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**SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE**



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# SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

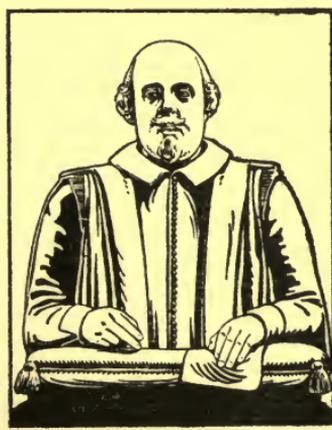
WITH A COMPLETE LIST OF THEATRICAL  
TERMS USED BY SHAKESPEARE IN HIS  
PLAYS AND POEMS, ARRANGED IN ALPHA-  
BETICAL ORDER, & EXPLANATORY NOTES

BY

MAURICE JONAS

AUTHOR OF "NOTES OF AN ART COLLECTOR AND MASUCCIO."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



LONDON :  
DAVIS AND ORIOLI  
24 MUSEUM STREET  
MCMXVIII

152205  
9-9-19

SHAKESPEARE  
AND THE STAGE

BY  
J. B. HARRIS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE EARLY DRAMA

**T**HE beginning of the English drama dates from a late period in the history of this country. Until the reign of Elizabeth, dramatic literature was really non-existent. During the Middle Ages, the religious drama held complete sway over the populace, producing such an abiding effect that no other kind of performance was tolerated. In England the first germs of a dramatic nature emanated from the church, chiefly in connection with the festival at Eastertide. At this time of the year the ritual was solemnized in a highly theatrical fashion. Processions marched round the sacred edifice, various scenes from the Gospels were introduced, accompanied by music and song. The festivals of Christmas and Corpus Christi were observed with great enthusiasm, sacred episodes taken from church history were acted with such fervour and ecstasy that the congregation remained spellbound during the service.

The next development in the evolution of the drama is the representation of the liturgical play, written in Latin, gradually being superseded by the religious play written in the vernacular; the scenes depicted consisted chiefly of episodes in connection with the Birth of the Saviour, also of events narrating the Lives of the Saints, together with other legendary characters.

All these scenes were called Miracle Plays, a name by which in this country all religious dramas were known, regardless of the origin of their source. In course of time these first offshoots of the ordinary service had grown to such dimensions that it was

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found impracticable that these spectacles should be presented inside the church, consequently, a larger space outside was deemed more convenient, but still remaining within the precincts. Even this innovation was not entirely successful, as the ground allotted for the performance was not extensive enough for the numerous throng that assembled on these occasions. Then a further step was taken by transferring the scene of action from the sacred precincts to the open spaces within the town. The development of the drama was greatly accelerated by this innovation. During the period that these plays formed part of the religious service, the clergy only were allowed the privilege of assuming the different characters, but when spectacular episodes were added to the ordinary ritual they became secularized by calling in the aid of the various guilds, assisted by professional entertainers. By these means the plays gradually lost their religious significance, finally being regarded as a popular form of amusement. By an act of Pope Gregory in 1210, the priests were forbidden to officiate in these interludes in any capacity, even if held inside the church. After the act had been confirmed by the Council of Trent in 1227, the clergy were strictly prohibited from joining the open-air performance.

The important Festival of Corpus Christi, founded by Pope Urban IV in the year 1264, was ratified years later by the Council of Vienne strictly enforcing its celebration. In England this very Corpus Christi day was, above all others, chosen for the representation of important plays composed in dramatic form chiefly from events connected with the religious history of the civilized world. There are extant several groups of plays which, during the Middle Ages, were regularly performed before appreciative audiences. Four of these "cycles" as

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they were termed, namely, the York, Townley, Chester, and Coventry plays, have been published and edited by competent scholars. The York cycle contains forty-eight pieces, most of which are derived from biblical subjects. These plays were written during the fourteenth century, and were acted by members of the different guilds.

In the "Ordo Paginorum" of 1415 a detailed list is given of the whole forty-eight interludes. "The order of the Pageants of the Play of Corpus Christi in the time of the mayoralty of William Alne, in the third year of the reign of Henry V, anno 1415, compiled by Roger Burton, town clerk."

Forty-eight different Companies took part in this pageant, commencing with the Tanners and ending with the Mercers. These crude compositions were still being exhibited during the greater portion of Shakespeare's lifetime; their total suppression followed in the first decade of the seventeenth century. Although these plays continued until so late a date, signs of their waning interest were apparent in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, when a more ambitious type of drama gradually superseded the old Morality play. The New Comedy displays more inventive genius in dramatic construction, together with greater skill in treating the literary dialogue, and a wider sympathy and ingenuity in the development of character, thus appealing to a more educated section of the public. The first real comedy written in the English language is entitled "Ralph Roister Doister," and was composed about the year 1550. By this composition an enormous stride in advance was made compared with earlier dramatic pieces.

Many of the characters are moulded on classical models, whilst others still bear traces of an allegorical nature. Other plays quickly followed based on similar types. The first English tragedy called

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“Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex,” produced about this period, was likewise founded on classical lines. Henceforth the Miracle play was doomed, and hereafter budded forth a new drama, the full blossom thereof culminating in the immortal works of William Shakespeare.

The construction of the open-air stage, where the Miracle plays were exhibited, totally differed from any kind of stage adopted by Europeans for the last three hundred years. The inn-yard performance presents a greater likeness to our present theatre than the primitive shows represented before our ancestors of the Middle Ages compared with the inn-yard performances. These Miracle plays were performed for over three centuries, and formed the only dramatic fare of the English people during this long period. The Miracle play can fitly be described as an isolated production, the successive stages can be plainly regarded as an organic whole, beginning with birth, developing into maturity, eventually drifting into decline and decay, finally ending in total extinction. The plays of a later date, and the conditions under which they were produced, owed little or nothing beyond a trifling debt to their forerunners.

When the Miracle plays emerged from the church and became secularized, the performances took place in the open streets. These exhibitions consisted of two kinds, one being stationary, and generally acted in the market place, or other convenient open space, such as the village green, or they were divided into separate stations or points, or as we should now say districts, each station being visited by the several pageants or movable stages, which formed a kind of processional ceremony. The actual acting place was a kind of platform resting on trestles, with planks thrown across; this primitive stage was fixed on wheels and was drawn

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by horses from one street to another, and as they arrived at each station a performance was given. By this method a large concourse of people could witness the entertainment in ease and comfort. What a contrast in comparison to a performance of a Greek play, when twenty thousand people were seated in a public theatre and watched with enthusiasm and delight the tragic masterpieces of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and the biting satirical comedies of Aristophanes, and pray remember that these great plays were written and performed about two thousand years before these puny dramatic efforts of our own people. In large towns like York, sixteen stations were erected to satisfy the demands of the public. In a small town about three or four would supply all needs. At Coventry the latter number proved sufficient. Six stations are mentioned in a pageant acted at Beverley. The length and duration of the plays varied at different places. Three days were allotted to the Chester plays, other towns managed in quicker time, finishing their programme in a single day.

These one-day performances usually commenced at daybreak. Newcastle was not quite so enthusiastic, conforming more with our modern ideas, commencing their pageant a little after mid-day, corresponding almost with our *matinée*. The most trustworthy account of a performance of a Miracle play is that described by Archdeacon Roger, who witnessed one of the plays at Chester during the Whitsun holidays in the year 1594.

“Every company had his pageant, or parte, which pageants weare a high scafolde with two rowmes, a higher and a lower, upon four wheels. In the lower they apparelled themselves, and in the higher rowm they played, beinge all open on the tope that all behoulders mighte heare and see them. The places where they played them was in every

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street. They begane first at the aby gates, and when the first pageant was played it was wheeled to the high crosse before the mayor, and so to every streete and soe every streete had a pageant playinge before them at one time, till all the pageants for the daye appointed were played, and when one pageant was neare ended, worde was brought from streete to streete that so they might come in place thereof exceedinge orderlye and all the streets have their pageants afore them, all at one time playinge together, to see which plays was great resorte, and also scafoldes and stages made in the streets in these places where they determined to play their pageants."

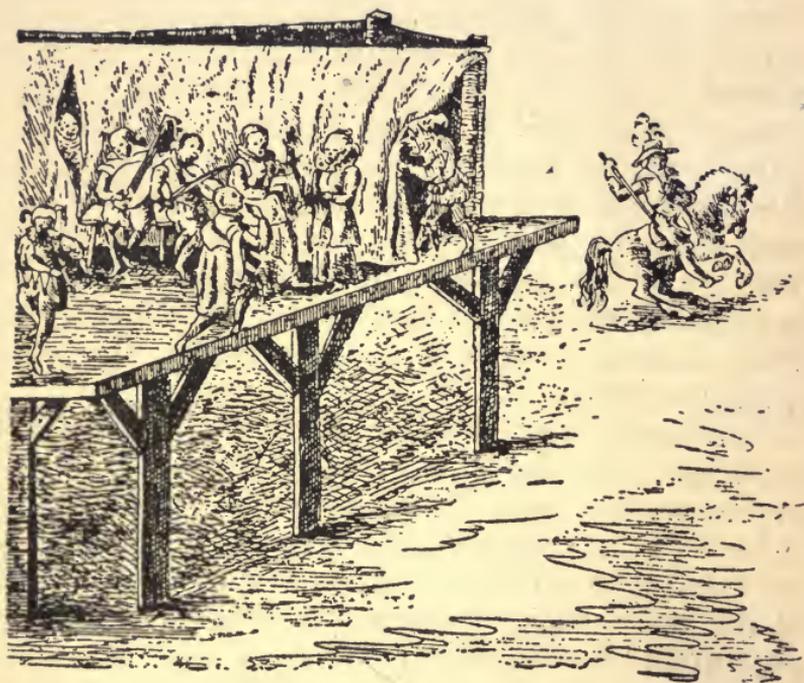
The Miracle plays are frequently mentioned by Chaucer, a verse in the Miller's Tale included among the Canterbury Tales, informs us how Joly Absolom, the parish priest, played Herod "in a Scafolde hie." Shakespeare refers to the ranting of the actors that prevailed in these entertainments in the proverbial phrase "out Herod's Herod," Herod being a well-known character in the Miracle play. May we not indulge in the fancy that John Shakespeare took his eldest son, William, over to Coventry to witness one of these shows, this town being distant only a few miles from Stratford-on-Avon?

In a most fascinating book written by the late Professor Haigh, of Oxford University, entitled *The Attic Theatre*, the author gives an exhaustive and detailed account of the ancient Greek theatre from the earliest times until its extinction. After the perusal of this admirable work, the reader may well be amazed at the paucity of reliable information concerning our own theatre. The distinguished author analyses each of his statements with remarkable accuracy before pronouncing judgment. The wealth of illustration brought to bear on the subject is truly remarkable, placing before the reader an exact account of how a play was produced in those

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remote times by graphically describing the conditions with such minuteness and intelligence that the reader can visualize the acted play from the printed page. Many other points of a theatrical interest are discussed in this fascinating book, which should be read by everyone who takes the least interest in the drama. After studying this detailed account of theatrical events, existing so many centuries past, we naturally expect from the innumerable writings of the Elizabethan age an ample and exact account how a play was represented during that era. Unfortunately in this instance our expectations will remain unrealized, stage history not being deemed worthy of chronicling in those spacious times.

Professor Lawrence, of Dublin, is specially to be congratulated on his brilliant articles and essays in Shakespearean dramatic and theatrical subjects. It would be a consummation devoutly to be wished if the erudite author would undertake to write a history of the early stage on the same lines as adopted by the author of *The Attic Theatre*.



AN EARLY TYPE OF STAGE

Reproduced by kind permission of Professor G. P. Baker.

## CHAPTER II

### INN-YARDS

**W**HEN Shakespeare first arrived in London, which is now generally assigned to the year 1586, there existed in the Metropolis two permanent theatres, called respectively The Theatre and The Curtain. Shakespeare's dramatic connection with the stage commenced probably about 1590, but where his first plays were produced records are found wanting. Personally I am strongly in favour of his early plays being acted at the Theatre. Students are agreed that Shakespeare joined the company of actors known as the Earl of Leicester's servants, in which the celebrated Burbages, both father and son, were included. The first named was the builder and manager of The Theatre; therefore, the inference is quite logical that Shakespeare acted in the playhouse to which his company was attached.

Before the public theatres were erected the actors set up their stages at the inn-yards, and many early and important plays were presented in these places. That acting took place in these localities is beyond question, and it is within the bounds of possibility that Shakespeare's earliest contributions to the drama may have been first produced in these impromptu play places, otherwise inn-yards.

The names of several of these London inn-yards are well known, both from contemporary literature and documentary records; unfortunately little information can be gleaned of their connection with the drama. These resorts were fairly well suited for stage plays. The fore part of the yard corresponded to the pit of a modern provincial theatre, with the

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exception that standing room only was provided. The galleries that surrounded the yard accommodated the better class of spectators, probably a space at the back of the stage supplied the needs of a dressing room. How the play was produced, the manner in which the scenes were indicated, the number of stage properties used and other details connected with the drama are questions that cannot be satisfactorily answered; the historian in search of full information on these subjects seeks in vain. However much we may deplore the loss of written documents elucidating this period of our early drama, we possess proof that the acting companies of the Earl of Leicester, Lord Strange, the Admiral's and other noblemen's companies frequently gave performances in these places. Although Southwark, the pleasure seeking resort of Londoners, was plentifully supplied with inn-yards, many becoming quite famous, namely, The Tabard, White Hart, Cross Keys, George, and several others, there exists no record or reference that any company of actors set up their stage in any one of those taverns named above. As already stated, little is known of the conditions under which theatrical companies acted in those impromptu places of entertainment.

In connection with these taverns one great difficulty arises of a rather perplexing nature, namely, how was the money collected during one of these performances? Devoid of any reliable information, every reader who is interested in the question must work out a theory for himself, relying on his own conclusion for the solution. My own particular theory is that, whenever the players announced a performance they hired the premises for the afternoon, with the right of charging admission for anyone entering the yard or the rooms in the gallery surrounding the building. As these last could be entered through the inn proper, money takers were

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stationed at the door or doors of all the private entrances and also at the place where the general public entered. In confirmation of the above, an account of a quarrel may be quoted from Halliwell-Phillipps's "Illustrations to Shakespeare": "Whilst the Queen's players were performing at Norwich a man named Wynsdon endeavoured to gain admission without payment. An altercation ensued, during which the money box was upset. The disturbance had a tragic sequel, so far as regards the originator of the quarrel, as he received a sword thrust from one of his pursuers, from which he succumbed." The above written testimony proves that some kind of system existed, whereby money could be taken at the doors before gaining admission. The entire subject of plays produced at inn-yards requires special treatment by a trained Shakesporean scholar. The subject is a difficult one, necessitating patient research, exact knowledge of sixteenth century theatrical customs and much leisure, but finally the student will be amply rewarded by the interest and fascination which the theme evokes. Printed matter has been ransacked in the hope of throwing light on the subject, but with poor results. Original research among the MSS. of the British Museum and the documents stored at the Record Office must be henceforth the order of the day. Considering so little is known in connection with this interesting subject, reference to similar theatrical conditions in Spain during the Elizabethan period may interest the reader. In Madrid plays were performed in a corral, which, in Spanish, signifies a courtyard of a private house, corresponding in England to our inn-yard. The stage was erected at the back of the yard, in all cases being a movable one, the majority of the audience viewing the performance standing in the court-yard. From the windows of the surrounding houses the better class of spectators

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watched the play. The entire building was open to the sky, fine weather being absolutely necessary for a continuous performance.

Two years before a permanent theatre was erected in London, these "corrals" were partly roofed, besides providing seats and benches. An awning was thrown across to protect the spectators in the unroofed courtyard from the glare of the sun. From these facts it will be noted that from 1574-1576 theatrical performances were given in Madrid under better conditions than those of any other country. Regular organized theatres did not exist in France, Italy, Russia, or any other European city except England and Spain until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Although for a short period Spanish playgoers were provided with more comforts than any other known theatre, the honour of erecting the first organized theatre in Europe must be awarded to English enterprise.

11 The chief taverns with inn-yards in which the different companies of actors pitched their tents are seven in number, although several others, whose names are unrecorded, were similarly used for the same purpose. The seven known are "The Bull," in Bishopsgate Street; "The Bull," "Cross Keys," and "The Bell," in Gracechurch Street; "The Belle Savage" on Ludgate Hill; "The Boar's Head," in Eastcheap," and "The Boar's Head" in Aldgate Without. "The Bell" was situated in Gracechurch Street. A reference to this inn is mentioned in the Revel's Account: "A well counterfeit from 'The Bell' in Gracious Street." This and two others are the only known references to this tavern being used as a playhouse. Even this quotation is rather vague. Probably "the well" refers to a play called "Cutwell," which was performed at Court during Shrovetide, 1577, by the Earl of Warwick's company, the actors having



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*The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist*, The Macmillan  
Company, New York, 1907.

A Stage Play in progress at an inn-yard.



Reproduced by kind permission of Professor G. P. Baker.  
A typical inn-yard in Elizabethan times used by the players  
for the acting of their plays.



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previously appeared at "The Bell" in the same piece.

This event is mentioned by Richard Rawlidge in a tract entitled "A Monster lately found out, or scourge of Tipplers," published in 1628. Prynne also mentions this inn in a pamphlet against stage plays in 1632. The best known resort of the actors during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign was "The Bull" in Bishopsgate Street, being frequently noticed in documents and literature. "The Bull" stood on the left hand side of Bishopsgate Street going towards Shoreditch from the west, exactly opposite St. Helen's Place, formerly known as Little St. Helen's. This inn luckily escaped the great fire in 1666, a disaster of such magnitude that, fortunately, has not befallen any other famous city of such great renown and dimensions. "The Bull" remained *in situ* two centuries after that disastrous event, only to be pulled down by the iconoclasts of our own day in 1866.

There exists a letter from the Earl of Warwick, dated July 1st, 1582, addressed to the Lord Mayor of London, in which he requests that his servant, John Davis, may be allowed to play at "The Bull," in Bishopsgate Street. In answer to a second letter from the Earl of Warwick, the Lord Mayor still refuses the license on account of the plague. The restrictions in connection with the theatres in time of plague were very stringent. By command of the Authorities, all places of amusement were immediately closed if more than thirty deaths occurred during the week. On cessation of the plague the theatres, by permission, resumed their normal course. In the last years of the sixteenth century, Anthony Bacon, brother of the celebrated Francis Bacon, occupied lodgings near "The Bull," much against the wish of his mother, who feared that his servants might be corrupted by living so near the

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scene of dramatic entertainment. This same inn was the resort of Hobson, the well-known Cambridge carrier. In one of the rooms hung his portrait with a hundred pound bag under his arm ; underneath was written " The Fruitful Mother of a Hundred more." The next notice is one of great importance and interest, containing a definite statement of a play being acted at " The Bull," besides naming the title of the play, " An excellent Jest of Tarlton's suddenly spoken at ' The Bull ' in Bishops-gate Street."

" There was a play of Henry the Fifth, wherein the Judge was to take a box of the eare, and because he was absent that should take the blow, Tarlton himselfe, ever forward to please, tooke upon him to play the same Judge, and Kenel then playing Henry the Fifth, hit Tarlton a sound boxe indeed, which made the people laugh, the more because it was he, but anon the Judge goes in and immediately Tarlton, in his clownes cloathes, comes out and asks the actor what news ? O, saith one, hadst thou been here thou shouldst have seen Prince Henry hit the Judge a terrible box of the eare. What, man, said Tarlton, strike a judge ! It is true in faith said the other. No other like, said Tarlton, and it could not be but terrible to the Judge when the report so terrifies me that methinks the blow remains still on my cheeke that it burns againe. The people laughed at this mightily, and to this day I have heard it commended for rare, for no marvel, for he had many of these. But I would see our clowns do the like in these days, no I warrant ye, and yet they thinke well of themselves too." The play in which the prince strikes the judge is taken from " The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth containing the Honourable Battell of Agincourt. As it was played by the Queens Majesties Players, London. Printed by Thomas Creede, 1598." A unique copy

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of this book is in the Bodleian Library. This play is much earlier than Shakespeare's "Henry the Fifth," and may be considered the source out of which Shakespeare created one of his great masterpieces. Gosson, in his "School of Abuse," published in 1559, refers to a comedy entitled "The Jew," performed at "The Bull," describing the "greediness of worldly chusers and venomous minds of Usurers." There is hardly a shadow of a doubt that this play is the same on which, many years later, Shakespeare founded his own "Merchant of Venice." The plot of the "worldly chusers," or what is now termed the "casket scene," is related in the *Gesta Romanorum* a collection of tales and jests written originally in Latin, an English translation of which existed, *circa*, 1515, printed by the famous Wynkyn de Worde, several reprints appearing between 1571-1601. I possess a copy in black letter dated 1672, proving the popularity of the book during many generations. The Bond, or pound of flesh, story is taken from a collection of tales called "Il Pecorone by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino," written in the year 1378; the first printed edition appeared in 1558. A copy of this rare book is in the Grenville collection, bequeathed by the owner to the British Museum. I was thus able to read the story in the beautiful original edition. I possess a copy of this book, which formerly belonged to Professor Dowden, bearing the imprint "In Milano, 1554," with the name of the publishers of the genuine edition of 1558, four years previously to the genuine first edition. This imprint is a false one, the entire book being issued in 1740. I also possess a thick quarto edition of a book entitled *The Orator*, containing one hundred discourses on various subjects. In each essay the pros and cons of the case in dispute are thoroughly investigated after the manner of books on rhetoric, which were fashionable with the

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early Greek writers. Declamation numbered 96 strikingly resembles the trial scene in the "Merchant of Venice"; this book may have been read by Shakespeare before he composed the "Merchant of Venice," which is assigned by most students to the year 1597. The Declamation opens as follows: "Of a Jew who would have for his debt a pound of flesh of a Christian." Spenser, the famous poet, when writing to his friend, Gabriel Harvey, the well-known Cambridge scholar, signs himself "He that is fast bound unto thee in more obligations than any merchant of Italy to any Jew there." This letter was in reply to one of Harvey's, dated 1579; enclosed therein was a whimsical bond between the two friends in allusion to the bond of the Jew in the play. Evidently these two students had witnessed a performance of the Jew at "The Bull," in which the bond story played a prominent part. When Shakespeare's play was entered at Stationer's Hall the description ran thus: "A book of the Merchant of Venyce or otherwise called the Jew of Venyce." John Florio, an Italian refugee, refers to "The Bull" in a book called the *First Frutes*, published in 1578: "Shall we go to a playe at 'The Bull' or else to some other place?" By the above reference plays continued to be acted at inn-yards even after the erection of public theatres.

"The Bell Savage" was situated on the north side of Ludgate Hill, immediately outside the City gates. The site is now occupied by the publishing firm of Cassell and Co. This inn is included in the five enumerated by Rawlidge, where stage plays were enacted. The inn is not mentioned by name, but simply as one on Ludgate Hill. Stephen Gosson notes that at this inn two prose plays were acted, further adding that these plays were free from all immorality and obscenity. "The two prose plays played at 'The Belsavage.' Where you shall find

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never a word without wit, never a line without pith, never a letter placed in vain. Neither with amorous gestures wounding the eye, nor with slovenly talk hurting the ears of the chaste hearer." George Gascoigne, in the prologue to one of his plays, called the "Glass of Government," 1575, refers to this inn: "The Belsavage fair as affording merry jests and vain delights." In Lamborde's "Perambulation of Kent" there is another reference to this inn as a place of amusement: "Those who go to Paris Garden, the Belsavage or Theatre to behold bear baiting, interludes, or fence plays must not account of any pleasant spectacle unless they first pay one penny at the gate, another at the entry of the scaffold, and a third for a quiet standing." In Shakespeare's play of "Love's Labour's Lost," in answer to a question a boy replies: "Why, sir, is this such a piece of study the dancing horse will tell you." This horse, named Morocco, was a famous draw in Elizabethan times, being shown at "The Bull," in Bishopsgate Street. One Banks, a Staffordshire man, exhibited him throughout England and a great part of the continent. When in Rome, Banks and his horse were supposed to have been burnt for witchcraft, but this is doubtful. The author of the above statement is Ben Jonson, in one of his epigrams, "Old Banks the Juggler and his learned horse burned beyond the sea." Morocco was a bay horse and performed some very clever tricks; amongst them was counting how much money was in a man's purse, signalling the answer by stamping with his hoof an equal number of times as there were coins in the purse. When his master told him to fetch the veriest knave in all the company he would always make towards his own keeper, thereby causing much merriment. The well-known Elizabethan dramatist, Thomas Dekker, mentions him as the dancing horse who stood on the top of

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Saint Paul's whilst a number of asses stood braying below. Many writers of the period refer to this animal, and he may well be dubbed the literary horse. A curious tract, entitled "Moroccus Extaticus, or Bank's Bay Horse in a Trance," with a woodcut depicting the horse on his hind legs and two dice in front of him, was published in 1596. Three copies of this pamphlet are known, one is in the British Museum. The Huth exemplar, sold in 1911, fetched £110. I read the copy in the British Museum, but nothing is related about the horse. The book is a political satire on the land question. The name of the La belle sauvage has given rise to many ingenious guesses respecting the derivation, and Stow says the owner was named Isabella Savage and that she bequeathed the inn to the Cutlers' Company. *The Spectator* would name it after a French play entitled "La Belle Sauvage." Another states it was christened after Lady Arabella Savage, with a sign of a wild man and a bell. By the discovery of a document the matter was finally set at rest, wherein it was stated that the tavern was known as "Savage's Inn," otherwise called "The Bell on the Hoop." By degrees the two names became confused, eventually becoming known as "The Bell Savage."

"The Cross Keys" stood on the north side of Gracechurch Street, adjacent to the well-known Elizabethan tavern "The Queen of Saba," kept by the Queen's famous jester, Richard Tarlton. Many said he was a frequent visitor at "The Cross Keys" in order to note the fashions of the day, not in apparel only, but in manners, morals and customs of the period. This inn is not mentioned by Rawlidge as one of the public inn-yards where plays were performed before the year 1580. We catch a glimpse of "The Cross Keys" by an order of the Lord Mayor, dated November, 1589, forbidding the

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players acting in the City on account of having appeared in a controversial play in connexion with the Martin Marprelate affair. This Marprelate question occupied a similar position amongst the Elizabethan public as the Pusey tract controversy in mid-Victorian days. The discussion ranged over a theological question which was taken up by the dramatists of the Tudor period, with much acrimonious feeling and much throwing about of brains on both sides. Shakespeare abstained from taking part in this fierce and bitter controversy. When the order was executed only two companies were playing in the City, The Admiral's and Lord Strange's men, the latter company included Shakespeare as a member. Both companies were promptly summoned before the Court. The Admiral's men obeyed the summons, but Lord Strange's company deliberately refused and acted the same afternoon at "The Cross Keys." Again they were summoned, and two of their number committed to prison. "The Cross Keys" was certainly one of the City's regular play places, in proof of which the same company, but under different patronage, is found five years later playing in this identical inn-yard. A petition to the Lord Mayor, dated October the eighth, 1594, emanating from Lord Hunsdon, who was then Lord Chamberlain, prays the Lord Mayor if he would allow his players to continue acting at "The Cross Keys," "where my company of players have accustomed for the better exercising their quality and for the service of Her Majesty, if need so require, and may your Lordship permit and suffer them so to do the which I pray you, rather to do for that they have undertaken to me, that there heretofore they began not their plays till towards four o'clock they will now begin at two and have done towards four o'clock and five, and will not use any drum or trumpet at all for the calling

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of the people together, and shall contribute to the poor of the parish where they play according to their abilities."

This is one of the few authentic notices concerning Lord Strange's men setting up their stages at an inn-yard. If it could be proved definitely that "The Cross Keys" was their principal place of acting between the years 1589-1594, then we must be prepared to admit that many of Shakespeare's early plays were first acted under these primitive and rough and ready conditions. I am not an adherent of this theory, holding the opinion that all his plays were first produced at regular built theatres; afterwards there may have been a revival performance at inn-yards for want of better accommodation, but all this is very problematical. Not possessing any records designating the actual place of the first performance of Shakespeare's plays, we are forced, therefore, to indulge in speculative theories. As I have repeatedly stated, this important question has not been sufficiently investigated, and a monograph on the subject by a Shakesperean scholar would be specially welcome.

At "The Cross Keys," Banks exhibited his wonderful performing horse.

The most famous of all inns where plays were acted was unhesitatingly "The Boar's Head," in Eastcheap, exactly where now stands the statue of William the Fourth. The old site was swept away when the new approach was made to London Bridge. The only instance of a play being produced there is fortunately extant, and is contained in a letter to the Lord Mayor from the Lords of the Council, dated March 31st, 1608, granting permission to the servants of the Earl of Oxford and the Earl of Worcester to play at "The Bore's Head," in Eastcheap. This letter is preserved in the "Remembrancia," a collection of papers now safely housed in the Guildhall. On

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the succession of James the First the Worcester men became the servants of Queen Anne, the consort of the King. Among the Calendars and State Papers is a licence for the actors to perform plays in their usual houses, "The Curtain" and "The Boar's Head." This tavern is, above all others, specially renowned, as it was here that Shakespeare selected as the meeting place of Falstaff, Prince Hal and their boon companions. The tavern is alluded to in Shakespeare's play of "King Henry the Fourth" in the following lines: "Doth the old boar feed in the old Frank," and Bardolph answers: "At the old place, my Lord, in Eastcheap."

Several inns existed in this locality, namely, "The Plough," "The Chicken," "The Three Kings," and many others, but none with any sign that could be confounded with "The Boar's Head." The nocturnal roysterings of Prince Hal are not the invention of the poet. Stow relates how the Prince, with his two brothers, created such a riot in Eastcheap that they were brought before the magistrate. William Gascoigne, the Chief Justice, required the Mayor and Aldermen for the citizens to justify the Prince's arrest and put themselves in the King's grace. The Aldermen answered they had done their best according to the law to maintain the peace, therefore the Chief Justice in the King's name remitted his ire and dismissed them. This William Gascoigne is the same judge who, according to tradition, was struck in the face by Prince Hal, whereupon the Prince, at the Judge's order, was committed to the King's Bench. Maitland, the historian of London, states that an inscription under the sign of "The Boar's Head" notified that "this is the chief tavern in London." The original inn was burnt to the ground in the great fire, immediately being rebuilt, and having for its sign a large boar's head of stone, with the date

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underneath—1668 ; the sign is now exhibited in the crypt of the Guildhall. This second building was likewise destroyed, but in this instance not by fire, being demolished when an improvement scheme was formed for the widening of the approach to London Bridge. Many years before its demolition, this tavern had been converted into two houses, numbered respectively 2 and 3, Great Eastcheap ; one of these houses was occupied by a gunsmith. A curious relic of " The Boar's Head " is a carved figure about 12 inches high representing Falstaff. This figure stood on a bracket placed on one side of the doorway, outside the inn, another figure of the same period representing Prince Hal, stood on the opposite side. A water-colour drawing of Falstaff was presented to the Guildhall by Mr. Burgin, Dean of Chichester. A more important memento of this inn is a carved boxwood bas-relief of a boar's head, set in a circular frame formed by the tusks of two boars, mounted in silver. An inscription at the back reads " Wm. Brooke, Landlord of ' The Bore's Head,' Eastcheap, 1566." The relic was sold at Christie's in 1855, and is now in the possession of Mr. Burdett Coutts. In Shakespeare's time the landlord at " The Bore's Head," was one John Rhodway, of Ventnor, who was buried in the churchyard of St. Michael's, Crooked Lane, 1623. This church was also demolished in making improvements in this district. There are several allusions to this tavern in the literature of the day ; one of special significance is mentioned in Gayton's *Festivous Notes*, 1654 : " Sir John of ' The Bore's Head,' in Eastcheap." Was it a coincidence or of a set purpose that Sir John and his wild companions assembled at this inn for their midnight revels ? There was another " Boar's Head " in Southwark, the property of a real Sir John Falstaff, who died in 1460.

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“The Red Bull” in Clerkenwell is mentioned by Larwood and Hotten in their history of sign-boards, as a place where the players acted. This is surely an error, as “The Red Bull” was always a regular playhouse from its opening in 1600 until all the theatres were closed by Act of Parliament.

A “Boar’s Head” tavern existed in Aldgate Without, where plays were represented. The following notice is copied from the Harleian MSS., No. 285: “At St. James’s the V day of September, 1557, A letter to the Lord Mayor of London to give order forthwith that some of his officers do forthwith repair to the Boreshed Without Aldgate, where the Lords are informed a lewd play called ‘A sack full of News’ shall be played this day, the Players whereof he is willed to apprehend and comit to safe warde, until he shall hear further from hence and to take their playbooks from them and to send the same hither. At Westr. the VI day of September, 1557.” Neither this inn nor the one of the same name in Eastcheap is mentioned by Rawlidge. The number of taverns in the City of London at this period must be reckoned by hundreds, most of them having inn-yards adjoining the premises, thus affording a convenient acting place for the players. That so many inns abounded in London may account for the meagre notice taken of them, scenes of everyday occurrence being less likely to be chronicled than events which rarely happen.

## CHAPTER III

### THE THEATRES

UNFORTUNATELY for lovers of Shakespearean drama no vestige of any early Elizabethan theatre exists; in some instances even the very sites are forgotten; in others, the plots of ground on which each theatre stood are disputed. When the Shakespeare Reading Society placed a tablet on the site of the first Globe Theatre, the handsome bronze plaque was erected on the south side of Park Street, which has lately been proved to be a palpable error, the real site of this historic building being situated on the north side. The localities where stood the early English theatres have changed so out of all recognition during the last two centuries that only an antiquarian who has access to old deeds can with any degree of certainty fix the limits of old houses and public buildings. Nothing remains to-day but the bare names of the streets, indicating in a few cases the places of entertainment in Elizabethan times. During Shakespeare's lifetime there existed in London eleven regular theatres, a brief account of each of these will be chronicled in the following pages:

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The first public theatre in London was situated in the parish of Shoreditch and quite appropriately named "The Theatre." When visiting to-day this depressing neighbourhood, similar districts being dotted over all the London area, an observer immediately concludes that the governing authorities of the London districts must be a most corrupt

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body ; how else can one account for the state of the filthy slums and the appalling ignorance of the inhabitants ? Which, after all, is not so surprising when only the gorgeous gin-palace is allowed to flourish. As for demolishing a slum alley, perish the thought ! It would offend the aristocratic and titled owner, whose property must be protected at all costs. If I were on a Board Council, not only would I confiscate the property and quickly sweep it off the face of the earth, but would heavily fine and imprison the owners as being pests to society. Shoreditch, God help us ! is an awful place. The thought that Shakespeare's plays were first produced in this neighbourhood seems to cast a stigma on his name, and that the present state of affairs should exist after three hundred years of social progress ! Something is rotten in the parish of Shoreditch. How could any modern institution or artistic building flourish in such a fetid and vicious locality, where the London County Council only permits the public-house to flaunt its vile face before the public gaze. A new terror is now added to the grand historic city of London and its outer boundaries by the glaring posters of the Cinema theatre depicting every sort of horrid crime so that a stranger must conclude that Englishmen are for the most part thieves and vicious characters, caring for little else but scenes of a most depraved nature.

Until quite recently the site of the theatre was identified with a plot of ground formerly occupied by Deane's Mews, situated in the neighbourhood of the present King John's Court. This site had never been questioned until the appearance of the London County Council pamphlet giving the details where the structure was erected. Halliwell-Phillipps first described the site as being on the Deane's Mews property in his *Illustrations to Shakespeare*. The pamphlet mentioned above is the work of Mr.

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W. W. Braines, whose untiring efforts and keen critical research have succeeded in revealing the exact spot on which the first theatre was erected. For years past I had searched in vain for Deane's Mews but without success ; in fact, this place was becoming to be regarded as a myth, no one having heard of such a name. A friend of mine, Mr. Charles Edwards, a fellow member of the Stock Exchange, had presented me with a handsome folio volume, giving details of all improvements in the Metropolitan area within the last fifty years. This compilation has been enriched with a wealth of plans, exact measurements and the necessary explanatory notes reflecting the greatest credit on the accomplished editor, Mr. Percy Edwards, a brother of my friend. On referring to this book I found Deane's Mews plainly marked, which stood about 200 ft. south of the true site. The Mews was swept away in the construction of Gt. Eastern St. in 1873-76, and its site is now covered by the latter thoroughfare.

On leaving the City at the junction between Wormwood Street and Camomile Street, where formerly stood the gate entrance to the City, called Bishopsgate, we will proceed down Bishopsgate towards Norton Folgate, thence passing into High Street, Shoreditch. From the High Street we soon reach New Inn Yard, turning up this lane, at a distance of 120 yards we arrive near the site of The Theatre, which was situated about fifty feet north of this street and within a few feet of the east side of the Curtain Road. In earlier times this district formed part of the celebrated Holywell Priory. A detailed account of this ancient abbey would be a welcome addition to the ecclesiastical and topographical history of London. I hope this little volume from which the above details are taken will be consulted by all Londoners, a perusal of which might instil into their minds a greater interest in

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the past history of their wonderful city. Actual experience teaches me that few people take any intelligent interest in the subject or any other which does not in some particular manner add to their commercial prosperity. Naturally, where so many neglect the pleasures of the mind, the ignorance and stupidity of the majority of the people pass unnoticed, otherwise any person totally unacquainted with the history of the City of London would be looked upon as a common lout, fitting only to herd with the base-minded.

I know from actual experience that few people take any intelligent interest in this great and all-absorbing subject. I have, alas, met several so-called educated men and women who have freely acknowledged that they are quite indifferent concerning the history of the past, although no subject of any importance can be thoroughly discussed without allusion to previous events. This attitude almost of revulsion exhibited by so many people for past history must have some deeply based reason for its existence. Many would explain this contempt for the past by the greater attraction of the wonderful world of science and mechanical transport. In my opinion, the real cause of this feeling is that the greater part of the population set up their idols to the worship of sport, which the public schools and universities ever delight to honour, and which, in my mind, is a public scandal which should be inquired into, and the authorities that encourage such wild orgies, severely reprimanded. The fascinating study of literature and art fill no void in the daily routine of their lives, a state of affairs greatly to be regretted; the welfare of the future generation rests with the teachers of the elementary schools, who should endeavour to foster in the young a genuine love for literature and all the arts that tend in elevating the mind. My

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enquiry why so few take any interest in these refining studies is generally met with the foolish and ill-bred answer that no immediate benefit is derived from these studies, as if the delights of the mind can be gauged by material benefits.

One more parting shaft. A governing corporation that sanctioned the demolition of Crosby Hall ought themselves to be demolished, or at least hounded out of the City by the citizens that placed them in power.

Although this theatre was situated outside the City boundary, the distance from the Metropolis was so short that Londoners were able to reach their destination without undue discomfort and fatigue. Notwithstanding that The Theatre was surrounded by fields, this obstacle proved to be of a negligible quantity. The novelty of the building and the vigorous dramatic force of the plays appealed to a populace ever seeking for amusement, and made this playhouse a success from its inauguration until its final destruction nearly a quarter of a century later. Londoners of to-day would consider any place surrounded by fields a pretty fair distance from the Metropolis, but towards the end of the sixteenth century the country could be reached in about a quarter of an hour by sharp walking from any point in the City, which at that date constituted London proper. The reason that Burbage, the proprietor, sought a locality for his projected theatre outside the centre of the business life of the City was primarily on account of the intense puritanical hatred against all theatrical entertainments, the mark of the beast being shown by the Lord Mayor and Corporation, who threatened with ejection all the players from the City. The crisis came in 1576, when an order was promulgated by which all places of amusement were to be closed. This order principally affected all inn-yards where

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plays were held, also bear and bull baiting establishments. Driven almost to desperation, the players resolved on quitting the City before the order was set in motion. James Burbage, one of the leading actors in the Earl of Leicester's Company, was by trade a joiner, and quite appropriately the builder of the first organized theatre not only in England but in modern Europe. This momentous decision proved of untold benefit in the course of the development of the drama, besides protecting his company from molestation and persecution. This almost inspired act prepared the way for the mighty genius who holds the world in awe, who was thus able to profit by this vast improvement and decisive innovation in the dramatic world. By taking this bold step the object of the City Fathers was completely frustrated, and their deep-laid schemes, in which the poor player was to be totally annihilated, recoiled on their own heads. The new venture was an instant success, instilling into the drama fresh blood and a long lease of life, daily growing more popular and prosperous and drawing within the charmed circle every class of citizen, with the exception of the puritan brigade.

The site chosen by Burbage for his first theatre was within the precincts of the ancient Priory of Holywell, a celebrated landmark in early Tudor times. The Priory was an ancient foundation originally built in the second decade of the twelfth century. The ground on which it stood was bequeathed by a Canon of St. Paul's to a religious body of women known as the Benedictine Nuns. The building remained in their possession until the total suppression of all monastic orders in this country by the Mandate of Henry the Eighth. The Dissolution began about the year 1538, but the total extinction of the Abbey, including the Chantries, Chapels, and Churches, was not finally accomplished until ten

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years later. The last notice of the Priory as a living centre can be traced to the year 1539, when Sybilla Newdigate, the prioress, delivered up her house to the King. The suppression of the Monasteries was one of those drastic acts by which means the King defied the spiritual and temporal power of Rome, and proclaimed to the English people that he alone was supreme head of the Church in England.

The origin of the name Holywell is traceable to a well which existed in the parish of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, early in the twelfth century. The exact site of this well is unknown, but somewhere in close proximity to the new theatre. One authority states explicitly that it is discoverable, but now concealed from view in the present Bateman's Row. An interesting relic of the ancient Priory can still be seen in the shape of an old stone wall about 50 ft. long, in a timber yard in High Street, Shoreditch. I must candidly admit that I have not seen this relic, but its existence is vouched by excellent authority. Immediately succeeding the Dissolution, the Priory was demolished and let out on building leases to various tenants. Stow, the London historian, writes : " Thence up to the late dissolved Priory, called Holywell, a house of Nuns. The Priory was valued at the Suppression to having lands £293 by year and was surrendered in 1539. The Church thereof being pulled down, many houses have been builded for the lodging of noblemen, of strangers and of others." When the old Abbey was portioned into estates, one important lot fell into the hands of Henry Webb, who eventually disposed of it to Christopher Bumsted, who disposed of the same property to Giles Allen, from whom James Burbage took over a lease in 1576. All the minute particulars respecting the site of The Theatre are mostly due to a protracted lawsuit between Giles and Burbage, the records of which have been

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fortunately preserved, and were made public by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps. The lease granted by Giles to Burbage contained a curious clause to the effect that Burbage was willing to accept a lease for twenty-one years provided that, at the termination of that period, the said Burbage, having expended the sum of not less than two hundred pounds on the building in the course of ten years, should have the option of taking down and removing the same to any locality he might select. A further clause also provided for an extension of the lease after the expiration of 21 years. For the present we will pass over the first 21 years and come to the critical year in the affairs of this playhouse. When the first lease was on point of expiry, James Burbage commenced negotiations for an extension of time, but unfortunately, while these particulars were being discussed, the original lessee, James Burbage died. By his will the interest of his Shoreditch property devolved upon his two sons, Richard and Cuthbert, the former being the famous actor ; of the latter little is known, he may have been an actor in his brother's company. The two sons, in an interview with Allen, the owner of the property, now demanded afresh an extension of the lease, Allen would have acceded to their request provided they paid an additional ten pounds a year and further stipulated that after five years from the signing of the new lease they must be prepared to use the property for other purposes than theatrical entertainments.

The new lease was never signed ; nevertheless, for a brief period the Burbages remained in possession. No one will deny but that the tenants had a very uncomfortable and insecure tenure of the premises. The lessees must have realized the perilous position of their tenancy, which was liable to foreclosure at any moment. Being faced with this predicament they hit upon a desperate remedy. As

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stated above, a clause was inserted in the original lease whereby they had the right in pulling down and removing the said building. No sooner had they resolved upon this expedient than the plan was quietly carried into effect, thereby causing the lawsuit with Giles Allen, and incidentally throwing light on the early annals of the theatre. The following paragraph is an extract from Allen's Bill of Complaints against Cuthbert Burbage, who "unlawfully combining and confederating himself with the said Richard Burbage and one Peter Street, William Smith, and divers other persons to the number of twelve, to your subject unknown, did about the eighth and twentieth day of December, in the one and fortieth year of your Highness' reign, and since then your Highness' last and general pardon by the confederacy aforesaid notoriously assemble themselves with divers and many unlawful and offensive weapons as namely, swords, daggers, billes, axes, and such like, and so armed did then repair unto the said Theatre, and then and there armed as aforesaid in very riotous, outrageous and forcible manner, and contrary to the laws of your Highness' realm, attempted to pull down the said Theatre whereupon divers of your subjects, servants and farmers, then going about in peaceable manner to procure them from that their unlawful enterprise, that the said riotous persons aforesaid, notwithstanding procured then thereon with great violence, not only then and there forcible and riotously resisting your subjects, servants and farmers, and also then and there pulling down, breaking and throwing down the said Theatre in very outrageous and violent and riotous sort to the great disturbance and terrifying, not only of your subjects, said servants and farmers, but of divers others of your Majesty's loving subjects there near inhabiting and having so done did then also in

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most forcible and riotous manner take and carry away from thence all the wood and timber thereof unto the Bankside in the parish of St. Overyes and there erected a new playhouse with the said timber and wood !

All the world knows that the said new playhouse was the famous Globe Theatre, the glory of the Bankside and the scene of Shakespeare's everlasting creations. Stow, the historian of London, in the first edition of the Survey of the City of London, mentions The Theatre by name in the following paragraph : " The church thereof being pulled downe, many houses have been builded for the lodging of noblemen of strangers borne and other. And neare thereunto are builded two publique houses for the acting and shewe of Comedies, Tragedies and Histories for recreation. Whereof the one is called the Courtein, the other the Theatre, both standing on the Southwest side towards the field." The last few lines from " Whereof to field " were omitted in the second edition in 1603. The learned editor of the latest and best edition of this famous book, Charles Kingsford, M.A., by a slip of the pen, in a note to this passage, refers to the Curtain as having been demolished in 1600 ; of course, it should be the Theatre, and the date should be 1598. The field mentioned by Stow formed part of the well-known Finsbury Fields, the playground of Elizabethan Londoners ; these fields abutted on Moorfields, which formed the boundary of North-East London. Many citizens took advantage of these open fields and used them as a short cut to the playhouse, generally going thither on horseback. This manner of approaching the playhouse may account for the tradition that Shakespeare on his first arrival in London held horses outside the building.

Sometime in 1576 the players were safely installed

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in the new building, notwithstanding the removal from the precincts of the City, persecution soon dogged their footsteps, inaugurated by a bitter attack from the puritan section of the community. The onslaught came from a clergyman in a book entitled *A Treatise against Dicing, Dancing and Interludes with other idle pastimes*, published in 1577. The author of this venomous tirade rebuking all kinds of amusement was John Northbroke, a preacher and procurator for the Bristol Clergy in the Synod of London. The tract is in the form of a dialogue between Youth and Age.

“ Youth. Do you speak against these places also which are made up and builded for such plays and interludes as The Theatre and Curtain are and other such like places tendes.

“ Age. Yea, truly for I am persuaded that Satan hath not a more speedy way and fitter school to work and teach his desire to bring men and women into his snare than these places and plays and theatres are, and therefore necessary that these places and plays should be forbidden and dissolved and put down by authority.”

One of the earliest references to the recently built theatres was made by Thomas Wilcox, a notorious divine, on December 9th, 1576, whose life will be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He referred to the Theatre and the Curtain as “ those sumptuous theatre houses.”

The earliest references to The Theatre, by name, is mentioned in an order of the Privy Council, dated 1st August, 1577, “ for the avoiding of the sickness likely to happen through the heat of the weather and assemblies of the people of London to plays,” measures should be taken that “ such as are and do use to play without the Liberties of the City . . . as the theater and such like, shall forbear any more to play until Mighelmas be past.”

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After an interval of one year from the Rev. Northbroke's outburst another preacher mounted the pulpit, delivering a vigorous sermon in denunciation of "The Theatre." This divine was a schoolmaster named Stockton, headmaster of Tonbridge School, where he held indisputable sway, widely known as a severe disciplinarian, and a writer of many devotional works. The following is an extract from a sermon preached at St. Paul's Cross : "Have we not houses of purpose built with great charges for the maintenance of them, and that without the Liberties, as who shall say 'There let them say what they will we will play.' I know not how I might with the godly learned especially more discommend the gorgeous playing places erected in the fields than term it as they please to have it called a Theatre. Will not a filthy play with a blast of a trumpet sooner call thither a thousand than an hour's tolling of the bell bring to a sermon a hundred? Nay, even here in the City, without it be at this place and some other ordinary audience where you shall find a rehearsal of company, whereas if you visit to the Theatre the Curtain and other places of players in the City you shall on the Lord's Day have their places with many other that I cannot reckon so full as possible they can throng."

In most ages, even the present one, the clergy have persistently set their faces against play acting without sufficiently analysing the reasons for their embittered attacks, therefore their testimony must be accepted as prejudiced partisans, which neither voice the view of the populace nor of the cultured classes. Contemporary records afford ample proof that the stage was frequented by all sorts and conditions of people, the rowdy section seeming to predominate, only the puritanical section, chiefly composed of the middle classes, kept aloof. The popularity of the drama, acclaimed by the upper classes, saved

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it from complete annihilation, otherwise the authorities would have banished every player beyond the City walls. The sole cause of hatred against the players can only be accounted for by the strong puritanical feeling existing in the breasts of the City Fathers, which expressed itself in denouncing with unseemly rage and bitterness any kind of entertainment in which the citizens evinced the slightest pleasure. Any pretext, however flimsy, was seized upon with avidity, thereby exhibiting their petty spite against the players. When the plague raged the theatres were closed. If any act of disturbance occurred the theatres were closed. On Saints' days, Holydays and Festivalsthe theatres were closed. Orders were frequently issued permitting stage plays only on certain days in the week. Every device was instituted in their endeavour to persecute the poor player, but, in spite of all these tyrannical enactments, the drama continued to flourish exceedingly, attracting hundreds of people who found employment in connexion with the stage.

