading and the Isle of White [sic]—but are they competent to judge? I assure you that with all my long experience upon these matters, I shou'd mistrust my own opinion were I to see Mr. Fitzharris or any other person in a mere Provincial company—they are all generally so very bad in country theatres, that if there be one but decently tolerable, he is deem'd at once a great actor—you know not how often Mrs. Siddons herself has been deceiv'd under the same circumstances—however all this is merely from myself and will in no way operate against Mr. Fitzharris, as I have for some time past, made up my mind never to offer an opinion upon any of the measures of Covent Garden. I think you will be surprised to hear that Charles Eckersall row'd himself up the river one day, and dined with us! I wish you cou'd be persuaded to do the same. John is now gone to Dr. Malkin's, and we cou'd give you a tidy bedchamber for a night or two. We have but poor *indoor* accommodation—but the
country is beautiful, and we almost wholly live under the canopy of heaven, which I invite you to, with the sincerity of a very true friend.

M. Thérèse Kemble

Mrs. Whitlock has been with us, and speaks of Mrs. Siddons (with whom she pass'd several days) in a most deplorable manner!—

The Rev^*^ William Harness

Thomas Hope's Esq*^"^*

Dorking

Surrey*^"^*

"Two songs apiece, and a duet will do—but there's no objection to more, if the situations will admit of them. The performers you speak of are popular, and songs by them (provided they are not brought in by the neck and shoulders) cannot but serve a piece. If it is any consolation to you, we are as ill, as you can be, and my poor husband was compelled to fag thro' Hamlet on Monday when in fact he ought to have been in Bed. I agree with you about Archer [in The Beaux' Strategem]. I think the whole play well done—(Mrs. Sullen might be better, but Miss Chester makes up in looks for her deficiencies as an actress) and that it is that renders it so popular—it is not necessary to give everybody much to do, but to give them that, which they can do—it is that attention to well fitting, in Paris, that makes their Comedies so excellent a treat. I send you an order for tomorrow, but if you fancy you are to see Miss Byfield, you are mistaken; the new piece is however a very pretty one, and you will at any rate, be amused. My best remembrances to Miss Harness, and*^"^ Believe me always,

Very sincerely Yours

M. Thérèse Kemble

Wednesday—"'

MRS. SIDDONS [ff. 188-205*]

It was only towards the close of her career that I had the never-to-be-forgotten pleasure of seeing this incomparable woman perform her chief
characters: but time had certainly not impaired the excellence of her acting; indeed, I believe that during her latter seasons, her Lady Macbeth, Queen Katharine, &c were finer than ever.

There are few circumstances which have impressed my memory more vividly than my first introduction to Mrs. Siddons, some years after she had quitted the stage, by my friend William Harness, at her house in Upper Baker Street. When we were ushered into her drawing-room, she had no one with her except her daughter Cecilia (afterwards Mrs. Combe); and she was sitting on a sofa, over which hung Harlow's sketch in oil for his well-known picture of the Kemble Family. Her attire was extremely plain and neat: she wore an umber-coloured gown, a muslin cap with her white hair parted on her forehead, and black kid gloves cut down so as to leave her delicate taper fingers bare. She looked somewhat thinner in the face than when I last had seen her on the stage; but her hazel eyes had lost nothing of their brilliancy and really seemed at times to send forth sparks. She spoke in a deep clear tone of voice, articulating each word distinctly; and she illustrated what she happened to be saying by a little more—a very little more—gesticulation than is usual in private society. Her whole manner and bearing were the perfection of dignity and grace. When the introduction was over, she said to me, "I will confess I was unwilling to become acquainted with you, for, though so much of my life has been spent in public, I have always had a nervous dread of being formally introduced to strangers; but now that you have made my acquaintance, I hope you will do me the favour to call frequently."— She used to maintain that those who had lived much with persons of celebrity, would never wish to attain celebrity themselves, because they must have witnessed the annoyances to which these [?] persons was [sic] subjected by the eagerness of strangers pressing for introductions to them.

Mrs. Whitlock, a younger sister of Mrs. Siddons, used often to relate an anecdote of the girlhood of the great actress. One night, somewhere in the provinces, when Roger Kemble and his wife were busy at the theatre, their children were left at home together in the parlour; and the eldest of them, Sarah (Mrs. Siddons), in order to amuse the others, undertook to show them how
"the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets";  

which, having let down her hair about her ears, she did so effectively, that her brothers and sisters were almost afraid to move till the return of their parents from the theatre.

It is well known that Mrs. Siddons's engagement by Garrick in 1775-6 proved altogether unsuccessful; and that it was not till her re-appearance at Drurylane Theatre in 1782 that she was at once acknowledged as the greatest female tragedian of her time.— A report goes, that during the thunders of applause elicited by one of Mrs. Siddons's performances in 1782, George Steevens exclaimed, "This is enough to make Garrick turn in his coffin!": and Mrs. Piozzi, the intimate friend of Mrs. Siddons, declares that "Siddons hated the little great man [Garrick] to her heart." It appears at least that she felt more indignation at his treatment of her than she has chosen to express in those interesting Memoranda which are printed in her Life by Campbell, and which are intended to show that Garrick behaved to her with an odd mixture of courtesy and neglect, ending in his "letting her down in the most humiliating manner." We must remember, however, that the Mrs. Siddons of those days was a timid inexperienced actress, very different from the Mrs. Siddons of 1782, and that if Garrick had brought her out in some important part, there is every probability that she would have failed to make an impression on the public.— It is [a] matter of regret that in the ample Memoranda just mentioned she has entered into no criticism on Garrick's acting, though, besides playing with him in two pieces, Richard the Third and Hoadley's Suspicious Husband, "she had seen him in his great characters from one of the boxes." And I remember Charles Kemble's once remarking to me, not without surprise, that, notwithstanding Mrs. Siddons's admiration of Garrick's talents, what he had heard her say concerning his acting amounted to little more than this,—viz. that his action was frequently angular (that is, that he jerked his elbows in a peculiar manner), and that the expression of his eyes was marvel-
lous, having a sort of fascination like that attributed to those of the snake.

I possess a few play-bills of the Liverpool Theatre, which by some chance have escaped destruction, and which curiously show how various were the characters performed there by Mrs. Siddons during the earlier portion of the period between her dismissal from Drurylane Theatre in 1776 and her return to London & triumphal success in 1782. . . .

Dr. Beattie, in a letter to his niece, dated Edinburgh, 28th May, 1784, writes thus: "Nothing here is spoken or thought of but Mrs. Siddons. I have seen this wonderful person not only on the stage, but in private company; for I passed two days with her at the Earl of Buchan's. . . . She loves music, and is fond of the Scotch tunes; many of which I played to her on the violoncello. One of them ('She rose and let me in,' which you know is a favourite of mine) made the tears start from her eyes. 'Go on,' said she to me, 'and you will soon have your revenge'; meaning, that I would draw as many tears from her as she had drawn from me. She sung 'Queen Mary's Complaint' to admiration; and I had the honour to accompany her on the bass." Now, Mrs. Siddons, not long before her death, assured me that the statement in the last sentence of the above extract is utterly false,—that, when it was pointed out to her on the publication of Forbes's book, she was struck with astonishment. "I should as soon," she said, "have stood up and danced for the amusement of the party, as have attempted to sing a song to Beattie's accompaniment."— Since, on the one hand, it is not to be supposed that the author of the Essay on Truth would violate truth even in a matter of so little moment as the present; and since, on the other hand, I see no reason to doubt the fidelity of Mrs. Siddons's memory; I can only account for such conflicting evidence by the hypothesis, that when Beattie's letter was transcribed for the press, the passage in question was by some chance inaccurately copied,—an accident which I know by experience is far from uncommon.

Two parts which she used to mention as "having afforded her particular pleasure in the acting," were Athenais in Lee's Theodosius, and Zara in Congreve's Mourning Bride. The former part, which she
first acted in 1797, and in which she was always well received by the public, soon dropped from her repertoire; but the latter she continued to play from an early period of her career down to the time of her retirement from the boards,—and wonderfully she played it, infusing true passion into its stilted and bombastic speeches, to say nothing of her most majestic and picturesque appearance as the captive queen: indeed, the late William Godwin,—who was the most constant frequenter of the theatre I ever met with, being in his old age as unwilling to miss the performances of Kean and Miss O'Neill as he had been in his youth unwilling to miss those of Garrick and Mrs. Yates—did not scruple to say that "it was worth taking a day's journey merely to see Mrs. Siddons walk down the stage as Zara."52

That her Euphrasia in Murphy's *Grecian Daughter*, her Hermione in Philips's *Distressed Mother*, her Elvira in Kotzebue's and Sheridan's *Pizarro*, and her Arpasia in Rowe's *Tamerlane*, should invariably have proved attractive performances, will perhaps seem strange to persons who are acquainted with those pieces only in the closet, and who are not aware what the powers of Mrs. Siddons were able to effect in dramas of an inferior order.— An early publication of Leigh Hunt furnishes the following remarks: "Of the force of such mere action I recollect a sublime instance displayed by Mrs. Siddons in the insipid tragedy of *The Grecian Daughter*. This heroine has obtained for her aged and imprisoned father some unexpected assistance from the guard Philotas [II, i]: transported with gratitude, but having nothing from the poet to give expression to her feelings, she starts with extended arms and casts herself in mute prostration at his feet. I shall never forget the glow which rushed to my cheeks at this sublime action."53

Here, too, may be quoted the words of another accomplished theatrical critic, Mrs. Inchbald; "The Arpasia of Mrs. Siddons *[in Rowe's *Tamerlane*] has, indeed, the power of inspiring a degree of horrible wonder in the dying scene; when, dropping down dead at the Sultan's feet, she gives, by the manner and disposition of her fall, such assurance of her having suddenly expired, that an auditor of a lively imagination casts up his eyes to heaven, as if to catch a view of her departed spirit."54

But the characters in tragedies *not written by Shakespeare*, which Mrs. Siddons rendered the most fascinating to the public, were Isabella

— Tom Davies, an old stager, and certainly not disposed to overrate her acting, bears witness to the intense feeling she displayed in Calista, her complexion actually changing under the conflicting emotions excited by the scene. As to her Belvidera, it appeared to have lost little of its charm even when her age and figure were such that Jaffeir no longer dared to address her as his [ . . . ]

With respect to Mrs. Siddons's performances in the plays of our great dramatist,—though, during her long professional life, she at various times and in various places had appeared, with more or less success, as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lady Anne in *Richard the Third*, Olivia in *Twelfth-Night*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Desdemona in *Othello*, Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Cordelia in *King Lear* (as altered by Tate), Queen Elizabeth in *Richard the Third*, Portia in *Julius Caesar*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Katharine in the farce taken from *The Taming of the Shrew*,—yet in none of these characters, though she played some of them excellently (more particularly Desdemona), can she be said to have produced, nor indeed did they admit of her producing, a deep and permanent impression on the public mind. Her fame, as the matchless representative of Shakespeare's matchless heroines, is mainly founded on her Lady Macbeth, her Queen Katharine in *Henry the Eighth*, her Constance in *King John*, her Volumnia in *Coriolanus*, her Imogen in *Cymbeline*, her Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, and her Isabella in *Measure for Measure*. Nor was it any wonder that audiences, all over Britain, were never weary of seeing her in the parts just enumerated; for by continual study, even down to the period of her quitting the stage, she had elaborated them to a perfection which baffles description, and which cannot be conceived by those who have only seen them embodied by her feeble successors.

With some of her youthful performances she felt dissatisfied in her later years; her maturer judgment condemning what then appeared
to her the bad taste of certain things she had done on the stage, which, however, had been applauded to the very echo.

Several times, while she was "starring it" at different provincial theatres, the manifest superiority of some individual actor to the rest of the wretched company had deceived her into a belief that he was really a person of histrionic talent; and if, after the play, she happened to bestow on him a few words of praise, they were immediately followed by a request that she would make his fortune by recommending him to the manager of Covent-Garden or Drurylane. "I have done so," she said, "in the case of more persons than one; and when I saw them on the London stage, I felt quite ashamed of my recommendation— their acting was so very bad."

Mrs. Siddons took a formal leave of the public 29th June, 1812, after performing Lady Macbeth. But few or none know that she originally had selected the part of Hermione in the Winter's Tale for her farewell performance, and that it was chiefly owing to the repeated suggestions of the late Henry Foss of Pall Mall—conveyed to her through her brother John Kemble—that she finally acquiesced in the more judicious choice of Lady Macbeth. The audience would not suffer the tragedy to proceed after the sleep-walking scene,—Lady Macbeth having nothing to do in the remainder of the play; and Mrs. Siddons presently, in plain modern attire, spoke the Address written for her—and not badly written—by her nephew Horace Twiss. The long white kid gloves which she then had on, and the small bouquet which she wore at her bosom, were carefully preserved by her faithful companion Miss Wilkinson; who bequeathed them to her niece Mrs. Groom; and by the latter lady they were presented to a friend of mine, an enthusiastic admirer of Mrs. Siddons, who still treasures them—the bouquet being now almost withered to dust—as interesting relics.

Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons. Interspersed with Anecdotes of Authors and Actors was written and published by Boaden in 18[27], while she was yet alive. She had but a slight acquaintance with that gentleman (though he was on intimate terms with her brother John Kemble); and she was so annoyed by the announcement of the book, that she at first determined to print a letter in the newspapers, declaring that it
had been composed and published without her knowledge or con­
currence. She forbore doing so, however, on learning the embarrassed
circumstances of the author: and, after reading the work, she probably
ceased to feel offended at the liberty he had taken; for from beginning
to end, it is a hymn of praise on her and her acting.— Boaden has
noticed some of the few occasions on which, after formally bidding the
public farewell, Mrs. Siddons was induced (not reluctantly) to re-
appear on the stage: but, either by an oversight or through ignorance,
he omits all mention of her very last performance, June 9th, 1819, when
she played Lady Randolph in Home’s Douglas for the benefit of her
brother Charles and his wife; and when Norval was acted by C. Kemble,
The Stranger by Young, Glenalvon (excellently) by Macready, and
Anna by Miss Foote (Lady Harrington). Accompanied by two college-
friends, I came up from Oxford expressly to be present at that last
performance of Mrs. Siddons; and I furnished Campbell with an
account of it, which he printed verbatim in his unfortunate Life of
the great actress, and which I now transcribe. “The part * [Lady
Randolph], I think, was injudiciously chosen: it is long and laborious,
it brings the actress almost constantly before the audience, and is
not, like Lady Macbeth or Queen Katharine, equally striking in every
scene. Her action in the greater part of the play was thought to be
somewhat redundant, and to want that grand repose for which she had
been so celebrated. In many pasages, however, she was still herself;—
particularly in the threatening injunction to Glenalvon to beware of
injuring Young Norval, when she uttered the words,

‘Thou look’st at me as if thou fain wouldst pry
Into my heart—’tis open as my speech’ [II, iii],

and when she swept past him with an indignant wave of her arm. She
was also great in her final exit, when, exclaiming,

‘For such a son,
And such a husband, drive me to my fate’ [V],

she rushed distractedly from the stage.— The audience showed their
devotion for her: at the question of Young Norval,
'But did my sire surpass the rest of men,  
As thou excellest all of womankind?' [IV]

they applied the words to Mrs. Siddons by three rounds of applause.”

A good many years after, Macready, the Glenalvon of that night, assured me, that when Mrs. Siddons (as above described) crossed the stage at “'tis open as my speech,” he was so startled by her tones, look, and gesture, that for the moment he forgot himself: “the woman,” he added, “who could do that, must have done many wonderful things.” (A similar effect was once produced on Macready by an actress of a very different kind, viz. Mrs. Glover, while playing Mrs. Candour to his Joseph Surface in The School for Scandal: the perfect naturalness with which she said to him, “By the by, I hope ’tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined” [I, i], so took him by surprise that for the instant he felt uncomfortable, his thoughts turning away to “his own brother, Major Macready.”)

Though in her readings from Shakespeare Mrs. Siddons did not attempt to rise to the loudness of stage-declamation,—for she fully agreed with her brother John Kemble in thinking that reading and acting ought always to be kept distinct,—she nevertheless contrived by the skilful management of her voice and the lightning of her eyes to give to passion all its intensity. When she read the scenes between Othello and Iago, you seemed to hear the latter, with his head on the shoulder of the former, pouring in low whispers the poison into Othello’s ear; nor was the rage of the Moor the less affective because it was less noisy than it usually is on the boards. In reading Antony and Cleopatra, which she did only to her friends in private, she displayed marvellous power. Indeed, she once intended to have acted the Egyptian queen; but abandoned the design, “because, as throughout a great portion of the tragedy Cleopatra is playing a part, she was afraid that the audience would not have thoroughly understood the performance.” She always read with an eye-glass in her hand, which she occasionally used to assist her sight while glancing at the book, and which she sometimes employed to heighten the effect of her reading: it served for the dagger in Macbeth,—
“like this which now I draw”;

and with it, as she repeated in an unearthly tone,—

“double, double toil and trouble,” &c

she stirred the contents of the enchanted caldron.

But Mrs. Siddons in her readings did not always confine herself to the tragedies of Shakespeare: she would occasionally read, at least to her friends in private, some of his richest comic scenes,—for instance, the scene between Falstaff, Prince Henry, Pointz, &c (First Part of Henry IV, act ii. sc. 4),—and evidently no less to her own enjoyment than to that of her auditors. — She had, indeed, a keen relish for the ludicrous. I have heard her relate with much humour an anecdote of a provincial actress, whom the manager scolded for throwing herself on the stage without a due care of her white sat[in] dress: “Sir,” answered the lady in high indignation, “Mrs. Siddons never minds where she flumps herself.” And on one of the last occasions I ever saw her, she described very comically and dramatically an innocent ruse of which she had recently been made the victim: “Two nights ago,” she said, “I was at my brother’s *[Charles Kemble's] house in St. J[ames's at Park Place] to meet a small party; when Mrs. Charles said to me, ‘As, I believe, you are fond of Scotch ballads, I wish to introduce you to a lady here, Miss Hamilton, who sings them charmingly.’ I, of course, replied that I should be happy to become acquainted with her and to hear her sing. On which, Mrs. Charles, with great formality, introduced me to a tall strange-looking woman, who, having made an awkward curtsey, forthwith sat down to the piano and sang, in a Stentorian voice, a queer song—‘My love he is so cru-el,’ and so on. I was all astonishment; nor, till some time had elapsed, did I discover that this Miss Hamilton was no other than my nephew Henry Kemble in woman’s clothes.”

After quitting the stage, Mrs. Siddons—as, I believe, is more or less the case with all players in like circumstances—suffered extremely from the want of excitement: she was not fond of cards; she was far from a devourer of books; and, on a review of the past, she fancied—
though unwilling to confess it—that the duties of the profession she had abandoned, which formerly appeared so irksome, would now afford her a pleasing recreation. I have seen a letter to her friend Mrs. Fitz Hugh, in which, alluding to John Kemble’s return to the stage after a temporary absence, she writes; “Coriolanus was glorious, and gloriously received: but, alas, where was Volumnia? sitting in an upper box, and sadly gazing on her substitute!”

Mrs. Siddons understood no language but her own; and her acquaintance with literature was comparatively very limited. “I believe,” said Mrs. C. Kemble to me, “that, with the exception of the Bible, Shakespeare, and Milton, she scarcely ever looks into a book.”— It must be allowed that she could not have “looked into” three better.