Another early reference to the Theatre is found in a volume of a contemporary author. John Florio, an Italian refugee, who instructed the English aristocracy in the niceties of the Italian language, in a book entitled *Dialogues and Proverbs First Frutes*, published in 1578, is the following passage: "We will go into the Fields. Let us go to the Theatre to see a comedie. What pastimes are they in England on holidays? Of all sortes of pastyme, as Comedies, Tragedies, leaping, dancing, playes of defence, Baiting of Beasts, etc." The above paragraph is in the form of a dialogue. This reference is rarely met with, I believe Mrs. Carmichael Stopes was the first to point it out. In the year 1580, Burbage was summoned before the Middlesex Court on a charge of bringing together unlawful assemblies of people to hear and see certain colloquies or interludes called

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plays, exercised by James Burbage and divers other persons unknown, at a certain place called The Theatre, in Halliwell, in the aforesaid county. By reason of which unlawful assembly of the people great affrays, assaults and tumults and quasi-insurrections and divers other misdeeds and enormities have been then and there done and perpetrated by very many ill-disposed persons to the great disturbance of the peace." This statement is a gross exaggeration, but its very overstatement suffices in explaining the attitude the authorities assumed in the extreme measures adopted by them in suppressing play-acting. How unfair and unjust appear the means by which a body of English magistrates endeavoured to abolish theatrical institutions. No statement was too false, no lie uttered was deemed sinful ; the airiest motive was seized upon with eagerness if by such means any discredit was cast upon the acting fraternity. For years they were harassed, tormented and bandied about from place to place, and this persecution lasted even whilst the greatest dramatic literature of all time was daily being represented before an ever increasing and admiring public.

For this drastic treatment we may seek some condonement and extenuating circumstances in the religious belief of the country, the people being chiefly guided by the clergy, who instilled in them the belief that all things connected with the stage were injurious and harmful to the community. Imbued with these ideas the clergy considered themselves justified by using every means in their power in overthrowing and abolishing the stage out of the kingdom. Many of these reverend fanatics were admitted on the Council of Administration, who continually persisted in their endeavours to oust the players, at any rate, out of the City ; in furtherance of their plans they preached the sinfulness of the drama in order to drive away the

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people from the playhouses. Their pleadings were partially successful ; by continual exhortations they succeeded in poisoning the minds of the middle classes, who accordingly absented themselves from all places of amusement. The chief patrons of the drama were drawn from the upper and lower classes much in the same way as the Turf to-day exercises on the same classes, the middle class in this instance displaying great good sense and morality by staying away from such an unhealthy and discreditable amusement.

Although the Corporation were powerful enough in forcing the players from places under their control, they were powerless in suppressing play-acting during the entire reigns of Elizabeth and James. The year 1584 was memorable on account of a disturbance which occurred outside the Theatre, thereby causing the assembly of a great crowd. Quickly seizing this event as an excuse, the authorities petitioned that this building and the Curtain should be pulled down. The Court considered the punishment too drastic ; nevertheless, the Corporation persisted, eventually obtaining letters ordering the demolition of both theatres : " Upon Sunday my Lord sent 2 Aldermen to the Court for the suppressing and pulling down of the Theatre and Curtain for all the Lords agreed thereunto, saving my Lord Chamberlain and Mr. Viech, but we obtained a letter to suppress them all. Upon the same night I sent for the Queen's players and my Lord Arundel his players, and they all well nigh obeyed the Lords' letters. The chiefest of her Highness' players advised me to send for the owner of the Theatre, who was a stubborn fellow, and to bind him. I did so. He sent me word that he was my Lord Hunsdon's man, and that he would not come to me, but he would in the morning ride to my Lord. Then I sent the under Sheriff for him,

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and he brought him to me, and at his coming he shouted me out very Justice, and in the end I showed him my Lord his master's hand, and then he was more quiet, but to die for it he would not be bound. And then I, minding to send him to prison, he made suit that he might be bound to appear at the Oyer and determined the which is to-morrow, where he said he was sure the Court would not bind him, being a counselor's man, and so I have granted his request, where he shall be sure to be bound or else is like to do worse."

Again, for fear of riots, official notices were distributed that the Theatre be closed. "There shall be no plays at the Theatre or other usual place where the same are commonly used." These orders were frequently circulated; whether they were put into execution is doubtful. Considering the restrictions that hemmed around the poor player, Shakespeare's lament that through ill-fortune he became a player need cause no surprise, considering the persecution that was directed against the theatrical profession.

A passage in Dante's "Inferno" might, with slight alterations, exactly fit the actions of our own civic authorities during the reign of Elizabeth. "As in the Venetian Arsenal, the pitch boils in the winter time wherewith to caulk their rotten ships. But, looking down into the chasm, I could see nothing except the bubbles that its boiling raised. And as I looked at it fixedly and wondered, my guide drew me back hastily, saying, 'Look! look!' And when I turned I saw behind us a black devil come running along the rocks. Oh, how wild his face, oh, how bitter his action, as he came with his wings wide, light upon his feet, on his shoulder he bore a sinner grasped by both haunches, and when he came to the bridge foot he cried down the pit: 'Here's an Alderman from the City of London;

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put him under that I may fetch more for the land is full of such."

Before the total destruction of The Theatre there is a reference to the "unfrequented Theatre" in Skialetheia, a series of satires entered in the Stationers' Register on the 15th September, 1598.

The literature of the day barely mentions the name of The Theatre, yet this building had flourished for over a period of twenty years. Stow mentions the Theatre once, only to be withdrawn from his second edition, possibly the sour old Puritan, condemned in his heart all play acting, and fervently desired the expulsion of all actors, plays, and their authors from the domain of the City. The antiquary, Stow, may well represent a type of the better class citizen utterly unsympathetic with the new drama, and entirely adverse to all kinds of amusement. This prejudiced feeling may account for the complete silence in any of his works of theatrical life, which during his time was daily growing into importance and significance. We have explained the silence of the old topographer, but how can we interpret the passing over of this side of London life by all literary coteries. The Metropolis swarmed with writers of books and pamphlets dealing with contemporary events, most of the authors were connected with the theatrical world, yet you may search in vain thousands of books in the expectation of finding any critical or explanatory notices of the stage. The conspiracy of silence is so well maintained that we are left almost unacquainted with theatrical conditions which governed the Elizabethan stage, whilst of the Greek stage which flourished over two thousand years previously we have minute particulars in all its branches. Why such a great novelty, as an enclosed theatre should not have been freely discussed, written about, and above all, criticised, remains one of the mysteries

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of the age? Fortunately a few foreigners from among the throng who visited these shores jotted down their experiences of London, including therein the amusements of the town, not forgetting to describe briefly a list of theatres.

No drawing, print, or any kind of illustration depicting the first theatre erected in London has been handed down to us. Under these circumstances conjectural reconstruction of its walls is quite permissible, although extreme caution is necessary when guided by imaginary probabilities. The information we possess regarding the later theatres may in some measure help us in forming a fairly accurate account of the early theatres. A period of over twenty years had elapsed between the building of The Theatre and that of the Fortune; concerning the latter, interesting details are forthcoming. Between these dates the type may have altered and improvements introduced, which is only natural considering the long interval. We obtain our first glimpse of the early theatre buildings from quite a most unexpected quarter.

Samuel Kiechel, a foreigner, visited England in 1585. On his arrival in London he patronised several places of amusement, recording in his Diary the impressions and facts of his journey. The following extract is taken from his published journal; the notice about the stage only concerns us. "There are some peculiar houses in which are so constructed that they have about three galleries one above the other. It may indeed happen that the players take from £10 to £12 at a time, particularly if they act anything new, when people have to pay double. And that they perform nearly every day in the week, notwithstanding that plays are forbidden on Friday and Saturday; this prohibition is not observed."

Contemporary literature informs us that the

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exterior of The Theatre was round, either hexagonal or octagonal, differing little from the illustrations as shown in maps of the period. Nash, in the *Unfortunate Traveller*, writes : " I saw a banquetting house belonging to a merchant that was the marvel of the world. It was built round, of green marble like a Theatre without."

As will be seen above, only scraps of evidence are available in piecing together the reconstruction of The Theatre ; as regards the interior absolutely nothing definitely is known beyond the important statement that three galleries surrounded the building. The first theatre was not solely devoted to dramatic entertainments, as records exist of fencing matches and other exhibitions of skill taking place there. Stow, the historian, notes that " activities were produced within its walls." The word " activities " denotes tumbling, rope dancing, vaulting and other acrobatic feats. Halliwell-Phillipps publishes a letter dated July 1st, 1582, from the Earl of Warwick to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, requesting them to allow his servant, John David, to play at " The Bull " in Bishopsgate Street, or in some other convenient place. On the 23rd of the same month the Earl again wrote to the Lord Mayor complaining of the treatment and disgrace put upon his servant in not being allowed to play for prizes after the publication of his bills. The following day the Earl received a reply from the Lord Mayor saying he had not refused permission for his servant to play for prizes, but had granted him a licence, only restraining him from playing in an inn for fear of the infection, and had appointed him to play in an open space at the Leaden Hall. Not having availed himself of the permission for fourteen days, and the infection increasing, it became necessary to prohibit the assembly of the people to his play within the City, but permission had been granted him to perform

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in the open fields. "I have herein yet further done for your servant what I may, that is that if he may obtain lawfully to play at The Theatre or other open place out of the City, he hath and shall have my permission with his company, drums and show, to pass only through the City, being not upon the Sunday, which is as much as I may justify in this season, and for that cause I have with his own consent appointed him Monday next."

Another reference occurs in the following year, in which the Lord Mayor writes to the Justice of the Peace, praying for the assistance of the Corporation in preventing a breach of the peace by refusing the people permission to congregate about "The Theatre." Gosson, in both his prose works, *The School of Abuse* and *Plays Confuted in two Actions*, mentions two plays usually produced at the Theatre, namely, "The Blacksmith's Daughter" and "Cataline's Conspiracy"; the former is mentioned in *Plays Confuted* and the latter in *The School of Abuse*, 1579.

The most interesting notice in connexion with plays acted at The Theatre will be found in a paragraph from Thomas Lodge's book entitled *Wit's Miserie or the World's Madness*, 1596, in which a reference is made to the old play of "Hamlet," whose authorship is generally assigned to Thomas Kyd, the writer of the famous "Spanish Tragedy," the most popular drama of the Elizabethan period. Shakespeare himself refers to this play more than once. Although the old "Hamlet" is lost there are excellent grounds for presuming that this play is the main source of Shakespeare's supreme masterpiece of "Hamlet," the greatest achievement in the dramatic literature of the world. The paragraph in reference to the Theatre reads as follows: "He looks as pale as the vizard of the ghost which cries so miserably at the Theatre like an oysterwife

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Hamlet revenge." The Theatre is again referred to by Middleton in the Black Book, 1604 : " He had a head of hair like one of the devils in Dr. Faustes when the old Theatre cracked and frightened the audience."

A foreign prince visited these shores in 1596, and wrote a poem in commemoration of the event, dated the same year as his visit. He writes that London possesses four theatres, which are utilized not only for dramatic purposes but for baiting of bulls, besides cock fighting. Another early reference to The Theatre occurs in a rare pamphlet called " Tarlton's Newes out of Purgatory," published without date, but definitely known to be printed either in 1590 or earlier. The passage is as follows : " And forsooth upon Whitsun Monday last I would needs to the Theatre to a play when I came I found such a concourse of unrulye people that I thought it better solitary to walk in the fields. Feeding my humour with this fancy, I stept by Dame Anne of Cleares well where after I had rested awhile I fell asleep." Nash, the dramatist, mentions Tarlton as playing at the Theatre in a pamphlet named " Piérce Penillesse," 1592. Stow, in his survey of London, mentions this well ; the origin of the name is founded on a sordid story of old London. A rich London widow, named Annis Cleare, who, matching herself with a riotous courtier in the time of Edward II, who vainly consumed all her wealth and leaving her in much poverty, there she drowned herself, being then but a shallow ditch or running water. Mr. Kingsford, in his learned edition of the Survey, notes " that this well was near Paul's St., Finsbury, in the neighbourhood of which there still is a St. Agnes Terrace. The name of St. Agness Clare Fields continued till a hundred years ago." I wandered all over this district in the hope of finding St. Agnes Terrace, but my search was fruitless. On my return I consulted the London County

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Council's directory of the Streets of London, and after looking through that ponderous volume for over one hour, I found that the terrace was formerly a part of what is now Tabernacle Street, the old name being abolished in 1884.

During the early years of the theatres the stage was merely a platform, which could be easily removed when necessary; as before mentioned, the theatres were used for other than dramatic performances. The stage platform jutted out far into the yard, the technical name for the space allotted to the audience. The spectators who occupied this part of the building were called the groundlings. The yard surrounded the platform on three sides, the stage buildings occupying the fourth, the audience reaching up as far as the barrier, which divided the stage from the auditorium. The roof was open to the sky, the actors protecting themselves from the elements by erecting a kind of lean-to or pent-house, sloping down from the tiring house; this contrivance was technically called the "Heavens" or "shadow," either thatched or tiled. At the rear of the stage was the tiring-house, sometimes used as an inner-stage, when not required by the actors, and was concealed by a curtain. Above the inner stage stood a balcony, flanked on both sides by rooms for noblemen or gentry. These special places were known as the Lords' rooms. Over the second story rose a turret, from which commanding view a flag fluttered announcing the immediate performance of a play. Only two doors of entry were considered necessary, one in front of the house admitting the audience to the yard and galleries, and a second situated at the back of the building, used by the actors and better class of spectators who occupied the expensive seats. The reason for the limited number of doors can be explained by the terms of agreement between the lessee and the actors.

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Burbage did not lease his theatre to a company of actors, but shared the risk of the undertaking with them, receiving for his share the money taken for the galleries, the players dividing among themselves the rest of the proceeds. This arrangement, in course of time, was subject to alterations. The same system, with slight variations, was adopted in all theatres during the Shakespearean era.

The chief action of the play took place on the outer stage, no curtain of any description concealing this part of the stage either before or after or during the performance, the only curtain or tapestry in lieu of a curtain noticeable was that dividing the inner from the outer stage, and even beyond Shakespeare's time this ever open stage existed. When the Theatre was first erected in 1576 there may have been no inner stage, and the entire change of properties may have been placed in sight of the audience. The Theatre was built entirely of wood, and only good fortune must have saved the building from being destroyed by fire. The Theatre, no doubt, stood in its own grounds, and this isolated position accounts for its withstanding the accidents which all wooden buildings are more or less subject. All performances in a public theatre were enacted during the day time, in the afternoon between the hours of two and five or three and six. The theatre, not being lighted, necessarily enforced the closing of the play before dusk. The acting of a play lasted between two to three hours; a Shakespearean drama would take nearer three than two hours to perform, sometimes even longer, even in those days the blue pencil was liberally used, many passages being cut, not on account of dramatic propriety but merely to shorten the performance. On entering an Elizabethan theatre the first object that met the eye of the spectator was a placard announcing the name of the play for the afternoon.

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Although theatre posters were put up in different parts of the City and on the theatre walls, informing the public of the date of a given play, unforeseen circumstances sometimes prevented the advertised play being performed. Unfortunately none of these bills has survived. How interesting would be the perusal of the play bill announcing the first performance of "Hamlet." That these placards were affixed to posts is corroborated by the following anecdote related by Taylor, the water-poet, in one of his pamphlets. "A merchant was riding down Fleet Street at a great pace, when he was stopped by an actor, who questioned him as to the name of the play being acted. The merchant was indignant at being thus waylaid, and asked the man why he had stopped him; the answer he made was 'I took you for the post you went so fast.'"

How a play was presented before a public audience when first produced at The Theatre cannot be satisfactorily solved, the subject dealing with all branches of theatrical customs, has never been thoroughly investigated, owing chiefly to want of the necessary literary materials; every writer on the subject may thus air his theories without much fear of contradiction, the critics themselves disagreeing how far scenic decorations had advanced during the Shakespearean era. Though the little we do know on this thorny subject would seem to militate against scenery of any description being employed, I have always held the opinion that the stage was not so bare of scenic effects as most historians of the early stage would have us believe. Stage properties of every size and description were extensively used by all companies of players of any importance. With respect to the stage, the general view maintained is that the outer stage or platform of The Theatre closely resembled the stage of a French theatre during the performance of a play of Molière's; in that

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case the Elizabethan stage would be absolutely bare with the exception of a table and a couple of chairs. Experience convinces me that in the course of time this theory will be thoroughly revolutionized, and proof will be forthcoming that scenic effect with certain limitations, flourished during the Shakespearean age.

As previously stated, the title of the play was exhibited on the stage, printed or written in large text letters. Some writers affirm that the title was exposed in full view of the audience from the balcony of the stage. Exact confirmation on these minor details cannot be expected. When the play advertised on the posts differed from the one actually performed, the playgoer was entitled to have his money refunded provided he quitted the theatre.

Three blasts of a trumpet announced the beginning of a play, and a flag was displayed flying from the turret showing that a play was in progress. The spectators in the yard, being unprovided with seats, were left standing during the entire performance.

I remember years ago visiting a theatre in Vienna, where a musical comedy was acted, and where all the occupants of the *parterre*, or pit, viewed the play standing, as no seats of any kind were provided in this part of the theatre.

How a change of scene was notified, if indeed any change was made, nothing definitely is known. The most likely plan adopted lacking painted scenery, would be by what is technically known as locality boards, something resembling the device employed by the modern music hall artist engaged in character sketches. A board is placed in a prominent position of the stage in full view of the audience with the name of the character assumed by the performer, the board being changed on each separate occasion when a different character is assumed. Apply this method in the changing of the scene in

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an Elizabethan theatre and then you can better understand Shakespeare's exhortation in his prologues of "Henry V" when he urges the audience that their imagination must fill up the void caused by want of necessary scenery. To our modern notions the number of scenes in a Shakespearean play is quite bewildering; the very number precludes the idea that the scene was changed at all. The question is such a difficult one, and of such an intricate and technical nature that further discussion at our present state of knowledge would only confuse the reader without providing him with a key for its solution.

The primitive device of locality boards was sarcastically alluded to by Sir Philip Sidney in his "Defence of Poesie": "What childe is there that coming to a Play, and seeing Thebes written in great letters on an olde doore, doth believe that it is Thebes. You shall have Asia on the one side and Africa on the other and so many other under Kingdoms that the player when he cometh in must even begin with telling where he is or else the tale will not be conceived. Now ye shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by we have news of a shipwreck in the same place, and then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave. While in the meantime two armies fly in represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field."

In reading the above paragraph the reader must bear in mind that this ironical criticism was penned many years before Shakespeare commenced his dramatic career. During the long interval several improvements may have taken place in stage effects,

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so that a Shakesperean play may have been produced under more promising conditions than Sidney's statement would allow.

An interesting chapter could be written explaining the mode of payment existing at these times on entering an inn-yard or theatre when a play was in progress. On the erection of the public theatres our information, although scanty, becomes a trifle more definitive; unfortunately no light is thrown on the methods in vogue at the inn-yards, although we learn that payment was collected on entering a theatre. As we should naturally expect, the system is different in many respects from modern methods. From literary sources we gather that a man, or even a woman, was stationed at the entrance door of a theatre, in his hand he held a box into which everyone who entered dropped a penny; note well that the money was always deposited in the box and not handed over into the keeping of the boxholder, by which act we must regretfully conclude that Elizabethan doorkeepers were in no way more trusted than our 'bus and tram conductors of the present day, more's the pity! This preliminary payment admitted the playgoer into the yard, where he could remain without further fee; if a more comfortable place was desired, the disbursement of an extra penny provided for him a seat or stool in the topmost gallery. At this stage we learn how the extra money was collected. At each separate entrance of the different parts of the house stood a doorkeeper, technically known as a "gatherer." This system of payment was adopted on account of the lessee of the theatre sharing in the profits of the house instead of, as in modern times, leasing the building into the hands of a third party, only receiving the rent and taking no share in the proceeds of the house.

In a lawsuit respecting the different shares claimed

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by each shareholder, Cuthbert Burbage, the son of the original builder of The Theatre, states that his father, James Burbage, borrowed large sums of money at interest with which he built the first play-house known as The Theatre. The players that lived in these times, 1576-1597, had only the profits arising from the doors, but now the players receive all the comings in at the doors to themselves. By the term "housekeepers" is meant the proprietors, those that are responsible for the rent and money laid out in connexion with the managing of a theatre.

The entrance fee for seats in the lowest tier of the gallery was sixpence, twelpence was the charge for a seat in the Lords' room; these boxes were partitioned off from the other seats in the lowermost gallery. Rooms and boxes were also provided on each side of the balcony, which formed part of the stage buildings; these seats were also expensive, but in later years they were abandoned on account of the poor view, and also for the evil repute into which they had fallen. These high-price seats equalled the price of a stall at our present West End theatres. Whether these charges ruled at all Elizabethan theatres during the last decade of the sixteenth century cannot be definitely affirmed, but considering the conservatism maintained in theatrical customs, for generations, no doubt, only slight changes were introduced. Whether seats were allowed on the stage of "The Theatre" is nowhere recorded; most probably this was a much later custom. Even at the Globe Theatre, built twenty years after the erection of the first theatre, a well known historian of the stage positively asserts that seats on the Globe stage for privileged spectators were practically unknown.

A list of plays acted at the Theatre would have been a valuable and interesting document, but unfortunately no such account exists, in place thereof

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we must be thankful for the known fragmentary records. Gosson, in his *School of Abuse*, 1579, mentions the Blacke Smith's Daughter and Catalins Conspiracies "usually brought into the Theatre"; he likewise refers to "the history of Cæsar & Pompey and the Playe of the Fabic, at the Theatre." The old "Hamlet" and Marlowe's "Dr. Fauste" were also produced there.

The last order issued against The Theatre appeared in 1597 from the office of the Privy Council to certain of the Middlesex Justices to the effect that "Her Majesty being informed that there are very great disorders committed in the common playhouses both by lewd matters that are handled on the stage, and by resort and confluence of bad people, hath given direction that these playhouses that are erected and built only for such purposes, shall be plucked down, namely, The Curtain and The Theatre near to Shoreditch. They were accordingly commanded to send for the owners of the Curtain theatre or any other common playhouse and enjoin them by virtue hereof forthwith to pluck down quite the stages, galleries and rooms that are made for people to stand in, and to deface the same as they may not be employed again to such use." This order was never enforced, but henceforth the Theatre as a playhouse was doomed, and after that year the actors quitted it for ever.

Many of the above details connected with the early theatres are derived from innumerable lawsuits caused by disputes among people engaged at the different theatres; these old cases have been unearthed and printed *in extenso*. Another source of information is obtained from the continual bickering, backbiting and petty annoyance emanating chiefly from the City authorities. These purse-proud, pompous and puritanical individuals endeavoured

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by any means and at all costs in suppressing theatres, players and playwrights with their followers. Through these jealousies, acrimonious actions, on both sides ensued, quite out of harmony with the innocent recreations of play-acting. Actions at law followed these unseemly outbursts, thanks to which we are indebted for many details concerning the early theatres. From the beginning of the history of the stage, the reader will observe that the players were always prohibited from erecting a theatre within the City boundaries. The favour of the Court saved the actors from being excluded altogether from the City ; proof of this last statement will be found in the many instances of the actors setting up their stages in the yards of the City taverns and inns all through the reign of Elizabeth.

## THE CURTAIN THEATRE

Within the same year of the building of the first playhouse in London, another appeared upon the scene. The plot of ground on which this second building stood was called the Curtene, and the theatre adopted this name, and not, as generally supposed, receiving its nomenclature from any theatrical accessory. Whether this establishment claimed rivalry with Burbage's theatre, or was another speculative venture of this energetic and far-seeing man remains unknown, as few records exist in connexion with this second enterprise. Anyone in search of the actual site of the Curtain theatre must walk up Holywell Lane until the Curtain Road is reached, then turning on the left, proceed about one hundred paces along this road until we arrive at Hewitt Street, formerly known as

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Gloucester Street, and earlier still as Gloucester Row. In George II's reign this alley bore the name of Curtain Court, and is thus named in Chassereau's map of Shoreditch. On this very spot stood the Curtain theatre. Even so accurate a scholar as Professor Lawrence locates the theatre as being in Gloucester Street, whereas this street has for several years been known as Hewitt Street.

London topography is at times very misleading, and requires the proverbial patience of the time honoured prophet in unravelling many of its mysteries. Not a single inhabitant of Shoreditch could direct you to the site of the theatre and would stare in bewilderment if you enquired for Gloucester Street, even so slight an error can cause vexation and loss of time, which is my reason for pointing out this mistake. The form of the stage buildings, the auditorium, entrances and exits were in all probability similar in construction with that in vogue at the Theatre. No two theatres would exactly resemble one another in every petty detail, but how they differed we have no means of ascertaining, although this theatre was in existence for over three quarters of a century.

Amidst all the rubbish that was printed during this period, barely a reference is made concerning this place of amusement, which loomed so largely in the life of the citizens of London.

When the clergy denounced the playhouses, they invariably coupled the two theatres then in existence, The Theatre and The Curtain. In the memorials of the Council the two houses are likewise associated. An instance in which the Curtain alone is mentioned is of a most interesting nature. The production of "Romeo and Juliet" at the Curtain theatre brought forth the following verse, which appeared in John Marston's book, entitled *The Scourge of Villanie*, 1598."

THE  
HECTOR  
OF  
GERMANIE,  
OR  
THE PALSGRAVE;  
PRIME ELECTOR.

---

A New Play, an Honourable Hystorie.

---

As it hath beene publikely Acted at the Red Bull,  
and at the Curtaine, by a Companie of  
Young men of this Citie.

---

Made by W. SMITH, with new Additions.

---

*Historia -vita Temporis.*

---

L O N D O N,

Printed by Thomas Creede, for Iofias Harrison, and  
are to be solde in Pater-Noster Row, at the  
the Signe of the *Golden Anker*. 1615.

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“Luscus, what’s play’d to-day? faith now I know  
I set thy lips abroad from whence doth flow  
Naught but pure Juliet and Romeo.  
Say who acts best? Drusus or Roscio,  
Now I have him nere of ought did speak,  
But when of Plays or Players he did treat  
Hath made a common place book out of plays,  
And speaks in print at least what ere he says  
Is warranted by Curtaine plaudites.  
If ere you heard him courting Lesbia’s eyes  
Say, courteous Sir, speaks he not movingly  
From out some new pathetic Tragedy.  
He writes, he rails, he jests, he courts what not  
And all from out his huge long scraped stock of  
well-penned plays.”

A difficulty arises with the word “Curtain.” Does the word refer to the theatre of that name or is it a casual way of speaking of any theatre whereby attaching the modern theatrical meaning to the word? Expecting a solution ready at hand, I consulted Dr. Murray’s New English Dictionary, but in this case was grievously disappointed. The actual phrase “Curtain Plaudities” was quoted under the definition appertaining to Curtain or curtains without any reference being given to the Curtain Theatre, the quotation should have been omitted, rather than mislead the enquirer. Shakespearean students generally agree that the phrase refers to the theatre of that name, and there can be no question that this is the correct view, strongly supported by the fact that at so early a date the front stage curtain was entirely unknown. The transcriber of the manuscript from which the quarto edition of “Romeo and Juliet” was printed in 1599, inadvertently substitutes the name of Kemp, the actor, for the character he played, namely,

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Peter. This same Kemp was quite a noted personage in his day. In 1600 he published a book, *Kemp's Nine Daies Wonder Performed in a Dance from London to Norwich*. Among other stories, he relates that once when staying at an inn at Burnwood two pickpockets claimed his acquaintance, "the officers bringing them to my inn. I justly denied their acquaintance, saving that I remembered one of them to be a noted cut purse, such a one as we tie to a post on our stage for all people to wonder at, when at a play they are taken pilfering." In the Middlesex County Records there is a notice concerning the Recognizances for William Hawkins, he being charged with a purse taken at the Curtain.

One can scarcely credit the idea that these wonderful dramas of Shakespeare, so well constructed in the action of the plot, the delicacy and skill necessary in handling and writing the diverse stories of the play, the complex nature of the characters portrayed, the beauty of the rhythm of the verse, combined with the easy flow of dialogue, the possibility, I contend, is almost inconceivable that these plays were produced in the noisy and somewhat uncouth surroundings of an inn-yard. Every link in the chain of evidence only confirms my implicit belief that these masterpieces were first acted in an enclosed building, where the necessary quiet and seclusion could be obtained for the actors in worthily interpreting the mighty thoughts and inspired words of the almost divine author.

Although actual proof is wanting that Shakespeare's company occupied continually the Theatre and the Curtain during the last decade of the sixteenth century, we may with certainty presume that these playhouses were the scene of Shakespeare's first dramatic productions. The oft quoted suggestion that these plays first saw the light in an open air yard seems incredible, especially when a

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properly organized theatre was ready at hand, whose owner was father of the most prominent actor of the day, namely, Richard Burbage, a fellow actor of Shakespeare.

On several occasions the Curtain Theatre was threatened with total extinction. Fortunately the Bulls of excommunication never materialized, the building surviving all the attacks and thunderbolts which were hurled against her doors.

Immediately prior to the dismantling of the Theatre an order was signed by the Privy Council, and issued to the Justices of Middlesex, for the suppression of the theatres and all places of amusement in the following terms: "Her Majesty being informed that there are very great disorders committed in the common playhouses both by lewd matters that are handled on the stages and by resort and confluence of bad people, hath given direction that not only no play shall be used within London or about the City or in any public place during the time of summer, but also the playhouses that are erected and built only for such purpose shall be plucked down, namely, the Curtain and the Theatre near to Shoreditch, or any other within that county. These are, therefore, in Her Majesty's name to charge and command you, that you take present order there be no more plays used in any public place within three miles of the City until Allhallows-tide next, and likewise that you do send for the owner of the Curtain Theatre and other common playhouses and enjoin them by virtue hereof forthwith to pluck down quite the stages, galleries and rooms that are made for people to stand in and so to deface the same as they may not be employed again to such use, which if they shall not speedily perform you shall advertize as that order may be taken to see the same done according to Her Majesty's pleasure and commandment."

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The above order was issued in 1597, but was never executed. Three years later another attempt was made enforcing the closing of the Curtain, during the time that the Fortune Theatre was erected. Notwithstanding this order for utterly destroying the building, the good old theatre stood defiant, keeping the flag waving aloft in spite of all puritanical onslaughts for her downfall. The next year yet another mandate was issued ordering the abolition of the Curtain; afterwards no further commands threatening this theatre were circulated, the Curtain continuing its career until an Act of both Houses of Parliament finally closed the doors of all places of amusement.

A few years after the accession of King James, his consort, Anne of Denmark, extended her patronage unto a company of players who performed at the Curtain until 1609, when they acted at another theatre called the Red Bull. A most important point for consideration is whether, on transferring their allegiance to the new theatre, the Curtain was altogether abandoned.

This theatre is again noticed in Heath's epigrams, 1610, where the Globe, Fortune and Curtain are mentioned as the three leading playhouses. A later notice occurs in the year 1613 in Wither's *Abuses Stript and Whipt*.

“ Base fellows whom mere time  
Hath made sufficient to bring forth a rhyme,  
A Curtain Jig, a libel a ballad.”

For many years the Curtain was let out on hire, but was chiefly occupied by dramatic companies. A play called “Hector” was acted at the Curtain by some young men of the City; the author of the play was Wentworth Smith, whose initials are

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identical with William Shakespeare. This same Wentworth Smith may be the author of several plays signed with the initials W. S. which appear on the title pages of many quarto editions of old plays. Although these plays are sometimes associated with our poet, there is absolutely no evidence in claiming them as his.

Another notice appears in *Vox Graculi, or the Jackdaw's Prognostication for 1623*: "About this time new plays will be in more request than old, and if company come current to the Bull and Curtain there will be more money gathered in one afternoon than will be given to Kingsland Spittal in a whole month. The last recorded notice yet discovered is dated 1627. Possibly the Curtain remained open until the order of Parliament suppressed the theatres in 1642, or when a more stringent act, compelled by force, the closing altogether. Whether the Curtain obeyed the first order in 1642, or waited until the forcible ejection in 1647, is uncertain. Professor Lawrence states that the Curtain was pulled down in 1630, but no proof of this statement is forthcoming.

## NEWINGTON BUTTS

In all books, both old and new, concerning theatrical matters in Elizabethan times, mention is made of a theatre existing in Newington Butts. This district was situated near St. George's Fields in Southwark. Antiquaries, with imagination all compact, mark the ground where now stands Spurgeon's Tabernacle as the site of the old theatre. Unfortunately, there is a lack of documentary evidence of any description definitely stating the

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existence of a regular built theatre in this locality. On the other hand, there is abundant evidence proving that play acting constituted one of the chief amusements of this neighbourhood.

Although not actually possessing any positive evidence of a theatre existing in this neighbourhood, we must accept as a certainty that either an inn-yard, town hall, or public theatre stood in this vicinity, otherwise there is no accounting for a passage in Henslowe's Diary in which is recorded the event of the Lord Chamberlain's men and the Lord Admiral's men acting at Newington.

"In the name of God Amen Beginning at Newington My Lord Admiral's men and my Lord Chamberlain's men as followeth." After this entry the Diary contains a list of plays acted by these companies from June 3rd until June 13th, 1594, then a line is drawn across the page, doubtlessly signifying that the engagement terminated. The next entry, dated June 15th, 1594, continues indefinitely until 1597. From June, 15th, 1594, all notices refer to plays acted at the Rose Theatre. Most writers credit all the performances to the Newington Butts Theatre, a palpable error, arising from insufficient study of the details connected with this period.

The list of plays acted by the two companies is as follows :

The 3rd of June, 1594,	Ry. at Hesterand Askeweros	
		(Hester and Assuerus).
,, 4th	,,	"The Jewe of Malta."
,, 5th	,,	"Andronicous."
,, 6th	,,	"Cutlacke."
,, 8th	,,	"Bellendon."
,, 9th	,,	"Hamlet."
,, 10th	,,	"Heaster" (Hester and Assuerus).

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

The 11th of June, 1594.	“ The tamyinge of A Shrowe.”
„ 12th	„ “ Andronicous.”
„ 13th	„ “ The Jewe ” (“ The Jew of Malta ”).

Out of these ten performances, six may with certainty be placed, on the credit side of the Lord Chamberlain's men, the remaining four on those of the Admiral's. The “ Hamlet ” was, of course, the old play attributed by all students to Thomas Kyd, the same play on which some years later Shakespeare founded his own “ Hamlet.” “ The Taming of a Shrew ” is likewise an old play, upon which Shakespeare founded his “ Taming of the Shrew ” ; the author of the old play is not known. Shakespeare changed the names of the principal parts, with the exception of Kate or Katherine, developed the characters by adding greater depth of feeling and making them living personalities instead of types of characters as in the earlier play. He likewise contrived that the different plots were more skilfully interwoven, and in every way improved upon the old play. “ Andronicus ” may be the play attributed to Shakespeare by the editors of the *First Folio*, or perhaps this drama was an earlier play of Marlowe's or one of his disciples. Although this “ Andronicus ” finds a place in the *First Folio*, most critics agree that Shakespeare was not the author. At the most, he may have revised a few scenes and added touches here and there, but in no other way is he responsible for this revolting and barbarous play, doubtless written by some popular dramatist to please the ears and eyes of the groundlings, who simply revelled in these horrors, without ever being satiated, the appetite growing by what it fed on.

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Even in our own day the disgusting and revolting posters exhibited in all our streets entice coppers from the populace ; this demand for sensational and bloodthirsty scenes unites the Elizabethan age in matters of beastliness with these that prevail at the present day. In spite of three hundred years' progress and free education and all the aids to refinement that lie at the door of all Londoners, the mass of the people clearly demonstrate by the class of their amusement how little they have materially benefited by their education, constantly demanding the villainous dreadfulness of low class entertainments instead of encouraging the refined pleasures of a Shakesperean performance.

Even the better educated classes cannot rise much above the red-nosed comedian or the cracked-voiced variety artist or to visit nightly some filthy so-called musical comedy or revue at a West End theatre, with courtesans posing as actresses, and low music-hall performers, introducing before a fashionable audience all sorts of vulgarisms and indecent jokes and styling themselves heaven-born actors and actresses, thus further insulting a noble profession.

Of "Hester and Assuerus" nothing is known beyond the name of the play. A foreign version with the same title is extant, perhaps copied or adapted from Henslowe's play. Those four plays in 1594 belonged to the repertory of Lord Strange's company ; a few years previously they had been in the possession of another company, from whom they were purchased by Lord Strange's men. The three remaining plays were the property of the Admiral's men, namely Marlowe's celebrated drama of the "Jew of Malta," acted scores of times to an ever-admiring audience. The play called "Bellendon" has been identified with a play entered in the *Stationers' Register* as "The True Tragedy and History of King Rufus the First, with the Life and

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Death of Belyn Dun, the first thief that ever was hanged in England." The play is not extant.

"Cutlack" is also a lost play, probably alluded to in Guilpen's "Skialetheia," a series of epigrams and satires published in 1598 :

" Clodius methinks looks passing big of late,  
With Dunstons browes and Allens Cutlacks gate."

The Diary alluded to so frequently is the famous theatrical account book kept by Philip Henslowe, whose stepdaughter married Edward Alleyn, the greatest actor of his day. On his retirement from the stage he purchased the Manor of Dulwich for £10,000. Henslowe's connexion with the theatrical world lasted over a quarter of a century ; how he drifted into the world of the theatre is a puzzle not easily solved, he being by trade a dyer ; possibly his son-in-law may have persuaded him in investing money in theatrical ventures ; at all events he controlled several places of amusement, and was on friendly terms with most of the playwrights and actors of his day. When he opened the Rose Theatre he entered in his Diary day by day a list of plays that were produced there. On the first production of a new play at his theatre he wrote the letters " n e " before the title ; these may signify " new enterlude " or simply a contraction of the word " new." Whenever the letters are found, they always indicate that the play was a new one, or an old play fresh-adapted for the requirements of up-to-date audiences. Many other matters were jotted down in this Diary, especially the sums of money lent to needy authors, or money advanced for new plays and other services, likewise money expended on his theatres and bear-baiting house, and a few entries of a private nature. This manuscript volume is chiefly helpful in deciding the date and authorship of several plays.

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For benefits received we are apt to regard Philip Henslowe in a more favourable light than the illiterate, greedy and grasping theatre manager and pawnbroking usurer really deserves. Without exception this volume ranks as the most precious record of theatrical history for the Elizabethan period. Everyone interested in the subject must feel deeply grateful to Mr. W. W. Greg, who by his immense learning and untiring industry, has given to students an edition of the Diary beyond all praise. The original manuscript of this volume forms one of the treasures of Dulwich College, and reposes in the library of this excellent institution.

An important reference respecting the Newington Butts Theatre is contained in the following document issued by the Privy Council, circa 1592, granting the Rose Theatre company permission to open their doors, and further stating: "That not long since, upon some consideration, their Lordships restrained the Lord Strange's servants from playing at the Rose on the Bankside, and enjoined them to play three days a week at Newington Butts, but they understand that the tedium of the way thither and for the fact that for a long time past no plays have been performed there on weekdays, makes the use of that house inconvenient, and also that the restraint is a cause of injury to a number of poor watermen, they therefore order that the Justices shall permit Lord Strange's men or any other company to perform at the 'Rose' as usual."

The next reference is of a more substantial character, as denoting the existence of some kind of playhouse, in all probability a regular theatre. Howe, in his continuation of *Stow's Annals*, 1631, gives a list of the early theatres in London, adding besides one in former times at Newington Butts. In spite of this authentic statement, the Newington Butts Theatre has been declared a myth, and, until

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further evidence is forthcoming, is likely in thus remaining so. That a place of entertainment for the acting of plays existed in this neighbourhood has been proved beyond doubt.

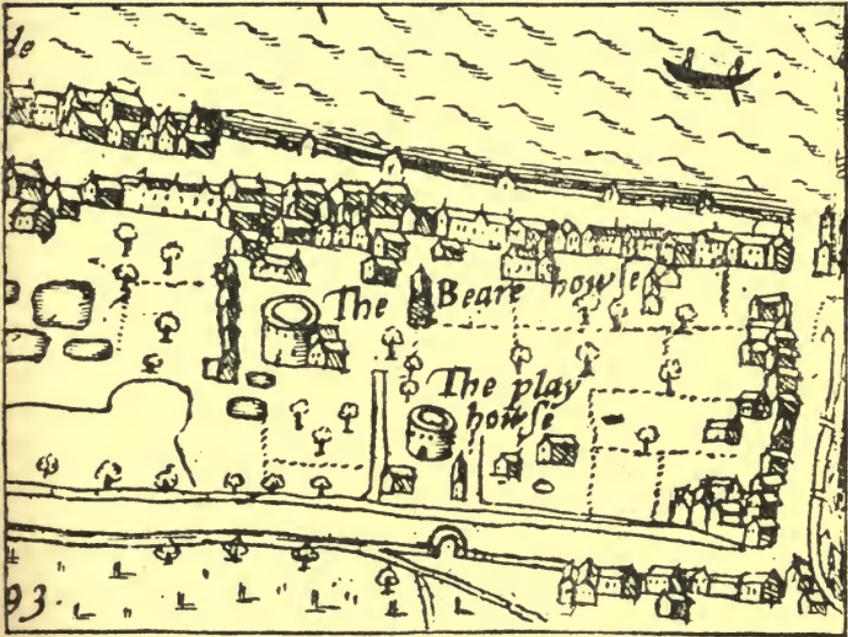
Considering the number of years plays were acted here, how shall we account for the lack of notices respecting the building in which the plays were acted? Nothing more tantalizing can be recalled in the whole history of the early drama.

When, in the year the Lord Admiral's men and the Lord Derby's men played at Newington Butts, both companies had already enjoyed many years of prosperity, and therefore quite unlikely they would give ten consecutive performances at an inn-yard or on a stage erected in an open place. Henslowe, in his Diary, simply remarks: "Beginning at Newington my Lord Chamberlain's men and my Lord Admiral's men." Even this entry does not assist us in determining the nature of the place where the plays were represented. It is to be regretted that Mr. Greg has not elucidated this puzzle for us, no one else but himself is capable of untying this knotty question.

Elizabethans themselves rarely allude to any of their theatres or places where plays were acted, the Newington Butts locality seemingly not deserving a passing notice.

### THE ROSE THEATRE

✓ The first authentic account of a theatre erected on the south side of the Thames is that of the Rose, in Southwark. In Norden's map of London, dated 1593, there stands a round building marked "The Playhouse," situated south-east of the Bear House, also depicted on the map. As the Rose was the only playhouse existing in the neighbourhood at this date, the logical inference is quite fair that the theatre is no other than the Rose. Even now there



The Rose Playhouse, from Norden's *Speculum Britanniae*, 1593.

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is still a Rose Alley in the district, which perpetuates the name of the old theatre.

Philip Henslowe, the famous owner of the Diary, was the proprietor and sole manager. Until the appearance of an article in *The Times* on April 30th, 1914, by Dr. Wallace, the first opening of the Rose was placed in 1592. Professor Wallace states that this theatre was built in 1587, and was mentioned for the first time in the "Sewer Records" in April, 1588, as then new.

Before the article was written, several writers had questioned the late date, but for lack of sufficient evidence the year 1592 was given in all text books as the correct date. This is a most important discovery, giving the citizens of London at this early date a third, or even a fourth, theatre, whereby the leading metropolitan companies could represent their plays at a properly constructed and organized theatre. Henslowe's first notice of a public performance at the Rose is as follows :

"In the name of God, Amen, 1591, beginning the 19th of February, my Lord Strange's men as followeth 1591." Although in the above paragraph the actual name of the theatre is not mentioned, there can be no question that the Rose is intended. An undated warrant from the Privy Council states "that upon some considerations their Lordships restrained the Lord Strange's servants from playing at the Rose on the Bankside." Notwithstanding that the warrant is undated, several reasons indicate that the order was issued at the same time that Lord Strange's men were playing at the Rose. The document describes the actors as servants of Lord Strange ; now in 1593 Lord Strange became the Earl of Derby, the events narrated in the document referred to the previous year 1592. Henslowe's 1591 is either a clerical error or a confusion between

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the regnal year and the legal one, which commenced on the 25th of March.

Another important entry is as follows: "A note of such charges as I have laid owt abowte my playe house in the year of our Lord, 1592, as ffoloweth." Had Mr. Philip Henslowe lived in these days he would have stood a fair chance of being elected President of the "Nu Speling Sosieti"; a more illiterate and uneducated being would be difficult in discovering, and this ignorance is found in conjunction with a man who was on intimate terms of friendship with the foremost authors of his day. His Diary is a mass of absurdities in the way of spelling, particularly on the employment of capital letters, but his greatest achievement is reached in recording the different titles of the plays acted under his management:

" the gresyan comodey.	The Grecian comedy.
Seser and Pompe.	Cæsar and Pompey.
the frenshe docter.	The French Doctor.
docter fostes."	Doctor Faust.

and many other items equally ludicrous and illiterate.

In congratulating Mr. Greg on the wonderful manner in which he has grappled with this extraordinary document, one must sympathize with him in the arduous labour thereby entailed. The ingenious editor admits once being baffled; in this instance the difficulty was solved by another acute mind the late Mr. Fleay. The word which defied decipherment was "an Isapryse," which Mr. Fleay identified as "nisi prius," the correct solution.

The Rose Theatre, like the playhouses in Shore-ditch, was erected outside the jurisdiction of the City of London. The site was not within the Gildable Manor, being situated within the Liberty of the Clink, becoming thereby amenable to the Justices of the Peace for Surrey. The Clink was the

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name of the noted prison in Southwark; the name is derived from the word "clink," to fasten securely.

An estate called "The Little Rose" is first heard of in 1552, passing into the hands of Henslowe in 1558. In January, 1587, a deed of partnership was drawn up between Henslowe and a grocer named Cholmley. This deed states that a playhouse is to be erected at Henslowe's cost, with the assistance of John Griggs, a carpenter, Cholmley paying £8 16s. in quarterly instalments, sharing in return half the receipts. Nothing further was known of this projected theatre before 1592 until Professor Wallace, in 1914, discovered a document among the "Sewer Records," in which the theatre is named the Rose in 1588. From the year 1592 until 1603 theatrical performances were given at the Rose. Acting was not continuous, the theatre being closed for many months, chiefly owing to the plague. The Diary contains the following entries:

- From February 19th, 1592, until June 22nd, 1592.
- From December 29th, 1592, until Feb. 1st, 1593.
- From December 27th, 1593, until April 8th, 1594.
- From June 3rd, 1594, until Mar. 14th, 1595.
- From Easter Monday, 1595, until June 26th, 1595.
- From August 25th, 1595, until Feb. 27th, 1596.
- From April 12th, 1596, until July 18th, 1596.
- From Oct. 27th, 1596, until Nov. 15th, 1596.
- From Nov. 25th, 1596, until Feb. 12th, 1597.
- From May 3rd, 1597, until July 28th, 1597.
- From Oct. 11th, 1597, until Oct. 31st, 1597.
- From Nov. 26th, 1597, until the end of December.

"A just account of all such money as I have received of my Lord Admiral's and my Lord Pembroke's men as followeth, beginning the 21st of October, 1597." The account commences on the aforesaid date and finishes on the 4th of March,

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1598, twenty performances in all. There appeared the next entry as shown in the Diary :

“ Here I Begigne to Receve the wholle gallereys from this daye beinge the 29th of July, 1598.” This contract lasted until the 19th of October, 1599, altogether forty-four performances. The titles of the plays are omitted ; the entry is simply :

Ry the 29th of July, 1598—xll xiiijs.

The next entry in the Diary in connexion with the Rose Theatre occurs on the 6th of October, 1599 : “ Heere I begine to Receve the gallereys again.” Representations were given from the 6th of October, 1599, until the 13th of July, 1600. After this entry the Diary only records the performances given at his newly-erected theatre, the Fortune in Golden Lane. The 13th of July, 1600, contains the last notice of the Rose until the year 1603, when the servants of the Lord Worcester occupied the theatre for a brief period. When the Worcester men left some time during 1603, nothing further is heard of this theatre until 1620, when prizefighters occupied the arena ; also fencing matches were held. Rendle, in his account of the Bankside Theatres, notes that the Rose was burnt down, and he quotes a couplet as evidence of his statement :

“ In the last great fire  
The Rose did expire.”

Rendle adds : “ When that was, I am not clear.” He gives no reference for the quotation.

Other investigators seem quite ignorant of this catastrophe. Professor Lawrence simply states that the Rose is last heard of in 1622, quite ignoring the fire couplet.

Two years before Henslowe's lease expired, hints were casually intimated that in future the rent would be considerably increased. This drastic course roused the old manager's anger up to boiling

A  
CHAST MAYD  
ꝛ ꝛ  
CHEAPE-SIDE.

A  
Pleasant conceited Comedy  
neuer before printed.

As it hath beene often acted at the  
Swan on the Banke-side, by the  
Lady ELIZABETH her  
SERVANTS.