It not unfrequently happens that theatrical performers, when in what is called “good society,” look and talk as if they were on the defensive; conscious that their profession is not universally regarded as an honourable one, they seem unable to get rid of the suspicion that some slight may be offered them. But in the case of Mrs. Siddons, who had been so much caressed and flattered by persons of the highest rank, even by royalty itself, such a feeling, if it ever existed, had long passed away. She was, however, though very unassuming, not without a proper sense of the respect that was her due; and resented any violation of it. Accordingly, at a party given by Lady Milbanke (some time before Lord Byron married Miss M.), she took offence at the behavior of Lovell Edgeworth; though, I believe, he was far from intending to treat her rudely. She had no acquaintance with him: yet, to her surprise, he came up to her without having been introduced, and, rubbing his hands together, said abruptly and as familiarly as if he had been one of her oldest friends, “Madam, I had the pleasure of seeing you many years ago act the part of Millamant in the little town of T—.”

“Sir,” replied Mrs. Siddons in her most dignified and solemn manner, “I never played Millamant in any theatre, and I never was at the little town of T— during the whole course of my life.” Edgeworth, however, continuing to insist that he was not mistaken, she rose from her seat, and walked to the other side of the room. “Really,” said she to Harness, as he was handing her, not long after, to her carriage, “Really, that Mr. Edgeworth is a very ungentlemanly gentleman.”
Among the admirers of Mrs. Siddons none was more ardent than Talma: and one night at Lord Glenbervie's he carried his admiration to an excess which rather discomposed her. After talking to her for some time in a strain of the highest compliment, he suddenly exclaimed, "Ah, Madame, il faut que je vous embrasse,"—suiting the action to the word.

It is well known that John Kemble was publicly feted when he bade farewell to the stage, that a grand dinner was given to him, and that he was presented with a piece of plate, while an Ode, composed for the occasion by Thomas Campbell, was recited by Young the tragedian. These honours paid to a brother whom she dearly loved afforded much pleasure to Mrs. Siddons: but she could not help recollecting at the same time that she (the greater performer of the two) had received no such testimonies of public approbation when she took leave of the stage. "I trust," she said, "that in the next world women will be more valued and respected than they are in this."  

Her sensibility was exquisite. Miss Kell[y], in an "entertainment" which once proved very attractive, took occasion to inform the public, that when, during her juvenile days, she played Prince Arthur to the Constance of Mrs. Siddons, the linen collar worn by her as the young prince used to be wet through and through with the tears shed on it by the great actress in the course of the tragedy. Even while reading passages of Milton to her friends in private, the tears would sometimes trickle down her cheeks. But the most remarkable instance of her extreme sensibility—one which some readers will probably treat with ridicule—was often related by the late Mrs. Groom, who, when Miss Wilkinson, was for several seasons well known to the musical world of London as an accomplished concert-singer, and who, eventually, after the ruin of her husband's affairs, nobly supported her family by becoming a teacher of singing, and could boast of numbering among her pupils the children of Queen Victoria. Being niece to the Miss Wilkinson, who lived for many years as companion to Mrs. Siddons, she consequently was very often in the society of the latter even from her childhood. One morning, when a little girl, as she was puzzling over a story-book, Mrs. Siddons inquired what was the subject of it; and on learning that it was The Life, Death and Burial of Cock Robin, rejoined, "Well, my dear, I will read it to you." Accordingly, she pro-
ceeded to do so in her most careful and artistic style; and so completely was she carried away by the narrative, that, at its close, she could not restrain her tears for Robin's untimely fate!—Some readers, as I have observed above, will probably treat this anecdote with ridicule, thinking that it equals in absurdity what Madame D'Arblay and Mrs. Piozzi have recorded of Sophy Streatfield's marvellous readiness "to cry": nevertheless, as it [is] highly characteristic and of unquestionable authenticity, I have not chosen to omit it.

When a young portrait-painter (whose fame soon died away) was extolled by his London admirers as superior to Sir Thomas Lawrence, Mrs. Siddons observed; "The public have a sort of pleasure in mortifying their old favourites by setting up new idols. I know it by my own experience; for I have been three times threatened with an eclipse,—first, by means of Miss Brunton (afterwards Mrs. Merry), secondly by means of Miss Smith (afterwards Mrs. Bartley), and lastly by Miss O'Neill. Nevertheless," she added, "I am not yet extinguished." Of the three ladies in question, one only could be considered as a really eminent performer,—viz. Miss O'Neill (now Lady Becher).

I remember Mrs. Siddons saying, "Liston now receives as much per week as the united salaries of myself, my brother John, and my brother Charles amounted to."

She always maintained that a constant residence in London and London society had a decided tendency to harden the heart.

Mrs. Siddons died June 8, 1831.

PART 2: MINOR CHARACTERS

[GIOVANNI B.] BELZONI [F. 22']

Long before he was known to the world as the indefatigable explorer of Egyptian antiquities, he used to act melodramatic (or rather, pantomimic) parts, and exhibit feats of strength at various theatres in England and Scotland. He was of gigantic stature—seven feet in height, if not more, and possessing extraordinary physical power. When a boy,
I saw him, at the Edinburgh Theatre, play Orson in Valentine and Orson; and I have a vivid recollection of his striking appearance on his first entrance in that piece, when he rushed from the back-scene down to the foot-lights, strangling a hare. He concluded his performances of the evening by carrying about the stage eight men; two of them on his shoulders; others hanging upon him with their feet resting on an iron girdle attached to straps which depended from his neck; and some supported by means of his hands.

MRS. [MARY ANN] DAVENPORT; [WILLIAM] FARREN, &C. [f. 36]

In the parts of old women—whether jolly dames, pompous matrons, starched ancient maidens, or feeble crones—Mrs. Davenport had no equal during my acquaintance with the stage. Mrs. Glover, who latterly took to parts of the same kind, was very inferior: in order to produce a laugh, she would unscrupulously vulgarize certain characters far beyond what the authors intended, and even cockneyfy their language: an instance of this was her Mrs. Heidelberg in The Clandestine Marriage; and yet after all her efforts to render it ludicrous, it was not so truly comic as the Mrs. Heidelberg of Mrs. Davenport.

In The Clandestine Marriage, when played at Covent-Garden theatre, Mrs. Davenport was associated with Farren as Lord Ogleby, Charles Kemble as Lovewell, Fawcett as Sterling, Jones as Brush, [Farley] as Canton, Mrs. Charles Kemble as Miss Sterling, and Miss Brunton (Mrs. Yates) as Fanny. All these performers did ample justice to their respective parts: but Farren carried away the chief applause, and very deservedly; for a more finished piece of acting than his Lord Ogleby could not well be conceived. From beginning to end it was elaborated to perfection: in the earlier scene [II, i] where the battered old beau appears at his toilet, making himself up for the day; in act iv. sc. 3, where, in the dialogue with Lovewell, he chuckles over the idea that Fanny has conceived a passion for him; and in act v. sc. 2, where, on Sterling’s threatening to turn Fanny and Lovewell out of doors directly, he declares, with a burst of generous feeling, that, should Sterling do
so, he will receive them into his own house;—Farren displayed in all such consummate ability as seemed sufficient to refute the allegations of his theatrical brethren that he was a man endowed with very little mind; unless, indeed, we choose to agree with those writers who maintain that acting is an imitative art almost independent of the intellectual powers.

Strange that Farren, who was so completely the polished gentleman in Lord Ogleby, should have been rather the reverse in Sir Peter Teazle: yet it is a fact that Mrs. Nisbett, when his Lady Teazle at the Haymarket Theatre, complained of his vulgarity to the manager: “I am far,” she said, “from affecting any airs of over-delicacy; but the way in which Mr. Farren runs *[amourously] at me in The School for Scandal is so very offensive, that I must beg you will interfere to prevent his doing so in future.”

Lord Ogleby as well as Sir Peter Teazle was originally performed by King. The elder Charles Mathews had seen him in both parts; and, on my asking how he played them, Mathews replied, “Sir, he grimaced throughout like a monkey.”

**MRS. GIBBS [f. 44]**

Though not “a star,” Mrs. Gibbs was a very valuable addition to any theatrical company. She was excellent as the representative of the waiting-maids of Congreve and of the dramatists of that class; nor was she less successful in various other characters,—Mrs. Candour in *The School for Scandal*, Charlotte in *The Stranger*, Tilburina in *The Critic*, &c &c. How trifling soever might be the parts she played, she was sure to make them “tell” by her neat and pointed delivery, her joyous manner, and her exhilarating laugh. The effect of her acting was heightened by her personal appearance; for on my first seeing her she was still much more than comely, and must have been beautiful in her youth. When a pageant in honour of Shakespeare was produced at Covent-Garden theatre, in which Miss O’Neill figured as the Tragic Muse, the managers very properly assigned her Comic sister to Mrs. Gibbs.

Somewhat late in her career she married George Colman the
Younger (with whom she had long lived par amours); and a very affectionate and prudent wife she proved. His circumstances made it necessary for him to reside within the rules of the King’s Bench; and many a night, after performing at the theatre, would Mrs. Gibbs (as she continued to be called), in order to save the expense of coach-hire, put on her cloak and pattens, and trudge home over Blackfriars Bridge, regardless of the weather.

To an actress who has remained on the stage till considerably advanced in years, it is generally a trial (and the more severe, if she has once been beautiful) to be compelled to take the parts of old women: it was, therefore, with extreme reluctance, and, I believe, not without shedding tears, that Mrs. Gibbs, on the retirement of Mrs. Davenport, acted the Nurse to Fanny Kemble’s Juliet,—and did not act it well, for it was unsuited to her style.

MRS. [DOROTHY] JORDAN [ff. 58–59’]

Was assuredly one of the most popular comic actresses that ever trod the British boards: and what added to the pleasure of her audience was the evident pleasure she herself took in the parts she played; for instance, it was plain how thoroughly she relished the brilliant wit of Shakespeare’s Rosalind; in which character, by the by, I may mention, as an instance of stage-trick now long obsolete, that when, with delightful archness, she sung into the ear of Orlando (Barrymore) the burden “Cuckoo, cuckoo,” she at the same time made the powder fall from his wig by giving it a smart brush with the back of her hand.— Nor was she less charming in another romantic part of our great poet,—Viola in Twelfth-Night.