---

By THOMAS MIDDLETON Gent.

---

LONDON,  
Printed for Francis Constable dwelling at the  
signe of the Crane in Pauls  
Church-yard.  
1630.

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pitch, and he vowed he would sooner pull down the Rose in the same manner as the Burbages had acted some years earlier in connexion with the theatre. Anyhow, the Rose was not demolished, the terms upon which the interested parties agreed remain unknown. Alleyn, the former actor and Lord of the Manor of Dulwich, was still paying tithe on the estate as late as the year 1622.

### THE SWAN THEATRE

The second theatre erected on the Bankside was named the Swan, situated at the extreme western end, in the Manor of Paris Garden, represented to-day by the Blackfriars Road. The proprietor and builder was a well-known London citizen, named Francis Langley, holding an office under the Corporation, as one of the searchers of cloth, an appointment much coveted by well-to-do men.

When first the plans were laid out for building a theatre on the Paris Garden Estate, the puritan section of the Corporation rose up in arms, vehemently protesting against the scheme being carried out. In their eager desire in preventing such desecration, they appealed to the Lord Treasurer, praying that a warrant might at once be issued, forbidding the building from being completed. These proceedings took place in 1594.

The exact date of the opening is very uncertain and somewhat conflicting. First, we have the opposition against the building in 1594; secondly, the evidence of the Dutchman De Witte, who visited and described the Swan Theatre. De Witte's biographer positively asserts that he only visited these shores once, that visit taking place in the year 1596. According to the evidence, we should expect the erection of the theatre between these dates, namely, 1594-6. Curiously enough, a third witness

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is introduced in the records of the minutes of St. Saviour's Vestry stating that Mr. Langley's new buildings shall be viewed, and that he and others shall be moved for money for the poor in regard to the playhouse and the tithes ; this order is dated 1598.

How can we best reconcile these three different dates ? The mention of Langley's new buildings in 1598 somewhat weakens the statement that De Witte visited the theatre in 1596, and yet the fact cannot well be ignored. Until new documentary evidence is forthcoming the wisest course consists in simply declaring an open verdict.

Quite apart from the interest attached to any place of amusement in Elizabeth's reign, the Swan Theatre has become famous, through a startling and sensational discovery, in the form of an authentic drawing depicting the interior of this building. The actual discovery of this important and interesting drawing was made by Dr. Thiele, librarian of the University of Utrecht, who found the drawing in a manuscript volume belonging to the University Library. This interior view is certainly the most interesting document in existence in connexion with the early history of the theatre. By a special act of courtesy on the part of the librarian, this precious manuscript containing the drawing was conveyed to this country and exhibited in the British Museum. A photograph of the drawing will be found as frontispiece to this volume. The text accompanying the drawing is as follows, omitting all extraneous matter :

(Fol. 131 verso).

Ex Observationibus Londinensibus Johannis De Witt.

Amphiteatra Londinij sunt iv visendae pulcritudinis quae a diversis intersigniis diuersa nomina

## THE THEATRES

fortiuntur : in iis varia quotidie scaena populo exhibetur. Horum duo excellentiora vltra Tamisim ad meridiem sita sunt a suspensis signis ROSA et Cygnus nominata : Alia duo extra vrbem ad septentrionem sunt, via qua itur per Episcopalem portam vulgariter Biscopgat nuncupatam. Est etiam (Fol. 132 recto) quintum sed dispari et structura, bestiarum concertationi destinatum, in quo multi vrsi, Tauri, et stupendae magnitudinis canes, discretis caueis & septis aluntur, qui (drawing occupies rest of page) (the words from quintum to qui being written underneath) ad pugnam adseruantur, iucundissimum hominibus spectaculum praebentes. Theatrorum autem omnium prestantissimum est et amplissimum id cuius intersignum est cygnus (vulgo te theatre off te cijn), quippe quod tres mille homines in sedilibus admittat, constructum ex coaceruato lapide pyrptide (quorum ingens in Britannia copia est), ligneis suffultum columnis quae ob illitum marmoreum colorem, nasutissimos quoque fallere possent. Cuius quidem formam quod Romani operis vmbra videatur exprimere supra adpinxi.

The above extract is taken verbatim from the manuscript book belonging to Arend van Buchell, the friend and biographer of De Witte.

(*Translation*).

There are in London four theatres of noteworthy beauty which bear diverse names according to their diverse signs. In them a different action is daily presented to the people. The first two of these are situated to the southward beyond the Thames and named from the signs they display, The Rose and The Swan. Two others are outside the City towards the north, and are approached (per Episcopalem postern, in the vernacular, Bisopgate)—Bishopsgate. There is also a fifth of dissimilar structure devoted to beast baiting, wherein many

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bears, bulls and dogs of stupendous size are kept in separate dens and cages, which being pitted against each other, afford men a delightful spectacle. Of all the theatres, however, the largest and most distinguished is that whereof the sign is a swan, commonly called the Swan Theatre, since it contains three thousand persons and is built of a concrete of flint stone, which greatly abound in Britain, and supported by wooden columns painted in such excellent imitation of marble that it might deceive even the most cunning. Since its form seems to approach that of a Roman structure I have depicted it above.

Naturally such an important document was submitted to various severe tests regarding its authenticity, and on examination was satisfactorily proved to be quite genuine. The next question requiring an answer was not so easily settled. How came this drawing made by De Witte inserted in a manuscript copy of a volume belonging to his friend, Van Buchell. It cannot be the original drawing sketched by De Witte on the spot, as the paper on which the sketch is made is identical with the paper forming the leaves of the manuscript. The only conclusion possible is that Van Buchell copied the drawing and the letters sent or lent to him by his friend into his own commonplace book. Whether the drawing was faithfully copied cannot be definitely answered, as De Witte's original is lost.

There is no reason in believing that Van Buchell deviated from the copy sent him. The description given by De Witte to his friend may have been orally delivered and Van Buchell may have made the sketch from memory according to the details narrated by De Witte. The biographer of Van Buchell states that he never visited England. De Witte's biographer writes that he only visited this country in 1596, but this statement cannot be implicitly relied upon.

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Arend van Buchell was a lawyer practising in Utrecht ; his hobby was collecting pictures and prints; he was intimate with Cornelis Boissers, an engraver, and several painters and collectors of his day.

By referring to the text, the reader will notice that De Witte estimated the seating and standing capacity of the Swan roughly about three thousand. Of course this number is the result of guesswork, but surely the number is nearer the mark than three hundred, the estimate of a well-known writer and critic, who arrived at this conclusion by inferring that three thousand was a mistake for three hundred.

On turning to the frontispiece of this volume, the reader will observe that the arena contains three galleries : these galleries ran right round the theatre, each one containing three or four rows. By carefully examining the drawing, fourteen divisions can be counted in the top-most gallery. Between each division, seats, or standing room for three people, can be quite distinctly made out. Therefore the third part of the gallery shown in the sketch would hold forty-two persons in one row, the entire row encircling the theatre on three of its sides would contain one hundred and twenty-six people ; multiply this number by eleven, the number of rows (four in the first and second tiers and three in the top one) we get a total of 1,386. Add to this another 700 standing in the yard, we get a grand total of 2,086, which in all probability was about the full capacity of the house.

Another point which is hotly debated is whether De Witte is correct in stating that the exterior of the theatre was built of stone. In Hentzner's description of the London theatres in 1598 he positively asserts that they all were built of wood ; naturally this counter assertion raises the question regarding the value to be placed on De Witte's observations in general.

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He could hardly mistake wood for stone, pointing out himself the difficulty in discerning wooden columns from marble ones. A possible solution might be that the Swan Theatre was not built when Hentzner described the theatres of London; they are not mentioned by name, which adds additional force to my theory.

On a close inspection of the drawing all the characteristics of an Elizabethan theatre are at once apparent. The first important feature is the division of the auditorium into three distinct tiers, one above the other, which the careful reader will remember seemed such a novelty to Samuel Kiechel, the foreigner, who visited London in 1585. At that date the Swan was not in existence, but the construction of an Elizabethan theatre only varied in small details during the length of her reign. On looking at the stage, one is not impressed with its elaborate or elegant appearance, a more primitive kind of structure is scarcely conceivable. There is no sign of a curtain either at the back or front. The turned columns support what is technically known as the "Heavens," a kind of roof protecting the actors from the elements, and also serving as a sounding board. Mr. Ordish, in his fascinating and highly interesting study of the early London theatres, in describing this sketch, strangely observes that the "heavens" over the stage are not shown; this statement must surely be a clerical error, as they are quite clearly marked in the drawing.

The two doors served as exits and entrances, leading to and from the dressing room, inscribed in the sketch as "mimorum aedes." The balcony was divided into boxes for playgoers who were willing to pay a higher price for their seats. When occasion required, part of the balcony was occupied by the musicians, and frequently by the actors themselves, especially in those scenes in which they

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appeared from above, as in the play of "Romeo and Juliet," or when soldiers appear before the walls of a city.

From a spectator's point of view, this part of the auditorium does not appear the most advantageous, as only the backs of the actors could be seen. Notwithstanding the bad position, these expensive seats were always in demand, some motive must have kept up the price of these boxes; the only one I can suggest is that they offered a degree of privacy to the occupants; furthermore, they had an entrance from the back of the stage, thus enabling the avoidance of the crowd by the seat-holders.

Over the balcony was a kind of hutch, where most likely the stage properties were stored. From an opening in this structure an attendant is seen sounding a trumpet, an intimation that the play is about to commence, although in this instance the warning is given while the play is in progress. The significance of this small detail is rather important, allowing us in presuming that De Witte drew the sketch after he had left the theatre, and therefore from memory, which in many small matters may have played him false.

The play which is being performed has all the appearance of a scene from Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," in which Olivia, Maria and Malvolio, with his staff of office, appear. Shakespeare's play was composed a few years later, but a play with similar incidents may have been acted at this date.

An earlier play on the same subject that Shakespeare treated in "Twelfth Night" is generally supposed to have been presented on the stage. The roof of the hutch is surmounted by a flag, waving over the building, bearing for its sign a swan. With the exception of the stage, which was a movable one, the other parts of the stage buildings were permanent structures. The different sections of the

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house inscribed in the sketch are as follows : Over the topmost gallery is a sloping roof, which ran right round the theatre, inscribed on the right hand side facing the spectators with the word " tectum," the Latin for roof. This part of the theatre was either tiled or thatched throughout. In one division of the lowermost gallery, in which were situated the best seats, a space therein, so described with the word " orchestra." Professor Lawrence has written a very ingenious and learned dissertation on the meaning of this word, in which he proves conclusively that the place so marked was set apart for private boxes, called in the theatrical parlance of the day " The gentlemen's rooms."

The word orchestra, in this sense, has no connexion with the modern meaning of the word, or the ancient Greek definition, signifying a place reserved for dancing, also where the chorus accompanying a Greek play sang. The true meaning in the Shakesperean period denoted that part of the auditorium set aside for noblemen or those willing to pay a high price for their seats.

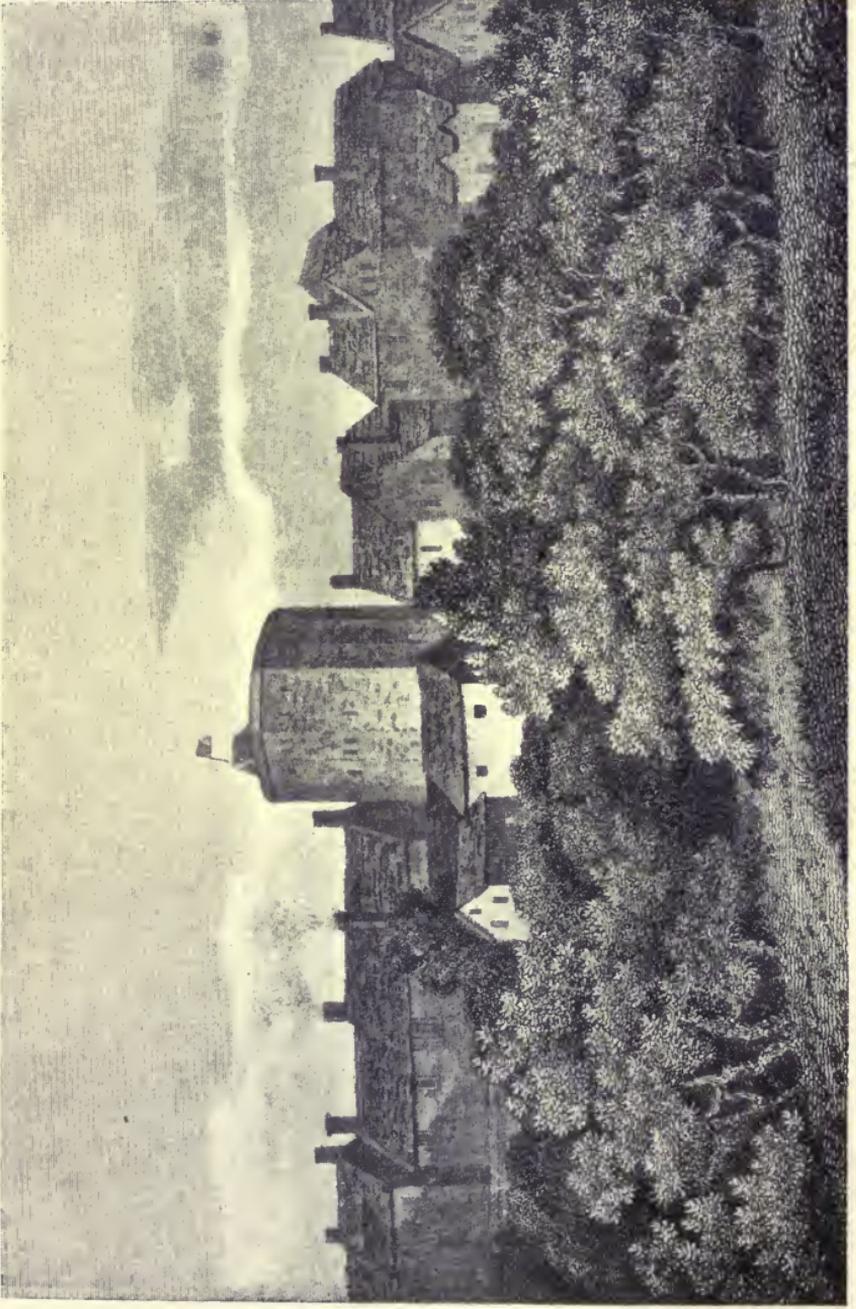
Cotgrave, in his English and French dictionary, published in 1611, defines *orchestre* as " the senators or noblemens' places in a theatre, between the stage and the common seats." The knowledge of this important fact in reconstructing intelligibly this part of an old theatre is a debt we owe to the ingenuity and learning of Professor Lawrence.

The word " sedilia " refers to the seats in the galleries, which proves that seating accommodation was provided in this part of the house, a fact which had been doubted for many years past.

The porticus was a colonnade or corridor running round the gallery furnished with columns supporting the galleries, and may have afforded standing room for spectators.

" Ingressus " refers to the steps leading to the





The Swan Theatre. From Visscher's Map of London, 1616.

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galleries, being placed on both sides of the house. Other steps not shown in the sketch led to the second and third galleries. At this point were stationed the "gatherers," who received the extra payment for entrance to these seats.

The structure behind the stage, inscribed "mimorum aedes," is the tiring room for the actors making their exits and their entrances through the two doors placed one on each side. The word "proscænium" is the Latin word for stage, derived from the Greek word Skene, a booth or tent, in which the leader of the chorus in the early days of the Greek drama erected his dressing room. The same word scene, in our own days, bears many theatrical meanings almost identical with the word employed twenty-five hundred years ago, thus contradicting the belief of most people that we owe everything to the genius of the present generation.

The arena was the yard, in which stood the pit and gallery *habitués* of our day, the charge for this privilege being one penny.

I hope the reader will constantly refer to the drawing whilst reading this description, as it will materially help him in fully understanding the interior of an Elizabethan playhouse.

The Hope Theatre was modelled on the Swan. I here append the contract for the first-named theatre :

"The contractor, Katherens, is to take down the existing structure, and to build in its place another game house or plaie house fit for players to play in and for the game of bears and bulls. There is to be provided a tyre house and a frame to be carried or taken away and to stand upon tressels, sufficient to bear such a stage. It is agreed to build the same of such large compass, form, wideness and height as the playhouse called the Swan in the liberty of Paris Garden. And the said playhouse or game

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place to be made in all things and in such form and fashion as the said playhouse called the Swan, the scantling of the timbers, tiles and foundations as is aforesaid without fraud or covin." The last word means conspiracy or collusion.

The separate items are :

1. Two staircases without and adjoining the playhouse of such largeness and height as the said playhouse called the Swan.

These stairs are not shown in the sketch ; perhaps they were placed outside the building. It would be interesting to know the exact position.

2. "Heavens" over the stage to be borne and carried away without any posts or supporters to be fixed or set about the stage. Gutters of lead needful for carriage of water that shall fall about the same.

The "Heavens" in the Hope contract is different somewhat from the Swan, as the sketch plainly shows the columns supporting the "Heavens."

3. Two boxes in the lowermost storey, fit and decent for gentlemen to sit in, and shall make the partition between the rooms as they are at the said playhouse called the Swan.

The boxes are marked "Orchestra" in the sketch.

4. Turned columns upon and over the stage.

5. Principals and forefront of the playhouse to be of oak ; no fir to be used in the lowermost or under stones, except the upright posts or the back part of the said stones, all binding joists to be of oak.

6. To new tyle with English tyles all the upper roof of the said playhouse.

7. Also a louvre or storey over the said playhouse as it now is.

Several of the above particulars confirm the exactness of the drawing. It must not be forgotten that between the building of the Swan and that of the Hope nearly twenty years had intervened ; in

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that time many improvements had taken place, but the essentials remain the same.

The Swan Theatre has little interest for students, the entertainments being chiefly devoted to bear-baiting, and other sports of a less exciting nature.

Francis Meres, the author of *Palladis Tamia*, published in 1598, refers to the Swan in the following passage: As Antipater Sidonius was famous for extemporal verse in Greek. . . . And so is now our wittie Wilson, who, for learning and extemporal witte in this facultie, is without compare or compeere, as to his great and eternall commendations he manifested in his chalenge at the Swanne on the Banke-side." A very interesting account of Shakespeare occurs in the same book: "As the soule of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras so the sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honeytongued Shakespeare, witness his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugred sonnets among his private friends, etc."

A few more references to the Swan are still extant. A certain Peter Bromville appeared at this theatre in 1600, performing acts of activity, he having exhibited the same before the Queen. Acts of activity correspond to those acrobatic feats often seen at our present day music halls.

Another extract is from Dekker's play "Satiromastic," 1602. Tucca: "Thou hast been at Paris Garden, hast not?" Horace: "Yes, Captain, I have played Zulziman there." I have searched in vain to find the name of the play in which the part of Zulziman occurs. Ben Jonson acted the part of Zulziman.

The Swan was often alluded to as Paris Garden. Middleton's play of "A Chaste Maid in Cheapside" was performed there. Another notice relates how a knight, witnessing the last new play at the Swan, lost his purse containing seven angels. An

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angel was a gold coin, valued at ten shillings. A man named Turner was thrust through the eye and killed here whilst contesting there for a prize.

During the last years of the Swan, only fencing matches and gladiatorial exhibitions were given. The last notice of this theatre appeared in a pamphlet entitled "Holland's Leaguer," by N. Goodman, published in 1632: "Three famous amphitheatres can be seen from the turret, one the continent of the world (*i.e.*, the Globe), to which, half the year, a world of beauties and brave spirits resort. A building of excellent hope for players, wild beasts and gladiators and another, that the lady of the Leaguer in fortress could almost shake hands with, now fallen to decay and like a dying swan, hangs her head and sings her own dirge." A dying swan evidently refers to this playhouse. It was a popular belief that a swan fluted a wild carol in her death.

Mr. Ordish attributes this pamphlet to Shakerley Marmion, who wrote a play called "Holland's Leaguer." Mr. Ordish has by a clerical error mixed the babies up.

Before taking leave of the fortunes of the Swan Theatre I wish to relate an interesting event which took place there in the year 1602, which incidently throws considerable light on how Elizabethan managers advertised their special shows on important occasions. The circumstances are described in a letter from John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton in 1602.

"And now we are in mirth I must not forget to tell you of a cosening prank of one Venner, of Lincoln's Inn, that gave out bills of a famous play on Saturday, was sevensnight on the Bankside, to be acted only by certain gentlemen and gentlewomen of account. The price at coming was two shillings or eighteenpence at least, and when he had gotten most part of the money into his hands he would

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have shewed them a fair pair of heels, but he was not so nimble to get upon horseback, but that he was fain to forsake that course and betake himself to the water, where he was pursued and taken and brought before the Lord Chief Justice, who would make nothing of it but a jest and a merriment and bound him over on five pounds to appear at the sessions. In the meantime the common people, when they saw themselves deluded, revenged themselves upon the hangings, curtains, chairs, stone walls, and whatsoever came in their way, very outrageously and made great spoil, there was great store of good company and many noblemen."

This event is referred to by Ben Jonson in his "Masque of Angurs, 1622." Three of these gentlemen should have acted in that famous matter of "England's Joy," in 1603, but the date should be 1602. In a poetical effusion by Taylor, the Water Poet, he relates how one Fenner often confused with the real writer of "England's Joy," Venner, advertised himself as the author of this piece. This Fenner was the rival of Taylor as an extempore rhymester, and being challenged and the bills set up advertising the literary duel, Taylor prepared himself for the meeting. On the day appointed Fenner failed to come to the scratch, thereby causing Taylor to be branded as an impostor, which drew from him the following lines, published in his "A Cast over Water," 1615 :

" My defence against thy offence."

" Thou bragst what fame thou gottst upon the stage,  
Indeed, thou set'st the people in a rage  
In playing ' England's Joy ' that every man  
Did judge it worse than that done at the Swan.  
To all your cost he will his wits employ  
To play the second part of ' England's Joy,'  
And poor old Venner that plain-dealing man,

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Who acted ' England's Joy ' first at the Swan,  
Paid eight crowns for the writing of these things,  
Besides the covers and the silken strings."

The original play-bill announcing this performance has the following title : . .

" The plot of the play called ' England's Joy,'  
To be played at the Swan this 6 of March, 1602."

This document being of such extreme interest, a photograph will be found on the opposite page. One can see by the smallness of the print that it was not intended for a poster, but to be distributed either amongst the assembled audience or delivered at the houses of the gentry or handed to passers-by in the street. The original of this broad sheet is preserved in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries. By the courtesy of the Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries I was accorded the privilege of inspecting this most interesting document, and further, allowed the favour of having the original photographed especially for this book. Although, as stated above, the print is too small for a poster, yet it is quite legible, almost the size of the type of this page.

In the fifth paragraph of this most interesting programme of " England's Joy " appears the name of Lopus, or more correctly Lopez. This name opens up a wide field of controversy, for the bearer was a Jew, and English historians aver that since the expulsion of that race in 1290, no Jew set foot on English soil until the time of Cromwell, over 350 years later than the first and only exodus. There can be no doubt that a certain number of Jews visited these shores, and a few settled here and made it their permanent home. This Lopez was a celebrated Jewish physician, and was honoured by being elected house surgeon to St. Bartholomew's Hospital ; afterwards he became physician to Queen

# THE PLOT OF THE PLAY, CALLED ENGLANDS JOY.

To be Playd at the Swan, the 6. of Nouember, 1602.



FIRST, there is induc't by shew and in Action; the ciuill warres of England from *Edward the third*, to the end of *Queene Maries* raigne, with the overthrow of *Vsurpation*.

2 Secondly then the entrance of *Englands Joy* by the Coronation of our Soueraigne Lady *Elizabeth* her Throne attended with peace, Plenty, and ciuill Policy; A sacred Prelate standing at her right hand, bestowing the Serenity of the Gospell: At her left hand Iustice: And at her feet Warre, with a Scarlet Roabe of peace vpon his Armour: A wreath of Bayes about his temples, and a braunch of Palme in his hand.

3 Thirdly is dragd in three Faries, presenting *Dissention*, *Famine*, and *Bloudshed*, which are throwe downe into hell.

4 Fourthly is exprest vnder the person of a Tyrant, the enuy of *Spaine*, who to shew his cruelty causeth his Souldiers dragge in a beautifull Lady, whome they mangle and wound, tearing her garments and Jewels from off her: And so leave her bloody, with her hayre about her shoulders, lying vpon the ground. To her come certaine Gentlemen, who seeing her pitious disposyment, turne to the Throne of England, from whence one descendeth, taketh vp the Lady, wipeth her eyes, Bindeth vp her woundes, giueth her creature, and bringeth forth a band of Souldiers, who attend her forth: This Lady presenteth *Belgia*.

5 Fifthly, the Tyrant more enraged, taketh counsell, sends forth letters, p'uisie Spies, and secret vnderminers, taking their othes, and giuing them bagges of treasure. These signifie *Lopus*, and certaine Iesuites, who afterward, when the Tyrant looks for an answeare from them, are shewed to him in a glasse with halters about their neckes, which makes him mad with fury.

6 Sixthly, the Tyrant seeing all secret meanes to fayle him, intendeth open violence and inuasion by the hand of Warre, whereupon is set forth the battle at Sea in 88. with *Englands* victory.

7 Seuenthly, hee complotteth with the Irish rebelles, wherein is layd open the base ingratitude of *Tyrone*, the landing there of *Dou John de Aquila*, and their dissipation by the wisedome and valour of the Lord *Mountjoy*.

8 Eightly, a great triumph is made with fighting of twelue Gentlemen at Barriers, and sundrie rewards sent from the Throne of England, to all sortes of well deservers.

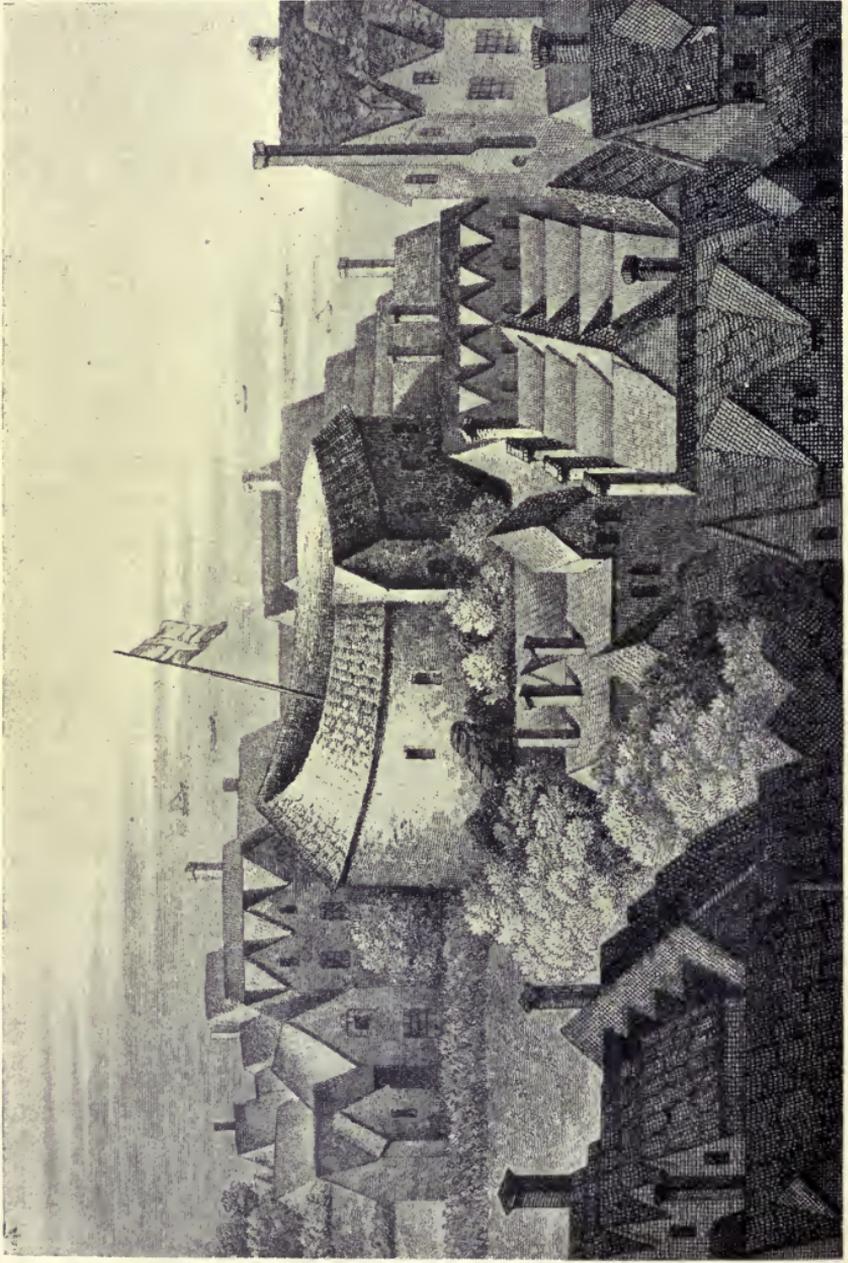
9 Lastly, the Nine Worthies, with severall Coronets, present themselues before the Throne, which are put backe by certaine in the habite of Angels, who set vpon the Ladies head, which represents her *Majestie*, an Imperiall Crowne, garnished with the *Sunne*, *Moon* and *Starres*: And so with Musicke both with voyce and Instruments s'cece is taken vp into Heauen, when presently appears, a Throne of blessed Soules, and beneath vnder the Stage set forth with strange fire-works, diuers blacke and damned Soules, wonderfully described in their severall treatments.



The plot of *England's Joy*, specially photographed for this book, from the original, with kind permission of the Society of Antiquaries.







Either the Rose Theatre or the First Globe Theatre.

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Elizabeth. After many years' residence in this country he was arrested on suspicion of being implicated in a plot to poison the Queen ; he was duly tried, convicted and sentenced to be hanged, which sentence a few months later was carried out at Tyburn. According to Camden, the learned antiquarian, Lopez's last words on the scaffold were that he loved the Queen as much as he did Jesus Christ, which naturally leads one to the assumption that he must have been a converted Jew and have forsaken the faith of his fathers, or else Camden may have invented this dying confession in order to show that some Jews believed in the Christian religion.

When the Swan Theatre was sold it realized the sum of £1,873. A view of the exterior of the theatre is depicted in Visscher's Map of London, 1616. The old theatre is marked on the Map of the Manor, dated 1627.

This sketch of the interior of the Swan Theatre, dated circa 1596, important as it is, must not be taken too literally ; many discrepancies can be detected when compared with our knowledge of the contemporary stage. Especially noticeable is the bareness of the stage, and lack of all signs of any suggestion of a curtain, which, judging by directions in old plays, was a most most important feature. Also be it remembered that the Swan playhouse was not typically a playgoers' theatre, being devoted chiefly to feats of activity and other pastimes.

## THE GLOBE THEATRE

The last theatre built on the Bankside was the most famous of all, namely, the Globe. On the stage of this theatre the greatest of the Shakesperean plays were first acted ; here Shakespeare followed the actor's calling, covering a period of ten years.

The site of such a famous spot might well kindle

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the imagination of every Englishman who takes a pride in the welfare of his country. Instead of which, what do we find? Truthfully speaking, not one Englishman in a thousand could indicate in what part of the Metropolis the Globe Theatre stood, and many could be found totally ignorant of the existence in early days of that theatre. Strange to relate, the fascinating study of old London does not appeal to modern Englishmen.

What would be the opinion of the greatest creator of the grandest literature the world has known if he could behold the vast majority of present day citizens, the labouring class of Britons, being sweated half-naked in factories for the benefit of a body of shareholders who look upon them as fuel for their machines? Such is England of to-day! and those men who accept such conditions deserve nothing but contempt. The better class idolize sport, cultivating physical strength at the expense of the mind; all the brains this sporting class possess seem hidden in their hands or feet; naturally brought up under these conditions they despise the beauties of the mind, and become slaves of their sensuous feelings, which would even make a Chinaman look down upon them with contempt. The only way to eradicate these vicious symptoms is by teaching the younger generation that money-making is not the fountain of happiness, and that hours of freedom are necessary for the enjoyment of life and the worship of both toil and wealth are fit only to be followed by despised nations.

If these rules are dutifully followed, Englishmen would be themselves again, and not a crowd of unworthy people whose only topic of conversation consists of sport, money, and amusement.

Judging from the dastardly act of razing Crosby Hall to the ground, little care they for the beautiful and sacred memorials of the past, otherwise such

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acts of vandalism would scarcely be permitted. Our City Authorities, filled with wine, beer, and turtle soup, allow these Philistines for the greed of gold to desecrate and demolish every ancient building, and are equally blamable in permitting these scandals of impiety to be carried out by the demons of improvement.

Some disgusting brewery, or evil-smelling warehouse or factory, are the buildings generally erected on these famous sites. No doubt the idiot guardians of the City regard these unsightly buildings as vast improvements.

Such being the spirit of the times, there is little reason for wonder that not even the sites of many ancient important places of interest can be accurately delineated. Unfortunately this indictment applies in some measure when we search for the site of the Globe Theatre. The original plot of ground occupied by the theatre can only be conjecturally restored, and then the deepest research and careful reading of old documents must be diligently studied, besides which the poring over old maps is most essential for the true discovery of the exact sites.

An extremely illuminating article on the site of the first Globe Theatre was contributed to the transactions of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society in 1912 by Mr. George Hubbard, Vice-President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. This pamphlet was first read at the Bishopsgate Institute in February of the same year. This learned dissertation was the result of a vehement discussion following the fixing of a bronze tablet on the outside wall of Messrs. Barclay and Perkins' Brewery, situated on the south of Park Street, formerly Maid Lane. The dispute arises over which side of the road the original Globe Theatre occupied, either on the north or the south side of Maid Lane,

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the modern Park Street. After a careful perusal of Mr. Hubbard's article, every sensible reader will strongly endorse the author's views and give his vote without demur for the north side.

Mr. William Martin, in a little special pleading, maintains in a most able and interesting paper which appeared in the *Surrey Archæological Collections*, vol. xxiii, that the site must be sought on the south side, without, in my judgment, convincing anyone. Before Mr. Hubbard entered the field of controversy, Mr. Martin's article had already been published.

When the Burbages dismantled their playhouse in Shoreditch, they removed the materials of the building, which chiefly consisted of wood, over the water, and there on the Bankside erected a new theatre. *The Times* printed four articles from the pen of Mr. Wallace, Professor of English Literature in an American university, on matters of great interest in connexion with the Globe Theatre. The document in question relates of a family dispute, which was eventually brought into Court. During the Shakesperean era, and later, the Law Courts were appealed to for the settlement of disputes of the flimsiest character, demonstrating the litigious nature of the citizens in Elizabeth's reign. To these quarrels and the survival of legal documents are due the knowledge which we now possess of early theatrical history. The plaintiff in this case was Thomasina Osteler, the widow of a well-known actor and sharer in the Globe and Blackfriars playhouses, the defendant being the John Hemmings, ever remembered as one of the joint editors of the *First Folio of Shakespeare's Works*.

The defendant was the father of the plaintiff, Thomasina, who claimed certain shares in the Globe Theatre. Her attorney, in maintaining her claim, cited certain leases from legal documents, and,

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fortunately for us, he drew up a plan of the ground occupied by the Globe Theatre. The following account, stripped of all legal verbiage, reads as follows ; “ All that parcel of land enclosed and made into four separate garden plots, late in the tenure of and occupation of Thomas Burt and Istrand Morris, dyers, and of Latantius Roper, salter, citizen of London, containing in length from east to west 200 feet of assize lying and adjoining upon a way or lane then on one side, and abutting on a piece of land called “ The Park,” upon the north, and upon a garden in the occupation of one John Cornish towards the west, and on another garden plot in the occupation of one John Knowles towards the east, with all the houses, buildings, etc. And also that parcel of land just recently enclosed and made into three several garden plots, whereof two of the same were in the occupation of one John Roberts, carpenter, and another in the occupation of Thomas Ditcher, citizen and merchant tailor, of London, containing in length from east to west 156 feet of assize, lying and adjoining upon a garden plot in the occupation of William Sellers towards the east, and upon another garden plot in the occupation of John Burgram, saddler, towards the west, and upon a lane there called Maiden Lane, towards the south, with all the houses, buildings, etc. Upon which same premises or upon some part thereof existed a certain playhouse fit for the showing or acting of comedies and tragedies.”

This account was diametrically at variance with the accepted conclusions respecting the site of the theatre, which all previous writers had placed due south of Maid Lane. The newly-discovered document mentions the north side of the theatre as being bounded by the Park and the south side by Maid Lane. The stumbling block in the new theory was the placing of the theatre north of the lane bounded

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by the Park ; the only Park known was Winchester Park, consisting of about sixty acres, which lay south of Maid Lane. For the solution of this difficult problem we must thank Mr. Hubbard, who has pointed out that the northern boundary named "The Park" had no connexion with the well-known Winchester Park, but refers to a strip of land called "The Park" abutting on the shore of the Bankside. Professor Wallace notes that : "What the Park was is not certain, possibly an inn or a little garden, for this district boasted several such little plots variously named. In any case, this so-called 'Park' was in no way connected with the great Winchester Park."

Further proof is shown in an entry in one of the token books, which is preserved at Southwark Cathedral, dated 1598, in which occurs the following memorandum : "From the Park." The collector of the rents for Nicholas Brend, the owner of the property on which the playhouse stood, makes several similar entries in the "Token Books," all dealing with property in the neighbourhood.

In another of these Sacrament Token Books is a further entry : "Globe Alleye Brend Rents, 1612." "Globe Alleye Brende's Rents nowe Bodley's" is an entry for the year 1613.

Mr. Hubbard thus comments on these entries : "The name Globe Alley is first inscribed in a marginal note under the heading of Brand's Rents, on page 61 of the Token Book for the Clerk Liberty for the year 1619. This alley was not apparently known as Globe Alley until that year." This statement is not quite accurate, as Globe Alley is already recorded in the year 1612. This alley lay north of Maid Lane, easily identified in the old maps of London ; although unnamed, the outline of this thoroughfare is clearly discernible in the map of

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Ralph Aggas, and also in that of Braun and Hogenberg, engraved by Hofnagel. Both these views were issued in 1572, from their similarity, one engraver must have copied the other. In Norden's Map of London, published in 1593, this way or lane can be distinctly traced. In Rocque's Map, dated 1745, a Globe Alley is marked on a London map for the first time. This alley is there shown on the south side of Maid Lane, this insertion causing all the trouble and confusion. The writers of the annals of the early London theatres blindly concluding that this alley marked the entrance to the old Globe Theatre; it does nothing of the kind. What most likely occurred is that when the second Globe Theatre was demolished the original Globe Alley of the Token Books was also destroyed. In later years a new Alley of the same name appears, perhaps in commemoration of the Globe Theatre, whose exact site was quite forgotten.

Mr. Martin adopts the fanciful view that the draftsman had before him a rough sketch, in which the top edge of the plan lay towards the south and Maid Lane towards the north, thus agreeing with Mr. Martin's own conclusions.

The exact spot where the Globe stood should be sought for between Red Lion Wharf and Southwark Wharf, both wharves being marked in the Ordnance Survey. The early Globe Alley will be found facing Clink Street, on a plot of ground now called Ironworks Yard, situated on Bankside, which in former times led to the famous Globe Theatre.

The maps of Aggas and Hofnagel depict two amphitheatres, one marked "The Bolle bayting" and the other further east, "The Bear bayting." On turning to Norden's map we find that the "Bear bayting" has vanished and the old "Bolle bayting" sport is now marked the Bear's house. Now let us cast a glance at Visscher's beautiful

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engraved view of London, 1616 ; there we notice in the foreground two distinct amphitheatres, the one towards the west marked the Bear Garden, the other The Globe. From the position of these two structures, no one, after carefully reading the above details, can mistake the position of the Globe which stands in Visscher's view on the site of the original Bear House, so named in the old maps, the site corresponding with the vacant space in Norden's map, and now definitely named the Globe.

The importance of locating the exact site of the most celebrated theatre in the world has led me into a somewhat lengthy discussion on the subject. There now remains for the Shakespeare Reading Society the duty of removing their handsome plaque to the opposite side of the road without further delay.

The Globe theatre was opened in the spring of 1599 with a probable production of "Henry V." "Within this wooden O" is mentioned in the prologue. The Globe was round in form, and built chiefly of wood. Another reference in the same play clearly proves that "Henry V" was acted sometime in the year 1599.

" But now behold

In the quick forge and working house of thought  
How London doth pour forth her citizens !  
The Mayor and all his brethren in best sort  
Like the senators of the antique Rome.  
With the plebians swarming at their heels,  
Go forth and fetch their conquering Caesar in,  
As by a lower, but by loving likelihood,  
Were now the general of our gracious empress,  
As in good time he may from Ireland come,  
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,  
How many would the peaceful city quit  
To welcome him ! "

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This passage commemorates a very exciting contemporary event. The Earl of Essex, the Queen's favourite, was despatched to Ireland, in command of a large force with the object of subduing the rebel Earl of Tyrone. Essex set out in March, 1599, not returning until September of the same year. When these lines were written, Essex was the idol of the people. The Irish expeditionary force under his command was a complete failure, and the Earl suffered greatly in reputation, and in no sense returned as a conquering hero.

Professor Lawrence affirms that there does not exist any authentic view of either the exterior or the interior of the first Globe Theatre. Professor Baker, of Harvard University, maintains that the circular building in the foreground of Hondius's map of London, dated 1610, is intended for the Globe. Halliwell-Phillipps, a great authority on all Shakesporean matters, identifies this theatre with the first Globe. Fleay, on the contrary, argues that the Rose is the theatre depicted. Professor Lawrence further states that no reliance can be placed on the evidence of old maps. They were based for the most part on surveys made many years previously, and published in later years without careful alterations in details, and in them the Bankside theatres are seldom correctly located. This building must either indicate the Rose or the Globe; nothing is known after 1606 of the Rose, which may have fallen into desuetude whereas the Globe was at the zenith of its reputation. X

Critically examined, the evidence favours the Globe, and in my opinion may fairly be declared as the theatre indicated. The structure marked the Globe, in Visscher's view, is the second Globe Theatre, built after the disastrous fire of 1613, the new theatre being erected on the site of the old one.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

This view so well known by frequent reproductions, is by most people regarded as the original theatre. In a map, dated 1657, a copy of the original being in my possession, four theatres are shown—namely, The Swan, The Hope, The Rose, and The Globe. The Hope and Globe occupy the spaces formerly marked in Aggas and Hofnagel maps as “The Bolle Bayting and The Bear Bayting.” The Rose is misplaced in the 1657 map, being too far north of the Hope and the Globe, the proper position should be marked south-east of the Hope and south-west of the Globe. Considering the historical importance of the Globe Theatre, how much cause for regret exists that such scanty records remain of this time-honoured building.

In spite of these limitations, diligent research by patient and skilful scholars have greatly increased the knowledge necessary for a complete understanding of this theatre.

The building was circular or octagonal in shape, and was open to the sky. The roof running round the topmost gallery was thatched ; a large aperture in this part of the building admitted the light. The drawing of the interior of the Swan, a most important Elizabethan document, gives a fairly representative view of an early Shakesporean theatre, and it is more than likely that the interior of the Globe presented a like appearance. An extra volume would be required in formulating the conditions under which a Shakesporean play was produced, and then three-fourths of the treatise would be mere conjecture.

We know for certain that the management was under a company of actors, who occupied the theatre during the whole period until destroyed by fire ; this company was known under different names at various periods, but chiefly as The Lord Chamberlain's Servants. Contemporary documents prove





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that Shakespeare was a member of this company, besides being an important shareholder. How he disposed of his investments is nowhere mentioned : they may have been sold on retiring from the stage in 1609 ; his will is silent respecting these shares, a sure sign that he had already parted with them.

For a period of fourteen years thousands of Londoners, drawn from all classes of society, enjoyed the dramatic production offered by the company playing at the Globe on the Bankside, yet we search in vain for any detailed notice of even one performance. What must we think of the critics and scribblers who had a giant in their midst and knew him not ; long notices of bull and bear fights abound, but the first performance of " Hamlet " found no chronicler ; perhaps on that day a big fight in the bear pit was advertised, which was considered a greater attraction. Even in our days a sensational and exciting performance would rather engage the attention of the critics of the daily papers than, in their eyes, the lesser attraction of a Shakesperean performance even if acted by celebrated players.

For instance, Miss Lily Elsie, in a new musical comedy of the vulgarest type, would appear of greater importance from a press point of view than Forbes Robertson in the character of Hamlet.

The only evidence we obtain of plays being acted at this theatre is from entries made in the books of the Stationers' Register : " A book called the *Revenge of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain's servants." The name of the Lord Chamberlain indicating where the play was produced. Similar evidence is likewise derived from the title pages of the early quartos issued during the lifetime of the poet. In the whole range of Elizabethan literature not a single page can be discovered criticising those wonderful scenes enacted almost daily before their eyes at the Globe

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or in previous years at other theatres, before that building was erected, although a vast amount of printed matter, more than the present generation can conceive, was constantly being issued from the press.

London alone possessed nearly a thousand publishers, booksellers and printers, and the number of books on all subjects was enormous. The great part of this large output has been thoroughly ransacked with the object of discovering Shakesporean references, unfortunately with rather meagre results. The general public of the day reads nothing of this mass of literature, with the exception of Shakespeare's works, although many of the books are really worth perusal. Even *Plutarch's Lives*, the most popular book of the last three centuries, is entirely neglected.

The lengthy description which is given in relating the history of the Swan Theatre applies in a more or less degree to all the other Shakesporean theatres, and now the mournful duty remains of chronicling the total destruction of the first Globe Theatre by fire.

This great catastrophe befell it on St. Peter's Day, June 29th, 1613. Oh, what a conflagration! In the space of two hours the building was a heap of smouldering ruins, no doubt containing many of the previous manuscripts of Shakespeare's plays; this statement is quite gratuitous. Shakespeare may have preserved his original MSS. at Stratford, or they may have been destroyed, after the prompter's copy had been transcribed from the original, as being of no further use. We know the Bodleian Library parted with their First Folio when the third appeared, as being in the eyes of the then librarian of no account when a later edition appeared.

When the fire broke out a performance was taking place of a play called "Henry VIII, or All is True." Whether this was Shakespeare's play of "Henry VIII" is a debatable point. The secondary title, "All is True," is never associated with Shakespeare's

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“ Henry VIII.” The higher criticism rejects this play of “ Henry VIII ” as not forming part of the Shakesperean canon, although included in the First Folio. Wolsey’s farewell speech is such a favourite of mine that I am willing in ascribing the whole play as Shakespeare’s.

This theatre possessed only two doors, one in front being the entrance door and the other situated at the rear of the building. This back entrance was used by the actors, and also for those provided with seats in the balcony, or were accommodated with seats in the Lords’ rooms. The reason for so few entrances can be explained by the peculiar manner in which payment was made by the gatherers of the theatre. A most interesting reference to the Globe will be found in the journal of *Prince Lewis of Wirtemberg*, representative of the United Foreign Princes to France and England in 1610, written by his secretary, Wurmsser. The original MS. is in the British Museum (*Lundi 30. S. Eminence alla au Globe, lieu ordinaire ou l’on joue les comedies*) in a manuscript volume, written by Dr. Forman a few months before his death in 1611, and now preserved among the Ashmolean MSS. in the Bodleian Library. This interesting manuscript was exhibited in the Bodleian Library at an exhibition of rare Shakesperean books in connexion with the tercentenary of the poet’s death. I purposely visited Oxford with the object of examining this wonderful collection. Dr. Madun, the learned librarian, expressly pointed out to me this interesting volume.

“ In ‘ Richard II ’ at the glob 1611 the 30th of April. In the Winterstale at the glob 1611 the 15th of Maye. Of Cimbale in ‘ King of England.’ In ‘ Macbeth ’ at the Glob 1610 the 20 of April.”

Appended are notes about the different plays. By comparing the notes of “ Richard II ” the play cannot be one Shakespeare wrote.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

Extracts concerning the burning of the Globe Theatre :

“ London, this last day of June, 1613. No longer since than yesterday while Burbage his companie were acting at the Globe the play of Hen 8. And there shooting of certayne chambers in way of triumph, the fire catch'd, and fastened upon the thatch of the house and there burned so furiously as it consumed the whole house and all in less than two hours, the people having enough to save themselves.”

Letter from Thomas Lakins to Sir Thos. Pickering.

“ Now to let matters of state sleep, I will entertain you at the present with what hath happened this week at the Bankside. The King's players had a new play called ‘ All is True,’ representing some principal pieces of the reign of Henry the 8th which was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of Pomp and Majesty, even to the matting of the stage, the Knights of the Order, with their George and Garter, the Guards with their embroidered coats and the like sufficient in truth within a while to make Greatness very familiar if not ridiculous. Now King Henry, making a masque at the Cardinall's Wolsey's house, and certain canons being shot off at his entry, some of the Paper or other stuff wherewith some of them were stopped, did light on the Thatch, where being thought at first but an idle smoak, and their eyes more attentive to the show, it kindled inwardly and ran round like a train, consuming within less than an hour the whole House to the very ground. This was the Fatal period of that virtuous Fabrique, where yet nothing did perish but Wood and straw and a few forsaken cloakes. Only one man had his breeches set on fire, that would perhaps have broyled him if he had not

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by the benefit of provident witt put it out with bottle ale."

Letter from Sir Henry Wotten to his nephew, Sir Edward Bain, reprinted in *Relique Wottonae*, 1635."