But Peggy in The Country Girl (an alteration by Garrick of Wycherley’s Country Wife),—the character which she selected for her debut in London, and which laid the foundation of her fame,—was perhaps her chef d’oeuvre. No description can convey an adequate idea of the fascination which she threw into the part: as the play proceeded, the audience were more and more enraptured with the exquisite picture of rustic simplicity combined with a cunning which enables her to out-
wit her surly guardian, till the crowning point of all, when, on the exclamation of Moody, “She’s my wife, and I demand her” [V, ii], Peggy suddenly appears in the balcony, and rejoins, “No, but I an’t,”—words which came from the mouth of Mrs. Jordan in a tone so perfectly natural that one could hardly think she was only acting.

Another piece which afforded her an opportunity of showing off her peculiar talent to the best advantage, and which may be considered as having died with her, was that strange production *The Devil to Pay* (an alteration from Coffey’s farce of that name, which he founded on Jevons’ *Devil of a Wife*) wherein a cobbler’s spouse, Nell, is metamorphosed by a magician into Lady Loverule, while the latter is changed into the cobbler’s wife. Nothing in its kind could be more truthful or amusing than Mrs. Jordan’s representation of the bewilderment of Nell, when, waking in bed as Lady Loverule, she holds a dialogue with her attendant Lettice, part of which runs thus [II, vi];

“Lettice. Your ladyship’s chocolate is ready.

Nell *[aside]*. Mercy on me! what’s that? Some garment, I suppose.—*Put it on, then, sweetheart.*

Lettice. Put it on! Madam, I have taken it off; ’tis ready to drink.

Nell. I mean, *put it by*: I don’t care for drinking now.”

That none of the great triumphs of this favourite daughter of Thalia were in modern genteel comedy must be attributed to a want of refinement in her acting, which has been allowed even by her most ardent admirers. And it seems certain that at times—though, I presume, very rarely—she was tempted to overdo her part; for I have heard Charles Kemble frequently relate that one night in *The Wonder* when he played Felix to her Violante, she was so carried away by the impulse of the moment that she absolutely bullied him, following him round the stage while he awkwardly kept retreating before her; and so great was his indignation that, on their making their exit, he said, “Mrs. Jordan, if a real Donna Violante had treated a real Don Felix with such intolerable rudeness, he would surely have stabbed her.”

Latterly, of course, the effect of her performances was marred by
the extreme unfitness of her figure for the juvenile parts, of which a large portion of her repertoire consisted: yet there was such a charm about her, that when an elderly, fat, dumpy woman,—and having some sort of string attached to her wig and passed tightly under her chin, to make a distinction between the said chin and her neck,—she continued to play youthful belles, and even hoydens of sixteen, to crowded and applauding houses. This was the case on the last occasion of my seeing her—in 1816 [i.e., 1814], when my friend Kenney brought out a new comedy called Debtors and Creditors, in which, though looking like a respectable grandmother, she acted with great sprightliness a very young lady. She was well supported in that comedy by Liston, Terry, Jones, Emery, and Mrs. Powell.

Nor in any account of Mrs. Jordan ought her merits as a singer to be passed over without notice: though not much of a musician, she had a very correct ear, and warbled ballads with ravishing sweetness and expression.

[James Kenney and His Last Dramatic Production [ff. 86-89]]

"12 Cork Street 83
23rd Oct' 1844

My dear Mr. Dyce,

When I met you some time ago you may remember I express'd a wish that you would take the trouble to read the play which had made so much stir between the actors & last management of C. G. Theatre. That wish, as Moxon may possibly have apprized you, I have not abandoned—first, because it would be a great satisfaction to me to have an opinion in which I should have so much Confidence and Secondly for a Reason more especial which I will explain.— From the Circumstances of my having lent myself to one or two Experiments [?] to oblige Macready, and in the Certainty of getting the pieces acted, tho' avowedly without faith in their Success, which the Events justified, it strikes me that I have lost more of my Estimation with Managers than I deserve, and I should say with Webster in particular, who in two or
three instances latterly has treated my overtures with strange inattention. But as you have been one of his judicial Committee in the Case [?] of the prize Comedies, it strikes me that if the play came to his hands thro' you, & with your Recommendation, the author being no otherwise identified than generally, as a Friend of yours, he would give it special attention, and if he should take the Same Sanguine impression of it, which *[Charles] Kemble did, & also his Cabinet Advisers, he might be induced to make a temporary Engagement or two to do it justice, for I do not see how that could be accomplished, as regards the two characters of the Duchess & Laroche in the present state of his Company. This favour of course would imply your approbation of the play, and not that your Candour should suffer any violence in granting it. The chief objection of the Actors, made under the perverse & discontented State of their feelings, was to the general position of the Duchess & the Construction of the last act. With all allowance for the fallibility of their opinions, I have nevertheless, amended the play in a careful re-consideration, and no objection I think in either of these Cases will now remain.—

Relying on your Kindness I venture to send the M. S. herewith, and should request to be favoured with your Sentiments about it, previous to any [?] further proceedings.

I am,

D' Mr. D.

Yrs very truly

Ja^ Kenney

My original title was Infatuation, or a Tale of the French Empire but as that Name appear'd in the papers I should send it in under another. As a Drama, it is quite original.—"

"12 Cork Street,
Sat'

My dear Mr. Dyce,

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

I am anxious you should stipulate that Webster should not pass the play into the hands of any adviser, as I hear Mr. Boursicault [sic],
the author of the forthcoming comedy, is much in his counsels, if not altogether; and he is notoriously a man to distrust: and pray use your own time and convenience in the matter, as I am not at all impatient, nor could there be any need of it at the theatre at this moment.

Yours very truly,
J. Kenney.”

Thinking the play more than tolerably good, I wrote to Webster, asking if he would read it. He replied:—

“My dear Sir,
I shall feel great pleasure in perusing the play you speak of, especially when so highly recommended.

I am,
My dear Sir,
At all times
Your obliged obed* Serv*,
B. Webster.

The Rev* Alex* Dyce.
*[n. d.].”

I accordingly sent the play to Webster, who having delayed for several months to signify his decision on it, Kenney became so restless and impatient that I heartily regretted having meddled in the matter.

“12 Cork Street,
15 Mar. 1845.
My dear Mr. Dyce,
Having had recent confirmation, and that on unquestionable authority, of what I stated to you when you last wrote to Mr. Webster, that he had repeatedly declared his intention of acting no more plays of serious interest, and also that his arrangement with Vestris would bar his engagement of any such actress as my heroine would require, I must again beg of you to request from him an immediate return of the M. S. I have now waited much longer than in kindness you advised, and with many thanks for whatever trouble I have given both you and Mr. Webster, be it distinctly understood that my request now amounts to a
requisition that you will obtain the play for me \textit{at once} under all and any circumstances.

I am,

My dear Mr. Dyce,

Yours ever truly,

J. Kenney.

P. S. I have written what precedes that you might quote it to Webster if you could spare so much trouble, which I am really ashamed to give; and pray add an earnest word or two representing the propriety of my demand and urging compliance, 'or that you will get into disgrace,' &c, &c.'

I was now forced to reclaim the play from the Haymarket-manager, who returned it to me with the following letter:

"T. R. Haymarket,
March 26, 1845.

My dear Sir,

Until my Easter pieces were launched I could not pay proper attention to your note: let this, I beg, be my excuse for not having ere this answered it. I have devoted the whole of this day to the careful perusal of your friend's play, and think it highly dramatic and most effective. Successful it must be; but I know of no actress except Miss Helen Faucit who could do adequate justice to the Duchess de Bracciano: certainly no one of my company. This is fatal to its representation here. Then for the elite of the talent here there are no parts, except perhaps Gobert for C. Matthews [sic]. Gobert is a delightful fellow: I could almost have wished he had had another scene. My forces are essentially comic; a five-act play without them would go for nothing: people would cry 'where's Farren,' &c? The author would suffer by it, saying nothing of the injury it would do your humble servant in pocket. * * * *

I am, My dear Sir,

Your obliged Serv'.

B. Webster.

The Rev' Alex' Dyce."
The play, under the title of *Infatuation*, was afterwards acted, for a night or two, at the Princess's Theatre, Miss Cushman and James Wallack taking the chief parts.

Subsequent to Kenney's death, Miss Cushman told me, at one of Rogers's breakfasts, that she possessed the original MS. of *Infatuation* with my remarks on the margins.

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"My brother *[John Kemble]* thought very very highly of Henderson's Shylock: but he said that in the fourth act of the play Macklin was superior to Henderson on account of the natural rigidity and stern expression of his countenance.

"I saw Cooke make his first appearance at [...] in Richard the Third." 84 It went off, on the whole, rather flatly till he gave the words, 'Well, as you guess,' which drew down thunders of applause; and from that speech to the end of the tragedy the audience were in raptures. His Richard was not free from coarseness: but he was a great actor; so great, that I have no hesitation in saying, that his Sir Pertinax Maysycophant 85 and his Sir Archy Macsarcasm 86 might rank, as artistic performances, with my sister's Lady Macbeth and my brother's Coriolanus.

"When Macklin was very old and his memory much impaired, he was stopped in the street by an actor named D[... ] (not the well-known Tom Davies), who said to him, 'Mr. Macklin, you perhaps don't remember me; but I used long ago to play to you boys' parts in various pieces.' 'O, ay,' replied Macklin, 'I remember: I'm glad to see you, Dav[... ]: good-by: *you're very much grown, Dav[... ].'*"

C. Kemble.
An exquisitely refined actress, who was perfectly natural without even for a moment sinking into vulgar familiarity. I was once talking about her to Mrs. Jamieson at the house of Charles Kemble, when Charles broke in with the remark, "She has not an equal in Europe." Though properly a comic actress, her pathos was intense, quite free from any hysterical exaggeration; and in the *Fille d'honneur* and in the slight melodrame of *Valérie* she drew as many tears from the audience as were ever shed at the deepest tragedy. Her acting as the heartless and satirical Célimène in the *Misanthrope* was one of the most brilliant specimens of genteel comedy which can well be conceived.

One night at Paris, after seeing her in some favourite piece, Mrs. Charles Kemble, accompanied by Talma, went round to her dressing-room to compliment her on her performance. When the door opened, Mars was sitting before the looking-glass, half undressed, with her bosom almost quite bare; and Mrs. Charles Kemble hesitated about going in. But Talma saw no reason why they should retreat; and, as they entered the room, he said to Mars, "*Ah Mademoiselle, votre miroir est bien trai\`{e}re!*"

Though his acting was always respectable, and in some characters rose much above mediocrity, he was far better on the whole as a mimic than as a regular comedian. The "entertainments" which, during several seasons, he gave, night after night, without any one to assist him, justly obtained great popularity: if they were not free from indifferent puns, these were overlooked amid the rich humour which predominated; for instance, if when he quoted Shakespeare's song, "Tell me where is fancy bred," the audience were not particularly amused by the exclamation of the little girl, "O, pa, our baker sells fancy bread," they could not fail
to be highly gratified by his admirable personation (in a cap and shawl) of the Old Scotch Lady, who tells a long story about nothing.\textsuperscript{87}

I have already mentioned his imitations of Coleridge,\textsuperscript{88} and I may add that I have been present when in a private room he has imitated to the very life the manner and language of O'Connell and Sheil while speaking before the House of Commons.

During one of the last visits I ever paid him at Highgate, he complained of feeling far from well: "but," he said, "I have to act tonight at Drury-lane Theatre, along with Liston, in Colman's \textit{Who Wants a Guinea?}, and, no doubt, as soon as I step upon the stage, I shall forget my illness."

That he was nervous and over-sensitive to a painful degree, I had a striking proof. When manager of the Adelphi Theatre in conjunction with Yates, he had frequently asked Harness and myself to meet him there before the play began, that he might put us into a private box. Accordingly, one evening we walked to the Adelphi, and entered it by the back-door: but Mathews had not yet arrived from Highgate; and we were requested by poor old Pope (who in his declining fortunes had become stage-manager of the Adelphi) to seat ourselves in the Green-room, which was then quite empty. On Mathews's arrival, we accompanied him up-stairs to his dressing-room, where he proceeded to array himself for the part of Monsieur Mallet in [the play of that name by Moncrieff]; during which operation Pope came in, and poured into his ear sundry flattering speeches—"No wonder that people preferred the Adelphi to all other theatres—the Adelphi was the only place in London where really good acting was to be seen," \&c, \&c. Just before the rising of the curtain, Harness and I were shown into the stage-box. The performance commenced; and Mathews and Mrs. Yates played very pleasingly as the father and daughter. At the end of the first act Mathews surprised us by suddenly bouncing into our box, and sitting down at the back of it, out of the view of the audience: he was in a state of great excitement, and declared that a party in the box next above us had come expressly to annoy and insult him, for they not only kept up a constant chattering, but they laughed at all those portions of his acting which he intended to be pathetic. We tried to convince him how unlikely it was that the party in question should bear him any ill-will; and we urged
that in all probability they were persons (of whom there are not a few) with such an itch for talking that they could not be silent even during the most interesting scenes of a play. But he left the box, very little soothed by our arguments: and Mrs. Yates afterwards told me that she had felt very uncomfortable the whole evening, expecting every moment that Mathews would formally address the supposed offenders.

Mathews was the devoted admirer of John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, and ever ready to deny the merits of any performers who were cried up in opposition to his two idols. Hence he could not endure the elder Kean, saying that in the iii\textsuperscript{a} act of \textit{Othello}, when Kean exclaimed "O, blood, blood, blood," crossing the stage and clutching with his hands, he realized the idea, not of a noble Moorish warrior, but of a brutal Indian savage. Hence, too, Madame Pasta in \textit{Medea} appeared to Mathews only "a little woman, bustling about, with her arms akimbo, and with the gait of a cookmaid."

\textbf{[Joseph S.] Munden [f. 139]}

His performance of Cockletop in O'Keeffe's farce of \textit{Modern Antiques} is immortalized by Lamb in \textit{Elia} ["On the Acting of Munden"]; and, among many other characters in which he was equally happy, were Autolycus in Shakespeare's \textit{Winter's Tale}, Marrall in Massinger's \textit{New Way to Pay Old Debts}, Old Dornton in Holcroft's \textit{Road to Ruin}, Adam Winterton in Colman's \textit{Iron Chest}, and Scrub in Farquhar's \textit{Beaux' Stratagem}. His acting in the last-mentioned comedy has been pronounced by a competent judge to be on a par with that of Garrick:\footnote{9} and I have here to notice the gross buffoonery which I have seen him engraft on the part of Scrub while playing it in the country, but which, I suppose, he never ventured to introduce at a London theatre.

In the fourth act of \textit{The Beaux' Stratagem}, Aimwell, pretending to have a fit, is carried in a chair into the house of Lady Bountiful; and presently, feigning to recover his senses, he breaks out into a rant,—

"Where am I?
Sure, I have pass'd the gulf of silent death,
And now am landed on th'Elysian shore."
Behold the goddess of those happy plains! —
Fair Proserpine, let me adore thy bright divinity.
[Kneels to Dorinda, and kisses her hand."

Now, as soon as the scene was over, Munden re-entered and went through a parody of the above lines: he threw himself into the chair which Aimwell had occupied, and then starting up from it, exclaimed—

"Where am I?
Sure, I have pass'd the gulf of silent death,
And now am landed on th'Egyptian shore.
Behold the goddess of those happy plains! —
Fair Porcupine, let me adore thy bright virginy,"

and all this gag he uttered with a prodigious deal of face-making and extravagant gesticulation; drawing down thunders of applause from an audience, who, doubtless, were quite unconscious that it did not form a portion of the original play.

**MRS. PIOZZI AND CONWAY THE ACTOR [ff. 143-45']**

In 1843 was published a thin pamphlet entitled *Love Letters of Mrs. Piozzi, Written when She was Eighty, to William Augustus Conway,* who was then in his twenty-seventh year; and though the language of those Letters may be thought insufficient to justify such a title, it is certain that they exhibit an ardour of romantic affection which has little of a maternal character. — That their genuineness should ever have been doubted appears to me surprising, for they are marked throughout by the peculiarities of the writer,—her elasticity of spirit, her playful fancy, and her slip-slop style; nor have I forgotten, that when they first were published, a gentleman, who was a native of Bath and had resided there during the whole period embraced by the Letters, declared to me that the various private individuals and the trifling events incidentally noticed in them were all so perfectly familiar to him, that "he could not for a moment entertain a suspicion of forgery in the case." Besides, is it likely that the idea of forging such Letters would ever have occurred
to any one either in America (where, it is stated, and with minute detail, the originals were sold among Conway’s other effects which were found on shipboard after his unfortunate death) or in our own country? What could have been the object of such a forgery?—Whether they are to be considered as “love-letters,” or merely as the effusions of a “warm friendship that is of every-day occurrence between youth and age that is not crabbed,” I do not pretend to determine: but I conceive that those who have hitherto been disposed to regard them in the former light, will see additional grounds for so regarding them, if they read for the first time the following remarkable statement, which comes from a source too respectable to be slighted. “We ourselves heard the late Charles Mathews say—and no one who knew him will question his veracity—that Conway had himself shown him Mrs. Piozzi’s offer of marriage, and asked his opinion and advice. Mathews told him at once that he could not honourably take advantage of it. ‘That,’ said Conway, ‘is what I myself felt; but in a matter so important to one so poor as I am, I also felt that my own decision should be confirmed by the opinion of a friend. I now know what to do.’ This, we repeat, we heard from Mathews himself, at the time the circumstance occurred, and we therefore believe it.” I dismiss the subject by mentioning, that, to my certain knowledge, Mrs. Piozzi once said to Mrs. Siddons, “The two happiest days of my life were those on which I was introduced to you and to Mr. Conway,”—a speech which was far from pleasing to the great actress.

The writer of the Preface to the *Letters* is quite ignorant of Conway’s parentage, merely observing that he “was of *[a] respectable family” [p. 10]. The fact is, he was a natural son of Lord George Seymour; and his baptismal name was William Augustus Rudd. He began life as an apprentice to a jeweller in Bristol; and though he had always felt an inclination to become an actor (which perhaps was strengthened by the consciousness of his personal beauty), he nevertheless would have endeavoured, on the expiration of his apprenticeship, to better his condition by other means than the theatre if his father would have lent him a helping hand; but, as he informed Macready, Lord G. S. turned a deaf ear to his repeated applications “to do something for him,” and he took to the stage as his only resource. In 1813 he made his first appearance
in London, at Covent-Garden Theatre, in the part of Alexander the Great [in Lee's *The Rival Queens*] and was very favourably received: he soon afterwards played, and with applause, the chief characters in several of Shakespeare's dramas; and perhaps some of my readers will remember him as the Romeo, the Jaffier [in *Venice Preserved*], and the Polydore [in Otway's *The Orphan*], to Miss O'Neill's Juliet, Belvidera, and Monimia. His success in those his earlier days may no doubt be attributed partly to the impression made on the audience by his incomparable face and figure, which realised one's idea of an Antinous of six feet high: but he was a much better actor than is assumed by the editor of the *Letters*, whose low and unjust estimate of Conway's histrionic powers [pp. 11–12] is echoed by Mr. Hayward in his *Autobiography, &c of Mrs. Piozzi* [I, 357–58]. My own opinion is, that in tragedy he was not inferior to any performer at present (1867) belonging to the metropolitan theatres; and what is more to the purpose, I have heard Macready allow that he possessed “considerable talent.” It was not, however, considerable enough to render him an object of permanent attraction; and, with the lapse of time, his popularity gradually declined. Having been five years absent from the London boards, he appeared at the Haymarket Theatre in 1821, and though there was rather an improvement than a falling-off in his acting, he had then ceased to interest the public: unfortunately, too, his unusual height made him look almost gigantic in so confined an area. (Indeed, he had himself always complained of being “too tall”; and once, while he and Charles Kemble were standing on the Covent-Garden stage during the performance of *The Orphan*, he kept stooping so excessively in order to conceal his height, that C. K. could not help whispering to him, “For heaven's sake hold up your head: the audience are not thinking about your tallness.”) After all, how did this once-admired representative of heroes and lovers end his London career? By serving as prompter at the Haymarket Theatre! A change which he felt acutely; for, along with a noble form, nature had given him a woman's sensitiveness: and now, when a guest at the table of Macready, or of any other old friend or acquaintance who kindly invited him to their house, he was “so humble” (not affectedly like Dickens's [Uriah Heep] but in all sincerity), that it was painful to witness the effect produced by his altered circum-
stances on one whose conduct had been always strictly honourable, and whose manners were those of a perfect gentleman.