" All you that please to understand  
Come, listen to my story,  
To see Death with his rakering brand,  
Mongst such an auditorye,  
Regarding neither Cardinal's might,  
Nor yet the rugged face of Henry the eighth."

A sonnet upon the pitiful Burning of the Globe playhouse in London. Anonymous about 1613.

" If I should have set down the several terms and damages done this year by fire, in the very many and sundry places of this Kingdom, it would contain many a sheet of paper, as is evident by the incessante collections throughout the Churches of this realm for such as have been spoyled by fire. Also upon S. Peter's day last, the playhouse or Theatre called the Globe, upon the Bankside neare London, by negligent discharging of a peal of ordinance close to the south side, the Thatch thereof took fire and the wind sudainly disperst the Flame round about and in a very short space the whole building was quite consumed and no man hurt, the house being filled with people to behold the play, viz., of Henry the 8. And the next spring it was new builded in a far finer manner than before."

*The Annals or General Chronicle of England*, begun first by Master John Stow and afterwards continued and augmented with matters foreign and domestique, ancient and modern, unto the end of the present year, 1614, by Edmund Howe, Gentleman, London.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

Howe evidently made a slip when he wrote 'upon S. Peter's Day last,' that date would refer to the year 1614. Howe admits that he continued the chronicle up to the end of that year, 1614. The fire took place in 1613.

" But the burning of the Globe or Playhouse on the Bankside on S. Peter's Day cannot escape you which fell out by a peal of chambers that I know not upon what occasion, were to be used in the play, the tampin or stopple of one of them lighting in the thatch that covered the house, burned it to the ground in less than two hours with a dwelling house adjoining, and it was a great marvel and fair grace of God that the people had little harm having but two narrow doors to get out at."

John Chamberlain wrote to Sir Ralph Winwood on July 8th, 1613.

Sir Henry Wotten's letter, previously quoted supplies us with the use of the chambers which so puzzled John Chamberlain. This letter acquaints us with the important fact that only two narrow doors admitted the spectators at the theatre.

" Well-fare the Wise-man yet on the Bankside  
My friends the Waterman. They could provide  
Against thy furie, which to serve their needs  
They made a vulcan of a sheafe of Reedes  
Whom they durst handle in their holyday coates  
And safely trust to dresse, not burn their boats  
But O these Reeds' they mere disdaine of them  
Made thee beget that cruell stratagem  
Which some are pleased to stile but thy madde  
pranck  
Against the Globe, the Glory of the Bancke  
Which though it were the Fort of the whole  
Parish,

## THE THEATRES

Flank'd with a Ditch and forced out of a Marish,  
I saw with two poorchambers taken in  
And razed ere thought could urge this might have  
been.

See the World's Ruins ! nothing but the piles  
Left, and wit senate cover it with tiles."

Ben Jonson, in his "Execration upon Vulcan," published among his Miscellaneous Poems in a book called *Underwoods*, wrote a short poem commemorating the fire.

"As gold is better when in fire tried,  
So is the Bankside Globe that late was burned,  
For where before it had a thatched hide  
Now to a stately Theatre 'tis turned."

In the Prologue to the "Doubtful Heir," a play by Shirley.

The day following the fire, two ballads in the event were entered at Stationers' Hall; one was entitled "The Sodayne Burninge of the Globe on the Bankside in the Play tyme of St. Peter's Day last, 1613." The other was called "A doleful ballad of the generall overthrowe of the famous theatre on the Bankside called the Globe, etc.," by William Parrat. Both these ballads have perished, but one of them may be identified, in a manuscript volume of poems in the library of Sir Mathew Wilson Mart. One stanza runs as follows :

"Some lost their hattes and some their swords,  
Then out runne Burbage, too ;  
The Reprobates, though drunck on Monday,  
Prayed for the foule-Foole and Henry Condye.  
Ther with swolne eyes, like druncken Fleminges,  
Distressed stood old struttering Heminges."

Both Heminge and Condell were the editors of the famous *First Folio*.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

An interesting reference to the burning of the Globe Theatre will be found in a quaint volume entitled, "A Concordancy of Yeares, containing a new easie and most exact Computation of Time according to the English Account. Also the use of the English and Roman Kalendar, with briefe Notes, Rules and Tables as well, Mathematical and legal, as vulgar for each private man's occasion. Newly composed, digested and augmented.

"Nicholas Okes for Thomas Adams, 1615. By Arthur Hopten, Gentleman."

This first edition is not in the British Museum, but a copy of the second edition, dated 1616, will be found in that institution. At the end of the volume is a calendar, or what we should term a diary, of chief events of the year. The calendar commences from 1066 until the date of publication. In the British Museum copy of the second edition the events are jumbled together without mentioning the date, but in the first edition, which by good chance I happened to see at Sotheby's auction rooms, most of the events are dated thus: Middleton's Waterworks finished 1611; the House of Correction, Clerkenwell, opened 1615. In the year 1613 three events are chronicled: Death of Prince Henry, the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to the Palatine, and the play-house on fire, which last event happened on June 29th, 1613. I did not have time to consult the diary carefully, but I think in all other years only one event is given to each year.

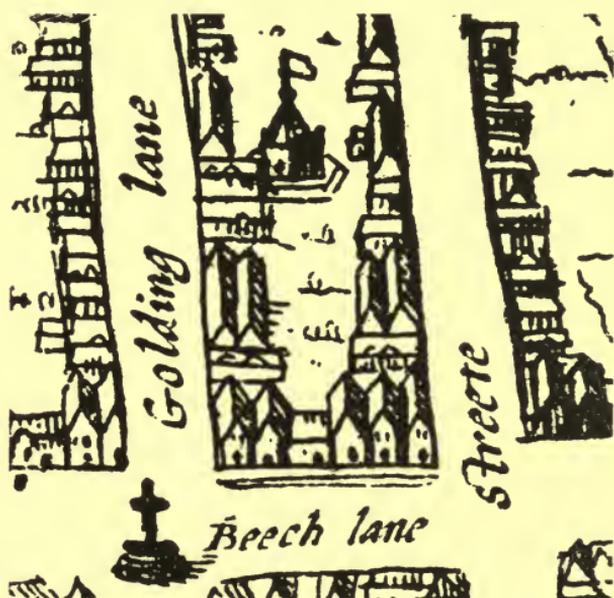
In 1644 Sir Mathew Brand, the son of Nicholas Brand, the original owner of the ground on which both the first and second Globe Theatres were built, pulled down the building and erected tenements, which in course of time were likewise demolished, giving place to a dwelling-house; on the latter being cleared away, warehouses were erected which are standing at the present day.

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The sign of the first Globe Theatre was a figure of Atlas supporting the Globe, bearing underneath an inscription: "Totus mundus agit histrionem." A rendering into English occurs in Jacques' soliloquy in "As You Like It": "All the world's a stage."

## THE FORTUNE

The opening of the Globe Theatre in the spring of 1599 proved from the outset a most successful venture, seriously curtailing the profits of its near



The First Fortune Theatre. Built in 1600. Situated midway between Golden Lane and Whitecross Street.

rival, the Rose; this latter theatre gradually discontinued the legitimate drama, diverting its energies in an entirely different channel.

Henslowe, the proprietor of this neglected playhouse, was a man of varied resources, combined with unbounded capital, two great advantages in speculative undertakings. Foreseeing that the opposition would eventually overwhelm him, a swift plan of action was devised which enabled him in

# The Roaring Girle.

## OR *Moll Cut-Purse.*

As it hath lately beene Acted on the Fortunc-stage by  
*the Prince his Players.*

Written by *T. Middleton* and *T. Dekkar.*

My case is alter'd, I must worke for my living.



Printed at *London* for *Thomas Archer*, and are to be sold at his  
shop in *Popes head-pallace*, neere the *Royall*  
*Exchange.* 1611.

## THE THEATRES

continuing uninterruptedly his theatrical prosperity. Without hesitating, he formulated a scheme of erecting a new theatre on the north side of the Thames. The building was far removed from the keen competition, such as was in vogue at the Globe, of the Lord Chamberlain's servants. The Fortune Theatre, for such was the name of Henslowe's latest enterprise, was situated in a district north-west of the heart of the City.

In searching for the exact site, the enquirer must walk straight down Aldersgate Street until he strikes the Barbican, then follow the Barbican until Beech Street is reached ; at each end of this thoroughfare two streets branch off, both leading to Old Street ; midway between these two streets, named respectively Golden Lane and Whitecross Street, stood the Fortune Theatre. A distant reminder of the past will be noticed by a street called Playhouse Yard, a turning off Golden Lane. Why this place should be termed a yard is rather puzzling, as outwardly it bears the monotonous look of an ordinary London street, which most readers will agree is far from picturesque.

Professor Lawrence, in his exhaustive list of the early London theatres, can find no view of this theatre ; on the other hand, Professor Baker gives an illustration of this theatre, taken from Ryther's Map of London, dated 1604. " In the district I have described is to be seen a building from the top of which a flag is flying ; on the churches marked in the map a cross is seen." This distinction is decidedly in favour of Professor Baker's theory.

In the last month of the year 1600 the Fortune was opened to the public, meeting with bitter opposition from the City Authorities and the Puritanical section of the people. Notwithstanding all those obstacles, coupled with innumerable complaints, Henslowe and Allen, his son-in-law, steadily

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proceeded with their undertaking, being eventually rewarded for all the anxiety and persecution by the complete success of their new venture.

The documentary evidence in proof of the opposition they encountered has been preserved in a letter addressed by the Earl of Nottingham, the Lord Admiral : " To all and every of her Majesty's Justices and other Ministers and Offices in the County of Middlesex requiring them to suffer his servant Edward Alleyn to proceed unmolested in the founding of his new playhouse near Redcross Street." This letter does not seem to have produced the desired effect ; thereupon, Allen caused a petition to be drawn up by the most influential inhabitants of Finsbury, in whose Lordship lay the site of the Fortune, beseeching the Lords of the Privy Council that the erection of the new house might be allowed to proceed, on the grounds that the site was conveniently chosen, so as to cause no annoyance, and that the projectors had promised a weekly allowance to the poor of the parish. Twenty-seven names were attached to this petition, which was engrossed on the first week in April, 1600.

On the 8th of April a warrant was issued on behalf of the Privy Council, and signed by the Earl of Nottingham, Lord Hunsdon, the Lord Chamberlain, and Robert Cecil, to the following effect : " To the Justices of Peace and the County of Middlesex, especially of St. Giles, without Cripplegate." The document refers to the petition of the inhabitants, and adds that Allen's choice of a site in Golden Lane is recommended by some of the Justices themselves.

Another item mentioned is that of an old theatre to be pulled down ; this would lead one in inferring that when the new theatre was licensed that either the Rose or the Curtain would be demolished, and presumably promises were given to that effect.

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However, the said theatres continued their career for many years after these interdicts. Even after the warrant from the Privy Council certain parties were still clamouring for the reduction of the number of playhouses, as is evident by a letter from the Privy Council addressed to the Lord Mayor for the restraint of the immoderate use and company of playhouses and players.

In reading the Privy Council's Bill of Complaint, one would conclude that the Lords of the Council played a double part, one in urging the restriction of the playhouses and actors, the other in protecting the same. The latter proceeds to state: "That there shall be about the City two houses and no more allowed to serve for the use of the common stage plays. And forasmuch as their Lordships have been informed by Edmund Tylney, esquire, her Majesty's servant and Master of the Revels, that the house now in hand to be built by the said Edward Alleyn is not intended to increase the number of playhouses but to be instead of another, namely, the Curtain, which is either to be ruined and plucked down, or to be put to some other good use, as also that the situation thereof is meet and convenient for that purpose, it is likewise ordered that the said house of Alleyn shall be allowed to be one of the two houses, and namely for the house to be allowed in Middlesex for the company of players belonging to the Lord Admiral, so as the house called the Curtain be as it is pretended, either ruined or applied to some other good use, and for the other house allowed to be on the Surrey side, whereas their Lordships are pleased to permit to the company of players that shall play there to make their own choice which they will have of divers houses, that are there, choosing one of them and no more, and the said company of players being the servants of the Lord Chamberlain and that are to play these

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

have made choice of the house called the Globe, it is ordered that the said house and none other shall be allowed there. And speedily it is forbidden that any stage plays shall be played as sometimes they have been in any common inn for public assembly in or near about the City. Further, it is ordered that the two several companies of players assigned unto the two houses allowed may play each of them in their several houses twice a week and no oftener, and specially they shall refrain to play on the Sabbath day upon pain of imprisonment and further penalty, and that they shall forbear altogether in the time of Lent and likewise at such times as of extraordinary sickness or infection of disease shall appear to be in or about the City."

This document sums up the position of theatrical matters in the last year of the sixteenth century, and, frankly speaking, the outlook was not a particularly rosy one.

However, this order of the Council was quite a dead letter and need not have been written. Theatrical managers took no notice of these commands, and the threatened theatres remained undisturbed.

There must have been some reason why this order was disobeyed; many critics contend that the Lord Admiral and the Lord Chamberlain were desirous of creating a monopoly for their servants, others with more show of reason point out that the Privy Council tried to sugar over the feelings of the City Authorities by writing polite letters, but when the fatal moment arrived they refused the permission granted in the correspondence. Perhaps the Queen took a greater share in these transactions than is generally supposed by the historians of the theatre, protecting in her own person the poor player.

All these points are merely surmises; further documents may enable us to discover the true

## THE THEATRES

solution of this interesting enigma. Fortunately the contract for the building of this theatre is still in existence. The extreme importance attaching to this document warrants its transcription in full, respecting the chief items. The contract was made out on the 8th day of January, 1599, between Philip Henslowe and Edward Allen on one part and Peter Short, citizen and carpenter, of London, on the other, for the building and setting up a new House and stage for a playhouse in and upon a certain plot of ground near Goldinge Lane, in the parish of St. Giles, without Cripplegate. "The frame of the house to be set up square, and to continue 80 feet of lawful assize every way square, without and 55 feet of like assize square every way within, with a good, sure and strong foundation of piles, brick, lime and sand both without and within, to be wrought one foot of assize at the least above ground, and the said frame to contain three stories in height, the first a lower storey to contain twelve foot of lawful assize in height, the second storey eleven foot of lawful assize in height, and the third or upper storey nine foot. All which storeys shall contain twelve foot and a half of lawful assize in breadth throughout, besides a jutty forwards in either of the two upper storeys of ten inches, with four convenient divisions for gentlemen's rooms and other sufficient and convenient divisions for twopenny rooms, with necessary seats to be placed and set as well in these rooms as throughout all the rest of the galleries, and with such like stairs, conveyances and divisions without and within, as are made and contrived in and to the late erected play house on the Bank, in the said parish of Saint Saviour's, called the Globe, with a stage and tiring house to be made, erected and set up within the said frame, with a shadow or cover over the said stage, which stage shall be placed and set, as also

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

the staircases of the said frame in such sort as is prefigured, in a plot thereon drawn, and which stage shall contain in length forty and three foot of lawful assize, and in breadth to extend to the middle of the yard of the said house, the same stage to be paled in below with good strong and sufficient new oaken boards, and likewise the lower storey of the said frame withinside, and the same lower storey to be also laid over and fenced with strong iron piles. And the said stage to be in all other proportions contrived and fashioned like unto the stage of the said Playhouse called the Globe, with convenient windows and lights glazed to the said tiring house. And the said frame, stage and staircases to be with tile, and to have sufficient gutter of lead, to carry and convey the water from the covering of the said stage to fall backwards, and also the said frame and the staircases thereof to be sufficiently enclosed without with lath, lime and hair. And the gentlemen's rooms and twopenny rooms to be ceiled with lath, lime and hair, and all the floors of the said galleries, storeys and stage to be boarded with good and sufficient new deal boards of the whole thickness where need shall be. And the said house and other things before mentioned to be made and done, to be in all other contrivitions, conveyances, fashions, thing and things effected, finished and done according to the manner and fashion of the said house called the Globe, saving only that all the principle and main posts of the said frame and stage forward shall be square and wrought pilaster wise with carved proportions called Satyres, to be placed and set on the top of every of the same posts, and saving also that the said Peter Short shall not be charged with any manner of painting in or about the said frame house and stage or any part thereof nor rendering the walls within nor ceiling any more other rooms than the gentlemen's rooms, twopenny





The second Fortune Theatre, 1621.

## THE THEATRES

rooms and stage before mentioned. That the said Philip Henslowe and Edward Allen will well and truly pay to the said Peter Short the full sum of four hundred and forty pounds (£440) of lawful money of England."

This contract is noteworthy as affording the means in some measure of reconstructing the Globe, also corroborating the evidence of the Swan sketch, especially with regard to the auditorium, which corresponds in most particulars with the plans formulated in the Fortune indenture. During Henslowe's lifetime—he died in 1616—the only company of players which appeared at the Fortune were those of the Lord Admiral, which in former days had their headquarters at the Rose. The last entry in Henslowe's Diary is a note detailing the accounts received from the Fortune in 1608, beginning at the Christmas holidays.

For many years past the Diary had ceased chronicling the name of the plays acted day by day, as we find in the Rose accounts, consequently nothing is known of the repertoire of this theatre. The Admiral's men continued acting at this house until its total destruction by fire in 1621. Allen notifies this event in his diary. "This night at 12 of the clock the Fortune was burnt."

On the death of his father-in-law, Allen took control of all his property, either by bequest or in right of his wife. The estate included the Fortune Theatre. Henslowe's will was at first disputed by his nephew, John Henslowe; this action must have failed, as Allen became the sole possessor of his father-in-law's property.

In 1616 Allen leased the theatre to the Admiral's men, thus becoming responsible only for the building. The loss of everything else through the fire fell upon the shoulders of the company. An account of the burning of the Fortune Theatre is recorded

**SWEINAM,**  
THE  
**Woman-hater,**  
**ARRAIGNED BY**  
**WOMEN.**

*A new Comedie,*  
Acted at the *Red Bull*, by the late  
Queenes Seruants.



LONDON,  
Printed for *Richard Meighen*, and are to be sold at his Shops  
at *Saint Clements Church*, ouer-against *Essex House*, and  
at *Westminster Hall*. 1620.

## THE THEATRES

under the date of December 15th, 1621, in a letter written by John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton. "On Sunday night there was a great fire at the Fortune, in Golden Lane, the fayrest playhouse in this town. It was quite burnt downe in two hours and all their apparell and playbooks lost, whereby the poor companions are quite undone."

A new Fortune arose three years later on the site of the old one, namely in 1624. An improvement in the building was effected by constructing the house of brick. Allen possessed shares in the new theatre, otherwise he had no interest or responsibility in the undertaking.

During the Civil War the theatre was dismantled, and the playhouse ceased for evermore its connexion with the drama. In 1682, Church Services were held there, and finally it became many years later a fully established brewery. The shape of the interior of the second Fortune is a matter of controversy, well known experts disagreeing on this point. The exterior is illustrated in Wilkinson's *Londonia*, and shows a square-shaped building.

The house took its name from the image of a Goddess which stood in front of the theatre, but whether it was a sculptured sign or a painting must remain undecided.

## THE RED BULL THEATRE

The next theatre on our list is the Red Bull, until lately unanimously assigned to the year 1609. Professor Lawrence, in his second series of Elizabethan studies, would antedate this reckoning by nearly a decade; unfortunately no reference is given for this early date. After spending many fruitless hours in search of fresh discoveries, I inserted a note in *Notes and Queries*, receiving by return one private communication, and a few answers through the journal itself. Although my

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

note was perfectly clear, the information was what was already known, and dealt chiefly with the later fortunes of the Red Bull.

Professor Baker, even as late as 1907, dates the opening of the theatre after 1608. The observant reader will readily perceive that the history of the early English stage is in a state of chaos. Scholars such as Mr. Greg, Mr. Chambers, Sir Sidney Lee, and Prof. Lawrence, who are especially endowed with thorough knowledge of the subject, should for the benefit of posterity undertake the colossal task of re-writing the history of the stage during the Shakesperean period. Mr. Fleay's chronicle history of the stage is much too fragmentary, from the theatrical point of view, for the guidance either of the general student or readers interested in the subject.

In my opinion all Collier's works must be entirely discarded as this dishonest *littérateur* forged documents, notes, and even whole books, in order to substantiate his theories. Certainly he possessed great knowledge of the matter, and may well be termed the pioneer in scientific research, but his criminal methods require that the student must verify all his statements, therefore if the reader is wise, all this author's works should be rejected on account of the difficulty of distinguishing the true from the false.

The site of the Red Bull is situated near the Clerkenwell Road end of St. John Street, formerly called St. John Street Road. On the left hand side, going towards the Angel, Islington, is Hayward's Place; close by is Woodbridge Street, on this space stood the Red Bull. Previous to the year 1609 nothing is heard of this theatre in the annals of the stage. Recently documents have come to light proving its earlier existence, and, as stated above, Professor Lawrence would place the date as early as 1600. A





Reproduced from an original engraving in the possession of the Author. Erroneously inscribed as the interior of the Red Bull Theatre. Now generally identified as the inside of a theatre during the Commonwealth.

## THE THEATRES

well-known print of this theatre, of which I possess the original copy, is generally styled "The inside of the Red Bull Theatre." This engraving first appeared in a book called Kirkman's *Wits or Sport upon Sport*, published in two parts, a second edition being re-issued in one volume in 1673, with the engraving as frontispiece, the original print does not bear any inscription; this is found only on the modern reproduction issued in 1809. The print was sold separately which may possibly account for the fanciful description. One glance at the drawing will convince the student that the print can in no way be associated with the old Red Bull Theatre. The Red Bull was a public theatre, being open to the sky, with a thatched roof, performances being given only in the daytime. Now the print plainly indicates by the inclusion of chandeliers hanging from the roof, as well as a row of rabbit-eared footlights along the front, that if a contemporary theatre is represented a private one is intended.

The massing of spectators on either side of the stage is evidence that the drawing is an imaginary one, made up partly from an early Elizabethan stage, combined with the Restoration Stage of Charles II.

Possibly it may represent a real stage of the latter period, but cannot under any circumstances resemble the old Red Bull Playhouse during any time of its existence. Seven characters are represented on the stage, illustrating a few of the plays that could be acted by a strolling company. The principal motive of Kirkman's book is "for those players who intend to wander or go a strolling; this very Book and a few ordinary properties are enough to set them up and get money in any Town in England."

1. Sir J. Falstafe and Hostes represent characters of that name in Shakespeare's "Henry IV."

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

2. The figure emerging from behind the curtain is Green, the actor, who took the part of Bubble, the City Gallant, whose answer to every complaint is "Tu quoque," the play on this account being re-christened "Tu quoque." The play was published in 1614, and is still extant. There is evidence that the drama was acted at the Red Bull in the year 1611.

3. Clause is one of the chief characters in the "Lame Commonwealth," taken from "The Beggar's Bush," a tragic-comedy, by John Fletcher, circa 1615. The scene is laid somewhere in Flanders, but the play is named after a well-known tree, called "The Beggar's Bush," between Huntingdon and Coxton. The play was first printed in 1647. On looking up an old theatrical dictionary, dated 1792, this play is ascribed to Beaumont and Fletcher, and is written "The Beggar's Bush."

4. "French Dancing Mr.," a droll taken from the Duke of Newcastle's play called "Variety," printed in 1647. The dictionary adds that this play was acted with very great applause at the Black Fryars.

5. "Simpleton" seems to be an independent farce, in which one, Robert Cox, an actor, made a great hit and caused roars of laughter from the unsophisticated audience by eating a huge slice of bread and butter, and complaining that a man cannot be left undisturbed to eat a little bit for his afternoon luncheon.

6. The "Changling" is a character in Middleton's tragedy of that name. Antonio, who pretends idiocy in order that he may gain access to the wife of a mad doctor. This play was acted before the Court at Whitehall in 1624.

The history of this theatre still awaits an historian. Its most enthusiastic supporters were the rougher elements of the population, who then, as now,

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chiefly delighted in lurid melodrama of a very pronounced type. The Chancery proceedings, in 1617, elicit the fact that certain members of the Red Bull company were sued for money owed; further proceedings state that they were unable to satisfy the claim—certain evidence that their finances were anything but prosperous.

This theatre cannot claim any Shakesporean associations, although enjoying a longer lease of life than any other playhouse of that period, being last named as a theatre as late as the year 1663. Pepys, the celebrated Diarist, visited the Red Bull in 1661. Mr. Barton Baker, in his history of the London stage, suggests that the Red Bull Theatre was originally an inn-yard, theatrical performances taking place there; he also casually mentions an accident caused by the collapse of the auditorium. By the word auditorium I presume he means the galleries that surrounded the yard on three sides. Mr. Baker does not give any references for these statements, or give further details of the event.

An interesting notice of this theatre, which existed during the early days of the Commonwealth, will be found in Randolphe's "Muses' Looking Glass."

### THE GLOBE.

Wherein, quoth he, reigns a whole world of vice,  
Had been consumed, the Phœnix burnt to ashes,  
The Fortune whipped for a blind—Blackfriars,  
He wonders how it escaped demolishing  
In the time of Reformation; lastly he wished  
The Bull might cross the Thames to the Bear-  
gardens

And there be soundly baited.

Edward Allen, the Elizabethan actor, also mentions this theatre in a manuscript note preserved at Dulwich College: "Went to the Red Bull and

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

received for the Younger Brother (a play) but £3 6s. 4d.

In 1629 a company of French comedians acted here for one day only. After being deserted by the actors, the Red Bull offered various entertainments to the public. There is extant a bill which was formerly in possession of Mr. Eliot Hodgson, advertising a fencing match at the Red Bull on Whit Monday, 30th May, 1664. This is surmounted by a large woodcut of the Royal Arms, and is printed on a sheet of coarse paper, measuring  $5\frac{5}{8}$  inches by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches. No authentic view of either the interior or the exterior is in existence.

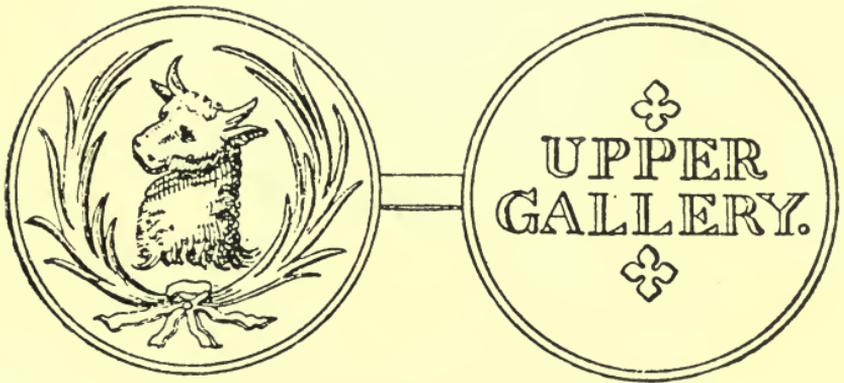
Above the illustration of the Red Bull Theatre check will be found a facsimile of an admission to the Roman Coliseum, built A.D. 72. This rare specimen is perfectly genuine, and was purchased by me many years ago at the Buxton Forman sale. It is an interesting souvenir of ancient theatrical times; the numerals, VII, on the reverse refer to one of the sections of the vast building, and may have been a complimentary ticket before the tax on deadheads came into vogue.

When the building was finally demolished is likewise uncertain. An interesting metal check ticket, giving admittance to the Upper Gallery of the Red Bull, is extant, the date of which is between the Restoration and the closing of the Red Bull as a theatre, namely, 1660-1663. The obverse has the head of a bull, within a wreath, tied in a knot with ribbons; a double ring encircles the entire figure. The reverse has simply the words UPPER GALLERY one above the other, a star is over the second P in upper, and another under the second L of Gallery; the whole is within a double lined circle.

The writer of an article on Shakespeare, in which an illustration appears, considers this check as a souvenir of the Globe; this ascription may be due



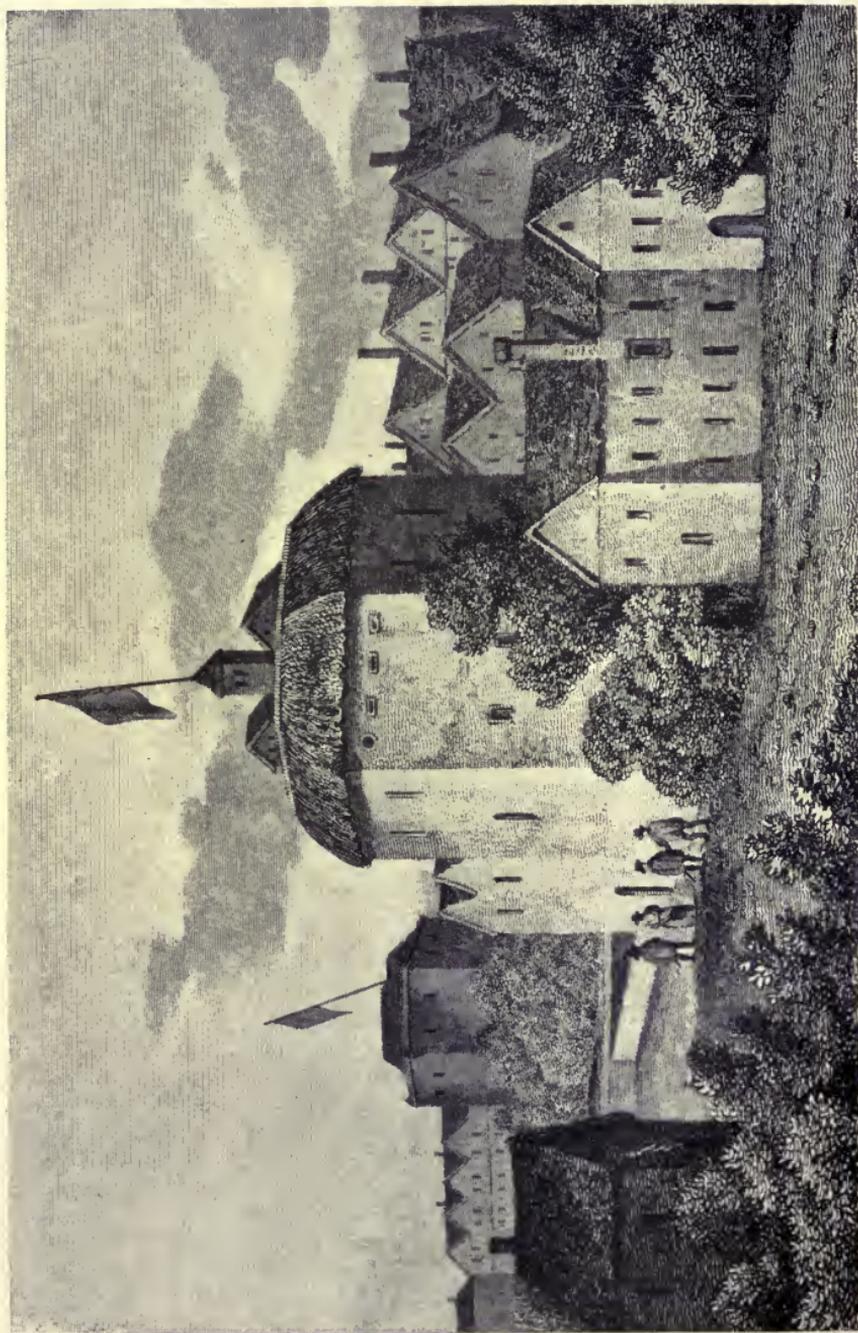
Facsimile of an admission ticket to the Roman Coliseum. Circa A.D. 90. Reproduced from a genuine ivory ticket in the possession of the Author.



Ticket of Admission to the Red Bull Theatre.







The large theatre in the foreground is the Second Globe Theatre, 1614. The small one is the Hope.

## THE THEATRES

to a clerical error. Most writers on Shakesperean matters, unless they are expert students, are seldom accurate in their statements ; they are too apt in seeking information from paragraphs culled from ancient encyclopædias, a very unsafe medium for sound knowledge. Almost every sentence requires patient research ; in some instances a dozen or more books must be consulted in verifying quite an ordinary statement, and very few writers possess the necessary patience for such monotonous work. For suchlike people I would recommend novel writing—a much easier task, and which can be pursued without interruption.

### THE HOPE THEATRE

The last theatre set up on the Bankside, and also the last public theatre opened during Shakespeare's lifetime, was the Hope, built in the year 1614, two years before his death. This reconstructed building had originally served as an amphi-theatre for bull baiting, being marked on the maps of both Aggas and Hofnagel in 1572, also in Norden's map of 1593.

Twenty years after Aggas' map appeared, the bull-baiting house had been converted into a bear-baiting establishment ; the old bear-baiting house seen in these maps was, in 1599, occupied by the the famous Globe Theatre. The playhouse marked in Norden's map is the Rose, then the sole theatre on the Bankside.

The cause of the Bear-house being turned into a theatre was due to the Globe Theatre being burnt to the ground in the previous year 1613. Cunning old Henslowe, seizing an opportunity of taking advantage of this catastrophe, converted his rival's misfortune to his own profit. The contract for demolishing the old Bear Garden is still in existence, setting forth that an arena for the exhibition of

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

bear-baiting, likewise a stage suitable for play acting, was to be erected. Under these conditions the stage was a movable one, thereby permitting the performance of either entertainments.

The contract states that it was to be built like the Swan, a theatre erected nearly twenty years previously, a proof that few alterations or improvements were made in theatrical structures during this long period.

Most people interested in theatrical matters are aware that customs appertaining to the theatre are handed down from generation to generation, and innovations in stage tradition are seldom, if ever, introduced, even in such an improving age as our own.

This theatre is without any Shakesperean association, and the only stage play, so far as is known, publicly acted there is Ben Jonson's "Bartholomew Fair," in 1614. This play contains several theatrical allusions, one of which is defining the spectators of the pit as "the understanding gentlemen of the ground. Shakespeare names the same audience as the "groundlings" in Hamlet's speech to the players. For several days in the week the Hope was given over to bear-baiting and other sports. There is an account of one Fenner, who challenged Taylor, the Water Poet, to a combat of wits, On the day appointed, Fenner failed to put in an appearance, thereby causing the great enmity of Taylor, who wrote some rather poignant and sarcastic verses in memory of the event. Fenner replied by a mock epitaph :

" O ! 'twas that foolish scurvie play  
At Hope that took his sense away."

Taylor replied :

" Thou writest a hotch potch of some forty lines  
About my play at Hope and my designs."

## THE THEATRES

On the rebuilding of the Globe, the Hope stood little chance against such a powerful rival ; in fact, this building was never seriously regarded as a theatre. When the new Globe was entirely rebuilt the Hope gradually resumed its former occupation as a bear-baiting house, which in reality had never been discarded.

As a bear-baiting garden, a reference is found in Swetnam's *Arraignment of Women*, 1617 : " If you mean to see the bear-baiting of women then trudge to this bear garden apace, and get in betimes and view every room where thou may best sit for thy pleasure."

The further history of the Hope after 1616 is quite unconnected with the drama. It flourished for many years. After Shakespeare's death, Cunningham, in his *Handbook of London*, says that the best account of its last days is narrated in Howe's MS., a continuation of Stow's Survey ; this must be by some other hand than Howe's, as he died in 1631. " The Hope, on the bankside in Southwark, commonly called the Beare Garden, a playhouse for stage players on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and for the baiting of the Beares on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the stage being made to take up and down when they please."

It was built in the year 1610, and was pulled down to make tenements, by Thomas Walker, petticoat maker, in Cannon Street, on Tuesday, the 25th of March, 1656.

Seven of Mr. Godfrie's Bears, by command of Thomas Pride, then High Sheriff of Surrey, were then shot to death on Saturday, the 9th of February, 1655, by a company of soldiers. A few years later, after the Restoration, the Bear Garden, was renamed, and continued giving exhibitions until 1691. In an advertisement, dated 1682, the Hope is still styled by its old name. This paragraph, which appeared

THE  
TWO  
NOBLE  
KINSMEN:

Presented at the Blackfriars  
by the Kings Maiesties servants,  
with great applause:

---

Written by the memorable Worthies  
of their time;

{M<sup>r</sup>. *John Fletcher*, and } Gent.  
{M<sup>r</sup>. *William Shakspeare*. }

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Printed at *London* by *Tho. Cotes*, for *Iohn Waterfons*:  
and are to be sold at the signe of the *Crowne*  
in *Pauls Church-yard*. 1634.

## THE THEATRES

in the *Loyal Protestant*, must refer to some new building, or perhaps the old name was still in use.

The last we hear of this new Hope is in 1691, when an advertisement states there is now made at the Bear Garden glass house, on the Bankside, crown window glass, and may be had of all glaziers in London. Howe is in error in stating that the Hope was built in 1610; this theatre was built soon after the Globe fire in 1614. In Visscher's map of London, 1616, is an excellent view of this theatre, named the Bear Garden. Another view is seen in Hollar's view of London, the last differs slightly from Visscher's in shape. During an interval of thirty-three years a few alterations may have been introduced.

An interesting souvenir of the bear-baiting house is preserved amongst the Dulwich papers. This relic takes the form of a modern playbill, with the exception that the text is written instead of printed. The advertisement is written in a large round hand, and may have been the original placard placed in front of the building: "To-morrow being Thursdaie, shall be seen at the Bear garden on Bankside a great mach plaid by the gamsters of Essex, who hath chalenged all comers whatsoever to play V dogges at the single beare for V pounds, and also to wearie a bull dead at the stake; and for your better content shall have pleasant sport with the horse and ape and whipping of the blind beare. Vivat Rex."

## THE BLACKFRIARS THEATRE

The first Blackfriars theatre was opened in 1577, occupying the second floor of a mansion belonging to Sir William More, serving, in former times, as a dining hall, in the old monastic Priory of Blackfriars. This part of the building, after its devolution, was converted into separate rooms, and occupied by Sir John Cheek in 1540. A few years

THE  
WARRES OF CY-  
rus King of Persia, against An-  
tiochus King of Assyria,  
with the Tragicall ende  
of Panthæa.

Played by the children of her  
Majesties Ch appell.



LONDON  
Printed by E. A. for William Blackwal,  
and are to be sold at his shop ouer a-  
gainst Guild-hall gate. 1594.

## THE THEATRES

later these rooms were tenanted by the Revels Office, under the Mastership of Sir Thomas Cawarden, continuing in use until 1560, when the offices were removed to St. John's, Jerusalem. Eventually this property came into the possession of Sir William More, who leased the premises to Richard Farrant, Master of the Children of Windsor. The site of these buildings will be found in the present Apothecaries' Hall, in Water Lane, Blackfriars.

Richard Farrant, on taking possession, turned the rooms into a theatre for the convenience of the boys in rehearsing their plays before performing before the Queen. The owner of the property was much displeased at Farrant's procedure, vigorously complaining that the tenant had damaged the property by converting the rooms into a theatre.

No views or records of the interior of this theatre exist, therefore, in reconstructing the stage, or auditorium, from imagination, conjecture must take the place of facts. Whether galleries surrounded the stage, as we find in the public theatres, or whether the spectators were seated on a level in front of the stage, is a matter of dispute. Another point of controversy is whether the stage protruded into the auditorium or continued from east to west in a straight line, as seen in a modern stage. These questions at present cannot be determined with certainty. Until Professor Wallace discovered the documents relating to the Blackfriars property nothing was known about this early theatre. The Children of the Chapel Royal and the Children of Windsor regularly acted here, and for a few years were exceedingly successful, owing to their being under the immediate patronage of the Queen. Farrant, their Master, wrote plays for them, but none have survived. At Farrant's death, in 1580, the theatre was managed by his widow, but she was unable for long to carry out the terms of the lease,

THE  
LOVERS  
Melancholy.

---

*ACTED*  
AT THE PRIVATE  
HOUSE IN THE BLACKE  
Friers, and publikely at the Globe  
by the Kings Maiesties Ser-  
uants.

---

---

LONDON,  
Printed for *H. Seile*, and are to be sold at the Ty-  
gers head in Saint *Pauls* Church-yard.  
1629.

## THE THEATRES

and, after endless litigation, extending over four years, the theatre again came into the possession of the original owner, Sir William More.

During the four years of quarrelling and bickering, the widow Farrant sold the lease to Hunnis, a celebrated Master of the Children of the Chapel, who continued training the children and producing plays. The other company, the Children of Windsor, ceased playing there two years before the death of Farrant. Hunnis, after two years' ownership, was so much harassed by the proprietor, that he, in his turn, leased the theatre to Henry Evans, who took over the management. This new arrangement lasted but for a brief period, for in the same year Evans disposed of the lease to the Earl of Oxford, who placed here his company of boy actors. But eventually the Earl made a present of the lease to Lyly, the poet and dramatist, who managed the theatre until 1584, when an order of the Court awarded the premises to Sir William More. This ends the history of the first Blackfriars Theatre.

The second Blackfriars Theatre dates from the year 1596. James Burbage, the father of Richard Burbage, purchased from Sir William More, for £600, the buildings that lay between the office on the north and Lord Hunsdon's mansion on the south. After the purchase of the property he immediately remodelled these rooms, making them suitable for a theatre.

James Burbage died in 1597, and his sons leased the second Blackfriars Theatre to Henry Evans, in conjunction with Nathaniel Gyles, who succeeded Hunnis as Master in 1597. The Children of the Chapel occupied the stage, acting plays written by all the celebrated dramatists of the period, with the exception of Shakespeare, whose plays are not mentioned as acted by the Children. Most critics, including Professor Wallace himself, contend that

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

Shakespeare acted in this theatre. There does not exist an item of evidence in support of this theory, beyond a statement made by Burbage's sons many years after Shakespeare's death, that Richard Burbage installed Shakespeare at this theatre, but in what capacity is nowhere mentioned ; and I doubt very much if Shakespeare ever set foot upon the stage, in spite of the above statement. No authentic views of this theatre are known ; Professor Baker gives an illustration of the exterior of this theatre, but its authenticity is not beyond doubt. The second Blackfriars Theatre was situated in a different part of the building from the first. When Burbage purchased the property, several rooms on the south side were converted into one large hall, measuring 66 by 46 feet. The room on the north side was formerly the home of the boy actors, under Farrant. The Blackfriars was a private playhouse, the word " private " denoting that the theatre was roofed and performances were given at night time, or on account of the theatre being within the liberties of the City, the proprietor safeguarded himself by this designation in order to comply with the Act of Common Council ; one clause of which exempted from penalties any private dwelling house exhibiting Enterludes, Comedies and Tragedies. The charges were somewhat higher than those in force at the public theatres. At this theatre, stools were allowed upon the stage, Although called a private theatre, anyone by paying the higher price was allowed admittance.

### WHITEFRIARS THEATRE

There is some slight evidence that a stage for acting existed in the vicinity of Whitefriars as early as 1574. Richard Rawlidge, in his tract already referred to, enumerates, among other playhouses in the year 1576, " one in Whitefriars." Fleay

THE  
INSATIATE  
Countesse.

A  
TRAGEDIE:  
*Acted at White-Fryers.*

---

Written  
By JOHN MARSTON.

---



L O N D O N:  
Printed by T. S. for Thomas Archer, and are to be sold  
at his Shop in Popes-head-Pallace, neere the  
*Royall-Exchange.* 1613.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

mentions that this is the only reference to the old Whitefriars playhouse until 1610. Professor Lawrence is again at variance with the usual authorities : he would assign the opening of the new Whitefriars, circa 1608. According to a burial register of St. Dunstan's Parish, Whitefriars, in September 29th, 1607, which records the following interment : " Gerry out of the playhouse in the Friars buried." Another entry is : " We present one playhouse in the same precinct, not fitting these to be now tolerable."

By the date 1607 both our professors have misdated the opening of the theatre. Another valid proof of how greatly we are in need of a veritable authentic history of the early theatres.

The place in which the stage was first set up stood in the Refectory of the demolished Monastery of the Carmelites, situated between the modern Bouverie and Whitefriars Streets, in Fleet Street. The early history of this theatre is a total blank, both as regards the stage and the company of actors, who gave performances there.

If conjecture is permissible, probably strolling players were allowed the use of the stage, or more likely a regular company for want of a better place, acted here. The performers were safe from molestation, on account of the ground being ecclesiastical property, therefore not being subject to the jurisdiction of the City Authorities.

In 1607, or earlier, this old hall was probably converted into a regular theatre, and from that date continued as such until 1616, when for an indefinite period the place was abandoned. On being reopened, acting took place as usual, subsequently being finally abolished in 1621.

The Children of the Queen's Revels made their home here. Many of the ablest dramatists wrote plays for them. Ben Jonson's " Epicene " was one

THE  
*Excellent Comedy, called*  
THE OLD LAW:

OR

A new way to please you.

By { *Phil. Massinger.*  
*Tho. Middleton.*  
*William Rowley.*

---

Acted before the King and Queene at *Salisbury House*,  
and at severall other places, with great Applause.

---

Together with an exact and perfect Catalogue of all  
the Playes, with the Authors Names, and what are  
Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Pastoralls,  
Masks, Interludes, more exactly Printed  
then ever before.

---

LONDON,  
Printed for *Edward Archer*, at the signe of the *Adam*  
and *Eve*, in *Little Britaine*. 1659.5

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

of the first plays they produced. A list of actors' names is prefixed to the printed edition of 1612. The celebrated actor, Richard Field, is the first actor named.

### THE SALISBURY COURT THEATRE

After the abolition of the Whitefriars Playhouse, another arose in the same district, and was called the Salisbury Court Theatre. The site is now occupied by the Salisbury Hotel, in Salisbury Square, Fleet Street. Edward Sackville, fourth earl of Dorset, leased a piece of land to Richard Gunnel and William Bargrave for forty-one and a half years, at a rental of £100 per annum.

The company of the King's Revels were the first who occupied the house. A few years later we find the Prince's men acting there. Among other plays produced by them was Marmion's "Holland's Leaguer," lately and often acted by Prince Charles' men at the Salisbury Court Theatre. A list of actors is prefixed to the first edition of this play, printed in 1632. In 1635, the Revel's company again were in possession of this theatre, and produced a play called "The Spargus Garden." The theatre continued in existence for many years, and was not abandoned until the fatal year 1649, when all theatres, without exception, were finally closed. At the Restoration this theatre was still in existence, but in a very dilapidated state. After being made habitable, play-acting was again resumed. Pepys records a visit to this theatre in his Diary. The fire of London counted this building among its victims. No views of any description are known.

### THE COCKPIT

This small, roofed private theatre was first opened in 1615, and was partially demolished by a band of wild apprentices. The cause of their action is not

*The Famous*  
**TRAGEDY**  
OF  
**THE RICH IEVV**  
OF *MALTA.*

**AS IT WAS PLAYD**  
**BEFORE THE KING AND**  
**QUEENE, IN HIS MAJESTIES**  
Theatre at *White-Hall*, by her Majesties  
Servants at the *Cock-pit.*

---

*Written by* **CHRISTOPHER MARLO.**

---



**LONDON;**  
Printed by *I. B.* for *Nicholas Vavasour*, and are to be sold  
at his Shop in the Inner-Temple, neere the  
Church, 1633.

THE  
TRAGEDY  
OF HOFFMAN

OR

A Reuenge for a Father.

As it hath bin diuers times acted  
with great applause, at the *Phenix*  
in *Druery-lane*.

---



---

LONDON,

Printed by *I. N.* for *Hugh Perry*, and are to bee  
sold at his shop, at the signe of the *Harrow*  
in *Brittaines-burse*. 1631.

## THE THEATRES

known. Speedily being rebuilt, it continued under the name of the Phœnix as a playhouse, until 1649, when the building was dismantled.

The company of the Lady Elizabeth, daughter of James I, acted at this house. A list of actors' names is recorded in the Herbert MSS. After the Restoration the theatre was once more used for play-acting, the last recorded performance taking place in 1664. Cockpit Court, Drury Lane, marked in Strype's map of London, 1720, stood on the site of the old theatre. In later years the Court was known as Pit Court, but now this place has entirely vanished. Formerly a cockpit existed in this neighbourhood, from which the theatre was named. Like so many other theatres of this period, no authentic views are known.

## ST. PAUL'S SINGING SCHOOL

Many printed plays have inscribed on their title pages: "As played by the Children of Powles." Very little is known of their place of acting. The exact site on which that part of the Cathedral was allotted to these boy actors still remains a point of discussion. Many authorities assert that the music room of the choir in St. Gregory's Church, in a corner of St. Paul's, was the place assigned to them; others consider the yard adjoining Convocation House, a more convenient spot, and thoroughly suitable for a dramatic performance. Professor Lawrence is in favour of the singing school, near the Convocation House. Until further evidence is forthcoming the question cannot be finally determined. St. Paul's singing school was built in the year 1581, and remained in use until 1596, when it was suppressed. A few years later this room may have been occupied by the Children of St. Paul's, and many a famous play of that period was probably acted

THE  
PURITAIN

Or

THE WIDDOW  
of Watling-streete.

*Acted by the Children of Paules.*

Written by W. S.



Imprinted at London by G. E. L. D.  
1607.

## THE THEATRES

there. All the great dramatists, with the exception of Shakespeare, wrote for the Boy Actors. The place served as a training ground for young actors, who afterwards joined the professional men's companies. Shakespeare bitterly satirized these juveniles in "Hamlet."

*A*  
Most pleasant Co-  
medie of *Mucedorus* the kings  
sonne of *Valentia* and *Amadine*  
the Kings daughter of *Arragon*,  
with the merie conceites  
of *Moufe*.

Newly set forth, as it hath bin  
*sundrie times plaide in the ho-  
norable Court of London.*

Very delectable and full  
of mirth.



---

LONDON  
Printed for *William Iones*, dwel-  
ling at *Holborne conduit*, at  
the signe of the *Gunne*.  
1598.

## CHAPTER III

### LONDON THEATRICAL COMPANIES

**I**N the early days of Elizabeth, actors sought refuge under the *aegis* of some great noblemen, otherwise they were branded as rogues and vagabonds, subject to arrest at any moment, followed by a term of imprisonment. The only way of escaping these stringent and harsh measures was by placing themselves, as above stated, under the patronage of Royalty and nobility, thereby securing freedom in following their calling without interruption or molestation. When the actors first sought the protection of the aristocracy, in all probability they became in reality the servants of the Lord who protected them, keeping themselves in readiness at the command of their masters, either acting at a public place or giving private performances. In course of time these ties became loosened, and the actors, in name only, were the servants of their patron, acting wherever and whenever they could find an appreciative audience. The Act of Parliament proclaiming them outcasts still remains in force, the Act never having been repealed.

Under these conditions they called themselves servants of the Queen, the Earl of Pembroke or the Lord Chamberlain his servants, thus enabling them to follow their profession in peace, and remain within the bounds of the law. It is generally admitted that when Shakespeare arrived in London he joined the Earl of Leicester's Company, or perhaps he may have enrolled himself as one of their members when they visited Stratford-on-Avon in the year 1587. A year later Leicester died ; Shakespeare then became a member of Lord Strange's

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

Company and remained in this company under different patrons until his retirement from the stage about 1610. The last six years of his life were spent in Stratford-on-Avon, where he died in 1616.

As would naturally be expected, the company whose fortunes Shakespeare followed has loomed largely in the student's mind. The other companies being partially ignored by thus restricting the attention to the Strange-Hunsdon company, the true perspective of the London companies is lost, and many which played quite an important part in the theatrical world of the time have become, through neglect in chronicling their history, somewhat obscured.

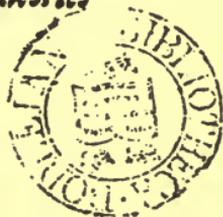
Behold here is another subject on which the Shakesperean student, by original research amongst the State and Records Office papers, might be able to throw considerable light on the histories of these dramatic companies. For the present the student must rely on the confused paragraphs of Fleay, recorded in his history of the stage. Mr. John Tucker Murray's *English Dramatic Companies* is a mine of information, chiefly describing the performances given in provincial towns by the London Companies, and also their Court performances. He likewise gives an excellent account of the minor companies which, previous to this work, were quite unknown, but little of anything new is related in connexion with the careers of the well-known London companies.

Dr. Greg, in his magnificent edition of *Henslowe's Diary*, no doubt relates all that is known about these London companies, Malone and Halliwell-Phillipps being his chief authorities. I think he makes a great mistake in quoting Collier, as this forger of documents and dishonest man of letters has no right to be regarded as a serious historian. All the documents he quotes may have been

FAMÖVŠ VIC-  
tories of Henry the  
fifth:

Containing the Honou-  
rable Battell of Agin-court:

*As it was plaide by the Queenes Maiesties  
Players.*



LONDON  
Printed by Thomas Creede, 1598.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

doctored in order to bolster up his own statements, besides which, anyone using a document which has passed through his hands should be very careful in recording the contents without a close examination, as many documents which he examined have been tampered with.

In Shakespeare's time the companies acting in London before the death of Queen Elizabeth were eight in number, as follows :

- The Queen's Servants.
- The Earl of Leicester's Servants.
- The Earl of Pembroke's Servants.
- The Earl of Worcester's Servants.
- The Lord Strange's Servants.
- The Lord Hunsdon's Servants.
- The Earl of Sussex' Servants.
- The Lord Admiral's Servants.

### THE QUEEN'S SERVANTS

This company was formed in the year 1583. The chief actors from other companies were pressed into this new troupe of regal comedians : most of their names are known. Howe, in his edition of *Stow's Annals*, published in 1615, mentions Wilson and Richard Tarlton, the former for a quiet, delicate and refined extemporal wit, and the latter for a wondrous, plentiful pleasant, extemporal wit ; he was the wonder of his time.

James Burbage, the founder of the first theatre in this country, was one of the first members. The Queen's Company frequently acted in various parts of the country, likewise at the Court, and continually in London. In the Metropolis they made The Theatre their headquarters ; sometimes they acted under the management of Henslowe at the Rose. A few of the plays in their repertoire found their way into the Press, the title page stating, " As was

## LONDON THEATRICAL COMPANIES

played by the Queen Majesty's players." One of their playbooks was the drama called "The True Tragedy of Richard III," a play that Shakespeare must have read or seen on the stage. Some half-dozen plays are known as belonging to this company, including the famous victories of "Henry V," the foundation play of Shakespeare's "Henry V."

After the Queen's death, in 1603, they ceased being called the Queen's players, and those actors who formed the company at this time sought other patronage, or were transferred wholly to some distinguished nobleman. There are no grounds for believing that some of the Queen's players found a new patron in Ludwic Stuart, Earl of Lennox, who was already patron of a company of players.

### EARL OF LEICESTER'S COMPANY

The Earl of Leicester is the earliest known nobleman under whose patronage the players first placed themselves, His name is found in a document as early as 1559, and until his death, in 1588, he remained a friend of the actors.

James Burbage, by trade a joiner, was a member of this company. In every important theatrical company of these times are found three well marked divisions of activity. First the actors performed in London, either at an inn-yard, hall, or properly built theatre. Secondly, provincial tours were arranged, especially when the plague was rampant in the Metropolis; in some instances the Continent was visited. Thirdly, a Court performance was commanded; naturally, only the better class companies were thus honoured.

The Earl of Leicester's company performed all these duties. A visit to Denmark is especially enumerated, the names of the actors being written down in the town records of Elsinore, which name instinctively recalls to mind the magic name of

A Pleasant Commodity,  
of faire *Enoch*. Millers daughter  
of *Maichelter*: With the loue of  
William the Conqueror:

As it was sundrietimes publicly acted in the  
honourable citie of London. by the right honourable  
the Lord Strange his seruants.



Imprinted at London for T.N. and I.VV.  
and are to be foide in S. Dunstones Church-  
yarde in Fleete-streete.

## LONDON THEATRICAL COMPANIES

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. During a lengthy provincial tour, the Earl of Leicester's company visited Stratford-on-Avon in 1587. Unfortunately there is no proof to corroborate the theory that Shakespeare may have joined the troupe on this occasion of their visit to his birthplace. When in London this company acted several times at Court, in one instance the name of the play being recorded. In February, 1574, was acted at Court the play called "Philemon and Philecia," for which they received £6 13s. 4d., and a further reward of £3 6s. 8d. It is nowhere stated where this company acted, but we are on sure ground in assuming that the locality was The Theatre, as James Burbage, one of the players, owned the property and, no doubt, acted as manager.

### LORD STRANGE'S COMPANY

One of the most successful companies in Shakespeare's time was that known during the latter years as the Lord Chamberlain's Servants.

The early history of this company is traced back to a troupe of actors under the patronage of Lord Strange. The first years of its career are practically unknown, beyond a few records of performances in provincial towns, prior to 1589 no reference of any description is known of the company's appearance on the London stage, nor of a command performance at Court before 1591.

This company comes into greater prominence than others of no less distinction, chiefly on account of Shakespeare being one of the members. In all probability he joined this company after the death of his first patron, the Earl of Leicester, in 1588, when many of the actors of Leicester's company threw in their lot with the Strange contingent. With the latter he remained, participating in all the varying fortunes of so hazardous an existence

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and vicissitude until his retirement from the stage.

Unfortunately for future students, this company found no minute chronicler like Henslowe, recording all the performances and other details connected with the daily routine of the theatre, events which would have greatly interested future generations of those who make a study of the Elizabethan stage. Scattered up and down the country, a few municipal documents have been discovered bearing upon this company, a fact which must cheer the hopes of those engaged in this dreary work that other references will in due course be found. At present, only by piecemeal, can any continuous history of this important London company be constructed.

The first document of any importance is dated 1589, proving that Lord Strange's men acted at the Cross Keys, an inn-yard situated in Gracechurch Street. But playing there was contrary to an order forbidding acting in the City; they thereby incurred the censure of the Lord Mayor, who promptly seized two of the members and committed them to the Compter.

From this period, 1589, until the 19th of February, 1592, their history remains a blank. Luckily, owing to the *Diary*, they can with certainty be located as acting at the Rose Theatre from the 19th of February, 1592, until June the 22nd of the same year; at that date the theatre was closed on account of the plague, when the company sought the patronage of the provincial playgoer. During the last few months of the year they will be found playing in the West of England: Bath and Gloucester possess records of visits paid there.

On their return to London at the end of the year, they gave a few performances at Newington Butts, and then opened again at the Rose. The season was of short duration, lasting only from December 15th until the beginning of February, when the theatre

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was again closed on account of the plague, forcing them once more on the suffrage of the provincial towns, where they are found playing at Bath, Bristol and Shrewsbury.

The year 1592 was quite a busy one: besides their London engagements and two provincial tours they acted three times at Hampton Court during the month of December.

In Henslowe's invaluable *Diary* twenty-three plays are attributed to Lord Strange's company on their first recorded visit at the Rose Theatre. Evidence is in existence that this theatre may have been built and plays performed there as early as 1587. One play is of exceptional interest, namely, the first part of "Henry VI," which is included in the First Folio of Shakespeare's complete dramatic works, published for the first time in 1623.

"Pericles" is not included in this edition; perhaps omitted through carelessness, as many editions had been issued during the poet's lifetime, with his name on the title page.

Another play mentioned in the *Diary* as acted by this company is "Titus and Vespasian," which may have been the same play as "Titus Andronicus," included in the canon of the First Folio. How much of the former play can be attributed to Shakespeare is very doubtful; that he had some share in the play is generally accepted, although some critics argue his authorship entirely. Meres mentioned the play in 1598 as written by Shakespeare, in spite of which there are a vast number of students who will not admit that their beloved Shakespeare had any hand in this chamber of horrors. Some scenes contain passages of undoubted poetical beauty, but in my opinion not above the standard of many writers of the time; in fact, I would banish this play altogether from the Shakesperean canon.

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The first part of "Henry VI" was the most popular play of the period, and is mentioned by Nash as drawing tens of thousands of spectators. How would it have joyed brave Talbot, the terror of the French, to think that after he had lain two hundred years in his tomb he should triumph again on the stage and have his bones new embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators, at least at several times, who in the tragedian that represents his person imagine they behold him fresh bleeding. Pierce Penilesse, his supplication to the Devil, 1592.

The other plays acted need no comment ; probably they all belonged to the Henslowe repertory. The different companies acting at Henslowe's theatre were allowed the study of his plays, otherwise the explanation would be difficult how Strange's company were found acting Marlowe's "Jew of Malta," which was at this period, undoubtedly, the property of Philip Henslowe.

1593.

At the close of the year 1592 the Strange Company is once more in possession of the Rose. Opening on the 9th of December, they continued there until the 1st of February, when the theatre again was closed on account of the plague. During this visit, they acted the same plays as on the former occasion, with the exception of producing two new plays, named respectively "The Jealous Comedy" and "The Guise ; or, The Massacre of France." Nearly the whole of this year London was infected with the plague, in consequence of which all the theatres were closed, and the companies compelled to travel. The Strange Company played at Chelmsford, Bristol, Shrewsbury, Coventry, and Leicester, and most probably at Chester and York. The two latter places are not found in the records, but the

THE  
HISTORY  
of the tryall of  
Cheualry,

With the life and death of *Cau-  
liero Dicke Bowyer.*

As it hath bin lately acted by the right  
*Honourable the Earle of Darby* his  
seruants.



LONDON

Printed by Simon Stafford for Nathaniel Butter,  
and are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church-  
yard, neere S. Austens gate. 1603.

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celebrated actor, Allen, when writing home to his wife, mentions that the company acted at other towns, and gave Chester and York as further addresses. A document of some importance granting a licence to the Strange Company was issued in this year, although Shakespeare was a member, his name is not included in the list of actors mentioned. Probably he was not yet a shareholder, which fact may account for his name being omitted.

Edward Allen, as servant to the Lord High Admiral, figures at the head of this list. Whether the custom permitted an actor attaching himself to two different companies has not been satisfactorily explained, although in this instance the evidence is quite clear.

During the year Lord Strange became the Earl of Derby, and by that name the company is recorded in the municipal documents of Coventry and Leicester. Under this title his name appears in print, and that on the title page of "Titus and Andronicus," published in 1594, as acted by the Right Honourable the Earl of Derby, Earl of Pembroke, and Earl of Sussex, their servants. Once only the Earl of Derby's name figures alone, and that is on the title page of a play called "The Trial of Chivalry," by the Right Honourable the Earl of Derby, his Servants, 1605.

In connexion with the title page of "Titus and Andronicus," an interesting and curious instance of the romance of books has recently been established. Langbaine, in his dictionary of dramatic literature, published in 1691, states that the first edition of "Titus and Andronicus" was published in 1594. In modern times the only known editions were those of 1600 and 1611. After nearly three hundred years a copy of this first edition, in 1594, turned up in Sweden, and was promptly secured by an American collector for two thousand pounds.

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How little these facts are studied can be seen by referring to the catalogue of the Tercentenary Exhibition of Shakespeare's books, exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum, when the 1600 edition is catalogued as the first.

1594.

Few facts are known concerning the company during this year. The most important event affecting their welfare was the death of their patron, Ferdinand Stanley, Earl of Derby, which happened on April 16th, 1594. By an entry in the municipal records of Winchester, they did not immediately seek a new patron, acting under the patronage of the Countess of Derby the following month. Before June the third, they had become the servants of Henry Carey, Baron Hunsdon and Lord Chamberlain. An entry in the *Diary* of this year is the first intimation of this change: "In the name of God. Amen. Beginning at Newington. My Lord Admiral's men and My Lord Chamberlain's (Lord Hunsdon) men as followeth, 1594." These two companies occupied the stage at Newington Butts from June 3rd until the 13th inst., when the Admiral's men seceded and played at the Rose. The Chamberlain's men may have continued at Newington, but no record of their performances is given. Anyway, their stay after the separation must have been a short one, as they visited Marlborough during the summer. The approach of autumn saw them again in London, Lord Hunsdon petitioning the Lord Mayor asking permission for his company to act at the Cross Keys, in Gracechurch Street. No answer is known in connexion with this petition, but the demand quite likely was granted; if so, Shakespeare's earliest plays may have been performed in



*AN*  
EXCELLENT  
conceited Tragedie  
OF  
Romeo and Iuliet.

As it hath been often (with great applause)  
plaid publicquely, by the right Ho-  
nourable the L. of *Hansdon*  
his Seruants.



LONDON,  
Printed by Iohn Danter.

1597

## LONDON THEATRICAL COMPANIES

this very inn-yard, an act of sacrilege which seems to us almost inconceivable.

1595.

The bare enumeration of three performances at Court in the last days of December is all that is known of this company's engagements during the year 1595. What a contrast to these days, when every stage event, however trivial, is fully chronicled by our daily and weekly press. Let us survey now the Elizabethan period: you will find no word of praise recorded to the greatest masterpieces of all time, although hundreds of books and pamphlets referring to current events were constantly being published at this time. The company was now under the patronage of Lord Hunsdon, who held the office of Lord Chamberlain, the actors being henceforth known until his death as the Lord Chamberlain's servants. A document is still extant which proves that this company received a reward for playing at Greenwich on St. Stephen's Day and Innocents' Day. This entry is of great interest, as among those receiving payment is the name of Will Shakespeare. This is the first authentic record of Shakespeare being a member of this company.

Another document, dated December, 1596, refers to payments made in 1595, in which a reward was given to this company for acting five plays; three were given respectively on St. Stephen's Day, St. John's Day, and Innocents' Day. Shakespeare's name is not mentioned in this document, which states that the actors were the servants of the late Lord Chamberlain, and are now the servants of George Carey, second Baron Hunsdon. This second Baron did not immediately succeed his father as Lord Chamberlain, but held that office on the death of Lord Cobham, who had been elected to this high official position on the death of the first

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Lord Hunsdon. Lord Cobham died in 1596, and then the second Lord Hunsdon became Lord Chamberlain.

1596.

The Lord Chamberlain's men acted twice at Court, namely, on Twelfth Night and again at Candlemas Day, at night ; the reward was paid to John Hemings and George Bryan as representing the servants of the late Lord Chamberlain. Baron Hunsdon having died on July 22nd of this year. The Company again acted at Court at the end of the year, giving performances during the Christmas holidays. John Hemings and Thomas Pope received £60 as reward for the company's services. Both Shakespeare's and Burbage's names are omitted in these documents. In former lists their names are mentioned ; why their names were omitted is a rather perplexing problem. At this period they played a prominent part in the management of the company's affairs, which makes the matter all the more mysterious. During the summer the company travelled in the provinces, but only once at Faversham can their destination be placed ; at this town they are entered in the municipal records as the players of Lord Hunsdon. The London season of this company is quite unknown, with the exception of the Court performances. A vague reference to a performance of " Hamlet " at the theatre in Shoreditch connects them with this place of entertainment ; the old " Hamlet " play which is lost was included in the repertoire of the Lord Chamberlain's Servants. The paragraph alluding to the old " Hamlet " play occurs in a pamphlet written by Thomas Lodge, entitled, " Wits miserie and the World's madness discovering the Devils incarnate of this Age." One of the Devils is Hate-Vertue, or sorrow for another man's good success, who says that he is a foul lubber and looks as pale

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as the vizard of the ghost which cried so miserably at the Theatre like an oyster-wife " ' Hamlet ' revenge." This play is generally assigned to Thomas Kyd, the dramatist, and it is almost certain that from this tragedy Shakespeare founded his own play of " Hamlet."

1597.

Very little can be gleaned of the company's whereabouts during this year. They appeared at Court during the Christmas holidays, and received their usual reward. As the theatres in London were closed by order of the Privy Council from August to October, we find them touring the provinces: records of their visits are found at Bath, Bristol, Rye, Dover, and Marlborough. On the title page of the first quarto of " Romeo and Juliet, 1597," it states that the play was acted with great applause by Lord Hunsdon's men; this was the second Lord Hunsdon, who had not yet become Lord Chamberlain. Marston refers to a performance of " Romeo and Juliet " given at the Curtain in a book of Satires, dated 1598. This is the only reference to the company appearing in London during this year.

1598.

There only remain very scanty materials to help us in tracing the engagements of the company during this year. They played as usual before the Court during the Christmas holidays. Mr. J. T. Murray, in his admirable and exhaustive study of this company, is unable, owing to want of material, to give a list of their provincial engagements after the year 1597 until their visit to London and Scotland in 1601. As Mr. Murray's work on the history of the London dramatic companies is the only one that gives a systematic account of the company's

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touring programme, there is no higher authority or court of appeal. No doubt the company toured the provinces during these blank years, but all records are lost.

According to Halliwell-Phillipps, a very interesting performance was witnessed at the Curtain Theatre, namely, Ben Jonson's comedy of "Everyman in his Humour," in which Shakespeare himself acted the part of old Knowle. Ben Jonson, according to Aubrey, acted in his own play, but his name is omitted in the list of actors prefixed to the first quarto edition of the play. Aubrey, in his *Lives*, has the following paragraph :

"Jonson acted and wrote, but both ill, at the Green Curtaine, a kind of nursery or obscure playhouse somewhere in the suburbs, I think towards Shoreditch or Clerkenwell." It is surprising that everyone writing about the stage in the seventeenth century should be so densely ignorant concerning the history of one of the chief playhouses during the Shakespérean era.

1599.

This year is an important one in the theatrical history of Shakespeare's company as during this time the dispute of granting a further licence to the lessees of the Theatre occurred, which ended in the demolition of the Theatre and the erection of the Globe Theatre in Shoreditch.

"Every man out of his Humour" was first acted at the Globe in 1599. There is no record of any other company acting here, so it may well be styled Shakespeare's Theatre. Astonishing as it may well seem to us, the truth is that no reference can be found in contemporary literature of the opening of the Globe Theatre. Surely an event of such importance must have attracted thousands of the pleasure loving populace, yet not a single member

A  
Most pleasaunt and  
excellent conceited Co-  
medie, of Syr *Iohn Falstaffe*, and the  
merrie Wiues of *Windſor*.

Entermixed with ſundrie  
variable and pleaſing humors, of Syr *Hugh*  
the Welch Knight, Iuſtice *Shallow*, and his  
wiſe Couſin *M. Slender*.

With the ſwaggering vaine of Auncient  
*Piſtoll*, and Corporall *Nym*.

By *William Shakeſpeare*.

As it hath bene diuers times Acted by the right Honorable  
my Lord Chamberlaines ſeruants. Both before her  
Maieſtie, and elſe-where.



L O N D O N

Printed by T. C. for Arthur Iohnſon, and are to be ſold at  
his ſhop in Powles Church-yard, at the ſigne of the  
Flower de Leuſe and the Crowne.

1 6 0 2.

By kind permission of Meſſrs. Griggs.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

of that vast assembly jotted down a memorandum on that auspicious occasion. How we should hail with delight a contemporary criticism of the first night of "Hamlet" and a detailed account of the actor-author's rendering of the Ghost, a part which tradition says he made his own, but these vain thoughts are the flimsy creations of an idle brain, and must be discarded for the bare facts such as we are acquainted with.

1600-1603.

Beyond performances at Courts in January, February and during Christmas, the whereabouts of this company are quite unknown. However, we may assume that they remained in London, and acted at their new theatre without intermission until the end of Elizabeth's reign.

This period was one of great activity in Shakespeare's life, and many of his plays found their way to the printing press. "The Merchant of Venice," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and "Much Ado about Nothing" were all published for the first time in the year 1600. The date of publication may have been years after the play was first produced at the theatre; in fact, "The Merchant of Venice" is mentioned by Meres in a literary work published in 1598, and even then the play may have been written a year or two earlier.

A fair conclusion is that all these plays were revived at this period, and then success led ultimately to their publication.

During the Essex Rebellion a play on the subject of "Richard II" was produced at the Globe. Whether this was Shakespeare's play or another quite distinct drama is a point under discussion. Shakespeare's, or not Shakespeare's, the company was censured and severely reprimanded for acting this play at such a critical time; the Queen was

T H E  
Tragicall Historie of  
H A M L E T

*Prince of Denmarke*

By William Shakeſpeare.

As it hath beene diuerſe times acted by his Highneſſe ſer-  
uants in the Cittie of London : as alſo in the two V-  
niuerſities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elſe-where



At London printed for N.L. and Iohn Trundell.  
1603.

By kind permission of Messrs. Griggs.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

highly incensed, and their non-appearance at Court during the year was on account of their short-sighted policy. After a few months the affair blew over, and the company was once again reinstated in the Queen's favour. A document states they received twenty pounds reward for acting on St. Stephen's Day. From the year 1600 until the death of the Queen in 1603, very little information is available in helping us in reconstructing the history and fortunes of this company, and until the accession of James the First nothing of interest can be gleaned.

The King, by a deed dated May 17th, 1603, licensed the company to act at their usual place, the Globe, and also allowed them to give performances at any town halls or moot halls or other convenient places within the liberties and freedom of any other city, university, town, or borough whatsoever, 'within our said realms and dominions.' This deed mentions the name of Shakespeare and Burbage among others. When the first quarto of "Hamlet" was published in 1603 the title page bore the following imprint :

" The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. As it hath beene diverse times acted by his Highnesse servants in the Cittie of London, as also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford and elsewhere.

" At London printed for N L and John Trundell.  
1603."

The company assumed the title of the King's Servants almost immediately on his accession. There is no record of their playing in London during the year 1603, which may be accounted for by a severe visitation of the plague, which caused all theatres and places of amusement to be closed. While the plague lasted, the Court was transferred

A  
YORKSHIRE  
Tragedy.

*Not so New as Lamentable  
and true.*

*Acted by his Maiesties Players at  
the Globe.*

*Written by W. Shakspeare.*



AT LONDON  
Printed by R. B. for Thomas Panier and are to bee sold at his  
shop on Cornhill, neere to the exchange.  
1608.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

to Wilton, the seat of the Earl of Pembroke, and there Shakespeare and his company acted on the 29th December, 1603. The plague continued during the next three months; meanwhile the company acted before the King at Hampton Court on several occasions. The provincial towns were again organized, for they are found playing at Shrewsbury, Bath, Coventry, and Oxford; at the last place "Hamlet" was one of the plays given.

1604-1609.

The Coronation of James was postponed on account of the plague, and it was not until the second year of his reign that this event was celebrated. Included in the procession, the actors of the King's company took their place, clothed in crimson.

Little is known of the company's engagements beyond a brief notice of having played in a piece called "The Gowrie Conspiracy," which brought the players into disfavour. Unfortunately, very scanty records are in existence giving details of the repertoire of the Globe. The usual Court performances took place each year, and when the proprietors closed the theatre the company visited the provinces. In 1613 the Globe was burnt to the ground; before this event Shakespeare had ceased to be a member. The theatre was rebuilt in 1614; the actors continued under the patronage of the King until his death in 1625. After that event, Charles I, who succeeded his father, extended his patronage to the company, and they remained the servants until all the theatres were closed by Act of Parliament, 1642, on account of the outbreak of the Civil War. The Shakesperean plays, written expressly for the Globe Theatre, included "Hamlet," "Othello," "Macbeth," "King Lear," and many of his comedies and histories.

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### THE ADMIRAL'S COMPANY

The Lord Admiral's Company played an important part in the theatrical annals of the country, disputing inch by inch the formidable rivalry of the Lord Chamberlain's men. The celebrated Edward Alleyn, by far the most brilliant actor of the early days of theatrical enterprise in Elizabethan times, was the head of the company. His father-in-law, Philip Henslowe, financed the Admiral's men, and gradually installed himself as the managing director. The Rose Theatre, owned by Henslowe, was chiefly occupied by them when in London, and it is solely owing to the famous Diary kept by him that so many details are known in connexion with this company.

The Admiral's Servants acted at Court almost every year during Elizabeth's reign; they likewise toured the provinces, acting in all the most important towns, travelling as far north as York and reaching Dover in their southern circuit. This company is first noticed as early as 1574, when they acted at Court in a play called "The History of Phedrastus and Phigon"; at this period they were under the patronage of Lord Charles Howard, and were known as the Lord Chamberlain's men, as Lord Howard was acting as Lord Chamberlain during the illness of the Earl of Sussex. After 1577 they again adopted the title of Lord Howard's Servants. In 1588 Lord Howard was appointed Lord High Admiral, when the actors became the servants of the Lord High Admiral, retaining this position until the death of the Queen. Sometimes we find these players designated as the Earl of Nottingham's servants, this nobleman receiving the Earldom in 1596; he was closely related by marriage to Lord Hunsdon, having married that nobleman's daughter.

In the early years of this company's existence a difficulty is experienced in tracing with any degree

The first part  
Of the true and hono-  
rable historie, of the life of Sir  
*John Old-castle, the good*  
Lord Cobham.

*purchased 1827*

*As it hath been lately acted by the right  
honorable the Earle of Nottingham  
Lord high Admirall of England his  
servants.*



L O N D O N

Printed by V.S. for Thomas Pauier, and are to be solde at  
his shop at the signe of the Catte and Parrots  
neere the Exchange.

1600.

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of certainty their actual playing place. They may have occupied the stages of the Theatre and the Curtain for short periods, but most possible of all, their chief stage was one of the inn-yards of which so little is known, although they played so important a part in early theatrical days. A document exists showing that in 1587 they set up bills in the City every day in the week, "so that when the bells toll for the Lecturer the trumpets sound to the stages to the joy of the wicked faction of Rome." The first mention of the Lord Admiral's men in the *Diary* occurs in Folio 9, under the following entry :

"In the name of God Amen, beginning the 14th of May, 1594, by the Lord Admiral's men."

Then follows the entry of three performances, the last taking place on the 16th of May. Another entry is as follows :

"In the name of God Amen, beginning at Newington, my Lord Admiral's men and my Lord Chamberlain's men, as followeth 1594."

The two companies played alternately from the 3rd of June until the 13th, when a line is drawn in the *Diary*, which indicates that the two-fold engagement was at an end.

The Admiral's men returned to the Rose and played there from the 13th of June, 1594, and continued until the 25th of June, 1595, opening again on the 25th of August, continuing until the following February, 1596, when a break occurs until the 12th of April of the same year. On and off they acted at this theatre until the year 1600, when Henslowe removed his company to his new theatre in Golden Lane, called the Fortune. At this theatre they acted under various patrons until the place was burnt down in 1621. Alleyn, noting the event in his diary : "Midnight this night, at 12 o'clock,

# A most pleasant and merie nevv Comedie,

Intituled,

*A Knacke to knowe a Knaue.*

Newlie set foorth, as it hath sundrie  
rymes bene played by ED. ALLEN  
and his Companie,

*With KEMPS applauded Merrimentes*  
of the men of Gotcham, in receiuing  
the King into Gotcham,



Imprinted at London by Richard Iones, dwelling  
at the signe of the Rose and Crowne, nere  
Holborne bridge. 1594.

Of this Company nothing is known. It may refer to  
the Lord Admiral's Company, in which Allen was  
the chief actor.

## LONDON THEATRICAL COMPANIES

the Fortune was burnt." The catastrophe is more detailed in a letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton.

The theatre was rebuilt in 1623, when the same company was installed in their new playhouse. Later these comedians are found playing at the theatre in Salisbury Court. According to the title page of *Holland's Leaguer*, which it states as having been acted by Prince Charles' men (a new patron of the Admiral's) at Salisbury Court Theatre, a list of actors and their parts are prefixed to this play. The reason of their abandoning their own theatre, the Fortune, is not known. They also acted at the Red Bull Theatre, returning to the Fortune in 1640, where they remained until the theatre was closed by Act of Parliament. For clearness' sake, the reader should remember that this company was known during the reign of Elizabeth as the Lord Admiral's, but in James' and Charles' reigns it was under different patrons :

Until 1597, Admiral's men, patron Baron Howard.

Until 1603, Nottingham's men, more often Admiral's men.

From 1603-1612, Prince's men, patron Prince Henry, eldest son of James I, died in 1612.

Then the company came under the patronage of Frederick Elector Palatine, who married Elizabeth, daughter of James I, from whom the Hanoverian monarchy is descended. The company remained under the patronage of the Elector, under the name of the Palsgrave's men, until the birth of Prince Charles, eldest son of Charles I, when they became Prince Charles' men until the closing of the theatres in 1642.

The list of plays in which the Admiral's men acted would total several hundreds. Anyone who is desirous of studying the list will find an excellent

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account of all the plays mentioned in Mr. W. Greg's edition of *Henslowe's Diary*. As I have stated elsewhere, and repeat again with pleasure, no writer of the theatrical history of the Elizabethan period is better equipped with all the necessary scholarship than the industrious and marvellously learned editor of the *Diary*.

### EARL OF PEMBROKE'S COMPANY

A company of actors, under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke, was well known in London and the provinces during the last decade of Elizabeth's reign. Once more we have recourse to the *Diary* in determining the place where they played, but the document is silent concerning their repertoire.

In *Henslowe's Diary* the following interesting notice is given of these players :

“ A Just account of all such money as I have received of my Lord Admiral's and my Lord of Pembroke's men as followeth, beginning the 21st of October, 1597.”

The company were engaged at intervals until the 4th of March of the next year, giving in all twenty performances. These performances took place at the Rose. A few plays they acted in can be gathered from the printed title pages of plays which found their way to the press ; one of these is particularly interesting: “ A pleasant conceited history called the Taming of a Shrew, dated 1594.” The imprint states that it was acted by the Right Honourable the Earl of Pembroke his servants. This play is the one on which Shakespeare founded his own “ The Taming of *the* Shrew.” The incidents are the same in both plays, the names only being changed. In Shakespeare's play the removal of Sly from the palace to the outside of the Alehouse where he was found, is omitted, but perhaps this part of the

A  
Pleasant Conceited

Historie, called The taming  
of a Shrew.

As it was sundry times acted by the  
*Right honorable the Earle of*  
Pembrook his seruants.



Printed at London by Peter Short and  
*are to be sold by Cutbert Burbie, at his*  
shop at the Royall Exchange.

1594.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

induction may have been lost or mislaid when sent to the press.

The name of the Earl of Pembroke occurs on the title page of "Edward II," by Christopher Marlowe, and also on the title page of "Titus Andronicus," in conjunction with those of the Earl of Derby and the Earl of Sussex. This is the same play as appeared in the First Folio.

The most interesting play that this company produced is the "True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York and the Death of Good King Henry the Sixth," by the Right Honourable the Earl of Pembroke his servants. A revision of this play is found in the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's works, but his share in this play and the two other parts of Henry VI forms one of the most knotty problems in the whole Shakesperean criticism. Several books have been written in support of different theories. A line in this play is parodied by Greene in his "Groatsworth of Wit," in which pamphlet occurs the first contemporary allusion to Shakespeare.

The original play of "Hamlet" may also claim ownership to this company, but in our present state of knowledge there is not sufficient evidence in identifying the play as theirs. During the ten years existence of these players, they acted only twice at Court, when the Earl of Pembroke's men were paid a reward of £6 13s. 4d., on March 11th, 1593, for plays performed on St. John's Day and Twelfth Day, both at night. Traces of this company can be found at Coventry, Bath, Ipswich, Bristol, Marlborough, Leicester, and several other towns. Even the above brief account shows that the company played an important part in the theatrical annals of the time.

### EARL OF WORCESTER'S COMPANY

William Somerset, Earl of Worcester, was patron

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of an important company of actors styling themselves the Earl of Worcester's Servants. This company was formed at a very early date, namely, in 1555. During this period they travelled mostly in the provinces, visiting all the chief towns in England. At one time, Edward Alleyn, the famous actor, was a member of this troupe ; his name is included in a list of actors in 1583, being then in his 16th year, and remained with this company until 1589, when he transferred his services to the Lord Admiral's men. I cannot find any notice of their acting in London whilst under the patronage of William Somerset, but when his son, Edward Somerest, succeeded to the Earldom, on the death of his father in 1589, this company henceforth is found playing in the Metropolis. Visits to the Continent were periodically taken, notices being extant of their appearance in the Netherlands and other foreign countries.

The *Diary* records that they acted at the Rose Theatre in 1602 and 1603. According to a document they played at the " Boar's Head," the famous inn at Eastcheap. On the accession of James I, the Earl of Worcester's servants entered into the service of Queen Anne, consort of James I. Although there are no existing documents recording the theatres in which they acted when in London during Elizabeth's reign beyond the one reference to the Rose, no doubt they often acted in one or other of the London theatres, and more often at the London inns, where stages were usually set up. Two records exist of this company acting at Court, in which payment was made to Kemp, the celebrated clown, who, before joining the Worcester men, was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company. When the Worcester men became the servants of the Queen they acted chiefly at the Curtain.

In later years they leased the Red Bull Theatre,

A  
PLEASANT  
conceited Comedie,  
Wherein is shewed  
how a man may chuse a good  
Wife from a bad.

*As it hath bene sundry times Acted by the Earle of  
Worcesters Seruants.*



LONDON  
Printed for Mathew Lawe, and are to be solde at his  
shop in Paules Church-yard, neare vnto S. Au-  
gustines gate, at the signe of the Foxe.  
1602.

## LONDON THEATRICAL COMPANIES

and continued acting there for a few years, until the company broke up ; this would be about the year 1623, as from this date nothing further is heard of them.

A few plays which this company possessed were all printed in the early years of the seventeenth century :

“ The Travels of Three English Brothers. By Her Majesty’s Servants, 1607. by Thomas Heywood. By Her Majesty’s Servants, at the Red Bull, near Clerkenwell, 1608.

“ The Golden Age.” At the Red Bull, by the Queen’s Majesty’s Servants, 1611.

“ A Woman Killed with Kindness,” by Thomas Heywood. By the Queen’s Majesty’s Servants.

In a pleasant conceited comedy is shown how a  
“ Man may choose a Good Wife from a Bad.” By the Earl of Worcester’s Servants.

The last play is the only one in which the name of the Earl of Worcester appears.

The title of Her Majesty’s Servants refers to Queen Anne, wife of James the First, and must not be confused with the company of Queen Elizabeth, bearing a similar appellation.

## THE EARL OF SUSSEX’ COMPANY

This company had for their patrons successive Earls of Sussex. The first Earl was Thomas Radclyffe, who held the appointment of Lord Chamberlain, consequently we find his players frequently acting at Court. Thomas Radclyffe was succeeded by his son Henry, and on his death, in 1593, Robert Radclyffe became Earl of Sussex. All research in locating



A  
PLEASANT  
CONCEYTED CO-  
medie of George a Greene, the Pinner  
of Wakefield.

*As it was sundry times acted by the seruants of the right  
Honourab'le the Earle of Suffex.*



Imprinted at London by Simon Stafford,  
for Cuthbert Burby: And are to be sold at his shop  
nere the Royall Exchange. 1599.

## LONDON THEATRICAL COMPANIES

this company in London in its early days has hitherto been fruitless.

The first record connecting this company with a London theatre then, under the patronage of Robert Radclyffe, is found in *Henslowe's Diary*, 1594 : " In the name of God Amen, beginning the 27th of December, 1593, the Earl of Sussex his men."

They acted without intermission until the 23rd of January, between the last date and the sixth of February ; but only five performances are placed to their credit. The next entry in the *Diary* occurs at Easter : " In the name of God Amen, beginning at Easter, 1593." The Queen's men and my Lord of Sussex together."

The two companies gave in all eight performances, acting on alternate days. Three out of the eight performances can be traced to the Sussex men, as on these occasions they acted in plays which are recorded in their first appearance at the Rose, namely, " The Jew of Malta " and the " Fair Maid of Italy."

It must be borne in mind that the Easter holidays following Christmas were both notified as occurring in the same year. The reason being that in Elizabeth's time, and long after, the ordinary year commenced on the 25th of March. Although the legal year commenced on the first of January. Even the names of the months in use to-day, such as September, October, November, December, are a reminiscence of this style of reckoning, the above months bearing in Latin their English equivalents of seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth.

One item of great interest attaches to the performance of the Sussex men at the Rose Theatre, namely, the first performance of " Titus Andronicus," presented by this company. The following is the exact entry :

# THE VVEAKEST goeth to the Wall.

*As it hath bene sundry times plaide by the right ho-  
nourable Earle of Oxenford, Lord great  
Chamberlaine of England  
his seruants.*



L O N D O N

Printed by Thomas Creede, for Richard  
Oliue, dwelling in Long Lane.

1600.

## LONDON THEATRICAL COMPANIES

ne. R7 at titus & ondronicus the 23 of Januarye  
1593 X IIS.

The letters " n e " have been clearly identified as meaning " new." The question in debate is whether the play is the Shakesperean one or an older production.

After leaving the Rose in April, 1594, this company is not heard of again in London ; their name appears in no document until 1602, when they acted at Coventry, they are last mentioned in 1615. During the years 1602-15 the company visited the provinces. It is especially noticeable regarding these London Companies that the documentary evidence is of the very slightest, and when not recorded in *Henslowe's Diary* they cease having any separate existence. My own firm belief is that original research would reveal many valuable details connected with the dramatic history of London, and would well repay a young student in devoting his time to unravelling the mystery of these companies of actors who, at present, seem to flit here and there for a moment, and then vanish into thin air.

### EARL OF OXFORD'S COMPANY

There was a company of actors under the patronage of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, as early as 1562, but no evidence of where they acted is in existence. Again, in 1580, the same Earl was patron of a company of boy actors, who performed chiefly in the provinces or at Court. They are described as the Earl of Oxenford, his boys. Antony Munday, the celebrated dramatist, was at one time a boy actor in this company. The Oxford men are mentioned as those who generally set up their play-bills in the City every day in the week ; this notice refers to the year 1585.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

The next piece of evidence occurs in the "Remembrancia," in 1602, when they were permitted to play at the "Boar's Head," in Eastcheap; this is the last record of their appearance.

One of their plays, called "The Weakest goeth to the Wall," has survived; it was acted by Lord Oxenford's boys, and published in 1600. Meres, in his important review of the poets and dramatists of Elizabethan times, mentions the Earl of Oxford as good in comedy.

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Several other companies occasionally acted in London, but little is known of their history. In a document issued by the Privy Council, 1578, it stated that the Lord Mayor should suffer the children of Her Majesty's Chapel, the servants of the Lord Chamberlain, Thomas Radclyffe, Earl of Sussex, of the Earl of Warwick, of the Earl of Leicester, of the Earl of Essex, and the children of St. Paul's, and no companies else to exercise plays within the City, whom their Lordships have already allowed thereunto by reason that the companies aforesaid are appointed to play this Christmas before the Queen.

The Earl of Hertford was patron of a company, but only one reference to their playing in London has been chronicled, when they acted at Court in 1592.

The Earl of Hereford's men were paid £10 on February, 1592, for a play presented before the Queen on Twelfth Night last. Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, also owned a company of players in 1584. There is a record of this company acting in London. In 1589 the Earl was charged with high treason and all his honours were forfeited.

### CHILDRENS' COMPANIES

During the Shakesperean era the custom of

---

PARASITASTER,  
OR  
THE FAWNE,

---

AS  
IT HATH BENE DIVERS  
times presented at the blacke Fri-  
*ars, by the Children of the Queenes*  
*Maiesties Reuels.*

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Written  
BY JOHN MARSTON.

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AT LONDON  
Printed by T. P. for W. C.  
1606.



# The dumbe Knight.

*A pleasant Comedy, acted sundry times  
by the children of his Maie-  
sties Reuels.*

Written by *Iarvis Markham.*

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LONDON,  
Printed by *Nicholas Okes*, for *John Bache*, and are to be sold  
at his shop in Popes-head Palace, neere to  
the Royall Exchange. 1608.

## LONDON THEATRICAL COMPANIES

maintaining a company of children actors was continued. The custom was inaugurated by Henry the Eighth. Several of these juvenile companies existed, the chief of which were attached to the Court. The best known amongst them were the Children of the Chapel Royal, the Windsor Chapel Choir, and the celebrated Children of St. Paul's Choir, the Children of Westminster School, and several others.

The inner history of these companies is only known in a very fragmentary state. A somewhat detailed account is given of the boys of the Chapel Royal, and that is owing to the indefatigable labours of Professor and Mrs. Wallace. Even in this study many details are lacking which further research may amend.

The famous passage of "Hamlet," where Shakespeare alludes to these children players, is responsible for many details in connexion with these small actors. For a time they played an important part in the theatrical annals of the period, otherwise Shakespeare's outburst against them would have little point.

This passage in "Hamlet" proves they were a thorn in the sides of the adult players, and for a brief period carried all before them. Many well-known dramatists wrote plays especially for these young actors. No record exists of their appearance at a public theatre. The boys acted chiefly at the private house known as the Blackfriars Theatre. The company of the Chapel Royal, and that of the St. Paul's Choir, can only be regarded as of a good all-round amateur ability comparable with societies of our own times.

## CHAPTER IV

### SHAKESPEARE AS AN ACTOR

**N**EARLY a quarter of a century of Shakespeare's life was passed in the theatrical world. Under these circumstances we should naturally expect to find scattered through his works many allusions in connexion with the stage. On this point we shall not be disappointed; with the exception of "Titus Andronicus," which many critics discredit the Shakesperean authorship, every play contains references to the contemporary stage.

By carefully reading through all the plays of Shakespeare, and assisted materially by Bartlett's concordance, I have extracted all such allusions and have appended notes, which I hope will be found useful and instructive.

Shakespeare played many parts in connexion with the theatre, one of the most important being that of an actor; chiefly in that capacity he acquired a great advantage over his fellow dramatists. By adopting this career, he gained a thorough knowledge of stage-craft in all its minute ramifications, which in a great measure assisted him most materially in his vocation as a practical playwright: and his rapid and marvellous progress as a dramatist must in some degree be due to his having studied the requirements of the stage in all its branches.

✧ Molière, the great French dramatist, who wrote in the middle of the seventeenth century, is another instance of a successful dramatist, being also an actor.

When we enquire how far Shakespeare succeeded in his profession, or with what parts his name is associated, we are again baffled, and that mystery

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which enshrouds the entire life of this mighty genius again defies us. The First Folio of Shakespeare's works was published in the year 1623. In one of the preliminary pages is a list of actors' names who took part in the several plays ; at the head of this list is the name of Shakespeare, but this by no means qualifies him as ranking first in the order of merit. Richard Burbage, whose name stands second, was the greatest actor of his time, and in this capacity is highly praised by his contemporaries, whereas the name of Shakespeare is rarely mentioned as an actor. There is a tradition that he acted the part of Adam in "As You Like It," which the following passage, written by Oldys about the year 1650, corroborates. This author wrote many notes on the life of Shakespeare, which were used by Reed, an editor of Shakespeare's works :

"One of Shakespeare's younger brothers, who lived to a good old age, even some years as I compute, after the Restoration of Charles the Second, would in his younger days come to London to visit his brother Will, as he called him, and be a spectator of him as an actor in some of his own plays. This custom, as his brother's fame enlarged, and his dramatic entertainments grew the greatest support of our principal, if not of all our theatres, he continued, it seems, so long after his brother's death, as even to the latter end of his own life. But when questioned, it seems he was so stricken in years and infirmities, which might make him the easier pass for a man of weak intellect, that he could but give them very little light into their enquiries ; and all that he recollected of his brother Will in that station was the faint, general and almost lost ideas he had of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies, wherein, having to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk that he was

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forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company, who were eating, and one of them giving a song."

Another well known tradition is that Shakespeare played the part of the Ghost in his own play *Hamlet*.

\* Rowe, the first real editor of Shakespeare, mentions this almost as a fact ; he further adds that this part was the top of his performance, although he gives  
\* no authority for either statements. John Davies, poet and epigrammatist, in a few lines, circa 1611, addressed "To our English Terence Mr. Will Shakespeare," mentions that he enacted Kingly  
\* parts, but gives no further particulars. The same writer had previously alluded to Shakespeare as a player in a work entitled, "Microcosmus," dated 1603. Sir Richard Baker, in his chronicle history of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, published in 1643, mentions Shakespeare in the double capacity of poet and player. As the reference is rather interesting, I append it in full :

"Men of Note in her times (Elizabeth) (Statesmen, Writers and Divines). After such men it might be thought ridiculous to speak of stage-players, but seeing excellence in the meanest things desires remembering, as Roscius, the Comedian, is recorded in History with such commendation, it may be allowed us to do the same, with some of our Nation. Richard Burbage and Edward Allen, two such actors as no age must ever look to see the like, and to make their comedies complete, Richard Tarleton, who for the Part called the Clown's Part never had his match, never will have. For writers of Plays, and such as had been players themselves, William Shakespeare and Benjamin Jonson have specially left their names recommended to posterity."

In the last passage I presume the writer praises

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these two authors in their capacity as men of letters rather than players. This author again refers to Shakespeare but only as a poet.

A curious reference to Shakespeare as an actor will be found in a tract entitled, "Ratseis' Ghost," published anonymously circa 1605. Only one copy of this pamphlet is extant, which was formerly in the Library of the Earl Spencer, known as the Althorp Library. Ratseis was a highwayman who, after paying certain actors to play before him, overtook and robbed them, and as an act of consolation for their loss, gave the chief actor the following piece of advice :

"Get thee to London, for if one man were dead, they will have much need as such a one as thou art. There would be none in my opinion fitter than thyself to play his parts ; my conceipt of such of thee that I durst venture of all my money in my purse on thy head to play 'Hamlet' with him for a wager. There thou shalt learn to be frugal, for Players were never so thrifty as they are now about London, and to feed upon all men, to let none feed upon thee, to make thy hand a stranger to thy pocket, thy heart slow to perform thy tongue's promise, and when thou feelest thy purse well lined, buy thee some place or Lordship in the Country that, growing weary of playing, thy money may bring thee to dignity and reputation. Sir, I thank you, quoth the player for thy counsell, I promise you I will make use of it, for I have heard indeed of some that have gone to London very meanly and have come in time to be exceedingly wealthy."

The only two well known actors in these times who had acquired fortunes and invested their money in landed estates in the country were Edward Alleyn and William Shakespeare. As the former was born in London, his birth being recorded in

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the parish register of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, he could not have been the poor player who hailed from the country, so we can take it as reasonably proved the writer is referring to Shakespeare, who was born in Stratford-on-Avon. There is abundant proof that Shakespeare acted in at least two of Ben Jonson's plays, namely, "Every man in his Humour" and "Sejanus." The former was produced in 1598, the printed edition first appearing in 1600; prefixed to the play is a list of Actors, in which the name of Shakespeare stands first. "Sejanus" was acted in 1603, the play being printed two years later, in 1605. A list of actors' names, prefixed to this edition, is arranged in two columns; Burbage's name heads the first column, Shakespeare's the second. The individual parts assumed by the actors are not given.

James Wright, in a rare little tract entitled, "Historica Histrionica," 1699, encourages the view that Shakespeare, at his best, was but a mediocre actor in a "Dialogue of Plays and Players."

Lovewit (one of the characters in the Dialogue):

"Pray, Sir, what Master Parts can you remember the old Blackfriars men to Act, in Jonson, Shakespeare and Fletcher's plays?"

Truman (another character in the Dialogue):

"What I can at present recollect I'll tell you. Shakespeare, who, as I have heard, was a much better poet than player. Burbage, Hemmings and others of the old sort were dead before I knew the town."

An early reference to Shakespeare as an actor is to be found in a volume of poetry, entitled, "Willobie His Avisas, or The true Picture of a modest maid and of a chaste and constant wife."

Imprinted at London by  
John Windet.

1594.