The rest of Conway's story is well known. In hopes of retrieving his fortune, he went to America on a theatrical speculation: but there utter disappointment awaited him, mainly in consequence of the persevering hostility of the public press; and he determined to abandon the stage for the pulpit. Accordingly with a view of taking orders, he applied himself to the study of Hebrew, in which he is said to have made considerable progress, and to which probably his attention had been directed at a much earlier period by Mrs. Piozzi, who was a constant dabbler in the Hebrew Scriptures. But the low spirits to which he had long been subject increased more and more; and during a voyage from New York to Charleston, just as the vessel was crossing the bar of the latter place, he, in a fit of deep despondency, threw himself overboard and was drowned, on the 24th of January 1828.

MRS. [ELIZABETH] POPE (MRS. YOUNG); HOLCROFT'S FOLLIES OF A DAY OR THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO; [CHARLES] BONNOR
[f. 146']

"I saw Mrs. Pope (Garrick's Miss Young) play Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro: I have a perfect recollection of her acting; and it was violent and exaggerated in the extreme." Mrs. C. Kemble.

The drama in question, The Follies of a Day or the Marriage of Figaro, founded by Holcroft on La Folle Journee ou Le Mariage de Figaro of Beaumarchais, was produced under very remarkable circumstances. In his "Advertisement" to the printed copy Holcroft says; "To enumerate all the obstacles encountered and overcome in bringing this comedy on the English stage would be to indulge this vanity *[of self-love]; which it is every wise man's pride and every prudent man's interest to resist. It may, however, afford some pleasure to be informed *[sic], that, finding *[sic] it impossible to procure a copy of the original French, though a journey to Paris was undertaken expressly for that purpose, the copy made use of in the composing [sic] The Follies
of a Day was taken by memory only during eight or nine representations; that I furnished the plot, incidents, entrances, and exits, and gave some other occasional hints; that the remainder was the work of a young Frenchman *[Bonneville], whose talents and whose heart are an ornament and an honour to his country; and that, after it was brought to England and received by Mr. Harris, it was translated, cast, copied, recopied, studied, and, in one of its longest parts, restudied, and played in little more than a month *[in 1784].”

The part of Figaro was acted by “Mr. Bonnor”: during his latest years resided at Aberdeen, where he died very old and greatly respected. There I knew him well,—a little, slightly built man, with an unceasing flow of lively conversation, somewhat theatrical, but without a shadow of vulgarity. And I remember that when John Kemble passed through Aberdeen on his way home from a visit to Lord Aberdeen at Haddo House, he expressed his regret that he had not time “to see his old friend Bonnor.”

MISS [JANE] POPE [f. 147]

This comic actress (whom Boaden terms “the paragon of chambermaids”), was as respectable in private life as she was excellent on the stage. I never saw her: but I was well acquainted with her niece and the inheritrix of her handsome fortune, Mrs. Thomas; who told me the following facts.—George the Third was so smitten by the youthful charms of Miss Pope, that, through the medium of a nobleman, he offered her any sum she might choose to name, if she would receive him as a lover. Though her circumstances were far from independent, she firmly and at once rejected the tempting offer. A few years before her death at an advanced age, Miss Pope and Mrs. Thomas were in a private box at one of the theatres; when the late Duke of Cambridge came into it, and talked to them for some time; saying, in the course of conversation, “You, Miss Pope, are the only woman in the world that ever made my mother jealous.”

Miss Pope had carefully preserved a large bundle of letters addressed to her by the friend and patroness of her early days, the celebrated Kitty
Clive. I have seen them in the possession of Mrs. Thomas, and they probably still exist.\textsuperscript{103}

GEORGE RAYMOND [ff. 153–55]

Was educated at Eton (where he had Shelley, Milman, &c for his schoolfellows) and at Trinity College, Cambridge, and became a member of the [bar]; but, though in his earlier years he once or twice went the northern circuit, he did so chiefly for amusement's sake, having succeeded to a considerable patrimony which rendered him independent of a profession.

Being very fond of the stage, he was much in the society of dramatists and players: George Colman and Elliston were among his most intimate associates; and I have passed many a pleasant hour at his house in company with one whom we both equally esteemed,—Charles Kemble.

In his youth Raymond was remarkably handsome; and used to set off his person to the best advantage by means of the most fashionable attire. During portions of the years 1819, 1820, he resided at Edinburgh, where he was known by the name of “the English dandy”; and such was the jealousy his good looks and elegant parure excited among the beaux of Prince's-street, that, according to his own account, they formed a regular conspiracy to mortify him, and damned a harmless comedy of his composition, which was brought out at the Edinburgh theatre, May, 1820, merely because they had traced it to his pen. It was called More Plots Than One, and was acted for the benefit of William Murray, the brother of Mrs. Henry Siddons. For the failure of this comedy he was consoled several years after by the success of his Lone Hut, a tremendously sensational melodrama which was produced in London at the Lyceum [1842].—He not only attempted dramatic writing, but on several occasions trod the stage as an amateur actor. I have heard him mention that he once played Jaffeir,—I forget where; and I know that at the Leamington Theatre, while it was under the management of his friend Elliston, he performed Charles Surface, the female part of the audience unanimously pronouncing him to be "charming."
Raymond made sundry happy puns (a minor kind of wit which has frequently been practised even by very celebrated persons who have condemned it as barbarous). One day, while on the northern circuit, he was dining at Bury with Justice Holroyd, Crabb Robinson, and others of the bar. A couple of roast ducks were on the table before Holroyd; and when Robinson said to Raymond “Shall I help you to mutton?” the answer was “No, thank you, I’ll take some of *adhuc sub judice.*” Among the proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre was a Mr. Moore, a hatter in a great way of business, who kept a shop at the Piccadilly-end of Bond Street, and kept moreover a *chère amie* whom he used to drive about in a phaeton. Raymond happened to be walking with Beazley, when this theatrical hatter appeared at a short distance in his chariot, the lady, as usual, being with him. “Who’s that?” said Beazley. “O,” replied Raymond (quoting a line of *Othello* with the addition of a single letter),—

“It is the Moor: I know him by his strumpet.”

Though a man of pleasure, Raymond at times applied himself to literature with considerable diligence. He had perseverance enough to torture the whole history of England into rhyme: but nobody, I presume, has ever had the perseverance to read his metrical *Chronicles* through. He shows some research, too, in his *Memoirs of [R. W.] Ellis-ton,* which reached a second edition [1857], and is entertaining to those who are interested in the biography of players, though a suspicion attaches to it, as to most books of the same description, that some of the anecdotes, if not apocryphal, are at least greatly exaggerated. His latest and, on the whole, his best publication is entitled *Drafts for Acceptance;* a small volume, consisting of essays and tales with a sprinkling of verse, which proves that nature had not denied him a portion either of fancy or humour. This volume is so little known, that I now extract from it the following stanzas on a fascinating contra-alto singer, whom perhaps some of my readers may remember as Pippo in *La Gazza Ladra* and as Arsace in *Semiramide* . . .

In the same miscellany is a *jeu d’esprit* entitled *A Model Prologue,*—not a bad specimen of verses which (like Swift’s celebrated song,
"Fluttering, spread thy purple pinions," &c) seem, if read hastily, to convey a sense, while in fact they are entirely destitute of meaning: indeed Hood thought so well of it, that he printed it (for the first time) in one of his *Comic Annuals.*<sup>107</sup> It opens thus:

> "When Grecian splendour, unadorn'd by art,  
> Confirm'd the Theban oracle—in part,—  
> When Genius walk'd digestive o'er the scene.  
> In meagre mystery of unletter'd mien,—  
> When man first saw, with an inverted eye,  
> The tearful breath of purple panoply,  
> 'Twas then the Muse, with adamantine grace,  
> Replied prophetic from her Pythian base,  
> And Roscius bent his Macedonian knee  
> Before the squadrons of Melpomene," &c.

As Raymond has not mentioned the ridiculous circumstances which suggested this tissue of nonsense, it may be noticed here. The Drurylane company, when under the management of Stephen Price, included a comedian named Gattie, who was far from contemptible in the common run of elderly characters, and was even excellent in the part of Monsieur Tonson.<sup>108</sup> The manager and some of his friends, wishing to amuse themselves with Gattie's simplicity, put into his hands a long and absurd Epilogue, to be spoken by him after a play which, they pretended, had been sent to the licenser, and was daily expected at the theatre. Gattie forthwith began to study the Epilogue; during the delivery of which he had to appear in three different dresses;—having pulled off first one garment, and then another, he was to be discovered in his favourite part of Monsieur Tonson. All this necessitated sundry rehearsings. At last, Gattie, having mastered the difficulties of the Epilogue, declared himself ready to speak it; when Harley suddenly entered the Green-Room, and announced the melancholy tidings, that Colman had positively refused to license the play, in consequence of which, the Epilogue would not be wanted. On hearing this, Gattie was wild with vexation; for not only had he had a great deal of trouble with the Epilogue, but Mrs. Gattie had been at much pains so to adjust the requisite dresses that he might slip them off quickly and easily. Raymond, being, in those days, very
frequently behind the scenes of Drurylane Theatre, witnessed the progress and the finale of this rather cruel joke; and was present when somebody started the idea that a Prologue should be composed as a counterpart to the Epilogue just described, and that, by means of it, a certain actor, who had laughed exceedingly at the trick played on Gattie, should, in his turn and in a similar manner, be made an object of ridicule. Such was the origin of the Model Prologue: the first line of which is by Poole, who struck, as it were, the key-note; the rest was written by Raymond currente calamo. The actor whom it was intended to hoax, remarked that "it seemed very obscure"; but, in his case, the jest was carried no further.— I may add, that Gattie, the victim of the Epilogue, terminated his career rather oddly: for some reason or other, having altogether abandoned the stage, he retired to Oxford,—not to study the Classics, but to set up a snuff-shop; and there he died in the odour of—tobacco.

Though so handsome a man, and so greatly admired by the other sex, Raymond was never married.— After an illness of several years, which commenced with paralysis, and which, rendering him gradually weaker and weaker (but without affecting his intellect), confined him at last to bed, he expired May 13, 1867, in his 71st year.

1. Almeria faints twice in The Mourning Bride (act i. sc. 2, and act iv. sc. 1); but on neither occasion is Zara present. Mrs. Siddons, therefore, must have seen this premature fainting from the wing, where she very often used to sit, instead of retiring to the green-room.

2. He is generally supposed to have been the son of an Edmund Kean and a Miss Carey. [The DNB concurs. See also Hillebrand, Kean, pp. 2 ff.]

3. See it minutely related in [Bryan W.] Procter's Life of [Edmund] Kean [London, 1835], vol. ii. p. 194 sqq. [In Hillebrand's account, Kean watched over Cooke's reinterment in New York and erected a monument to the actor; "in his pocket he carried away a bone of the forefinger of his saint" (Kean, pp. 222-23).]

4. [Howard's first appearance on the stage was at Exeter, 26 March 1813, in The Savages (Hillebrand, Kean, p. 75).]

5. ["Here, mark a poor desolate maid."]

6. [They show 21 roles on 18 dates; a fuller list is in Hillebrand, Kean, pp. 73-75. Dyce scribbled at the bottom of the leaf, "K. first appeared in London Jan 26th, 1814." Hillebrand relates this famous event (Kean in Shylock at Drury Lane) on pp. 108 ff.]

8. "O, now, for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content,” &c

9. "Iago. She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,
She lov'd them most.

Othello. And so she did.”

Act iii. sc. 3

10. [See n. 24 below.]

11. [This information is duplicated, in much the same language, by “a conversation preserved by John Forster” (Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, MS. 48 E 3, No. 315) ; printed in Hackett's Descriptive Notes, ed. Downer, p. xvii.]

12. [See Macready’s Reminiscences, ed. Sir Frederick Pollock (New York, 1875), pp. 102-3.]

13. [This scrap of a leaf, so numbered in the MS, was inserted after f. 62. Hawkins's “Preface” is dated 1 March 1869; thus this cranky note may have been Dyce’s last addition to the MS.]

14. They had already acted together in one or two plays at Glasgow,—where [they were applauded in J. H. Payne’s Brutus, Sept. 1828. See Hillebrand, Kean, p. 298.]

15. A small property with a house on it, near Horndean in Hampshire, which Charles Kean had recently purchased, and which was the residence of his mother during the last years of her life.

16. [These characteristically Romantic comments refer to one of the earliest attempts to restore Shakespeare. On 20 February 1845 Samuel Phelps “produced for the first time Richard III, and from the text of Shakespeare in lieu of the Colley Cibber edition, which had so long held possession of the stage” (W. May Phelps and John Forbes-Robertson, The Life and Life-Work of Samuel Phelps [London, 1886], p. 69). This marvel ran for twenty-four nights. A favorable review describing it may be found in the above memoir, pp. 74-75.]

17. Forrest failed in London because his acting, powerful as it undoubtedly was, had such an admixture of coarseness and extravagance as a British audience could not tolerate. But, under the erroneous impression that he owed his failure to the partizans of Macready, he did not scruple to outrage all decency by going into the pit of the Edinburgh Theatre and openly hissing Macready in Hamlet! And the persecution which Macready afterwards underwent in America on account of his alleged enmity to Forrest is hardly yet forgotten.

18. A letter written by me to Charles Kean, at the request of Macready, to ask if he would play Othello to Macready’s Iago,—the proceeds of which performance were to be applied to defraying the cost of the statue of Mrs. Siddons now placed in Westminster Abbey.

19. [Dyce’s note to this sentence in The Album, p. 265, mentions Kemble’s asthma and adds, “. . . we have frequently observed him reduced to the indecorous necessity of spitting on the stage.”]

20. ["The Pleasures of Imagination," I, 492–500.]


22. [In The Album, p. 271, Dyce continues: “Perhaps, towards the end of the tragedy, he was somewhat deficient in that martial ardour which burns in the bosom of the usurping tyrant.”]

23. [A word here is illegible.]

24. [Two scribbled paragraphs remain on f. 77°. They relate to Edmund Kean’s acting of Sir Giles Overreach and his effect upon Mrs. Renaud, the anecdote on f. 63° given above in the article on Kean. The original is in The Album, p. 255.]

26. [A few words are missing in this and the following lacuna owing to a tear in the leaf.]
27. [Alexander Barclay's *Myrrour* of gode manners. [The leaf is torn.]
28. [Dyce is perhaps referring to Michael Kelly.]
29. [The unique MS is in the Larpent Collection at the Huntington Library. See Baker, *Kemble*, p. 43 n.]
30. [On f. 75* Dyce transcribed from *The Album*, p. 263 n., a brief account of Kemble's last performance, the basis of what follows (ff. 81–82).]
31. [These words follow a deleted sentence corresponding to the next paragraph.]
32. On that night Abbot (as a substitute for C. Kemble) read the part of Young Woodville, which tended still further to render the whole performance heavy.
33. [This leaf, which follows f. 85 in the MS, has no number.]
34. [I have mentioned the first paragraph on this side of the leaf in n. 30. The present paragraph is to be found in *The Album*, p. 264 n.]
35. [P. iv in the Dublin, 1801, edition.]
36. [Things are shuffled here, and the actual letters have been numbered as part of the MS. The original of the first is ff. 93–94, of the second ff. 91–92. Dyce's transcript is on ff. 95, 90. I print the originals, with Dyce's notes.]
37. Alluding to the D[eepe]dene, Mr. Hope's mansion near Dorking.
38. Where C. Kemble at that time had a house.
39. [Probably *The Foscari* (Covent Garden, 4 Nov. 1826).]  
41. A clever and very gentlemanly youth, who took orders, and has been long dead. He had lived chiefly at Bath; and an article by him entitled "The Bath Man," which appeared in *The Album* [IV (1824–25), 173–89, 413–34; it is unsigned], made the good folks of that city extremely angry.
42. Her son, afterwards so eminent as an Anglo-Saxon scholar.
43. [Dyce omits the address in his transcript.]
44. [Dyce omits this much of the sentence.]
45. Elizabeth Kemble, wife of C. E. Whitlock, manager of the Theatre at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Before her marriage she played for some time at Drury Lane Theatre. Having accompanied her husband to America in a professional expedition, she acted there for many years with such success as to realize a handsome fortune.
46. *Hamlet*, act i. sc. 1.
49. "Mr. Garrick would also flatter me by sending me into one of the boxes when he acted any of his great characters." Campbell's *Life of Mrs. Siddons*, vol. i. p. 61.
50. [They show 11 roles on 11 dates in 1776–77, 1779.]
52. "Zara's surprising Almeria and Osmyn in conference, produces an incident, which, from situation and circumstance, is rather of the comic than the tragic strain. One princess jealous of another's superior charms may indeed be made a serious subject, as in *The Distressed Mother*; but the expressions of anger and resentment in this captive queen seldom fail to excite laughter. Mrs. Porter, who was deservedly admired in *Zara*, and Mrs. Pritchard her successor in that part, could not, with all their skill, prevent the risibility of the audience in this interview. Mrs. Siddons alone preserves the dignity and truth of character, unmixed with any incitement to mirth from countenance, expression, or action." [Thomas] Davies's *Dram. Miscell*. [Dra-
The Stage: Consisting of Critical Observations on Several Plays of Shakespeare (London, 1785) vol. iii. pp. 373[-74].


54. Observations on Tamerlane [p. 5].—British Theatre [(London, 1808), X].— Hazlitt, whose admiration of Mrs. Siddons knew no bounds, writes as follows: “The very sight of her *Mrs. Siddons’s* name in the play-bills, in *Tamerlane* or *Alexander the Great,* threw a light upon the day, and drew after it a long trail of eastern glory, a joy and felicity unutterable, that has since vanished in the mists of criticism and the glitter of idle distinctions.” Memoirs of W illiam Hazlitt [London, 1867] by W. Carew Hazlitt, vol. i. p. 202.— On one occasion, in the dying scene of Arpasia, Mrs. Siddons was so overcome by her feelings that she actually fainted. Of this the audience were immediately aware by the violence with which her head struck the stage and by the disorder of her dress; and for some time great alarm and excitement prevailed in the theatre.

55. “Mrs. Siddons very lately in the third act of the Fair Penitent was so far affected with assuming the mingled passions of pride, fear, anger, and conscious guilt, that I might appeal to the spectators whether, in spite of the rouge which the actress is obliged to put on, some paleness did not shew itself in her countenance.” Dram. Miscell. vol. iii. p. 58.

56. The late Mr. Adair Hawkins, who had practised as a surgeon, told me, that, in company with a friend, also a medical man, he saw Mrs. Siddons act Rosalind, and that her swoon at sight of the bloody handkerchief was so true to nature that they could hardly believe it to be feigned.

57. For a benefit.


59. [The leaf is torn, making illegible a note on Dr. John Thomson, professor of general pathology in the University of Edinburgh, who apparently had something to say about Mrs. Siddons’s acting and Dugald Stewart’s oratory.]