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The poem in which the reference occurs is in the form of a dialogue between H. W. and W. S. The first initials probably stand for Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare dedicated his two poems of "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece"; the W. S. plainly indicates William Shakespeare. The 44th canto opens with a preface, in which H. W. is infected with a passion for Avisia: not being able to endure the secret of his fervent desire, he confides his wish to W. S., who had likewise "tried the curtesie of the like passion." Thus this miserable comforter comforting his friend with an impossibility, either that he would now secretly laugh at his friend's folly that had given occasion not long before unto others to laugh at his own, or because he would see whether another could play his part better than himself, and, in viewing afar off the course of this loving comedy, he determined to see whether it would sort to a happier end for this new actor than it did for the old player. But at length this Comedy had like to have grown a Tragedy by the weak and feeble estate that H. W. was brought unto.

In some verses attached to this poem is one

In praise of Willobie his Avisia  
Hexametron to the Author.

In the second verse—there are six—is found recorded one of the earliest allusions to Shakespeare:

"Though Collatine have deerly bought  
To high renowne a lasting life,  
And found that most in vaine have sought  
To have a Faire and Constant wife,  
Yet Tarquine pluckt his glistening grape  
And Shake-speare, paints poore Lucrece rape."

The above lines certainly strengthen the theory that the initials W. S. stand for a real actor. The

# GREENES, GROATS-VVORTH of witte, bought with a million of Repentance.

**Describing the follie of youth, the falshood of make-  
thiste flatterers, the miserie of the negligent,  
and mischiefes of deceiuing  
Courtezans.**

Written before his death and published at his  
dyeing request.

*Fallicem fuisse infaustum.*



L O N D O N  
Imprinted for William Wright.  
1 5 9 2.

## Greenes

Sweet boy, might I aduise thee, be aduise, and get not many enemies by bitter wordes : inueigh against vaine men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so well : thou hast a libertie to repproue all, and name none ; for one being spoken to, all are offended ; none being blamed no man is iniured. Stop shallow water still running, it will rage, or tread on a woyme and it will turne : then blame not Schollers vexed with sharpe lines, if they repproue thy too much liberty of repprofe.

And thou no lesse deseruing than the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferiour ; driuen (as my selfe) to extreme shifts, a litle haue I to say to thee : and were it not an idolatrous oth, I would sweare by sweet S. George, thou art vnwor thy better hap, sith thou dependest on so meane a stay . Valse minded men all three of you, if by my miserie you be not warnd : for vnto none of you (like mee) sought those burres to cleaue : those Puppets (I meane) that spake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange, that I, to whom they all haue beene beholding : is it not like that you, to whome they all haue beene beholding, shall (were yee in that case as I am now) bee both at once of them forsaken ? Yes trust them not : for there is an vnsart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you : and beeing an absolute Iohannes fac totum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey. That I might intreat your rare wits to be imploied in more profitable courses : & let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and neuer more acquaint them with your admired inuentions . I knowe the best husband of  
you

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reader will also notice the words Actor, Player, Comedy and Tragedy, all of which help to identify the person designated.

The first literary notice of Shakespeare is to be read in a pamphlet styled "Greene's Groats-worth of Wit." Greene died in September, 1592, and his book was issued in the same year. The first edition of Greene's pamphlet remained unknown for many generations, and was only discovered during the last few years, and is now safely deposited in the British Museum. To the best of my belief the accompanying facsimile is published for the first time. Chettle refers to Shakespeare in his introductory letter to "Kind Harts Dream," styled "To the Gentlemen Readers." Chettle Greene's friend, in a tract, entitled, "Kind Harts Dream," entered at Stationers' Hall, 8th December, 1592, published shortly afterwards by W. Wright without date. Greene's pamphlet was registered on September 20th, 1592.

A copy of this book in the Huth collection, dated 1596, when sold fetched £200. The 1617 edition sold for £25 and the 1637 edition for £17. All three editions came from the same library. The full title of the 1596 edition is as follows :

"Greene's Groats-worth of Wit, bought With a Million of Repentance. Describing the follie of Youth, the falshoode of makeshift flatterers, the miserie of the negligent and mischiefes of deceiving Courtesans. Written before (*sic*) his death, and published at his dying request."

"Printed by Thomas Creede for Richard Olive, dwelling in long-long (*sic*) Lane, and are there to be solde, 1596.

"Black letter, cut on title (last leaf backed and 3 pages scribbled on margins of 2.U. slightly mended, otherwise good, blind stamp russia A-F.2 in fours.

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The above is a description of the Huth copy. The only other copy of this edition on record was Archdeacon Wrangham's, which wanted nearly a leaf. The present copy is from the libraries of Joly and Corser: "To those Gentlemen his quondam acquaintance that spend their wits in making Plaies R. G. wisheth a better exercise and wisdom to prevent his extremities. If woeful experience may move you Gentlemen to beware, or unheard-of wretchedness entreat you to take heed, I doubt not but you will looke backe with sorrow on your time past, and endeavour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not for with thee will I first begin, thou famous gracer of Tragedians, that Greene, who hath said with thee like the fool in his heart, 'There is no God,' should now give glory unto his greatness, for penetrating in his power his hand is heavy upon me, he hath spoken to me with a voice of thunder, and I have felt he is a God that can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, his gift be so blinded that thou shouldst give no glory to the giver? Is it pestilent Machiavellian folly that thou hast studied? With thee I join young Juvenal that biting satirist that lastly with me writ a comedy. Sweet boy might I advise thee, be advised and get not many enemies by bitter words. Tread on a worm and it will turn, then blame not scholars vexed with sharp lines if they reprove thy too much liberty of reproof. And thou no less deserving than the other two in some things rarer in nothing inferior, driven as myself to extreme shifts a little have I to say to thee, and were it not an idolatrous oath I would swear by Sweet S. George thou art unworthy better hap, seth thou dependest on so meane a stay.

"Base minded men all three of you fly, my misery ye be not warned; for unto none of you like me sought these burns to cleave: these Puppets I

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meane that speak from our mouths these Anticks garnished in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they all have been beholding, is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall were ye in that case that I am now be both at once of them forsaken ?

“ Yes, trust them not, for there is an upstart crow, beautiful with our feathers, that with his Tiger’s heart wrapped in a player’s hide supposes he is as well able to bumbast out blank verse as the best of you : And being an absolute Johannes factotum is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.”

The three writers who spend their time in making plays are Marlowe, Nash, and George Peele. There can be no question about Marlowe : he was an avowed atheist, and the foremost dramatist of his time ; he was killed in a tavern brawl in a quarrel over some woman down Deptford way in 1593.

Young Juvenal is doubtful, but in all probability it applies to Thomas Nash, the greatest satirist of his time. When Greene writes in connexion with young Juvenal, “ blame not scholars,” he must surely refer to the long outstanding quarrel between Nash and Gabriel Harvey, one of the foremost scholars of his age. The acrimonious literary duel lasted many years, and was carried on in a most vicious and unseemly manner, personalities of every description being brought in on both sides. The quarrel lasted long after Greene’s death.

The third person alluded to is George Peele, the Sweet S. George making the personality obvious. Greene is especially angry with Shakespeare ; this tirade arising chiefly from jealousy. It is generally agreed that Shakespeare revised the three parts of “ Henry the Sixth ” from earlier plays, in which Greene had a great share.

Shakespeare’s adaptation or revisal of this play

# KIND - HARTS DREAME.

Conteining five Apparitions, vvith their  
Inuectiues againſt abuſes raiging.

*Delivered by ſeuerrall Ghoſts vnto him to  
be publiſht, after Piers Penileſſe Poſt  
had refuſed the carriage.*

*Inuita Inuidia.*

by H. C.



Imprinted at London for William Wright.

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was a great success, and this must have incensed Greene, who was of a jealous nature to a state of livid envy. The line "that with his Tiger's heart wrapt in a Player's hide," is a parody of a line from "The True Tragedy," also in "Henry VI., I., IV. 137."

"O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide."

The history of these plays, the three parts of "Henry VI.," all appeared in the First Folio. The first part of the "Contention betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster" forms the second part of "Henry VI." "The True Tragedy," another play, is the origin of the third part. The first part is only known in the Folio version. These plays remain one of the great unsolved puzzles of Shakesporean criticism.

There is no early foundation play of the first part although no doubt one did exist.

Of course, in this attack Greene's spite against Shakespeare was as a writer of plays, although the context rather points out that he took exception against him as an actor; if that were so, the paragraph would be pointless. No doubt Greene refers to Shakespeare as an actor, but that is not his grievance; 'supposes he is as well able to bumbast out blank verse' means that he can wield an able pen and beat them at their own game and not only speak their lines. Greene meant to give a double thrust at Shakespeare, but his antagonist came through the ordeal quite scathless.

When Henry Chettle published Greene's *Groats-worth of Wit*, he wrote a preface containing the following passage:

"About three months since died Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry booksellers' hands; among others, his *Groats-worth of Wit*, in which a letter written to diverse play-makers is offensively by one or two of them taken, and because on the

## SHAKESPEARE AS AN ACTOR

dead they cannot be avenged, they wilfully forge in their concertes a living author, and after tossing it to and fro, no remedy, but it must light on me. How I have all the time of my conversing in printing hindered the better inveying against scholars, it has been very well known, and how in that I dealt, I can sufficiently prove. With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if I never be. The other, whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that as I have moderated the heat of living writers and might have used my own discretion, especially in such a case the Author being dead that I did not, I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil, than be excellent in the quality he professes. Besides divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art."

This passage clearly demonstrates that both Marlowe and Shakespeare had complained to Chettle, considering the paragraph a libel. Of Marlowe's complaint he takes no notice, but writes an ample apology to Shakespeare, at the same time praising him in his dual capacity as an actor and playwright.

Shakespeare's sonnets were first published in their entirety in 1609. Two of this collection having been printed in a piratical volume of poetry, dated 1599, attributed to Shakespeare, although he was only responsible for five numbers out of the twenty published. The great question which divides Shakesperean critics into two camps is whether the sonnets are autobiographical or poems of the imagination. A discussion on this point, and others connected with the dedication and order of sequence, would fill volumes. If they are to be accepted as episodes

## To the Gentlemen Readers,

the other, he that offendes being forst, is more excusable than the wilfull faultie, though both be guilty, there is difference in the guilt. To obserue custome, and auoid as I may cauill, opposing your fauors against my feare, I shew reason for my present writing, and after proceed to sue for pardon. About three moneths since died M. Robert Greene, leauing many papers in sundry Booke sellers hands, among other his Groatsworth of wit, in which a letter written to diuers play-makers, is offensively by one or two of them taken, and because on the dead they cannot be auenged, they wilfully forge in their conceites a liuing Author: and after tossing it two and fro, no remedy, but it must light on me. How I haue all the time of my conuersing in printing hindred the bitter inueying against schollers, it hath been very well knowne, and how in that I dealt I can sufficiently prooue. With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if I neuer be: The other, whome at that time I did not so much spare, as since I wish I had, for that as I haue moderated the beate of liuing writers, and might haue vsde my owne discretion ( especially in such a case ) the Author being dead, that I did not, I am as  
sory

## To the Gentlemen Readers.

*sory, as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe haue seene his demeanor no lesse ciuill than he excellent in the qualitie he professes: Besides, diuers of worship haue reported, his vprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that aprooues his Art. For the first, whose learning I reuerence, and at the perusing of Greenes Booke, stroke out what then in conscience I thought he in some displeasure writ: or had it beene true, yet to publish it, was intollerable: him I would wish to vse me no worse than I deserue. I had onely in the copy this share, it was il written, as sometime Greenes hand was none of the best, licensd it must be, ere it could bee printed which could neuer be if it might not be read. To be breife I writ it ouer, and as neare as I could, followed the copy, onely in that letter I put something out, but in the whole booke not a worde in, for I protest it was all Greenes, not mine nor Master Nashes, as some vniustly haue affirmed. Neither was he the writer of an Epistle to the second part of Gerileon, though by the workemans error T. N. were set to the end: that I confesse to be mine, and repent it not.*

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

in the life of Shakespeare, sonnet 111 clearly has reference to his own life as an actor :

“ O ! for my sake do you with fortune chide  
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds  
That did not better for my life provide  
Than public means which public manners  
breeds.

Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,  
And almost thence my nature is subdued  
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.

Pity me then, and wish I were renew'd  
Whilst like a willing patient I will drink  
Potions of eysell, 'gainst my strong infection:  
No bitterness that I will bitter think,  
Not double penance to correct correction.

Pity me, then, dear friend, and I assure ye  
Even that your pity is enough to cure me.”

Another sonnet, in a similar strain, is numbered 110 ; the first two lines unmistakably refer to his profession as an actor :

“ Alas 'tis true I have gone here and there,  
And made myself a motley to the view.”

The first line refers to acting at different places in the Metropolis, and also touring in the provinces, an event common to all theatrical companies of the period. Whether Shakespeare had really played the fool's part can only be conjectural. It may be simply a synonym for an actor, who in various costumes acted different parts.

In an edition of Shakespeare's poems, published by John Benson in 1640, there is an elegy addressed to Shakespeare, with the following heading : “ An elegy on the death of that famous writer and actor, William Shakespeare.” The author eulogizes Shakespeare as a poet, but makes no reference to him as an actor, beyond merely stating in the heading that he was an actor.

## SHAKESPEARE AS AN ACTOR

The remarks that Shakespeare let fall from his pen, in connexion with his profession as an actor, need not surprise us if we consider the drastic measures imposed upon actors during the reign of Elizabeth, and the contempt with which certain sections of the public regarded the actors' calling, together with the scanty recognition they received from the literary world. Under these circumstances, it is little to be wondered at that he half despised his own vocation, but in his secret heart he cherished a deep love for the stage, otherwise he would have retired years previously to his final farewell, which only took place at the close of his life, in reality about the year 1610, six years before his death. Anyone reading the interview with the players and the play-acting scene in "Hamlet" cannot doubt for a moment that Shakespeare derived intense satisfaction and happiness from his theatrical life; there is a ring of enthusiasm in all those scenes in which he alludes to the theatre, and revels in everything connected with the art of the theatre. Being an actor may have barred him from any great social success, and he may have written the lines in the sonnets when in a moody humour, or at some insult levelled against him at the common playhouse.

I should like to point out that with the exception of Davies' epigram, in which he remarks that Shakespeare played "kingly parts," there is no authentic notice of his having acted any particular character, and all accounts written about the parts he played are purely fictitious. Even Rowe, the earliest biographer of the poet, gives no authority for stating that the part of the Ghost in "Hamlet" was the top of his performance as an actor; all such statements are misleading, and writers on Shakesperean matters should be careful in stating whether their remarks are founded upon facts or are of an imaginary character.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

Sir Richard Baker, in his chronicle history, refers to Shakespeare as being both player and poet. "For writers of Plays and such as had been Players themselves, William Shakespeare and Benjamin Johnson (*sic*) have specially left their names recommended to posterity." Mr. Greenwood, in his latest book (1916), entitled *Is there a Shakespeare Problem?* states that Baker was not a contemporary of Shakespeare; this is a gross error, perhaps purposely perpetrated in order to maintain a foolish theory that the actor Shakespeare was not the author of the plays. Baker was born in the year 1568, and died in 1645.

## CHAPTER V

### COURT PERFORMANCES

**D**URING the reigns of Elizabeth and James, Court performances were frequently given, especially during the religious holidays. All the well-known London companies appeared at Court nearly every year, and were liberally remunerated for their services. Documentary evidence is in existence stating the exact fees paid to the actors, and the names in some instances of the plays performed.

Shakespeare is known to have taken part in several of the Court functions ; many of his own dramas were presented before the Queen, and although nowhere expressly stated, he, no doubt, acted in them before the royal audience. These performances were given at the different palaces where the Court happened to be assembled. The Royal residences were numerous, and contemporary records prove that dramatic entertainments were represented at each of them on several occasions. The enthusiasm which Elizabeth displayed towards the drama must, in a great measure, account for its continued success and development. Without the Court patronage, the City and Local Authorities, in their blind prejudice against all kinds of entertainment, would certainly have taken drastic measures to drive the actors out of the Metropolis: and in their idiotic rage against the theatre, might have gone so far as to prohibit the actors from following the profession.

The following is a list of Court palaces in which plays were presented before the reigning monarchs. Both Elizabeth and James were enthusiastic playgoers. In the latter's reign court performances were

# M. William Shak-speare:

*HIS*  
True Chronicle Historie of the life and  
death of King L E A R and his three  
Daughters.

*With the vnfortunate life of Edgar, sonne  
and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his  
fullen and assumed humor of  
TOM of Bedlam:*

*As it was played before the Kings Maiestie at Whitehall upon  
S. Stephans night in Christmas Hollidayes.*

By his Maiesties seruants playing vsually at the Gloabe  
on the Bancke-side.



LONDON,

Printed for Nathaniel Butter, and are to be sold at his shop in *Pauls*  
Church-yard at the signe of the Pide Bull neere  
*St. Austins Gate.* 1608

With kind permission of Messrs. Griggs,  
Hanover Street, Peckham.

## COURT PERFORMANCES

given every day in the week, Sundays included, and although at times the plays produced were far from entertaining, the royal pair remained until the play was ended, in spite of being tired, as the rest of the audience often were.

### WHITEHALL

Everyone has heard of Whitehall, the magnificent London residence of Henry VIII and his royal daughters. Here we are only concerned with the Great Hall, the Great Chamber, the Banqueting House, and the Cockpit, all four apartments being the scene of dramatic entertainments. Proof of at least one of Shakespeare's plays being presented at Whitehall will be found on the title page of the authentic quarto of "King Lear":

" M. William Shakespeare,

" His True Chronicle History of the life and death of King Lear and his three daughters. As it was played before the King's Majestie at Whitehall upon St. Stephen's night in Christmas Hollidays. By his Majestie's servants playing usually at the Globe, on the Bankside, 1608."

From documentary evidence there is proof that several of Shakespeare's plays were acted at this palace, including "Othello," "Measure for Measure," "Love's Labour's Lost," "The Winter's Tale," and others by the same dramatist, besides over a hundred performances of plays by various authors. These plays were produced in the magnificent structure called the Great Hall, which was a hundred feet in length and about forty in breadth. The roof was elaborately decorated, and from it hung eight large chandeliers and eight smaller ones, each containing fifteen lights. The scene on these occasions was one of great splendour, and those that witnessed it were considered exceptionally

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

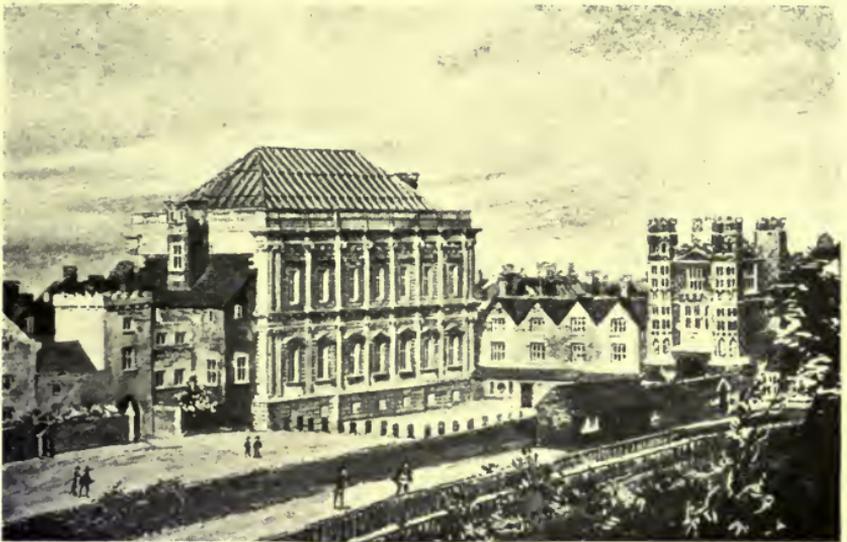
fortunate, as only those whom the King delighted to honour were invited.

Plays were sometimes presented in the Great Chamber, a building of large dimensions. This room was often chosen on account of its great warmth, and also its being better adapted for presenting plays than the Great Hall. The Banqueting House, in which Shakespeare's plays were given, was built by Queen Elizabeth; its length was 150 feet, the walls were of wood, with lath and plaster between. The roof, supported by thirty principals, was ceiled with canvas, and decorated most gorgeously with the emblems of the heavens. Externally the Hall presented the true Gothic type similar to those seen to-day at Hampton Court and Christ Church, Oxford. On each of the three sides, tiers of seats were erected for the audience, the fourth being reserved for the stage. The King and Queen sat on thrones facing the stage, a clear way of vision being kept in direct line with the actors. The performances were always given at night, contrasting very vividly with the afternoon representation at the Globe and other public theatres. This beautiful building was destroyed by fire. The existing Banqueting House was built in the reign of Charles I; many of Shakespeare's plays were performed in this building before the King and Queen. From this fatal room King Charles was led forth to execution on January 30th, 1649. The celebrated architect, Inigo Jones, was the designer of this noble edifice, one of the few remaining buildings of this great architect which exist to adorn this great city.

The Cockpit, built in the reign of Henry VIII, was sometimes used for presenting plays, and quite possibly Shakespeare's plays may have been given here before Queen Elizabeth. The building was octagonal in shape, resembling the public theatres, containing galleries and staircases. The original



The Palace of Whitehall. Reproduced with kind permission from a model by John B. Thorp, Esq.



Banqueting Hall and Holbein Gate, Whitehall. Tiltyard in foreground. Reproduced with kind permission from a model by John B. Thorp, Esq.



## COURT PERFORMANCES

site stood in the neighbourhood of Downing Street. This building has frequently been confused with the Cockpit Theatre, situated in Drury Lane. There are many traps laid for the writers of early theatrical matters, and an author cannot be careful enough in thoroughly investigating his sources. I have noticed the most painstaking writers sometimes go astray, even Mr. Law, to whose interesting and valuable account of the Whitehall Palace I have been entirely indebted for the above description, alluded to the Blackfriars Theatre as being the scene of Shakespeare's activities. There is not an atom of evidence to prove that Shakespeare ever acted on its boards or that his plays were produced there during his lifetime. The only evidence is that Cuthbert Burbage, the son of Richard Burbage, states that his father, in 1609 or 1610, placed deserving men, Heminge Condell and Shakespeare, at the Blackfriars. This evidence was given in 1632, and does not say in what capacity Shakespeare was placed there. The evidence may only have been given to prove his claim, or perhaps Shakespeare acted as Stage Manager; in spite of this meagre evidence, all writers persist in stating that Shakespeare acted at this theatre, which I emphatically deny, on the grounds that in the year 1610 Shakespeare severed his connexion with the stage and retired soon afterwards to Stratford-on-Avon.

Court performances were frequently held at Whitehall. As early as 1560 the Earl of Leicester's players performed at one of the royal palaces before the Queen; in some instances the names of the plays performed are given, but unfortunately in most cases the name of the palace is not stated.

Chalmers, in his *Apology*, refers to Lord Strange's men being paid £40 and £20 reward for six performances at Whitehall in December, 1591; the titles of the plays are not given. The most interesting

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

performance presented at Whitehall was Shakespeare's "King Lear," as acted before his Majesty at Whitehall upon St. Stephen's night at Christmas last. The entry for publication of "King Lear" is found on the books of the Stationers' Company, where the record states that Nathaniel Butter and John Busby entered their names for a copy of "a booke called Master William Shakespeare, his history of King Lear"; the licence is dated November 22nd, 1607. The "Christmas last of the Stationers' Register" and "in Christmas Hollidaies" of the printed edition refer to the year 1606. Whether Shakespeare took part in this production cannot be definitely stated, but the probabilities are that he acted with his company.

1579. The Irish Knight. The Earl of Warwick's players were paid £6 13s. 4d. for presenting this play before the Queen at Whitehall. 1597. The history of Murderous Michael was presented in 1604. The Children of the Revels played before the Queen at Whitehall.

In 1608, John Hemings was paid £130 for 13 plays acted before his Majesty at Whitehall. The King and Prince Charles witnessed a play at Whitehall, given on Sunday. This performance took place in the year 1623. As stated above, several plays were presented at the Court at Whitehall, for many years in succession.

The Marquise Tremouille on thursday last tooke leave of the Kinge; that night was feasted at white hall by the duke of Lennox in the Queen's greate chamber.

In the Kinge's greate chamber they went to see the play of "Pirrocles Prince of Tyre," which lasted till 2 o'clocke. After two actes the players ceased till the french all refreshed them with sweetmeats, brought on china voiders and wine and ale in bottells, after the players began anew.

## COURT PERFORMANCES

### RICHMOND

A royal palace stood here in quite early times, being in ruins in the reign of Henry the Fourth. Henry V rebuilt it, and when Henry VII became King, he made it his royal residence, changing the name of the hamlet from West Sheen to Richmond, in commemoration of his title as Earl of Richmond in Yorkshire.

A fire broke out in 1498, completely demolishing the old building. A new palace was erected in 1501. This building is especially interesting, being in its entirety a Tudor structure, representing the architectural taste of the time in domestic building, when the sole determining factors were pleasure and convenience. This object was fully obtained by mixture of judicious colouring, oblong or diamond shaped patches of black brick, having been originally super-imposed upon a ground of warm red. The level of the frontage is broken up by the intervention of small circular towers, sallying forward from the background, and fine mullioned windows, with a forest of turrets complete the frontage, which formed a most picturesque view and which existed only for that purpose. These architectural details bore a strong affinity to the Saracenic type of architecture, which may well have influenced English taste through our then close connexion with Spain.

The chief drawback to the general good effect of the building is its huddled appearance, arising principally from the narrowness of the projecting towers and the manner in which they are crowded together upon a not too extensive front.

This impression is assisted by the close proximity of the palace to the river. An early chronicler, about 1501, narrates that the building was girded and encompassed with a strong and mighty brick wall, barred and bent with towers in each corner and angle and also in the midway. The openings, the

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

strong gates of double timber and heart of oak, were stuck full of nails right thick and crossed with bars of iron. Now but little is left to confirm the fact that there was a palace upon the site built as late as the time of Henry VIII, and was still standing in the seventeenth century. The most conspicuous of the remains are those in the house occupied by Mr. Middleton, facing Richmond Green, and the gateway to Wardrobe Court, with its upper chamber forming part of the house. The gateway is of red brick, and has a large four central archway of stone, over which is a perished stone panel of arms; on the east side is an eighteenth century oval window, and on the other side three block windows, above a stone string course, with a moulded top member and a bead at the bottom. The building is cut short north of the gateway, but evidence of its continuation in that direction is given by the arched recess on the ground floor and the blocked doorway in the upper storey, besides the marks showing the position of the first floor and the flat roof on that face, which now overlooks the gardens of the old Court House, an eighteenth century building now occupied by a lady. Some of the lower walls of Mr. Middleton's house, no doubt, retain the original brickwork, and the three projecting bays in the east front, a semi-octagonal one between the two five-sided bays are evidently on the old foundation, but there is little in the house to call attention to its age except a fireplace on the first floor, with a Tudor arch and a chimney stack on the west side. Authentic records exist proving that Shakespeare and his fellow actors often acted before the Court when residing at Richmond Palace. The Hall in which the performance took place was situated in an upper storey containing one fairly large room 100 feet by 40 feet, called the Great Hall. The following account is taken from a description of the Palace, written in

## COURT PERFORMANCES

1649 : " This room (the Great Hall) hath a screen in the lower end, over which is a little gallery ; the pavement is tiled, and is very well lighted ; the ceiling is adorned with eleven statues ; on the side stands a brick hearth for a charcoal fire, having a large lanthorn in the roof of the Hall fitted for that purpose, turreted and covered with lead. In the north end of the Great Hall there is one turret, and a clock case covered with lead, which, together with the lanthorn in the middle thereof, are a special ornament unto that building."

No detailed account of a performance is known, and only in one instance is the name given of the play performed ; documents may exist at the Record Office which one day may give us new information on the subject.

1575. The Earl of Warwick's players were paid £10 for performing a play before the Queen at Richmond on Shrove Monday last past.

1578. The Lord Chamberlain's men were paid £10 for performing a play called " A History of the Cruelties of a Stepmother." This play was performed at Richmond on Innocents' Day at night.

1578. A play was performed at Richmond on St. John's Day at night by the Children of the Chapel Royal.

On March 15th, 1639, John Lowin, Joseph Taylor and Edward Swanston were paid £300 for 24 plays acted before the King by the King's players. Six of these plays were produced at Richmond in the previous year.

The next year the same actors were paid £20 for producing several plays before His Majesty, two of which were performed at Richmond.

1640. A warrant for £60 unto the company of the Prince's players for three plays acted at Richmond at £20 each play, in consideration of their travelling expenses and loss of the days at home.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

### HAMPTON COURT

From various documentary records there is certain proof that many of the London theatrical companies acted at Hampton Court during the Shakesperean era. Hampton Court was a favourite residence both of Elizabeth and James, and in addition the Great Hall was more suitable for the representation of plays and masques than any other royal residence. Originally this palace belonged to the great Cardinal Wolsey, who commenced the building in 1515 in a truly regal manner, and it was ready for occupation in the following year. The Palace contained over eleven hundred rooms, furnished in the most elaborate and elegant style, equal in magnificence to any Court throughout Europe. After occupying this ideal residence for a period of ten years, Wolsey presented the entire building to his sovereign, King Henry the Eighth, who graciously accepted his subject's munificent gift, which for evermore became the property of the Crown.

The chief interest to Shakespereans is the Great Hall, a chamber of magnificent dimensions, this Hall being considered one of the finest existing examples of Gothic architecture. The length of the Hall is one hundred and eighteen feet, with a height of ninety-two feet.

One beautiful window nearly reaches the entire height of the Hall; five other superb windows encircle the building. In the alcoves of the Hall are shapely octagonal turrets, which reach to the extremity of the roof. The interior of the building is no less remarkable for its beauty. The first impression is one of dazzling brilliancy, and on further investigation the richness of all the details enhances the grandeur of this majestic state apartment. That such a noble work of art should come down to us in nearly all its ancient splendour is indeed fortunate.

No trace remains of the rich stained glass, but

# THE FAIRE MAIDE of Bristovv.

As it was plaide at Hampton, before the  
King and Queenes most excellent  
Maiesties.



Printed at Loudon for Thomas Pauer, and are  
to be solde at his shop, at the entrance  
into the Exchange 1605.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

after the lapse of centuries that need cause no wonder : the miracle is that as much remains for our admiration.

The large bay window contained fully eight lights, which reflected on the dais, where stood the King's table. At the lower end of the Hall was fixed a screen of beautiful oak, before which a platform was raised for the actors, who here performed their comedies and tragedies, masques, and other kinds of entertainments. Over the screen was a balcony, called the Minstrels' Gallery, which was reached by a small staircase.

Mention must be made of the magnificent roof, the most ornate of this particular style which still exists, for richness of detail and elaborate carving it remains unrivalled. Although we do not possess actual proof, we can confidently maintain that Shakespeare acted on several occasions under this noble roof, and also produced many of his immortal plays before the royal audience.

Lord Charles Howard's men performed a play before the Queen in 1576. This Lord Howard was Baron Howard of Effingham. In the early years of Elizabeth's reign Lord Howard's men are styled the Lord Chamberlain's men.

Lord Strange's men were paid £20 and given £10 reward on March the 7th, 1593, for three plays presented at Hampton Court on St. John's Night, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. This extract is taken from Chalmer's *Apology*. The names of the plays are not recorded. Shakespeare was a member of Lord Strange's company, and probably acted on this occasion.

The Earl of Warwick's servants were paid a reward for acting before the Queen at Hampton Court in the Christmas Holydays ; the name of the play was the "Painter's Daughter."

Lord Rich's players were paid £6 13s. 4d. for

## COURT PERFORMANCES

presenting plays before the Queen on St. Stephen's Day at night. Lord Rich's company was quite an unimportant one, and was unknown in London; they acted at Hampton Court in 1569 and again in 1570. Court performances were frequently given here during the reigns of James I and Charles I.

### WINDSOR CASTLE

Historically, Windsor Castle dates from before the Conquest. William the Conqueror was the first English king to reside here permanently. Little is heard of this fortress castle until the reign of Edward III, when a complete restoration was effected. One of the chief glories of the Castle is St. George's Chapel, reconstructed on a princely scale by Edward IV. In Queen Elizabeth's reign a new gallery and banqueting house were erected; the latter was situated at the extreme eastern side of the terrace; it was an octagon in shape, and was surmounted by a cupola, windows being placed on every side. The Great Hall was built in the reign of Henry III, and appears to have been a truly stately edifice. When Henry VIII entertained Charles the Fifth at Windsor in 1522, the great Hall was the scene of many festivities. At the upper end of the chamber a platform was erected, in the centre of which was a dais elaborately painted in royal state. On all sides of the Hall were several windows filled with fine stained glass. During Charles's visit a play was presented in this Hall; after the play was ended, a most magnificent masque was introduced, in which twelve gentlemen and twelve ladies dressed in the most costly masquerade garments, all of which were in gold. After the dance a sumptuous banquet was held, which greatly added to the night's entertainment.

1582. A play called "A History of Love and Fortune" was performed before the Queen at

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

Windsor "on the Sondaie at night next before the newe yeares daie." The play was produced by the Earl of Derby's players.

1570. William Hunnis was paid £6 13s. 4d. for a play performed by the Chapel Children before the Queen on the Twelfth Night at Windsor. This William Hunnis was a poet musician, a keeper of the Queen's gardens at Greenwich, and eventually was appointed Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal.

In 1582 a play called "A Game of Cards" was presented at Court. This play was performed before the Queen at Windsor on the evening of St. Stephen's Day. In the original document the entry is as follows: "A Comodie or Morrall, devised on 'A Game of the Cardes.'" "

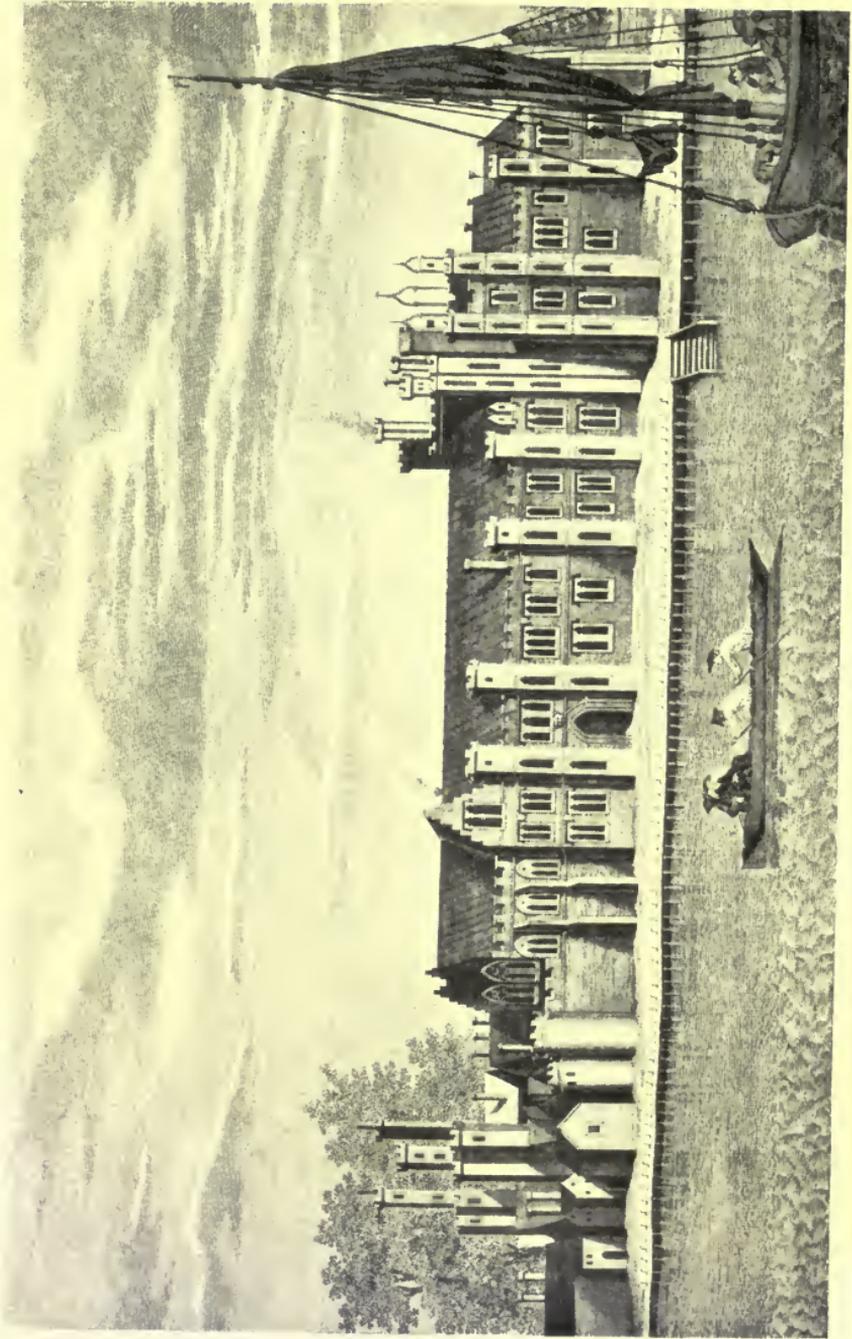
1569. Richard Farrant, Master of the Children of Windsor Chapel, was paid £6 13s. 4d. for a play "performed by these boys before the Queen upon St. John's daye, at nighte last past." There are several entries relating to this company, but the place where they acted is not stated; most probably the Windsor boys only acted at Windsor Castle.

1563. The Children of Westminster School acted before the Queen at Windsor.

## GREENWICH PALACE

As far back as the year 1300, a royal palace was in existence at Greenwich. Nothing is known of this early building until the end of the reign of Henry IV. Afterwards it came into the possession of the Duke of Gloucester, who beautified the place and considerably extended the grounds, calling the palace Palacentia, on account of its sweet and pleasing aspect.

Henry VIII was born here, and in after years his birthplace was an object of his special devotion, he



Greenwich Palace in the time of Elizabeth.



## COURT PERFORMANCES

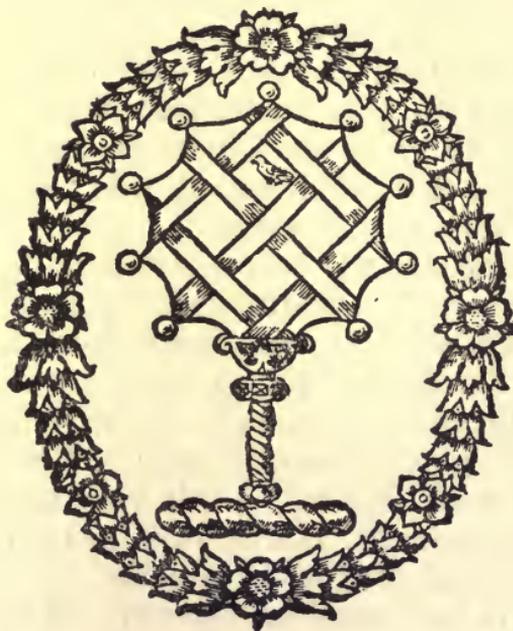
spending much of his time and income on enlarging the building and laying out the grounds.

In the great Hall many feasts and entertainments were held, these occasions being specially noted for the lavishness and splendour displayed. This monarch greatly encouraged the performing of the Masque, then newly imported from Italy. "On the day of the Epiphany, at night, the King, with eleven others, were disguised after the manner of Italy, called a masque a thing not seen before in England, they were apparelled in garments long and broad wrought all in gold." The King himself took part in these gorgeous displays. Queen Elizabeth was also born at Greenwich; like her royal father, she was much attached to the palace and greatly enlarged the edifice. The Presence Chamber was hung with rich tapestries, and the floor, as was usual in those days, was strewn with rushes.

Plays were frequently acted at this palace, Greenwich being a favourite residence of Queen Elizabeth. In 1584, the Queen's players acted before Her Majesty here on St. Stephen's Day at night; the next day the Earl of Oxenford's plays were performed before the Queen, the play presented being "The History of Agamemnon and Ulysses"; this play was acted on St. John's Day at night. The St. John's Day mentioned is in celebration of the Evangelist of that name whose birth is honoured on the 27th of December; this saint must not be confused with John the Baptist, whose name day is celebrated both on the 24th of June and the 29th of August. The play acted on St. Stephen's Day was "Phylbyda and Corin."

1585. A play called "Felix and Philomence" was performed before the Queen at Greenwich; the plot was founded on a pastoral poem by George Monetmayor. An early edition of this poem, dated 1585, written in the original Spanish, is in my possession.

CERTAIN DE  
uises and shewes presented to  
her MAIESTIE by the Gentlemen of  
*Grayes-Inne* at her Highnesse Court in  
*Greenewich*, *the twenty eighth day of*  
Februarie in the thirtieth year of her  
MAIESTIES most happy  
Raigne.



AT LONDON  
Printed by Robert Robinson.  
1587.

## COURT PERFORMANCES

A few days later another play was performed called "Five plays in One."

1588. On Shrove Sunday, Paul's boys performed before the Queen at Greenwich. Their master, Thomas Gyles, received in payment £10.

1594. This year is a very important land-mark in Court performances: no less a personage than Shakespeare himself acted at Court on this occasion.

"To William Kempe, William Shakespeare, and Richard Burbage, servants to the Lord Chamberlayne, upon the Councelles Warrant, dated at Whitehall XV of Mar., 1594, for two several comedies or interludes "showed by them before her Majestie on Christmas time laste paste, viz., upon St. Stephen's days and Innocentes days XIIIli, VI. VIIId. and by waye of her Majesties reward VIIi, XIIIIs, VIIId, in all XXli."

"For making ready at Greenwich for the Qu. Majestie against her Highness coming thither by the space of VIII days, December, 1594, as appeareth by a bill signed by the Lord Chamberleyne."

Although the two plays performed are not mentioned by name, one of them may have been "The Comedy of Errors," as this play was performed on the same date in Gray's Inn Hall, and was acted by the same company as appeared before the Queen at Greenwich.

1606. On October 18th, John Hemings was paid £30 for three plays acted before his Majesty and the King of Denmark, two of them at Greenwich and one at Hampton Court.

## ST. JAMES'S PALACE

The ground on which St. James's Palace stood was originally a hospital for lepers, and was in existence years before the Conquest. When it surrendered to Henry VIII, the maiden lepers (being a hospital for women) were pensioned.

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The building and grounds were in possession of Eton College, with which the King made an exchange. The building, on coming into possession of the King, was entirely demolished, and upon the same site a magnificent Palace was erected, and was named after the adjoining fields.

The Palace was designed in the Gothic style. In course of time the building has been much altered, and further additions have been made by subsequent sovereigns. A goodly part of the old structure remained until a disastrous fire at the beginning of the last century destroyed nearly the entire fabric. Fortunately, the Clock Tower escaped destruction as also did the famous Gateway, together with the celebrated Chapel Royal, one of the special features of the ancient residence. The Chapel is built of brick, with battlements coped with stone, somewhat after the Gothic fashion ; this part is quite ancient, forming the original chapel as it existed in the time of Henry VIII. Some authorities would even ascribe it as part of the old hospice, but this is more than doubtful. Many records exist that during the reigns of Elizabeth and James many theatrical representations were given. In Elizabeth's reign no special room was set aside for these court performances, but at a later period the Ball Room was generally the scene of action. Several of Shakespeare's plays are known to have been performed before Charles I and Queen Henrietta.

The famous Children of the Revels performed regularly before Queen Elizabeth, and many are the plays extant, by all the famous Tudor dramatists, in which these children companies acted before private and semi-private audiences.

1623. All Hallows. The play performed was the "Maid of the Mill." The prince being present only.

1633. On Saturday, the 17th of November, being

## COURT PERFORMANCES

the Queen's birthday, "Richard the Third" was acted by the K. players at St. James's, when the King and Queene were present, "it being the first play the Queene sawe since Her Mrys. delivery of the Duke of York, 1633."

"1633. On Tuesday night, at Saint James, the 26th of November, 1633, was acted before the King and Queen 'The Taminge of the Shrew.' Lik't."

"November 28th, 1633. 'The Tamer Tamed, or, The Woman's Prize.' Very well lik't."

Several other plays were performed at St. James's Palace by the King's players.

## SOMERSET HOUSE

Old Somerset House, sometimes called Denmark House, in honour of the Queen of James the First, was situated in the Strand on the same site as the modern Somerset House. This palace was built by the great Duke of Somerset called the Protector; he was the ill-fated brother of Jane Seymour. In the erection of this building many well known palaces and houses were demolished, including the palaces of the Bishops of Worcester, Chester, Llandaff, Lichfield, also the Strand Inn and the Parish Church of St. Mary's. The great Duke never lived to see his magnificent house completed; arrested on a charge of high treason, he was beheaded in 1552. The Palace, when finished, was frequently the residence of Queen Elizabeth, and in later years was inhabited by the Queens of Charles I and Charles II. This palace was not the favourite residence of Elizabeth, she preferring the more fashionable quarters of Whitehall and St. James's. Old Somerset House was pulled down in 1776, and the present building was commenced under the superintendence of the architect, Sir William Chambers. Old Somerset House consisted of one large and principal quadrangle, called the Upper

THE  
PASSIONATE  
LOVERS,  
A  
TRAGI-COMEDY,

---

*The First and Second Parts.*

---

Twice presented before the KING and  
QUEENS Majesties at *Somerset-House*,  
and very often at the Private House in  
*Black-Friars*, with great Applause,

*By his late MAJESTIES Servants.*

---

*Written by*  
LODOWICK CARLELL, Gent.

---

LONDON,  
Printed for *Humphrey Moseley*, and are to be  
sold at his shop at the sign of the *Prince's Arms*  
in *St. Pauls Church-yard*. 1655.

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Court, facing the Strand. In the southern front of the quadrangle were the Guard Chambers, with a waiting room. The Privy Chamber and the Presence Chamber from the west end of which a flight of stone steps led down into the garden, on the western side. In the south-east angle were situated the private apartments of the Queen. Facing the Strand was a variety of other buildings occupied by members of the Court, also the Yellow Room, the Cross Gallery, and the Long Gallery, this last, no doubt, being the chamber where plays and masques were held. These entertainments attracted a vast throng of courtiers and their friends, especially on those nights when the King and Queen attended in person.

1585. Three plays in One. "This play should have been shewed before her highness on Shrove-sundie at night, but the Queen came not abroad that night. Tarlton, the celebrated clown and jester of Queen Elizabeth, wrote a play in two parts called 'The seven Deadly Sins.' Three plays in one may have been the first part."

1585. "An Antic play and a Comedy. This play was given at Somerset Place at night, the Queen being present."

1634. "The Shepherdess." "On Monday night, the sixth of January and the Twelfth Night, was presented at Denmark House, before the King and Queen, Fletcher's pastorall, called 'The Faithful Shepherdess' in the clothes the Queen had given Taylor the yeare before of her owne pastorall." The scenes were fitted to the pastorall and made by Mr. Inigo Jones in the great chamber, 1633.

Denmark House is another name for Somerset House, also called Somerset Place. After spending a whole afternoon in searching for a reference to Denmark House without any result, I made repeated enquiries, which were fruitless. Eventually, after

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

further research, the desired information was forthcoming.

### NONSUCH PALACE

Nonsuch Palace was built by Henry VIII. When erecting this building the King destroyed the entire village of Cuddington, including the church and the old manor house. Judging from its name, which signifies "beyond compare," the palace, when furnished, must have presented a noble appearance. One author waxes quite enthusiastic: "Here Henry VIII, in his magnificence, erected a structure so beautiful, so elegant and so splendid, that in whatever direction the admirer of florid architecture turned his eye he will say that it easily bears off the palm, so great is the emulating Roman Art, so beautiful are the paintings, the sculpture, gildings and decorations of all kinds that you would say it is a sky spangled with stars."

Paul Hentzer, who described the early London theatres, also took notice of this handsome building and lovely grounds. On the death of the King, Queen Mary sold it to the Earl of Arundel, and in the next reign the noble earl entertained the Queen in right royal state. Balls, masques, and plays were given in alternate evenings, the children of St. Paul's acting in a play especially composed for the occasion. After this visit the Queen much favoured this beautiful summer retreat, and a few years later she purchased the entire estate from Lord Lumley, the Earl of Arundel's son-in-law. Elizabeth kept open house here, daily hunting over the neighbouring downs, and in the evenings masques and plays were held; sometimes for divertissement she would dance a galliard with her courtiers. Nonsuch was pulled down in 1671, and the surrounding lands were converted into farms. Even in the present day

## COURT PERFORMANCES

a residence named Nonsuch House will be found in the neighbourhood.

“ 1559. A play was performed here before the Queen by the Children of St. Paul’s, under their Master, Sebastian Westcott.”

No other play is mentioned as performed in this Palace.

## ELTHAM PALACE

This royal residence dates from quite ancient times, being erected during the thirteenth century. It was occupied by royalty for many centuries, until the reign of James I, when it ceased to be a royal palace. Originally a moated manor house, like all such buildings, the house was nearly square in form, and embraced four courts, surrounded by a high wall. The moat, which surrounded the structure, was of great width ; the principal entrance was over a stone bridge and through a gateway in the north wall. There was also another gateway and bridge at the opposite side of the enclosure. The most important part of the building consisted of a high range, which crossed the Court from east to west, and included the Great Hall, the Chapel and the State Apartments. The principal courts were spacious, lodging rooms and state offices were numerous. Of all these large buildings, the Banqueting Hall and an ivy covered bridge now remain, which still forms an entrance to the ruins. The Banqueting Hall is a most interesting relic of this once magnificent Palace.