60. In Whalley’s Journals and Correspondence, edited by Mr. Wickham, is a blunder connected with the above-mentioned Address, so strange and unparalleled that I cannot even invent an hypothesis to account for it. He informs us that in 1781 *[1782] Mrs. Siddons took leave of the Bath-audience . . . . “when she led forward on the stage her three children, most becomingly dressed, and repeated:—

‘These are the moles that heave me from your side,
Where I was rooted, where I could have died. . . .’” vol. i. p. 7

[I have spared the reader Twiss’s section.] Now, the first two lines just cited are really from the Address, written by herself, which Mrs. Siddons delivered at Bath in 1781: but the eight remaining lines, “Perhaps your hearts,” &c, form the conclusion of the Address composed for her by her nephew Horace Twiss, and spoken by her at Covent-Garden Theatre in 1812! Both Addresses may be read in Campbell’s Life of Mrs. Siddons, vol. i. p[p]. 90[-92], vol. ii. p[p]. 338[-39]. And is it not surprising that Mr. Wickham was not struck by the utter absurdity of making Mrs. Siddons declare in 1782, that “her lips had poured so long the charmed sorrows of your Shakespeare’s song”? [F. 205’ comprises what is apparently a rough draft of a letter containing most of this information.]

61. She was the daughter of Tate Wilkinson, the York manager, and author of those queer productions, Memoirs of His Own Life and The Wandering Patentee. In 1798, at the request of Mrs. Siddons, who had long felt a deep regard for her, Miss Wilkinson became a permanent inmate in the Siddons family, not as a humble companion, for she was in easy circumstances, but as a cherished friend; and there she remained till the death of the great actress. She was a very worthy person, and not devoid of talent. That the gods had not made her sentimental and romantic she
could not help. On a day following one of Mrs. Siddon's benefits when she had been playing a highly tragic part, Miss R—— said to Miss Wilkinson, "Surely Mrs. Siddons must have been dreadfully exhausted by the wear and tear of her feelings last night." "Yes, indeed," replied Miss Wilkinson; "and you can't think what a quantity of cold mutton and cold apple-tart she ate for supper."

62. In the "Supplement" to his Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons [2d ed. (London, 1831)] Boaden says; "*[Her son] Mr. George John Siddons, a few months before the death of his father, married, in India, Miss Fonhill, daughter of Judge Fonhill, by whom he has a numerous family." [II,] p. 412,—where "Fonhill" is a mistake for "Fombell."

63. Concerning that work see the close of the article "Thomas Campbell." [It will not be found there.]


65. I may notice that when she selected Shakespeare's Measure for Measure for one of her public readings, she retained a portion of the comic dialogue, but without laying much stress on it.


67. The second son of Charles Kemble. He afterwards went into the army; and died shortly before his father.

68. Mrs. Faucit.


70. I have doubts about this name; but I can answer for the correctness of the anecdote in other respects. [Compare the version in Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, ed. Thomas Sadler, 3d ed. (London and New York, 1872), I, 217.]

71. He probably had seen one of her sisters in the part.

72. [Cf. Dyce's Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers. To Which is Added Porsoniana, 3d ed. (London, 1856), p. 190. In 1833, Crabb Robinson witnessed the "entertainment" in the anecdote which follows (Diary, ed. Sadler, II, 135.).]

73. In a sale-catalogue of books I find,—

Marlborough (Duke of) Life, Death and Burial of Cock Robin, set to Music for four Voices, coloured engraving LARGE PAPER (unique), red morocco super extra, g. e. with arms of the Duke of Marlborough stamped in gold on sides n.d.

How honoured is Cock Robin—to have had his story read and wept-over by Mrs. Siddons, and set to music by a duke!

74. [See Piozzi, ed. Hayward, I, 116.]

75. Be it remembered that in those days the reputation of Sir Thomas Lawrence was undeservedly great.

76. In my Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers, &c, p. 190, third ed., where this anecdote of Mrs. Siddons is given, I have, by an oversight, described Miss Brunton as being afterwards Lady Craven. But the Miss Brunton alluded to by Mrs. Siddons was a rather clever tragic actress who married the Della-Cruscan poet Merry: the Miss Brunton, whose great beauty and faultless conduct in private life raised her to the rank of Lady Craven, was a comic actress of moderate ability, and the sister of Mrs. Merry.

77. But Boaden thought very differently of King's acting in those two parts: see Life of Kemble, vol. i. p[p]. 60[-61].
78. On being appointed Licenser and Examiner of plays, Colman quitted that locality. He died at his house in Brompton Square.

79. Latterly she had a much better Orlando—indeed, most probably the very best ever seen—Charles Kemble.

80. In the song, “When daisies pied,” &c, which belongs to Love’s Labour’s Lost, and which is generally introduced by all Rosalinds who are able to sing.

81. It was in the part of Nell that Mrs. Clive (then Miss Rafter) first convinced the public of her great comic powers.

82. Qy. in Act v. sc. 3? — A reader of the play will be at a loss to know how Mrs. Jordan contrived to engratify on that scene, or, indeed, on any other scene, the extravagance here complained of: but that she did something extremely outré is beyond a doubt; and it must be remembered that any liberty taken by such a darling actress would be readily enough forgiven by the public, though not by Charles Kemble.

“Saturday, January 9th [1808]. In the evening went to Drurylane. ‘The Wonder.’ Elliston very poor in Felix, and Mrs. Jordan bringing out too often her oysterwoman notes in Violante, which destroys all the effect of her otherwise captivating voice.” Miss Berry’s Journals [Extracts of the Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry from the Year 1783 to 1852, ed. Lady Theresa Lewis (London, 1865)], vol. ii. p. 338.

83. [The original of this letter comprises both sides of leaves 86 and 87. I follow the original instead of the transcript by Dyce, who corrects the spelling and regularizes capitalization and punctuation. He leaves gaps for the readings that I have indicated as doubtful, excepting “any,” for which he reads “my.” According to Nicoll (English Drama, IV, 338; V, 443), Kenney’s last production was either (appropriately) Up the Flue (1846), written in collaboration with Dion Boucicault, or London Pride (1859), performed ten years after his death. However, the DNB concurs with Dyce that Infatuation was his last play.]

84. [“What was practically his first appearance in London took place 31 Oct. 1801 as Richard III” (DNB).]


86. In Macklin’s farce, Marriage [i.e., Love] a la Mode.

87. Years before these entertainments, Bannister used to give (at theatres) a medley somewhat similar to them, though immeasurably inferior, entitled Bannister’s Budget (in which I remember two lines of a song,—

“I am a wild and wandering boy,
And I come from the isle of Troy!!”).

This Budget was not his own composition, but written expressly for him. Mathews’s entertainments were concocted by himself. [This note clearly belongs to the first paragraph, though Dyce has not so indicated.]

88. See the article headed “Samuel Taylor Coleridge” in the present work.

89. “I saw Munden in Scrub, after Garrick, and perceived no inferiority.” Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs by [Joseph] Cradock [London, 1828], vol. iv [ed. J. B. Nichols], p. 246. Cradock was considered to be a first-rate amateur actor; he was intimate with Garrick, whom he imitated very successfully.

90. Gag in theatrical language means the stuff introduced by an actor beyond what is “set down” for him.

91. [The DNB gives Mrs. Piozzi’s birth-year as 1740/41 and Conway’s as 1789. It claims that Conway’s true name was Rugg. Dyce appears indebted to the “Preface” to the Letters for several details.]


93. [See the “Preface” to the Letters, p. 14.]

94. The Examiner, Feb. 16, 1861 [No. 2768, p. 100],—cited by Mr. Hayward ubi supra [I, 359 n.].

96. So I learned from Mrs. Clarke, the wife of the manager of the Liverpool Theatre: the jeweller was her father; and she was well acquainted with Conway his apprentice.—Mr. and Mrs. Clarke were a very worthy couple and much esteemed by the members of the theatrical profession: they both died nearly about the same time, not long after he had retired from the management at Liverpool; where he used to play in comedy and she in tragedy.—Mrs. Clarke, while a young married woman, came out as Euphrasia in The Grecian Daughter at Covent-Garden Theatre during the O. P. Riots; when a debutante of far superior talent than she could boast would have had little or no chance of success, all being wild uproar.

97. At which date, it must be confessed, first-rate tragic acting is not to be seen.

98. "New Theatre Royal, Haymarket, This evening The Provoked Husband, Lord Townly, Mr. Conway (his first appearance in London these five years)." The Times for July 5, 1821 [p. 2b]. On the 6th of the following Sept' he played Jaffeir (his last part) and repeated it several times at intervals.

99. Miss Young had reached a "pretty age" when she bestowed her hand on the stripling Pope, who will be recollected as a veteran actor by some readers of the present work. (And see the article "Charles Mathews" [ . . . ])—In a letter to Dr. Whalley, dated Sept’ 28, 1785, Mrs. Siddons writes, "Miss Young is married to a Mr. Pope, a very boy, and the only child she will have by her marriage." Whalley's Journals and Correspondence, &c, vol. i. p. 446.

100. [P. v in the London, 1785, edition.]

101. "Mr. Holcroft himself played the part of Figaro the first night, in the absence of Mr. Bonner [sic], for whom it was designed, and who afterwards took it." Holcroft's Memoirs [Memoirs of the Late Thomas Holcroft, Written by Himself, ed. William Hazlitt (London, 1816)], vol. ii. pp. 58[-59].

102. Life of Kemble, vol. i. p. 82.


104. [As evidence, Dyce quotes from two works by Cousin D'Avalon: Voltairiana and Diderotiana.]

105. "Et adhuc sub judice lis est." Horace,—Ars Poetica, 78.

106. ['Brambilla."

107. [VI (1835), 123-24. It is there entitled "An Occasional Prologue."]

108. [In the play by Moncrieff, not to be confused with the earlier-mentioned verse-tale of the same title by John Taylor.]