The high pitched roof is in a fair state of preservation, with hammer beams, carved pendants, and braces, supported on corbels of hewn stone. The dimensions of the Hall are 100 feet in length, 55 in height, and 36 in breadth. This Hall, with a suite of rooms at either end, was the main feature of the Palace ; it rose in the centre of surrounding buildings

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as superior in the grandeur of its architecture, the magnificence of its properties and the amplitude of its dimensions. This fair edifice has survived the vicissitudes which, at different periods, has destroyed the old palace. Desolation has reached its very walls, but still the Hall of Eltham Palace has not, with the exception of the Louvre, been deprived of any of its salient features. The proportions of Eltham Hall and the harmony of the design attest the care and skill which were exerted in the production of this beautiful edifice. Other halls may surpass this building in extent, but this is perfect in every useful and elegant decoration belonging to a banqueting chamber. It was splendidly lighted, and perhaps required painted glass to subdue the glare admitted through two and twenty windows.

The Palace during the early part of the nineteenth century was used as a barn, when most of the windows were bricked up and three pairs on the north side remain in that position at the present time. The holes for the timber supports of the elevated platform are still visible on the western wall and above the same spot at a considerable elevation was a window, where the King might look from his own private apartment on the revellers in the Hall, an arrangement commonly in use in the old mansions of this description.

“1559. August 7th. A play was performed at this date before the Queen.” Collier gives the acting place at Eltham, other authorities state the performance took place at Nonsuch. The Children who presented the play were acting under their Master, Sebastian Westcott. This is the only reference I can find pertaining to Eltham, and unfortunately, a doubtful one.

### THE MIDDLE TEMPLE HALL

In Elizabethan times plays and masques were





Interior of the Middle Temple Hall.

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often presented in the Halls of the buildings belonging to the Inns of Court. The Hall of the Middle Temple has the distinction of being one of the grandest Tudor buildings remaining in the United Kingdom.

This beautiful Hall dates from the year 1571, when the edifice was completed. At the lower end of the Hall stands a marble bust of Plowden, who was Treasurer during the period of its erection. One of the plays acted in this historic building possesses great interest for the Shakesporean student. The play solicited by the Benchers for their Candlemas Festival in the year 1601 was no other than Shakespeare's delightful masterpiece, "Twelfth Night." The assumption is quite natural that the Lord Chamberlain's company produced and acted the play, and that Shakespeare, as a member of that company, took part in the performance. In all likelihood, Queen Elizabeth was present on this auspicious occasion. There is no authentic record in any way bearing out this last statement. I was one of the fortunate individuals who witnessed the production of this same comedy, under the same roof, and attended by royalty, our present King and Queen and Queen Alexandra being interested spectators at this performance in aid of the Red Cross Society. I still retain as a souvenir the voucher of my five-guinea seat.

The date of the first production of this play was in former times attributed to various years, ranging from 1599 to 1614. Malone and Stevens, two of the foremost commentators of the eighteenth century assign the play to the year 1614. By the discovery of Manningham's Diary, in which "Twelfth Night" is mentioned as early as 1601, all dates previously suggested are null and void. Manningham was a student of the Middle Temple who, for a space of over two years, kept a diary, which was discovered

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in the British Museum as early as the last century. The extract which interests us is as follows :

“ Febr. 1601.

“ Feb. 2. At our feast we had a play called ‘ Twelve Night,’ or ‘ What you Will,’ much like the Commedy of Errores or Menechmi in Plautus, but most like and neere to that in Italian called ‘ Inganni.’ A good practise in it to make the Steward believe his Lady widdowe was in love with him by counterfeyting a letter as from his Lady in generall terms, telling him that she liked best in him, and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparaile cte, and then when he came to practise making him believe they tooke him to be mad.”

Manningham made mistake in believing Olivia to be a widow ; she was mourning for a brother, which is distinctly referred to by Orsino. The play mentioned by Manningham as “ Inganni,” is really an Italian play called “ Gl’Ingannati,” a copy of which I recently picked up at a bargain price, the bookseller being unaware that the play was the original source of “ Twelfth Night.”

In the essay on Law contributed to Shakespeare’s “ England,” by Mr. Arthur Underhill, the author states that : “ It was for a Christmas revel at the Middle Temple that Shakespeare wrote ‘ Twelfth Night.’ ” There does not exist an atom of evidence to prove this assertion, the general opinion being that Shakespeare wrote all his plays for the Lord Chamberlain’s company, and they were produced first at a regular theatre. How is it that at this late period of Shakesperean research such foolish guesses are allowed to pass the Censor ?

## THE INNER TEMPLE

The Inner Temple and the Middle Temple cover the site formerly occupied by the Knights Templars.



Interior of the old Inner Temple Hall.



Jan 1. 1601 /

2. The last christmas by some sayings, went  
well from blinde country good for you.  
The young lewd woman, he is Mrs. Laurence,  
she had not bin so good as she would,  
because she promised her friend to go with  
to his first night (planning to go last  
on his last night) but she is, you shall  
be Mother to my next, if you will.

A telegram.

Margaret Westfalme.  
my greatest misfortune! / My wife, now  
Darius. / Admire the / Judas / matter!

febr. 1601 /

2. ~~on foot~~  
I was glad a play rather and involve myself  
or what you will / must like the comedy of  
error / or the next in instance, but must  
like and next to that in Italian called Fagiani  
a good pastime in it to make by showed  
Belshazzar's lady middow with in low city fine  
by counterfeiting a letter, as from his lady, in  
famous letter, telling him what for  
like to be in him, and of his being in the  
in finding it to be a letter / and then  
after he came to the ship making him believe  
they took him to be dead.

*Quae mala in multis pariter saeviora putantur*

72. / Goshon Norton with his friend in London /  
82. / For your copy the supplement to G. 1. 1601. Conde  
is printed by the wife / or some so to be notice  
of the next day, with promoting the out  
being remembered, what for you do in it.

Facsimile of passage in Manningham's Diary, referring to Twelfth Night.



¶ The Tragidie of Ferrex  
and Porrex,  
set forth without addition or alte-  
ration but altogether as the same was shewed  
on stage before the Queenes Maiestie,  
about nine yeares past, *vz.* the  
xviiij. day of Ianuarie. 1561.  
by the gentlemen of the  
Inner Temple.

Seen and allowed, &c.

¶ Imprinted at London by  
Iohn Daye, dwelling ouer  
Aldersgate.

Acted at the Inner Temple in 1561 and repeated  
before the Queen at Whitehall in the same year

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

After their suppression in 1312, the Temple Church and the surrounding buildings passed into the possession of the Crown. Thirty years later the Hospitallers, or Knights of St. John, were the owners, who eventually leased the ground and buildings to the lawyers, who have remained in possession ever since.

The Inner Temple had the distinction of possessing a famous library as early as the fifteenth century, being the first of the Inns of Court which possessed a library worthy of the name.

The ancient Hall of the Inner Temple, where plays and masques were held on Festival and other occasions, was rebuilt early in the last century. The modern Hall has been erected in close imitation of the former one. Historically and architecturally the new Hall cannot compare with the exquisite building of the Middle Temple, and every Englishman should consider it his duty to pay at least one visit to this monument of ancient learning.

The first English Tragedy, properly so called, was acted in the ancient Hall of the Inner Temple on the occasion of the Christmas Revels in 1561. The same play was performed the next year before the Queen at Whitehall. The first edition of this work was a piratical one, published in 1565, a unique copy of which is in the Eton Library. The title page of this edition states that the first three acts were written by Thomas Norton, and the last two by Thomas Sackville. The play is styled the "Tragedie of Gorboduc." The second edition is called "The Tragedie of Ferrex and Porrex," published in 1570. The third edition was issued in 1590. Each act of this play is preceded by a dumb show similar to the one produced in the play scene of "Hamlet." Another play acted by the members of the Inner Temple in 1567 is "Gismund of Salerne," a tale adapted from one of Boccaccio's novels. Two





Interior of Gray's Inn Hall.

## COURT PERFORMANCES

manuscripts of this play exist, as well as a printed version, dated 1591, called "Tancred and Gismonda," a revised version of the earlier play. This tale had been translated by Painter and published in his *Palace of Pleasure*; Vol. I, 1566. The author translated the version from the original Italian, but it is quite possible they consulted Painter's version.

### GRAY'S INN

Gray's Inn owes its name to one Reginald Le Gray, who was Chief Justice at Chester early in the fourteenth century. Towards the end of the same century we find a building mentioned as "Graysyn" which at this time was in the possession of the lawyers. The present Hall is founded on the same site as the one that previously existed, which was not entirely destroyed, but rebuilt about the middle of the sixteenth century. The existing Hall is of quite modest dimensions and, together with the old Chapel, forms quite a picturesque view. The surrounding buildings date from early Georgian times, and add quite a pleasing effect; a few modern buildings afford an opportunity of criticising and comparing several modes of architecture in one place. The beautiful gardens of Grays Inn add another exquisite touch to these old world surroundings.

The original entrance to Gray's Inn was a Gray's Inn Lane, now Gray's Inn Road, the Holborn entrance being made about the year 1600. The present archway certainly wears a modern aspect: that may be through the old brickwork being stuccoed at a later period. Gray's Inn was famous for its revelling, Masque Plays and other diversions being frequently acted within its walls.

We know for almost certain that one of Shakespeare's plays was performed at Gray's Inn. On

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the even of Innocents' Day, 1594, a play was enacted called "The Comedy of Errors," before the benchers, students and invited guests. During the performance a disturbance was caused by the students of the Inner Temple being dissatisfied with their seating accommodation. A Gray's Inn chronicler describes the scene thus: "Was begun and continued to the end on nothing but confusion and errors, whereupon it was afterwards called the Night of Errors." This same play was given in the identical Hall by members of the Elizabethan Society, 1895. An early representation of a play at Gray's Inn was named "Jocasta," a Greek play, 1566, adapted and translated for the English stage by George Gascoigne and Francis Kenwelmersche, both of Gray's Inn. The first edition of this play is included in the complete works of George Gascoigne, entitled "A Hundred Sundrie Floures," bound up in one small Poem, no date, but issued in 1573. A second edition appeared in 1575, and a third in 1587. There is no record of any stage play or masque being given at Lincoln's Inn.

Jocasta

R

8

NOTES

A Tragedie written in Greeke by Euripides translated and digested into acte by George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmershe of Grayes Inne. 1566

The Argument of the Tragedy

How might the name of wretched Layne and wretched the foule furst of Oedipus the Angry goddes kinde up hee fumed by stryfe his blode embred to reare the offspr of his wife. His mother, and his wounerne maye foure full parte foredrad her fatal fene her smild the deade deliaynet longer life and dead her self the self same bloody kins the daughter to surpris the wretched deade that dunt not daye a lorge some lyfo dege leade yet rather wylde to ynde her banysse fere from exell Oedipus had save his de fere Oedipus the kynge of Thebes of Thebes And Oedipus myrr of my fere

Jocasta,

A Tragedie written in Greek by Euripides, translated and digested into acte by George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmershe, of Grayes Inne, and there by them presented, 1566.



CHAPTER VI  
THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

---

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

PARTS.

Ours be your patience then, and yours  
our parts. *Epilogue, line 5.*

This word bears quite a respectable age of antiquity in its theatrical sense, being so used in the year 1495 in a note to the Coventry Mysteries. "Payd for copying of the 11 Knights partes and demons." The meaning refers to the character assigned or sustained by an actor in a dramatic performance ; also the words assigned to or spoken by an actor in such a character. It also refers to a printed copy of these words :

PLAY.

The King's a beggar, now the play is done.  
*Epilogue, line 1.*

TRAGEDIANS.

What say you to his expertness in war ?  
Faith, sir, had led the drum before the  
English tragedians. *IV, 3, 299.*

Although the sentence is self explanatory, its meaning puzzled me. The contemporary drama has no reference to this somewhat primitive method of advertising. I wrote the following paragraph to *Notes and Queries*, and received the two replies which are here printed.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

FROM *Notes and Queries*.

Shakespereana. All's Well that Ends Well.

In the "Arden Shakespeare," which is the only separate edition of this play that has a full commentary, the important passage, "Has led the drum before the English tragedians," is left unnoticed. I am prepared to wager that not one in a hundred readers of Shakespeare would be able to interpret it. I am not quite certain of its interpretation, and therefore I ask your readers to interpret it. I believe it has reference to the actors who marched through the City accompanied by a drum to call attention to the play they were about to act.

(Sgnd.) MAURICE JONAS.

### REPLIES.

Shakespereana. All's Well that Ends Well. 10 S.  
XI. 30.

In reply to the query as to the meaning of the passage, "Has led the drum before the English tragedians," I offer the following quotation from the *European Magazine* for June, 1788. It refers to the early history of the drama in Birmingham. In about 1740 a theatre was erected in Moor Street, which rather gave a spring to the amusement. In the daytime the comedian beat up for volunteers for the night, delivered his bills of fare and roared out an encomium on the excellence of the entertainment. "In 1751 a company arrived which announced themselves 'His Majesty's Servants from the Theatres Royal in London,' and hoped the public would excuse the ceremony of the drum as beneath the dignity of a London company." The novelty had a surprising effect, the performers had merit, and the house was continually crowded. It is evident, therefore, that the custom was prevalent long after Shakespeare's death. I may add that

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

there is a well-known portrait of Tarlton, the actor, which represents him with a big or small drum.

(Sgnd.) HOWARD S. PEARSON.

### ANOTHER REPLY.

Parolle's ridicule of Capt. Dumain's soldiership by saying that "He led the drum before the English tragedians," IV, III, 298, may be compared to Iago's "That never set a squadron in the field" (Oth. I 1). And in both of those plays, in the scenes just referred to, the "bookish theoretic" of war is satirized. Parolle's comparison of Dumain, with the drummer that preceded a company of strolling players, was probably due to his knowledge of the importance of the soldier that carried the drum with his smatter of languages, and what appeared a ridiculous imitation of the military costume.

The military disliked the players marching to the beats of a drum, and sometimes, when the players entered a town where soldiers were quartered, a fight ensued, often ending in a riot. This explanation may support the point to Parolle's remark. In III, 41, Parolle's vexation at the loss of his drum is not clear from the text, so it is necessary to add that the colours were attached to the instrument in those times.

(Sgnd.) TOM JONES.

Does Tom Jones, in his reply, convey the idea that an English soldier marched in front of the actors? This is quite a conjectural assumption, not a scrap of evidence existing that such was the custom. Since writing my note I came across an allusion bearing on the subject. This appears in a letter written by Lord Hunsdon to the Lord Mayor in 1594, stating that "where my now company of players have been accustomed for the better exercise of their quality and for the service of her Majesty if

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

need so require, to play this winter time within the City at the Cross Keys, in Gracious Street, those are to require and pray your Lordship to permit and suffer them so to do, the which I pray you the rather to do for that they have undertaken for me that where heretofore they began not their plays till towards four o'clock, they will now begin at two and have done between four and five, and will not use any drums or trumpets at all for the calling of the people together, and shall be contributors to the poor of the parish where they play according to their abilities. Halliwell's Illustrations, p. 31, of Remembrancia, p. 353, as quoted in Greg's edition of *Henslowe's Diary*."

In this interesting and important extract nothing is said respecting the actors marching through the City with a drummer at their head. It is a well-known fact that three blasts of a trumpet announced that the play was about to commence. I feel sure something more is known about this practice, although it does not appear in the usual channels of information in reference to this period. At a much later date this custom seems to have prevailed when the actors visited the provinces, but whether it was customary or only occasional cannot be stated with any degree of certainty. Unfortunately, so many questions of Shakesporean interest must be unanswered in a similarly unsatisfactory manner.

Another question of interest arises from this extract. How comes it that the company formerly commenced their plays between four and five even in winter time? The players either acted at a regular theatre or in an inn-yard, and at both places acting took place in the open air. The only solution possible is that the actors rented a large room of one of the inns or taverns and there acted by candlelight, otherwise beginning at such a late hour cannot be accounted for.

# THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

## AS YOU LIKE IT

STAGE, PLAYERS, EXITS, ENTRANCES, PLAYS, PARTS,  
ACTS, SCENE.

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players :  
They have their exits and their entrances ;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages.

Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history.

II, 7, 139.

### ENTRANCES.

Entrances is not used as a stage direction. It is employed here in a special sense of an actor making his appearance on the stage. Exit denotes the departure of an actor from the stage, and is freely used in all the printed editions of Shakespeare's works and in all other dramatic literature. The plural *exeunt* is also used in the same sense. Although *exit* is written and spoken in its Latin form, the word is thoroughly naturalised, whilst *exeunt* is marked in the dictionary as a foreigner. *Man* and *Manet* are also stage directions often to be met with in the old quarto editions ; they signify that the actor or actors whose name or names follow this direction remain on the stage after the others have left ; later dramatists did not use these terms, and now they have become obsolete. As the old quartos were not divided into scenes or acts, these directions generally indicated that the scene or act was concluded. At the end of a few plays the words "*exeunt omnes*" are to be found.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

### ACTOR.

“ Bring us to this sight, and you shall say  
I’ll prove a busy actor in their play.

III, V, 62.

### PLAY.

And so he plays his part.

II, 7, 157.

I charge you, O women, for the love you bear  
to men, to like as much of this play as please you.

*Epilogue.*

I charge you, O men, for the love you bear  
to women, that between you and the women  
the play may please.

*Epilogue.*

### PROLOGUE.

Shall we clap into ’t roundly, without  
hawking or spitting or saying we are hoarse,  
which are the only prologues to a bad voice.

### PLAY.

Full of wise saws and modern instances ;  
And so he plays his part.

II, 7, 157.

### CLOWN.

The roughish clown, at whom so oft your grace  
was wont to laugh at.

II, 1, 8.

Hollow you clown ! Peace, fool ;

It’s meat and drink for me to see a clown.

V, 1, 12.

### EPILOGUE. PLAY.

It is not the fashion to see the lady the  
epilogue. If it be true that good wine needs  
no bush ! ’tis true that a good play needs  
no epilogue, yet to good wine they do use  
bushes ; and good plays prove the better  
by the help of good epilogues. What a case  
am I in then, that am neither a good epi-  
logue, nor cannot insinuate you on the  
behalf of a good play !

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

### PAGEANT.

Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy,  
This wide and universal theatre  
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene  
Wherein we play in. II, 7, 138.

If you will see a pageant truly play'd.  
III, 5, 55.

The general meaning of this word is simply a kind of dumb-show procession similar to our Lord Mayor's Show. One of the earliest meanings of pageant referred to the stage, platform or scaffold on which such scenes were acted. It is a point of contention whether the pageant took its name from the structure or *vice versa*. In course of time, speaking parts were introduced, and then the word became to be applied indiscriminately to all kinds of plays, such as Mystery, Miracle, and Morality Plays, which had by the end of the sixteenth century become obsolete and antiquated.

In the York Miracle Cycle the *Ordo Paginorum*, the order of the pageants, is prefixed to the version of the plays. The Order consisted of different guilds, which took part in the plays represented on Corpus Christi day in the year 1415.

A subjoined quotation from Sir A. W. Ward's *English Dramatists* would support the view that the pageant was provided with speaking parts of short duration. "Those pageants, in the generally accepted later and narrower use of the term, which consisted of moving shows devoid of either action or dialogue." In a pageant given at Westminster Hall, before Henry VIII, an account is extant in which a dialogue is represented as taking place between the ladies and the ambassadors, also the sweet and harmonious saying of the Children. It will be observed that in these passages a germ of

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

dialogue existed which in later years may have assumed such larger proportions as might justify these as being alluded to as plays.

### EPILOGUE.

An address or short poem recital before the audience after the conclusion of a play. Rosalind, the heroine of this comedy, delivered the epilogue. Few dramatists in those days furnished either prologues or epilogues when writing their plays, but after the Restoration, when women played the female parts, the custom became universal and was generally spoken by one of the actresses. Nell Gwynne, when she acted, usually recited these lines. In many instances the epilogues are spoken by a person not connected with the play. There exists some doubt whether Shakespeare wrote the prologues and epilogues prefixed to the printed edition of his plays, the general custom permitting another hand adding these verses. Of course the magnificent prologues in "Henry V" are Shakespeare to the core.

### ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

COMEDIANS. EXTEMPORALLY. REVELS. BOY MY GREATNESS.

The quick comedians  
Extemporally will stage us, and present  
Our Alexandrian revels ! Antony  
shall be brought drunken forth and I shall see  
some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness.  
In the posture of a wanton.

In this celebrated passage many terms are used in connexion with the theatre. The quick comedians were the lively, quick witted actors who, by their inventive methods, will produce a play according to the rules of the *Commedia del' arte*, which is meant

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

by "extemporally will stage us." The meaning of the phrase, some "squeaking Cleopatra will boy my greatness" will be apparent to every one conversant with the theatrical history of Shakespeare's time. At that period of dramatic history no woman was allowed to appear on the public stage, all female characters being represented by boys or men, which custom lasted until the Restoration. It is generally acknowledged that a Mrs. Hughes was the first woman to act on the public stage, appearing in the character of Desdemona. This innovation was of the utmost importance, and an interesting reference was made to this new custom in a specially written prologue by Thomas Jordan.

"I come unknown to any of the rest  
To tell the news I saw the lady drest :  
The woman plays the part to-day ; mistake  
me not,  
No man in gown or page in petticoat."

In comparison with former times, the stage must have reaped an enormous benefit by this change.

"Our women are defective and so sized  
You'd think they were some of the guard  
disguised,  
For to speak truth, men act that are between  
Forty and fifty, wenches of fifteen  
With bone so large and nerve so incompilant,  
When you call Desdemona enter giant."

### PAGEANT.

Thou has seen these signs ; They are  
black vesper's pageants. IV, 14; 8.

### PLAY. SCENE.

Play one scene of excellent dissembly  
And let it look like perfect honour. I, 3, 78.

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### PUPPET.

Thou, an Egyptian puppet, shall be  
shown in Rome, as well as I. V, 2, 208.

### STAGED. SHOW.

And be staged to the show  
against a sworder ! III, 13, 30.

### SHOW-PLACE.

In the common show-place,  
where they exercise. III, 6, 12.

## CYMBELINE

### ACT.

What, makest thou me a dullard in this  
act ? V, 5, 265.

### PLAY. PART.

Shall's have a play of this ?  
Thou scornful page.  
There lie thy part. Striking her, she falls.  
V, 5, 228.

“ Shall's ” in Elizabethan drama is equivalent to our modern “ shall we.” “ There lie thy part,” refers to the part the page shall play by lying down.

### PART. ACT.

That part thou, Pisanio, must act  
for me. III, 4, 26,

## COMEDY OF ERRORS

### JUGGLERS.

They say this town is full of cozenage ;  
As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye.  
I, 2, 98.

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In mediæval times Jugglers were frequently to be met with at the Court, being well received by an admiring audience. Their entertainment consisted of catching knives, tossing balls and feats of balancing. Such diversions even at the present day evoke unstinted applause, especially if practised by a Cinquevalli. The word is derived from the Latin *joculare*, to jest; the early meaning, which is now obsolete, denoted one who entertains or amuses people by shows, songs, buffoonery and tricks. It also bore the meaning of magician, wizard, or sorcerer.

### MOUNTEBANK.

A mere anatomy, a mountebank, A threadbare juggler. V, 1, 239.

A well known character in Shakespeare's time. This entertainer performed at street corners, who, from an elevated position, addressed and amused his audience by means of stories, tricks, juggling and all forms of quackery, in which he was generally assisted by a professional clown or fool. Derived from the Italian *Montebanchi*, to mount a bench.

## CORIOLANUS

### MUMMERS.

If you chance to be pinched with the colic, you make faces like mummers. II, 1, 83

In the fourteenth century, mummings were the customary entertainments held at the Court on festive occasions. They consisted of men in masquerade, performing in dumb show, with the addition of dancing. The word is derived from mum, an articulate sound made with closed lips. Anyone taking part in these mummings was called a mummer. The meaning of the word in its slang and

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contemptuous reference to an actor is of quite modern date. These mummings or disguisings—both these terms were used indifferently—continued to be presented until the first quarter of the sixteenth century, at which date they assumed the name of masks, and were of a more elaborate nature than the older form of entertainment, speaking parts being added, which were generally written in verse. This is the only instance in which Shakespeare uses the word.

### ACTING. PART.

It is a part that I shall blush in acting.

II, 2, 149

### ACTOR.

Like a dull actor now, I have forgot my part, and I am out.

V, 3, 40

### SCENE. ACT.

When he might act the woman in the scene, He proved the best man. II, 2, 100

The gods look down, and this unnatural scene they laugh at.

V, 3, 184

### PROMPT.

So then the Volsces stand but as at first ;

Ready, when time shall prompt them to make road upon's again. III, 1, 6

Come, come, we'll prompt you. III, 2, 95

## HAMLET

### ACT.

When thou see'st that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe mine uncle. III, 2, 83

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

You that look pale and tremble at this chance  
That are but mutes or audience to this act.

V, 2, 346

### ACTED.

I heard thee speak a speech once, but  
it was never acted.

II, 2, 455

### ACTOR.

When Roscius was an actor in Rome, The  
actors are come hither.

II, 2, 410

Then came each actor on his ass. The best  
actors in the world.

II, 2, 416

### HAMLET :

My Lord, you played once i' the university,  
you say ?

### POLONIUS :

That did I, my lord, and was accounted a  
good actor.

III, 2, 106

### ABRIDGEMENT.

For look, where my abridgement comes.

II, 2, 439

### ARGUMENT.

There was for a while no money bid for  
argument.

II, 2, 273

Belike this show imports the argument  
of the play.

III, 2, 149

Have you heard the argument ? Is there  
no offence in it ?

III, 2, 242

The argument of a play signified the plot or the subject matter under discussion. The word in this sense is now obsolete, although much in use in Elizabethan times, and frequently employed by several dramatists of the period.

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### AUDIENCE.

They are but mutes or audience to this act.

V, 2, 398

### CHORUS.

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

III, 2, 255

### CUE.

What would he do

Had he the motive and the cue for passion

That I have ?

III, 2, 587

TRAGEDY. COMEDY. HISTORY. PASTORAL.

### POLONIUS :

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral ; tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical - pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited ; Seneca cannot be too heavy, not Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

II, 2, 415

By the above speech Polonius must have been fairly well acquainted with the actors, and the repertoire of the tragedians of the city. The list describing the different styles of composition are somewhat exaggerated, but not to such an extent as appears at first sight. Evidence of the lengthy repertory of the Globe can be gleaned from an extract concerning a licence granted in 1603 to the Globe company. Permission is given "freely to use the, and exercise the, Arte and facultie of playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterludes Moralls, Pastoralls and stage plaies, and such other like." The phrase "scene individable" refers to the dramas, scrupulously adhering to the Unity of

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Place, a rule so carefully observed by classical writers. "Poem unlimited" may have expressed the antithesis to scene indivisible. The mention of Seneca and Plautus takes us back to the dramatic writers of antiquity. Seneca's tragedies were translated into English and published in 1581. There are many allusions in English literature to these blood-curdling dramas. Nash, the Elizabethan dramatist and pamphleteer, thus describes the works of the Latin author: "Yet English Seneca read by candle-light yields many good sentences as 'Blood is a beggar,' and so forth, and if you entreat him fair on a frosty morning he will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls, of tragical speeches. But o grief *Tempus edax rerum*, what's that will last always? The sea exhaled by drops will in continuance be dry, and Seneca let blood line by line and page by page at length must needs die to our stage."

I possess an original edition of Seneca's work in Latin, printed at Venice in the year 1498. The volume contains the ten tragedies, which were rendered into English by Thomas Newton and other writers. The "Hamlet" here referred to is an older play than Shakespeare's "Hamlet," and presumably written by Thomas Kyd, to which Shakespeare was immeasurably indebted. Traces of this play may survive in the 1603 quarto of "Hamlet." The relation of the 1603 quarto of "Hamlet" to the received text is one of the most puzzling subjects in all Shakesporean literature. The exact relationship still awaits solution. Plautus was a Latin dramatist, one of whose plays had been translated into English. The "Menaechmi" was rendered into the vernacular by William Warner and published in 1595. The translation acquaints us with the fact that before publication the play had been circulated in MS. Shakespeare's play of

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the "Comedy of Errors" is founded on Plautus's comedy. Whether Shakespeare went direct to the original or copied from Warner or any other translation cannot be decided. Somewhat puzzling is the question in discovering the grammatical subject of "these are the only men." Does Polonius refer to the law of writ and the liberty or the "best actors of the world." "Writ and liberty" bear the same meaning as "scene indivisible or poem unlimited." The phrases may be intended as a compliment to the poets who were distinguished in both classes of composition, or perhaps the actors were the only men, who by their expert knowledge were capable of acting in all kinds of plays, whether a written composition or extempore plays.

### CELLARAGE.

Come on ; you hear this fellow in the cellarage.

Consent to sweat.

I, V, 151

This quotation possibly refers to some kind of contrivance in use underneath the stage. Trap-doors in the Elizabethan theatre were an indispensable feature of the stage setting. From the stage of to-day they have entirely disappeared, with the exception of pantomime, where they are still much in evidence. The Ghost in "Hamlet" apparently made his entrance and his exit by one of these trap-doors. Several dramatists made use of these doors in introducing their characters upon the stage. The exact spot in which they were situated cannot be indicated ; only in one instance can it be clearly defined. Ben Jonson, in his Induction to the Poetaster marks the trap-door in the centre of the stage. One may also have existed in the upper stage, but this suggestion is quite problematical. Spectators at the Blackfriars Theatre were allowed stools on the

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stage. Considering that trap-doors were situated all over the stage, the stool-holders must have had their allotted space marked off, otherwise they would have interfered with the stage setting.

### DUMB SHOW.

Capable of nothing but inexplicable  
dumb-shows and noise.

III, 2, 14

### HAUTBOYS PLAY. THE DUMB-SHOW ENTERS.

III, 2, 145

Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly ; the Queen embracing him and he her. She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up and reclines his head upon her neck ; lays him down upon a bank of flowers ; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns ; finds the King dead and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner woos the Queen with gifts ; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts, his love.

*Exeunt.*

I have quoted the dumb-show scene in full, as only in rare instances in English dramatic literature is the action of the play foretold by such means. Why Shakespeare employed this confused method cannot be conjectured. Surely Hamlet exhibiting, through the dumb-show, how his father was murdered would naturally put the King upon his guard ; the very thing he sought to avoid. The dumb-show undoubtedly detracts from the climax

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of the play-scene, and must be considered a serious blunder on the part of the dramatist in having introduced this artless and old-fashioned piece of machinery. The commentators give no valid excuse for its introduction. Halliwell-Phillipps makes the silly suggestion that the King and Queen should be whispering together during the scene, and so escape seeing it. A more ridiculous note by a great Shakespearean scholar has never been printed.

### ENACT.

What did you enact? I did enact

Julius Cæsar, I was killed in the Capitol.

Brutus killed me.

III, 2, 107.

Besides writing a play called "Julius Cæsar," Shakespeare introduces his name on several occasions; apparently he was one of the poet's favourite characters. I am afraid Shakespeare did not verify his quotations; many simple errors occur through Shakespeare copying them from other authors, whilst the critics, from sheer ignorance, always lay them on Shakespeare's shoulders, thus making him the scapegoat for other's mistakes. Of course, from the point of view of modern scholarship, it is a grave error in placing Cæsar's assassination in the Capitol; Plutarch expressly states that Cæsar met his death at Pompey's portico, where a statue of his famous rival stood in the centre. The dramatist was on the right track when Marc Antony, in his oration, describes the place where Cæsar fell:

"Then burst his mighty heart,  
And in his mantle, muffling up his face,  
Even at the base of Pompey's statue,  
Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell."

Julius Cæsar was murdered in the "Curia," Pompey near the theatre of Pompey, in the Campus

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Martius. Chaucer commits the same blunder in believing that Cæsar was stabbed in the Capitol. In Shakespeare's play of "Julius Cæsar" the same error was repeated. An ancient statue, which was discovered in 1553 and now stands in the Sala dell' Udianza of the Spada Palace at Rome, may be the identical statue of Pompey, at the base of which great Cæsar fell. Plutarch relates how at the very base where Pompey's statue stood, which ran all gore blood, till he was slain. Plutarch's celebrated lives of the Grecians and Romans was translated into English by Thomas North in 1579, from the French version of Jacques Amyot, first printed in 1559. Four editions were issued before North made his translation without studying the text very minutely, a difficulty arises in determining which edition North used. This book was Shakespeare's constant companion, and many of North's vigorous prose passages are turned into verse with very little alteration. This volume was in the library of Molière's mother, and was frequently consulted by the great French comic poet. The author was in great vogue during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it may well be considered the most popular book of those times among educated people. During the last hundred years the work has lost much of its popularity, few people of the present day having read it. I doubt if many who profess themselves readers of good literature know the author, even by name. So much for our educational system. I possess a copy of the first Greek edition, dated 1517, formerly in the possession of the Duke of Sussex; besides the rare first French edition, 1559, which I recently purchased from the catalogue of a lady provincial bookseller.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

### GROUNDLINGS.

To split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise.

III, II, 12

That part of the theatre, corresponding to our pit, was called the yard, and the spectators who stood in the enclosure were dubbed groundlings, the word being associated with the general sense of ground. "Your groundlings and gallery-commoner buys his sport by the penny." The price of admission to this part of a public theatre, such as the Globe, was one penny. At the Blackfriars, a private theatre, there was no open yard. In Jonson's play of "The Case is Altered" one of the characters explains: "Tut, give me the penny, give me the penny. I care not for the gentleman, I, let me have good ground." The same dramatist, in another play, designates these spectators as the understanding gentlemen of the ground. Judging by contemporary accounts, the yard was the most uncomfortable place for enjoying the performance, the enclosure was bare of any sitting accommodation, neither was there any flooring, being generally overcrowded; there was no room for stools. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the people flocked to this part of the theatre, which, at most of the public theatres, held about a thousand spectators. In proof of this statement I will quote some verses from Marlowe's Epigrams and Elegies, translated from Ovid's *Amores* :

" For as we see  
The playhouse doors  
When ended is the play, the dance and song,  
A thousand townsmen, gentlemen and wantons,  
Porters and serving men, together throng."

These lines were published circa 1596, and have

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never been quoted before in reference to the stage, and I regard them, on my part, in the light of a discovery. When every nook and cranny of Elizabethan literature has been diligently ransacked in quest of materials for illuminating theatrical matters, it is all the more surprising that this passage should have been overlooked. The reason may be that in this poem some of the verses were too highly coloured for respectable literary folk, but in spite of this obstacle I considered it my duty as a student to read the book diligently from page to page in hopes of finding some reference to the early stage, and in this instance I was amply rewarded. This volume of amorous verses was one of the books condemned to be burnt at Canterbury by Archbishop Whitgift in 1599. By a strange coincidence, the original of this volume was banned from the public libraries by order of the Emperor Augustus.

### HOBBY HORSE.

For O, for O, the hobby-horse is forgot.

III, 2, 144

Although only distantly connected with the stage, the mention of this well-known feature in the May games proves that Shakespeare was well versed in all matters connected with the festivities of the village homes. The hobby-horse was one of the principal actors, taking part in the Morris Dance, this dance being considered the chief attraction of the May games. Hobby was originally the name of a small horse chiefly of Irish breed ; when figuring in the festivities under this name it was represented by a paste board painted figure of a horse, attached to a frame of wicker wood or other light material, and was fastened round the waist of a man, his own legs, going through the body of the horse, were concealed by a long foot-cloth, thus enabling

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him to walk unseen, while false legs appeared where those of the man should have been, at the sides of the horse. Thus equipped, he executed various antics in imitation of a skittish high-spirited animal. The name of the performer was also called the hobby-horse. The phrase is now obsolete, but the word hobby is now associated with the occupation of collecting various works of art or trivial things, which is compared to the riding of a toy horse. The present quotation may be a line now lost from an old ballad, in which the omission of the hobby-horse from the May games was the principal theme. The figure of a man riding a hobby-horse is depicted on a glass window at Betley Church, Staffordshire. This identical sentence is often mentioned in Elizabethan literature, which would indicate that at this period it had ceased to form a part of the rustic games. As an instance showing the disfavour into which the hobby-horse had fallen, Hope-on-high Bomby, a character in "A Woman Pleas'd," by Beaumont and Fletcher, throws off his hobby-horse and will no more engage in the Morris Dance. Last summer I witnessed some very interesting Morris Dances performed on the Green in the Hampstead Garden Suburb, but was disappointed in not seeing the hobby-horse. "For O, For O, the hobby-horse is forgot," I exclaimed in a loud voice, but no one heeded me, and the dances continued.

JIG.

Prithee, say on, he's for a jig or a tale of  
bawdry, or else he sleeps. II, 2, 522

This is the only instance in which Shakespeare uses the word in its connexion with the dramatic history of the stage. In this sense the word is now obsolete. Until quite lately, no specimen of this form of dramatic literature was extant, yet the



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gentleman makes love to his own wife in the belief that she is the farmer's wife. When he discovers his mistake he is forgiven and all ends happily. We may readily assume that many such pieces still exist in manuscript which have not yet come to light. We owe a debt to Mr. Clark for having published this highly interesting example, illustrating a popular theatrical amusement of the Tudor period. The Spanish dramas of this date also had their jigs, which were called "bayles," always accompanied by words, either sung or recited, and, of course, by dancing.

### LINES.

But if you mouth it, as many of your players do,  
I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines.

III, 2, 4

These lines refer to the delivery of the speech, inserted by Hamlet in the play scene. Apparently Shakespeare did not appreciate this boisterous school of acting, which was of a pompous oratorical style, uttering the words with great distinctness of articulation, amounting almost to affectation; in brief, a species of ranting. In poetry, verses are termed lines. Milton, in his ode to Shakespeare, prefixed to the Second Folio, 1632, writes :

“ . . . and that each part  
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued Book  
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took.”

“Unvalued” in the above quotation is here used for our modern word “invaluable.” Shakespeare uses the word in both its ancient and modern definitions, namely, “Inestimable stones, unvalued Jewels,” in “Richard III,” and once in “Hamlet,” “He may not as unvalued persons do Carve for himself.”

An actor of to-day still refers to the words of his part as his lines. A further instance of ranting occurs

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in Churchill's "Roliad," where he speaks disparagingly of an actor in the following couplet :

He mouths a sentence  
As a cur mouths a bone.

Shakespeare himself refers to his "untutored lines" in the dedication of "Lucrece" to the Earl of Southampton.

### PART.

The humourous-man shall end his part in peace.

II, 2, 336

In this passage the "humourous man" has no connection with the funny or comical character in our present day melodramas. The meaning in this latter sense is first used at the end of the seventeenth century. The Shakesperean sense was moody, peevish, or capricious, ever ready in entering into a quarrel, and represented by such characters as Mercutio, Jacques, and Faulconbridge.

### PLAY.

He that plays the King shall be welcome. II, 2, 332  
The play I remember pleased not the million.

II, 2, 456

An excellent play well digested in the scenes.

II, 2, 46

We'll hear a play to-morrow. Dost thou hear me?  
Old friend, can you play the murder of Gonzago?  
II, 2, 56

I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play  
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,  
Been struck so to the soul, that presently  
They have proclaimed their malefactions.

II, 2, 618

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- I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father. II, 2, 624
- The play's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. II, 2, 663
- They have already order  
This night to play before him. III, 1, 21
- After the play  
Let the queen mother alone entreat him. III, 1, 189
- O, there be players that I have seen play. III, 2, 33
- Let those that play your clowns speak no more  
than is set down for them. III, 2, 43
- Though, in the meantime, some necessary question  
of the play be then to be considered. III, 2, 47
- There is a play to-night before the king. III, 2, 80
- If I steal ought whilst the play is playing  
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft. III, 2, 93
- They are coming to the play I must be idle. III, 2, 98
- Belike this show imports the argument of the play. III, 2, 150
- You are naught, you are naught, I'll mark the play. III, 2, 158
- Madam, how like you the play? III, 2, 239

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What do you call the play? The Mouse trap.  
III, 2, 246

The play is the image of a murder done in Vienna.  
III, 2, 265

Give o'er the play. Give me some light, Away.  
III, 2, 279

Ere I could make a prologue to my brains  
They had begun the play. V, 2, 31

### PLAYED.

My lord, you played once i' the university, you  
say. III, 2, 104

### PLAYER.

What lenten entertainment the players shall receive  
from you. III, 2, 329

What players are they? Even those you were wont  
to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.  
II, 2, 365

Unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the  
question. II, 2, 373

There are the players.  
You are welcome to Elsinore. II, 2, 386

Lest my extent to the players should more appear  
like entertainment than yours. II, 2, 391

I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players.  
II, 2, 406

Will you see the players well bestowed. II, 2, 547

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- Is it not monstrous that this player here  
But in a fiction in a dream of passion  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit.  
II, 2, 577
- I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father.  
II, 2, 623
- It so fell out that certain players  
We o'er-raught in the way.  
II, 1, 16
- If you mouth it as many of your players do.  
I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines.  
III, 2, 3
- O, there be players that I have seen play. III, 3, 32
- Bid the players make haste. III, 2, 54
- Be the players ready. III, 2, 111
- The players cannot keep counsel, they tell all.  
III, 2, 162
- Will not this—get me a fellowship in a cry of  
players. III, 2, 289

### PLAYING.

Anything so overdone is from the purpose of play-  
ing. III, 2, 23

If he steal aught whilst the play is playing.  
III, 2, 93

### PROLOGUE.

And prologue to the omen coming on. I, 1, 123

Is this a prologue or the posy of a ring. III, 2, 123  
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains  
They had begun the play. V, 2, 30

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### QUALITY.

Will they pursue the quality no longer than they  
can sing ? II, 2, 268

We'll have a speech straight, come give us a taste  
of your quality, come a passionate speech.  
III, 2, 451

In Shakespeare's time the word was used technically, as applying to the profession of acting ; in this sense the word is now obsolete. "Players, I love ye and your quality," is a quotation from Davies' "Microcosm," 1603.

### SCENE.

Scene individable or poem unlimited. II, 2, 418

An excellent play well digested in the scenes.  
II, 2, 418

Have by the very cunning of the scene. II, 2, 619.

One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death.  
III, 2, 81

### SHOW.

Belike this show imports the argument of the play.  
III, 2, 149

Will he tell us what this show meant. III, 2, 153

The word show in both these passages refers to the dumb-show which caused Ophelia to make these remarks. Although in modern slang the word show is used in connexion with a dramatic entertainment, this meaning did not exist in Shakespeare's time : its only meaning in a theatrical sense, in the sixteenth century was of a spectacular nature, such as pageants, masques or processions on a large scale.

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### STAGE.

These are now the fashion and so berattle the  
common stages. II, 2, 358

He would drown the stage with tears. II, 2, 588

### TRAGEDIAN.

Those who were wont to take such delight in the  
tragedians of the city. II, 2, 324

### TRAGEDY.

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy,  
comedy, history. II, 2, 416

For us and for our tragedy. III, 2, 159

### TRAGICAL.

Tragical, historical, tragical comical, historical  
pastoral. II, 2, 417

### VICE.

A vice of kings.

A king of shreds and patches. III, IV, 98

The vice in the old morality was usually of a  
humourous and malicious character, deriving his  
name from the vicious qualities attributed to him  
in the old morality plays. His nature was wholly  
mischievous, and this trait permeated his entire  
being. The vice was generally dressed in a fool's  
habit, hence the further reference to a king of  
shreds and patches. One of the meanings of patch  
is a piece of cloth sewed together, with others of  
varying shape and size and colour to form patch-  
work or adorn a garment. Shakespeare having  
previously alluded to the vice or fool, by association  
of ideas refers in a few lines later to his many-  
coloured garment.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

HAMLET.

Why did you laugh then, when I said " man delights not me ? "

ROSENCRANTZ.

To think, my lord, if you delight not in man what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you. We coted them on the way, and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

HAM.

He that plays the king shall be welcome ; his Majesty shall have tribute of me ; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target ; the lover shall not sigh gratis ; the humourous man shall end his part in peace ; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are ticle o' the sere, and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they ?

ROS.

Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

HAM.

How chances it they travel ? Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

ROS.

I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

HAM.

Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city ? Are they so followed ?

ROS.

No, indeed they are not.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

HAM.

How comes it ? Do they grow rusty ?

Ros.

Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonter place ; but there is, sir, an eyrie of children, little eyeases, that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapped for 't. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither.

HAM.

What, are they children ? Who maintains 'em ? How are they escorted ? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing ? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better, their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession.

Ros.

Faith, there has been much to do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy ; there was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

HAM.

Is't possible ?

GUILDENSTERN.

O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

HAM.

Do the boys carry it away ?

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

Ros.

Ay, that they do, my lord. Hercules and his load,  
too.

This passage is particularly interesting to Shakespearean students, introducing as it does one of those veiled allusions to the contemporary stage, under the cloak of carrying on the ordinary dialogues of the play. The most unobservant reader will notice that this conversation in no way furthers the action of the play, and was simply brought in on a set purpose to interest the spectators in certain theatrical events of the day. Shakespeare, frequently in his dramas, refers to topical events which were quite clear to his audience, but in the course of ages the allusions were forgotten, and now only have a shadowy existence. A few commentators still squabble over these so-called references, in most instances failing to see any contemporary event embedded in the text, while others would discover contemporary allusions throughout a great majority of the plays. These topical references must be treated sensibly and logically; the safest plan is to completely ignore them without ample evidence is forthcoming of their real existence, otherwise it will surely lead the commentator into various pitfalls. Weaving imaginary theories out of these passages, which many editors of the past most delight in, is simplicity itself, but the modern reader very justly demands conclusive evidence before giving credence to these wild assumptions. In the above passage there can hardly exist a doubt that some stage event of the day is here discussed; the difficulty is to pluck out the heart of the mystery in the words "inhibition" and "innovation." Although the scene is laid in Denmark, every reader will surely —  
understand that Shakespeare is referring to the —  
stage in London. By the tragedians of the city his —

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

own audience would be quick in detecting a reference to the celebrated actors of the Globe Theatre, which included the famous Richard Burbage, the creator of Hamlet and many other leading Shakespearian characters. In the query "how chances it they travel," there is a reference to the custom of the London companies making their provincial tours. These tours were organized when the London theatres were closed, occurring chiefly through the raging of the plague, or want of funds necessary in carrying out a London season, or by some drastic measure imposed by certain authorities. One fact is certain, every company, whether successful or unsuccessful, made these regular provincial tours, evidence of which is abundant, and can be found in the archives of the principal towns in England.

By Hamlet's question it would appear that only unsuccessful companies quitted the Metropolis, but on that point I can offer no satisfactory answer, except that Shakespeare in this passage was not alluding to the custom of the theatrical profession of his own times which, I think most readers will agree with me, is most unlikely.

The next quotation presents even greater difficulties. "I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation." To anyone unacquainted with the theatrical practices of the Elizabethan times, this passage is altogether meaningless, even those possessing the requisite knowledge, the exact interpretation can only be dimly surmised. That there was some definite allusion to some theatrical event of the day, which the audience clearly understood is certain, otherwise the passage would have been explained in a further conversation. Now our duty is to pierce this Cimmerian darkness by discovering the true history of this inhibition, likewise the origin of the innovation. The word inhibition

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

refers to the act of inhibiting or forbidding, a prohibition formally issued by a person or body possessed of civil authority. Innovation means the action of innovating or the introduction of novelties. A change made in the nature or fashion of anything. Something newly introduced, a novel practice or method. Armed with these dictionary explanations we can now proceed in applying them to the present passage.

If we might take a liberty with the text and follow Dr. Johnson's emendation, we immediately get rid of one of the difficulties. Dr. Johnson proposed to transpose the order of the words to read: "I think their innovation comes by the means of the late inhibition." By this simple expedient innovation would refer to their new practice of strolling and the inhibition to the cause of it.

In my opinion this new reading is a most ingenious correction, and if adopted would remove the difficulty of making Hamlet grasp immediately the cause of the innovation which was certainly unknown to him. By explaining innovation as referring to their travelling or strolling, and inhibition as a command to quit the Metropolis, for some offence, the answer appears satisfactory and needs no further elucidation. But this tampering with the text is high treason in the Shakesporean sense, and other solutions more in conformity with the rules of the game must be suggested. It is just possible that the word inhibition is a corruption due to the compositor mishearing the word exhibition, meaning that the players were exhibiting themselves in the country for some offence or other.

Theobald, the greatest of all Shakesporean commentators, suggested the word itineration, clearly indicating that he thought the word was a corruption.

The city and local authorities frequently prohibited the actors from playing in their theatres;

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

sometimes refusing permission on account of the plague, on other occasions for disturbances caused by the gathering of a large concourse of people, more often by their prejudice and utter dislike of all theatrical performances. Any light pretext was sufficient to order an inhibition. In this particular instance it is difficult to account for any inhibition by the authorities. The innovation certainly referred to the competition of the child performers, although in Shakespeare's time it was no innovation, the children having acted for many years previously. The Blackfriars Theatre was given up to the Children of the Queen's Revels and the Children of the Royal Chapel and other boy companies, which the Queen encouraged not only by her presence at the Blackfriars Theatre but by allowing them several privileges. The Children of St. Paul's were also a rival company, and acted with great applause, several dramatists of eminence writing plays for them as well as for the Blackfriars brigade. Hamlet bitterly laments these innovations, for which he has my hearty approval, the child performer on the stage or in the drawing room being my *bête noire*. Shakespeare's sympathies being entirely on behalf of the men players. Other causes for the closing of the theatres were the custom of introducing matters of state and religion upon the stage, for which cause the Admiral and the Strange companies were severely censured and, no doubt, obliged to retire for a season. Personal abuse was also rampant, and led to the war of the theatres, a controversy carried on with much bitterness on all sides. Satirizing living persons and impersonating their peculiarities was another feature of the stage, which caused the imprisonment of Nash, the well-known dramatist. Lord Strange's company got into a great scrape for playing the deposition scene in "Richard the Second," much to the annoyance and anger of the

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

Queen, at the time of the Essex rebellion. The Queen is reported to have said, " Know ye not that I am Richard the Second ? " For this offence they were debarred from acting at Court, and also in London. During their prohibition they acted in the provinces, but it is hardly likely that Shakespeare would refer to his own company as being in disgrace. I only cite these instances as showing the theatrical customs of the day, and incidentally throwing light on the topical allusion in this passage. Attentive readers of Shakespeare's works will in course of their perusal come across several of these tantalizing references, which are all the more interesting on account of the difficulty in solving them. Many a passage which runs so smoothly in the modern text owes its simplicity to the untiring efforts and scholarship of previous editors. One such editor, the famous Theobald, was a genius in restoring the true reading out of a mass of corruption in which he found the text, also in interpreting for later generations out of the way classical allusions and ancient customs. Some of his restorations and interpretations can only be considered as inspired, and all Shakesperean students should revere his memory. Without the aid of Theobald hundreds of passages would still have remained unintelligible, and Shakespeare himself owes him a debt of gratitude.

### COMMON PLAYERS.

John Stephens, in his *Essays and Characters*, 1615, thus describes a common player : " Therefore did I prefix an epithet of ' common ' to distinguish the base and artlesse appendants of our city companies, which oftentimes start away into rustically wanderers and then, like Proteus, start back again into the citty number."

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

### HAMLET'S ADVICE TO THE PLAYERS.

III, 2.

HAM.

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue ; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much, with your hand, thus ; but use all gently ; for in the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the wound to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant ; it out-herods Herod ; pray you, avoid it.

FIRST PLAYER.

I warrant your honour.

HAM.

Be not too tame neither, but let your discretion be your tutor ; suit the action to the word, the word to the action ; with this special observance that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature, for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature ; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it makes the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious

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grieve ; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. Oh, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journey-men had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

### FIRST PLAY.

I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

### HAM.

Oh, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them, for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime some necessary question of the play be then to be considered ; that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it.

In this passage the whole art of the actor is set down for all time. Only a practised and enthusiastic actor, who in reality was in love with his profession, and who saw the educating force and dignity of his calling, could have drawn up such an ennobling picture of the responsibility entrusted to the impersonators of the characters, who embodied the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. Voice, gesture, deportment; the actor's indispensable gifts, are all in due proportion given prominence, nothing is forgotten, so that the mimic representative shall be as perfect as the exigencies of the stage will allow.

A copy of these rules should be hung up in every

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theatre of the land, so that the actor should be impressed with the dignity and elevating powers of his profession. There be players that I have seen who would have well profited by reading this passage before setting foot on the stage. It was not only in Shakespeare's days that reformation was needed : how often in our days is a well-written part mangled out of recognition by the slovenliness and stupidity of the impersonator. Study this speech, and, if you are in danger of forgetting it, study it again ; it is the very alpha and omega of your great art. Shakespeare's motive in assigning this speech to Hamlet may be for the better instruction of the actor in delivering the dozen or sixteen lines, which Hamlet inserted in the play of Gonzago's murder. " But if you mouth, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines." Considering that Hamlet was collaborating in the play, which was to be played before the King and Queen he was naturally interested in its production. On the other hand, it seems rather presumptuous for an amateur to dictate to a professional how a play should be acted, especially in this instance, when Hamlet had already tested the quality of the actor by hearing his recital of a scene out of Æneas' tale of Dido, which he afterwards criticised, eulogising the admirable manner in which the player had acquitted himself. When witnessed on the stage these trifling discrepancies pass unnoticed, but in the study, when the plays are submitted to a microscopical examination, the inexactitudes make us reflect, and in the cold light of reason accuse Shakespeare of being a careless writer.

### THE MURDER OF GONZAGO.

HAM.

Dost thou hear me, old friend ; can you play the  
" Murder of Gonzago ? "

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

### FIRST PLAY.

Ay, my lord.

HAM.

We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in 't. Could you not ?

### FIRST PLAY.

Ay, my lord.

I have read most of the tales of the Italian novelists, but can find nothing answering to the description of the "Murder of Gonzago." Hamlet refers in a later part of the play to the murder having been committed in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name, his wife's Baptista. In the dumb-show Gonzago is the King and Baptista the Queen, but in the dialogue they are named Duke and Duchess, a trivial oversight, due either to haste or carelessness ; many such slight inaccuracies are found throughout Shakespeare's works. The historians of Urbino mention a Duke of that state married to a Gonzago. Professor Dowden relates that this Duke was murdered in the same manner as the king in the dumb-show. He gives no reference for this statement. The Duke referred to was renowned for the splendour of his Court, also for his patronage of learning and the fine arts. He married Elizabeth Gonzago, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Gonzago, Lord of Mantua. This Duke of Urbino was created a Knight of the Garter by Edward the Fourth ; he died quite peacefully in 1508. I feel almost positive a story existed in which the details correspond to the action in the dumb-show. When Hamlet asks the first actor if he remembers the speech of Æneas' tale to Dido all the critics thought that Shakespeare

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

had invented the speech, but afterwards an unfinished play by Marlowe, completed by Nash, was discovered; it was entitled "Dido, Queen of Carthage." A paraphrase of Marlowe's lines is contained in Shakespeare's version. Possibly some day we may discover the original story of the Murder of Gonzago.

You could for a need study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines. II, 2, 560.

Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck; lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.

OPH.

What means this, my lord?

HAM.

Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

OPH.

Belike this show imports the argument of the play?  
(*Enter Prologue.*)

HAM.

We shall know by this fellow; the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

OPH.

Will he tell us what this show meant ?

HAM.

Ay, or any show that you'll show him ; be not you  
ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you  
what it means.

OPH.

You are naught, you are naught ; I'll mark the play.

PRO.

For, us and for our tragedy  
Here stooping to your clemency,  
We beg your hearing patiently.

HAM.

Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring ?

OPH.

'Tis brief, my lord.

HAM.

As woman's love.

*(Enter two Players, King and Queen.)*

P. KING.

Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round  
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,  
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen  
About the world have times twelve thirties been,  
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands  
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

P. QUEEN.

So many journeys may the sun and moon  
Make us again count o'er ere love be done !  
But, woe is me ! you are so sick of late,

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

So far from cheer and from your former state,  
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,  
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must ;  
For women's fear and love holds quantity  
In neither aught, or in extremity.  
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know,  
And as my love is sized, my fear is so ;  
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear,  
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. KING.

Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too ;  
My operant powers their functions leave to do ;  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
Honour'd, beloved ; and haply one as king  
For husband shalt thou ——.

P. QUEEN.

Oh, confound the rest !  
Such love must needs be treason in my breast ;  
In second husband let me be accurst !  
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

HAM (*Aside*).

Wormwood, wormwood !

P. QUEEN.

The instances that second marriage move  
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love ;  
A second time I kill my husband dead,  
Then second husband kisses me in bed.

P. KING.

I do believe you think what now you speak,  
But what we do determine oft we break.  
Purpose is but the slave to memory,  
Of violent birth but poor validity ;  
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

But fall unshaken when they mellow be.  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt ;  
What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.  
The violence of either grief or joy  
Their own enactures with themselves destroy ;  
Where joy most revels grief doth most lament ;  
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.  
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange  
That even our loves should with our fortunes change  
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,  
Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.  
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies ;  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies ;  
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend ;  
For who not needs shall never lack a friend ;  
And who in want a hollow friend doth try  
Directly seasons him his enemy.  
But, orderly to end where I begun,  
Our wills and fates do so contrary run  
That our devices still are overthrown,  
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own ;  
So think thou wilt no second husband wed,  
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

P. QUEEN.

Nor earth to me give food nor heaven light !  
Sport and repose lock from me day and night !  
To desperation turn my trust and hope !  
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope !  
Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,  
Meet what I would have well and it destroy !  
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,  
If, once a widow, ever I be wife !

HAM.

If she should break it now !

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

P. KING.

'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile ;  
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile  
The tedious day with sleep.

P. QUEEN.

Sleep rock thy brain ;  
And never come mischance between us twain !  
(Exit).

HAM.

Madam, how like you this play ?

QUEEN.

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

HAM.

O, but she'll keep her word.

KING.

Have you heard the argument ? Is there no offence  
in 't ?

HAM.

No, no ; they do but jest, poison in jest ; no offence  
the world.

KING.

What do you call the play ?

HAM.

The Mouse-trap. Marry, how ? Tropically. This  
play is the image of a murder done in Vienna ;  
Gonzago is the duke's name ; his wife's, Bap-  
tista : You shall see anon ; 'tis a knavish piece  
of work ; but what o' that ? your majesty, and  
we that have free souls, it touches us not ; let  
the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

(Enter Player, as Lucianus.)

(This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.)

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

OPH.

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

HAM.

Begin, murderer : pox, leave thy damnable faces and begin. Come : the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

LUC.

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing ;  
Confederate season, else no creature seeing ;  
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property,  
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

*(Pours the poison into the Sleeper's ears.)*

HAM.

He poisons him i' the garden for 's estate. His name's Gonzago ; the story is extant, and written in very choice Italian ; you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPH.

The king rises !

HAM.

What, frightened with false fire !

QUEEN.

How fares my lord ?

POL.

Give o'er the play.

KING.

Give me some light.—Away !

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

ALL.

Lights, lights, lights !

The question arises : were the lines which Hamlet proposed to write inserted in the play, and if so, can they be identified. Professor Seeley and others would fix on the lines commencing the player King's speech : " I do believe you think what now you speak " (III, 2, 196), until " Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own " (III, 2, 223). The sentiments contained in these verses are, for the most part, trite aphorisms in no way affecting the murder scene, and can on that account be entirely rejected. The speech of Lucianus, commencing " Thoughts black " (III, 2, 266), are certainly more apt for the occasion, and had the desired effect of alarming the King. Had these lines numbered sixteen instead of six there would have been greater plausibility in assigning them to Hamlet. The intention was that these lines should have a direct bearing upon the play, and form an integral part of the whole, therefore these verses must also be dismissed. We can only surmise that Shakespeare intended the audience to believe that he in some measure revised a scene in the " Murder of Gonzago " to suit the present circumstances, which would avoid the improbability that a play existed which in every respect resembled Claudius' crime. An attempt in picking out the actual lines is mere sophistication, and a profitless and useless discussion. In introducing a play within a play, Shakespeare endeavours to beguile the audience to believe in the reality of the play and in the artificiality of the play scene ; for this purpose he employs rhyme couplets instead of the ordinary dialogue and blank verse. The style of the interlude is further mocked by the forced conceits and bombastic nature of the language. Note further the

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

liberal use of classical names in the first few lines. One must admire Shakespeare's resourcefulness in these small matters, and even greater contrast is shown in the recitation scene, which approves his act and judgement.

ACT II. SCENE II. Line 447-569.

*(Enter four or five players.)*

You are welcome, masters ! welcome all. I am glad to see thee well : welcome, good friends.—O, my old friends ! Why, thy face is valanced since I saw thee last ; comest thou to beard me in Denmark ?—What, my young lady and mistress ! By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.—Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to 't like French falconers, fly at anything we see : We'll have a speech straight ; come, give us a taste of your quality ; come, a passionate speech.

FIRST PLAY.

What speech, my good lord ?

HAM.

I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted ; or, if it was, not above once ; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million ; 'twas caviare to the general ; but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried on the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury,

I R E  
Tragedie of Dido

Queene of Carthage:

Played by the Children of her  
*Maiesties Chappell.*

Written by Christopher Marlowe, and  
*Thomas Nash. Gent.*

Actors

<i>Jupiter.</i>	<i>Ascarins.</i>
<i>Ganimed.</i>	<i>Dido.</i>
<i>Venus.</i>	<i>Anna.</i>
<i>Cupid.</i>	<i>Achates.</i>
<i>Iano.</i>	<i>Ilieneus.</i>
<i>Mercurie, or</i>	<i>Iarbas.</i>
<i>Hermes.</i>	<i>Cloambes.</i>
<i>Aeneas.</i>	<i>Sergestus.</i>



AT LONDON,  
Printed, by the Widdowe Orwin, for *Thomas Woodcucke*, and  
are to be soide at his shop, in *Paules Church-yard*, at  
the signe of the blacke Beare. 1594.

---

*En.* My mother *Venus* ieaious of my health,  
Conuaid me from their crooked nets and bands :  
So I escapt the furious *Pirrhus* wrath:  
Who then ran to the pallace of the King,  
And at *Ioues* Altar finding *Priamus*,

C

About

## The Tragedie of *Vliad*.

About whose withered necke hung *Hecuba*,  
Foulding his hand in hers, and ioyntly both  
Beating their breasts and falling on the ground,  
He with his faulchions poynt raise vp at once,  
And with *Megeras* eyes stared in their face,  
Threatning a thousand deaths at euery glance.  
To whom the aged King thus trembling spoke:

*Achilles* sonne, remember what I was,  
Father of fiftie sonnes, but they are slaine,  
Lord of my fortune, but my fortunes turnd,  
King of this Citie, but my *Troy* is fired,  
And now am neither father, Lord, nor King:  
Yet who so wretched but desires to liue?

O let me liue, great *Neoptolemus*,  
Not mou'd at all, but smiling at his teares,  
This butcher whilst his hands were yet held vp,  
Treading vpon his breast, strooke off his hands.

*Dido*. O end *Aeneas*, I can heare no more.

*En*. At which the franticke Queene leapt on his face,  
And in his eyelids hanging by the nayles,  
A little while prolong'd her husbands life:  
At last the souldiers puld her by the heeles,  
And swong her howling in the emptie ayre,  
Which sent an eccho to the wounded King:  
Whereat he list'd vp his bedred lims,  
And would haue grappeld with *Achilles* sonne,  
Forgetting both his want of strength and hands,  
Which he disdainig whist his sword about,  
And with the wound thereof the King fell downe:  
Then from the nauell to the throat at once,  
He ript old *Priam*: at whose latter gaspe  
*Ioues* marble statue gan to bend the brow,  
As leching *Pirrhus* for this wicked act:  
Yet he vndaunted tooke his fathers flagge,  
And dipt it in the old Kings chill cold bloud,  
And then in triumph ran into the streetes,  
Through which he could not passe for slaughtred men:

THE TRAGEDIE OF DIDD.

So leaning on his sword he stood stone still,  
Viewing the fire where with rich *Iliou* burnt,  
By this I got my father on my backe,  
This yong boy in mine armes, and by the hand  
Led faire *Crensa* my beloued wife,  
When thou *Achates* with thy sword mad'st way,  
And we were round inuiron'd with the Greekes :  
O there I lost my wife : and had not we  
Fought manfully, I had not told this tale:  
Yet manhood would not serue, of force we fled,  
And as we went vnto our ships, thou knowest  
We sawe *Cassandra* sprauling in the streetes,  
Whom *Aiæx* rauisht in *Diapas* Fawne,  
Her cheekes swolne with sighes, her haire all rent,  
Whom I tooke vp to beare vnto our ships;  
But suddenly the Grecians followed vs,  
And I alas, was forst to let her lye.  
Then got we to our ships, and being aboutd,  
*Polixena* cryed out, *Aeneas* stay,  
The Greekes pursue me, stay and take me in.  
Moued with her voyce, I leapt into the sea,  
Thinking to beare her on my backe aboutd :  
For all our ships were launcht into the deepe,  
And as I swomme, she standing on the shoare,  
Was by the cruell Mirmidons surprizd,  
And after by that *Pirrhvs* sacrificzde.

*Dido.* I dye with melting ruth, *Aeneas* leaue.

*Anna.* O what became of aged *Hecuba*?

*Iar.* How got *Aeneas* to the fleete againe?

*Dido.* But how scapt *Helen*, she that caus'd this warre?

*En.* *Achates* speake, sorrow hath tired me quite.

*Acha.* What happened to the Queenc we cannot shewe,  
We heare they led her captiue into Greece,  
As for *Aeneas* he swomme quickly backe,  
And *Helena* betray'd *Diphobus*  
Her Louer, after *Alexander* dyed,  
And so was reconcil'd to *Menelaus*.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection ; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved ; 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido ; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line ; let me see, let me see :

### DIDO

The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast,—  
'tis not so, it begins with Pyrrhus :  
The rugged Pyrrhus,—he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,—  
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
With heraldry more dismal ; head to foot  
Now is he total gules ; horridly trick'd  
With Blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,  
That lend a tyrannous and damned light  
To their lords' murder, roasted in wrath and fire,  
And thus o'er sized with coagulate gore,  
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
Old grandsire Priam seeks.  
So, proceed you.

### POL.

'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent  
and good discretion.

### FIRST PLAY.

Anon he finds him  
Striking too short at Greeks ; his antique sword,  
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,  
Repugnant to command ; unequal match'd  
Pyrrhus at Priam drives ; in rage strikes wide ;  
but with the whiff and wind of his fell sword

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top  
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear ; for, lo ! his sword  
Which was declining on the milky head  
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick ;  
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,  
And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
Did nothing.

But, as we often see, against some storm  
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
The bold wind speechless and the orb below  
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
Doth rend the region ; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,  
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work ;  
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
On Mars' armour, forged for proof eterne,  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune ! All you gods,  
In general synod take away her power ;  
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,  
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven  
As low as to the fiends !

POL.

This is too long.

HAM.

It shall to the barber's, with your beard—Prithee,  
say on ; he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he  
sleeps : say on ; come to Hecuba.

FIRST PLAY.

But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen ——.

HAM.

“ The mobled queen ? ”

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

POL.

That's good ; " mobled queen " is good.

FIRST PLAY.

Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames  
With bisson rheum ; a clout upon that head  
Where late the diadem stood ; and for a robe,  
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,  
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ;  
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,  
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced :

But if the gods themselves did see her then,  
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport  
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,  
The instant burst of clamour that she made,—  
Unless things mortal move them not at all,—  
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven  
And passion in the gods.

POL.

Look, whether he has not turned his colour and his  
tears in's eyes. Prithee, no more.

HAM.

'Tis well ; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this  
soon.—Good, my lord, will you see the players  
well bestowed ? Do you hear, let them be well  
used, for they are the abstracts and brief  
chronicles of the time ; after your death you  
were better have a bad epitaph than their ill  
report while you live.

POL.

My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

HAM.

God's bodykins, man, much better ! Use every  
man after his desert, and who should 'scape

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity; the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

POL.

Come, sirs.

II, 2, 468

### ÆNEAS' TALE TO DIDO.

Shakespeare, through the person of Hamlet, shows his entire sympathy and love for all things dramatic. Directly the players enter he heartily welcomes them, throws off for a time all thoughts of melancholy, and appears in his true character as a noble prince, scholar and gentleman. Evidently Hamlet had not seen these players for a long time; for what cause he had abstained from the theatre he does not state. In the interval the chief actor had grown old, and was bearded. The young lady alluded to is the boy actor who had grown at least many inches since Hamlet last saw him; in fact, by the altitude of chopine, this last object was a kind of heel attached to a shoe or boot, measuring a good height, sometimes as much as eighteen inches. The ladies of Venice were chiefly addicted to this fashion at the end of the sixteenth century, being much ridiculed for so doing, perhaps to the same extent as the ladies of our period when the hobbled skirt was introduced. The fashion of wearing a chopine did not extend as far as this country, although Walter Scott introduces the custom in his novel of the *Fortunes of Nigel*. The allusion to the lady's voice being cracked within the ring, refers to the boy changing his voice from the boy to the young man's stage. There was a ring on the coin of the realm within which the sovereign's head was placed; if the crack extended from the edge beyond the ring, the coin was rendered unfit for currency.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

“ One speech in it I chiefly loved, 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido.” Should we consider this play which Shakespeare so admirably criticises as an imaginary composition or one by a living author? I think, after reading Marlowe and Nash's drama, entitled, “ Dido, Queen of Carthage,” there can exist no doubt that Shakespeare was criticising this play, and he certainly moulded the piece he chose for recitation on this production. If any conclusion can be drawn from this piece of criticism, one conclusion is certain, that Shakespeare himself admired the classical drama, and if he had composed plays only for the study they would have been written more in conformity with classical methods. Having a mixed audience he was obliged to flavour his plays with savoury matter, what we should call spicy bits, for seeking the suffrage of the groundlings, and on some occasions treated these matters in no very delicate way according to our present notions. Shakespeare used the big brush, and laid it on pretty thick, proving the truth of Pope's couplet :

“ For gain, not glory, winged his wordy flight  
And grew immortal in his own despite.”

Many critics have taken this speech as being ironical, or a burlesque on the old play, but there would have been no point in making Hamlet praise the piece so extravagantly. I think the critics who favour this theory may this time be dismissed with a caution, but should they offend in the same manner again they will be hardly dealt with. I regret seeing Professor Gollancz's name in the list.

Shakespeare refers to the actors as the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. The Shakesperean canon comprises thirty-seven plays, not one of which, with the single exception of “ The Merry Wives of Windsor,” deals with contemporary events, there-

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

fore, by his own confession, we owe Shakespeare little for pourtraying the chronicles of the time. Had Shakespeare strictly adhered to the laws of the drama this censure might have more force, but in all the plays, whether Roman, English of bygone centuries, or Italian, characters and scenes are laid before our admiring eyes, bearing always a substratum of pure contemporary English manners, for which we must be ever thankful.

The same might be said of all the Elizabethan dramatists with but few exceptions. Perhaps Shakespeare was looking ahead, prophesying the time when the playwright would record the events of his day, as in our own time the happenings of the hour are fully recorded, vindicating the phrase voiced by the poet as "holding the mirror up to nature":

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,  
Have by the very cunning of the scene  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaimed their malefactions.

I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle.

The play's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

II, 2, 617.

In hearing or reading this speech, the spectator or reader would naturally conclude that this was Hamlet's first conception of the plot, in which he sought to prove by a mock performance of the murder the guilt or innocence of the king, yet a few minutes previously Hamlet had already conceived the idea of the play scene. Is this another sign of carelessness, or is Hamlet visualizing the effects of his scheme? Hunter, a Shakesperean

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

commentator, would read "About 't my brains," that is, set about composing the lines which the players were to add to "The Murder of Gonzago," he would also delete the word "hum." By omitting the interjection he maintains that it makes prospective what is evidently retrospective. I contend that it does nothing of the sort, and the natural inference is, that the poet forgot that he had already invented the stratagem by which he intends catching the conscience of the king. Many instances occur in literature, whereas by means of a play representing a murder, the actual wrong-doer has confessed his crime, and been brought to justice. Such a scene is found in "A Warning to Fair Women," a play acted by the Chamberlain's company and printed in 1599. The play is founded on a celebrated murder case which took place in Lynn in Norfolk, in 1573.

HAM.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me—with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir ?

HORATIO.

Half a share.

HAM.

A whole one I.

III, 2, 286.

The difficulties of determining the precise value of a share in a theatre are manifold. The value of money in those days does not correspond in any degree to that of to-day. The purchasing power of a sovereign being from seven to ten times greater now than at the end of the sixteenth century. With the exception of corn, which in normal times was about

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

the same price as to-day, all food was ridiculously cheap compared with our present-day prices, so that anyone with an income of, say, three to four hundred pounds a year would be regarded as a rich man. Respecting the present passage, Horatio considers half a share a fair remuneration for a deserving actor. The shares in the Globe Theatre were divided into sixteen parts ; out of this number Shakespeare possessed at one time in his life two whole shares, which, it is computed, brought him in £200 a year for each share, quite a goodly income. Shakespeare seems to have parted with his shares before his death, as in his will he makes no mention of them. The technical name for the proprietors of the theatre or shareholders was house-keepers ; the word has now become obsolete. I cannot find the word in the New English Dictionary, an omission which I consider almost a record.

### UNIVERSITY PLAYS.

HAM.

My lord, you played once i' the university, you say ?

POL.

That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

HAM.

And what did you enact.

POL.

I did enact Julius Cæsar.  
Brutus killed me.

HAM.

It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

An entire volume of 400 closely printed pages, gives a detailed history of plays produced at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The list includes both classical and early English comedies and tragedies ; this interesting volume has been written in a masterly and scientific manner, and treated in a most fascinating way rarely met with in this kind of literature. Professor Boas has thoroughly exhausted the subject, and his book can be commended to all Shakesperean students. Plays were acted at both Universities in quite mediæval times, becoming a regular institution in the reign of Henry VIII. The ancient Greek dramatists were presented either in the original Greek or in Latin translations. The first comedy written in the vernacular is called "A right pithy and pleasant and merry comedy, Intituled

### Gammer Gurton's Needle

Played on stage not long ago in  
Christ's College in Cambridge  
Made by Mr. S. Mr. of Arts."

The plays produced at Oxford and Cambridge were of a private character, each college paying its own expenses for the entertainment. In later years, assuming more of a public character, and finally magnificent dramatic entertainments were given before the sovereign and courtiers. The college authorities were lavish in their expenditure according to their means, but in no way rivalled the splendour of the Court productions. Queen Elizabeth honoured Cambridge with a visit in 1564, and a great dramatic exhibition was held in her honour. The performance took place at King's College, and a great stage was erected in the College Hall ; this being found too small, another was built up in the Chapel. A chair of State was placed on the stage for the Queen. In the Rood Loft another

THE  
RETURNE FROM  
PERNASSVS:

Or

The Scourge of Simony.

*Publiquely acted by the Students*  
in Saint Johns Colledge in  
*Cambridge.*



AT LONDON

Printed by G. Eld, for John Wright, and  
are to bee sold at his shop at  
Christ church Gate.

1606.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

platform was placed for Ladies and Gentlemen, and still another under the Rood Loft was placed for the officials of the Court. The scholars on this occasion were not admitted. The Queen arrived on Saturday and took up her lodgings at King's Lodge, and on the following evening, which was Sunday, a play was given. The Chapel was lighted by torches, which were held by the Guards. The play chosen was the "Aulularia of Plautus," being acted by the students of the different colleges.

The Shakesperean student will remember Polonius' description of the literature of the drama. "Seneca is not too heavy or Plautus too light." The next night another play was performed by the men of King's College, who were responsible for the entertainment. The play represented was a tragedy, "Dido," written by Edward Halwell, formerly a fellow of the College. The third night a play by Nicholas Udal, the author of the famous comedy, "Ralph Roister Doister," was presented before the Queen. The play given on this occasion was a biblical one named "Ezechias," performed by the King's College scholars. All these plays were great successes. Another play was to have been performed the next night, but the Queen being so fatigued after visiting the colleges and hearing the deputations, sent messages of regret and excuse, much to the sorrow of the whole University.

Two years later, in 1566, the Queen visited the famous University town of Oxford, and stayed there a whole week. The stage for the nonce was erected at the west end of the Christ Church Hall, that being very convenient for the Queen, as her lodging was at the College. The Earl of Leicester, as Chancellor of Oxford University, received her in state.

The first performance was given on Sunday evening; although the Queen kept her apartment,

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

and was not present, the play was acted before the Spanish Ambassador and the Court. On Monday evening the Queen attended; unfortunately, the performance was marred by a serious accident, caused by a wall giving way through the pressure of the crowd, and killing three persons, including one of the students. The play acted was "Palamon and Arcyte," written in two parts, by Richard Edwards, the master of the Children of the Chapel; the second part was given on another evening. The play is founded on the Knight's Tale in Chaucer, the same source as "The Two Noble Kinsmen," part of which play has been attributed to Shakespeare, his name appearing on the title page in conjunction with Fletcher. I once possessed a copy of the first and only edition of the quarto, 1634, formerly belonging to Marshall, the Shakesperean editor and commentator.

A Latin play, acted on the following evening, closed the dramatic performances. A list of players who acted in these college state exhibitions is extant.

Reynolds, who was one of the actors, in after years became the greatest and bitterest opponent of the University stage plays. He states that he played the part of Hippolyta at Christ Church on the occasion of the Queen's visit. The Queen left Oxford with many thanks to the whole University and repeated fond farewells to her dear scholars. The amount of the expenses connected with these plays totalled the goodly sum of £150, a large amount of money in those days.

At Oxford the chief dramatic centres were Christ Church, Magdalen, St. John's, and in a lesser degree Merton; performances were also held at Trinity, Exeter and elsewhere. At Cambridge the dramatic fare was more widely distributed, Trinity, King's, St. John's, Queens', Jesus', Christ, and Clare Hall all presenting plays on frequent occasions. In spite

THE  
Q V E E N E S  
ARCADIA.

A Pastorall Trage-comedie  
*presented to her Maiestie and*  
her Ladies, by the Vniuersitie of  
*Oxford in Christs Church,*  
in August last,  
1605.



AT LONDON  
Printed by G. Eld, for Simon Waterfon,  
1606.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

of the fact that the spurious quarto edition of "Hamlet," dated 1603, states that the play was acted at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, no record exists of any such performance being given. Possibly the play was acted in the town at a public place of entertainment. The University authorities were dead against the professional actors, and persecuted them in a like manner as did the Lord Mayor of London and the Corporation. As early as 1575 both Universities issued proclamations that stage plays should not be exhibited at Oxford or Cambridge, or within five miles of either of those towns.

The first notice is interesting on account of the mention of the Earl of Leicester's players, who was patron and protector of a company of professional actors.

"Paid to the actors of the Earl of Leicester to depart with their plays without further troubling the University XX shillings." This order was issued in 1587, and if Shakespeare was a member of the company at the time, which is generally supposed, his first appearance at Oxford was by no means a happy one, as he was paid to go away. Many similar payments are recorded in each year, until the death of Elizabeth, and even afterwards, sufficient proof that the title page must not be implicitly relied upon, and we must abandon the idea that Shakespeare's masterpiece was acted before the Master Dons and students of the University Halls. The same restrictions were observed at Cambridge, and the professional players were banned acting even at the outlying village of Cherterton. The censorship remains in the power of the Universities in our own time; the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford has prohibited the production of "Hindle Wakes," a most powerful play, which the authorities should have encouraged instead of censored.

# THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

## HENRY IV

### PART I

#### PLAY. EXTEMPORE. ARGUMENT.

Shall we have a play extempore ?

Content ; and the argument shall be thy running  
away. II, IV, 310

In Europe, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a play extempore was a usual form of entertainment, and was deservedly extremely popular. In this country this nimble art never took root, and was purely known as an exotic of an Italian growth. From mere buffoonery the " *commedia dell' arte* " or " *all improvviso*," as it was indifferently named, developed into true comedy, and many of the situations were in later times used by Molière, the grand Comique, in the literary, as well as in its histrionic sense. The *Commedia dell' arte* was a species of comedy in which the actors themselves provided the dialogue. The plot or different situations were rehearsed beforehand, but the words were entirely spontaneous. Naturally, under such circumstances, the plays were acted with more fire of action, truthfulness of gesture and deportment than if they had been written by another and learnt by heart. Evidently such a method had its drawbacks, the characters became types, the audience knowing beforehand by constant repetition the nature of the performance. There were several well known types, the most popular being Harlequin, Pantaloon, the swaggering Captain, and others. Ben Jonson's Captain Bobadil must have been modelled on this personage. The comic personages were Sgnarelle, Scaramouche, and the valets and soubrettes of Molière's comedies.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

### KING CAMBYSES' VEIN.

For I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyses' vein. And here is my speech :

Weep not, sweet Queen, for trickling tears are vain,  
For God's sake, lords, convey my trustful Queen ;  
For tears do stop the floodgates of her eyes.

II, IV, 445

This is in reference to a well-known play, entitled "A Lamentable Tragedie, mixed full of Pleasant Mirth, containing the Life of Cambises, King of Persia," by Thomas Preston, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. The printed play is without date, being written and acted at Court about 1570, and perhaps published the same year. The story is taken from an episode in the life of Cambyses, King of Persia, as related by Herodotus. The play was often parodied and held up to ridicule by Elizabethan dramatists, chiefly on account of the maudling style of the King when in liquor. The putting to death of the Queen was also made fun of. "Weep not, sweet Queen," may be an allusion to a scene in this play, where we read as a stage direction, "At this tale let the Queen weep."

### QUEEN.

These words to hear make stilling tears  
Issue from crystal eyes.

### KING.

What dost thou mean, my spouse, to weep  
For loss of any prize.

Shakespeare must have seen or read the play when published. Another allusion will be found in "Midsummer Night's Dream," where there seems to lurk a parody of the title page of Preston's book, "A Lamentable Tragedy mixed full of Pleasant Mirth."

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

In Shakespeare's play there is mention of a tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love, Thisbe ; very tragical mirth. Merry and tragical, tedious and brief, Cambyzes' vein has become proverbial for rant, chiefly in connexion with the stage.

### PLAY.

I'll play Percy and that damned brawn shall play  
Dame Mortimer and his wife. II, 4, 122

Dost thou speak like a king ? Do thou stand forth  
for me and I'll play my father. II, 4, 477

Play out the play. II, IV, 482

### PLAYER.

He doth it as like one of these harlotry players as  
ever I see. II, 4, 437

### VICE. INIQUITY. VANITY.

That reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father  
ruffian, that vanity in years. II, 4, 452

In the old Morality plays, Iniquity was one of the vices, and generally played by a clown. In Marston's "Histriomastix," a stage direction adds, "Enter a roaring Devil with the Vice on its back. Iniquity in one hand and Juventus in the other." "I'll marry you to Lady Vanity," another of the seven deadly sins, occurs in Marlowe's "Jew of Malta."

### CRESSETS.

At my nativity

The front of heavy was full of fiery shapes of burn-  
ing cressets. III, 1, 15

A vessel of iron or the like made to hold grease or oil, or in an iron basket to hold pitched rope, wood or coal, to be burnt for light. Cotgrave, in his French and English Dictionary, 1611, describes them under the word "falot," a cresset light, such as they use in playhouses.

# SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

## HENRY IV

### PART II

I was then Sir Dagonet in Arthur's show.

III, 1, 300

Apart from dramatic performances, there existed in Shakespeare's time several societies, which occasionally presented spectacular shows elaborately prepared, in order to amuse a number of spectators. These were sometimes held at the Court, and were generally of the nature of dumb-shows or masques, or formed a kind of pageant. These shows originated from the guilds of mediæval times, in which the craftsmen of the different companies gave an entertainment in the streets of important towns on Corpus Christi and other festival days.

In this particular show, Sir Dagonet is Arthur's fool in the story of Trestam de Lyonesse. Arthur's show was an exhibition of archery by a society of 58 members, which styled itself "The Auncient Order Society, and Unitie laudable of Prince Arthur and his Knights Armory of the Round Table," and took the names of the knights of old romance. The meeting of the society was held at Mile End Green,

#### ACT. STAGE.

And let this world no longer be a stage  
To feed contention in a lingering act.  
The rude scene may end.

I, 1, 156

#### ACTING. SCENE. ARGUMENT.

For all my reign hath been but as a scene  
Acting that argument.

IV, 5, 199

#### PLAY.

I was lately here in the end of a displeasing play, to  
pray your patience for it, and to promise you a  
better.

*Epilogue, line 10.*

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

### NINE WORTHIES.

Thou art as valorous as Hector of Troy, and ten times better than the Nine Worthies.

II, 4, 239

### VICE.

And now is this Vice's dagger become a squire.

III, 2, 343

## HENRY V

### ENTER PROLOGUE.

All modern editions head this opening scene as "Prologue. Enter Chorus." The First Folio omits the word chorus. In the four subsequent acts, "enter chorus" is used.

### CHORUS.

Admit me Chorus to this history.

In ancient Greek plays the chorus consisted of several performers, but in Shakespeare's time the number is reduced to a single personage, who enters before the beginning of a play and explains or comments upon different events which are to follow in course of the narrative. In reality, he serves the same purpose as the speaker of the prologue. In other passages the word is used as synonymous with prologue, but in this quotation the word bears the original meaning as applied to Attic tragedy, in which the chorus, chanting the choral odes, passed in review the episodes which had taken place upon the stage, and also prepared the audience for scenes which were to follow. The tragic chorus of a Greek play numbered fifteen members, who entered the orchestra (dancing place) three abreast. Between the acts they recited choral odes, accompanied by a dance movement. In the dialogue between the chorus and the actors,

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

only the coryphæus, the leader of the chorus, acted as spokesman.

### MORRIS DANCE.

Therefore I say 'tis meet we all go forth  
To view the sick and feeble parts of France,  
And let us do it with no show of fear ;  
No, with no more than if we heard that England  
Were busied with a Whitsun Morris Dance.

II, 4, 25

The Morris Dance was a popular element in the village May games, and, although with no literary associations, it may claim equal popularity with the dumb-shows and motion plays of the sixteenth century. A painted window at Betley, in Staffordshire, has a representation of these village dances, which include six Morris dancers, with a Maypole, a musician, a fool, a crowned man on a hobby horse, a crowned lady with a flower in her hand, and a friar. This window dates from the reign of Edward III. Sometimes, included amongst the dancers, was a dragon, and, no doubt, the rider of the hobby-horse personated St. George. A reference to the hobby-horse occurs in "Hamlet," where Hamlet exclaims, "O for the hobby-horse is forgot," referring to the omission of that living property from the show, which was fast becoming obsolete at the end of the sixteenth century. The Morris Dance proper consisted of six personages, each dancer wearing a broad garter below the knee. There are two sets of figures : in one handkerchiefs are carried, in the other short staves are swung and clashed. Sometimes the dancers sing to the air of an old country dance. There is always a fool, who carries a stick with a bladder and a cow's tail. The music is that of a pipe and tabor, played by one man. The name is a corruption of "Moorish," and is immediately derived from the Flemish "morriske

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

dans." The reason for this name is that the performers blacked their faces, but whether they derived the name because of their Moorish appearance or dressed up to represent Moors is undecided.

### CUE.

Now we speak upon our cue. And our voice is imperial.

### ACT. SCENE. STAGE.

A kingdom for a stage, princes to act  
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene.  
*Prologue, line 3*

### PLAY.

Gently to hear, kindly to judge our play.  
*Prologue, line 34.*

Linger your patience on, and we'll digest  
The abuse of distance ; force a play.  
*Prologue II, line 32*

For if we may, we'll not offend one stomach with  
our play. *Prologue II, line 40*

Bardolph and Nym had ten times more valour than  
this roaring devil i' the old play, that every one  
may pare his nails with a wooden dagger.  
*IV, 4, 73*

The devil was supposed to keep his nails unpared from choice, and therefore to pare them was considered an insult. The character of the "Devil" was a feature from the old Miracle and Morality plays.

Edward the Black Prince  
Who on French ground play'd a tragedy.  
*I, 2, 106*

### PLAYHOUSE.

There is the playhouse now, there must you sit.  
*Prologue II, line 36*

# SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

## PROLOGUE.

ENTER PROLOGUE. PROLOGUE I.

Prologue, like your humble patience pray.

*Prologue I, line 33*

## SCENE.

The scene

Is now transported, gentles,  
To Southampton.

*Prologue II, 34*

Unto Southampton do we shift our scene.

*Prologue II, line*

Thus with imagined wing our swift scene flies  
In motion of no less celerity

Than that of thought.

*Prologue II, line 1*

And so our scene must to the battle fly.

*Prologue IV, line 48*

## STAGE.

A kingdom for a stage.

*Prologue I, line 3*

Which oft our stage hath shown.

*Epilogue, line 13*

## PROMPT.

Vouchsafe to those that have not read the story

That I may prompt them.

*Prologue V, line 2*

THIS WOODEN O. SCAFFOLD. COCKPIT.

O, for a Muse of fire, that would ascend  
The brightest heaven of invention ;

A kingdom for a stage, princes to act

And monarchs to behold the swelling scene,

Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,

Assume the part of Mars ; and at his heels,

Leashed in like hounds, should famine, sword  
and fire

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles, all  
The flat, unraised spirits that hath dar'd  
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth  
So great an object ; can this cockpit hold  
The vasting fields of France ? or may we cram  
Within this wooden O the very casques  
That did affright the air at Agincourt ?

### SCAFFOLD.

On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth.

In mediæval times the ecclesiastical plays were usually performed in churches or chapels upon temporary scaffolds erected for that purpose. The term survived even to the seventeenth century in the sense of a platform, or stage, on which theatrical performances took place. This is the only instance in which Shakespeare uses the word.

### COCKPIT.

The name applied to a theatre and the pit of a theatre, deriving its name from a pit or enclosed area usually of a round formation in which game-cocks are set to fight for sport.

### THIS WOODEN O.

All the early Elizabethan theatres were constructed in a circular or octagonal shape. An uncertainty prevails as regards the theatre intended. Quite possibly the reference might be to the newly erected Globe, which was opened in the summer of 1599, about the time " Henry V " was written, and was under the management of Shakespeare and his fellow actors belonging to the Lord Chamberlain's company. Some critics favour the Curtain Theatre, in Shoreditch, as the original house in which " Henry V " was first produced.

# SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

## HENRY VI

### PART I.

This play is of doubtful parentage. Many would ascribe it either singly or in conjunction to Greene, Peele, Marlowe, Nash, and Shakespeare. It appears in the First Folio amongst the collected works of Shakespeare, and for that reason is admitted in the Shakesperean canon of modern editions. There exists grave doubts whether Shakespeare ever wrote a single line of this composition. This play was written as early as 1590, thirty years before Heminge and Condell, the editors of the First Folio, issued their book. Perhaps Shakespeare revised the work of others, and thus it appeared in its latest form under his name. The altering of a play by another hand without acknowledgment did not constitute in those days any literary offence, although at times an author objected to his work being so treated, and was not mealy-mouthed in proclaiming the fact. An excellent instance of this tampering with another's property can be read in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592, where he denounces Shakespeare in no measured terms "as an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers," in reference to his treatment of the three parts of "Henry VI." Greene may have been mistaken in identifying Shakespeare as the author. Every critic understands by the "only Shake-scene in the country" as referring to Shakespeare. The entire question is one of the most difficult problems in Shakesperean studies

HEAVENS.

Hung be the Heavens with black. I, 1, 1

The heavens were part of the stage buildings. It was built over the stage in shape of a sloping roof. The stage being open to the sky, it protected the

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

actors against the inclemency of the weather, and also acted as a sounding board. An illustration of the "heavens" can be seen in De Witt's drawing of the Swan Theatre, c. 1596. Contemporary documents prove that all the theatres were provided with this necessary commodity. Cotgrave, in his French and English Dictionary, 1611, has under the word "volerie," a robbery, also a place over a stage, which we call the Heaven. In Hatzfeld and Darmsteter's Modern French Dictionary there is no reference to such a meaning as given by Cotgrave, but under the word "volet" one definition is given as a kind of shutter before a window.

Hung be the Heavens with black. I, 1, 1

When a tragedy was played, the stage was draped with black; many references to this custom are found in contemporary authors. In Sidney's *Arcadia*, 1598: "There arose even with the sun a veil of dark clouds, before his face, had blacked all over the face of heaven, preparing as it were a mournful stage for a tragedy to be played on." In Marston's *The Insatiate Countess*: "The stage of heaven is hung with solemn black. A time best fitting to act tragedies," and in *A Warning for Faire Women*, 1599: "The stage is hung with black, and I perceive the auditors prepared for Tragedy."

### PLAYED. PART.

Pucelle hath bravely play'd her part in this  
And doth deserve a coronet of gold. III, 3, 88

### MASQUERS. REVEL.

Tell false Edward, thy supposed king,  
That Lewis of France is sending over masquers  
To revel it with him and his new bride.

III, 3, 224

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

This passage is repeated in IV, I, 94 :

At my depart these were his very words :  
“ Go tell false Edward, thy supposed king,  
That Lewis of France is sending over masquers  
To revel it with him and his new bride.”

Masquers were those performers who took part in a masque. As a rule they were gorgeously costumed. The performers were chiefly chosen for their agility and grace in dancing. In later years a dialogue was added to the masque, which the masquers took part in.

There are no theatrical allusions either in Part II or Part III of “ Henry VI.”

### HENRY VIII

#### THE PROLOGUE.

##### SCENE. SHOW. PLAY.

I come no more to make you laugh, things now  
That bear a weighty and a serious brow,  
Sad, high and working, full of state and woe  
Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow  
We now present. Those that can pity, here  
May, if they think it well, let fall a tear :  
The subject will deserve it. Such as give  
Their money out of hope they may believe,  
May here find truth, too. Those that come to see  
Only a show or two, and so agree  
The play may pass, if they be still and calling  
I'll undertake may see away their shilling  
Richly in two short hours. Only they  
That come to hear a merry play,  
A noise of targets or to see a fellow  
In a long motley coat guarded in yellow,  
Wil be deceived, for gentle heavens, know

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

To rank our chosen truth with such a show  
As fool and fight is, beside forfeiting  
Our own brains and the opinion that we bring  
To make that only true we now intend  
Will leave us never an understanding friend.  
Therefore for goodness' sake, and as you are  
known

The first and happiest hearers of the town,  
Be sad as we would make ye, think ye see  
The very parsons of our noble story  
As they were living, think you see them great  
And followed with the general throng and sweat  
By thousand friends ; then, in a moment see  
How soon this mightiness meets misery :  
And if you can be merry then, I'll say  
A man may weep upon his wedding day.

I'll undertake may see away their shilling  
Richly in two hours.

In commenting upon this play, the reader must bear in mind that this is one of the doubtful plays of Shakespeare. Much ingenuity has been displayed in endeavouring to unravel the mystery of its authorship. Most scholars discern the hand of Fletcher, together with that of Shakespeare. Others would award the entire play to Fletcher, while on the other hand, the entire play has been considered as fully Shakesperean. A great poet, Tennyson, was of the opinion that most of the play was written by Fletcher. Spedding, who has devoted much thought to this problem, would assign to Fletcher a great portion of the dialogue, including the famous "Farewell" speech of Wolsey, which I for one cannot for a moment allow, as this speech, above all others, has the true Shakesperean ring. Two very interesting items of theatrical history can be gathered from this prologue, namely, the price of admission

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

to the best seats and the duration of a five act play of Shakespeare's time. Speeding would give the Prologue and the Epilogue to Fletcher.

The price of admission to the best seats would be a shilling, as we learn from Dekker's books of Gull's, where he mentions the twelvepenny rooms as being the best place in the theatre. This price was for the best seats or a seat upon the stage, which at this period was allowed at some of the theatres. When the custom was introduced of allowing a few of the spectators a seat on the stage is uncertain. The matter has not been fully examined or explained, and little information can be gathered from contemporary sources. The boxes, or rooms, as they were styled, were priced at a shilling at the Globe and Blackfriars Theatres. The twelvepenny rooms were situated near the stage, in the lowermost gallery, and are seen on the drawing of the interior of the Swan Theatre, close to the word orchestra. Why the writer should refer to the shilling seats only is difficult to make out. Perhaps for the first performance of a new play a shilling was charged for all the seats. We know that a different scale of charges did exist, but the accounts are somewhat confused. It was during a performance of this play that the thatched roof of the Globe Theatre caught fire and was burnt to the ground. This took place on St. Peter's Day, June 29th, 1613.

### ACT. PART. PLAYED.

I would have play'd

The part my father meant to act upon

The usurper Richard.

I, 2, 195

### THE EPILOGUE. PLAY. ACT. CLAP.

'Tis ten to one this play can never please

All that are here ; some come to take their ease

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

And sleep an act or two ; but those we fear  
We have frightened with our trumpets, so 'tis clear  
They'll say 'tis naught.

For this play at this time, is only on  
The merciful construction of good women ;  
For such a one we show'd 'em if they smile,  
And say 'twill do I know within a while,  
All the best men are ours for 'tis ill hap  
If they hold when their ladies bid 'm clap.

### MASQUE.

Now this masque was cried incomparable.

I, 1, 27

### PAGEANTS. SHOWS.

'Tis well ; the citizens,  
I am sure, have shown at full their royal minds  
And let 'em have their rights they are ever for-  
ward,

In celebration of this day with shows,  
Pageants and sights of honour.

IV, 1, 2

### PLAYHOUSE. AUDIENCE.

These are the youths that thunder at a playhouse  
and fight for bitter apples ; that no audience  
but the tribulation of Tower Hill or the limbs  
of Lime House, their dear brothers, are able  
to endure.

V, 4

### MASQUE. REVELS.

Enter the King and others as masquers, habited  
like shepherds, ushered by the Lord Chamber-  
lain. They pass directly before the Cardinal,  
and gracefully salute him.

A noble company ! What are their pleasures ?  
Because they speak no English, thus they pray'd  
To tell your grace, that, having heard by fame  
Of this so noble and so fair assembly.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

### PAGEANT. PLAY. PART.

I will not be slack  
To play my part in Fortune's pageant.

### PROLOGUE. PLAY. TRAGEDY.

I know their complot is to have my life :  
And if my death might make this island happy  
And prove the period of their tyranny,  
I would expend it with all willingness ;  
But mine is made a prologue to their play.  
For thousands more, that yet suspect  
Will not conclude their plotted tragedy.

III, 1, 151

### SHOWS.

And now what rests, but that we spend the time  
With stately trumpets mirthful comic shows  
Such as befits the pleasures of the Court.

### ACT. ROSCIUS. SCENE.

What scene of death hath Roscius now to act ?

V, 6, 10

Roscius was the most celebrated comic actor of his times. He lived in the first century A.D., dying in the year 62. Throughout the ages he has been personified as the greatest actor of all times, and his name has often been applied to any actor of great eminence. In Shakespeare's period, Richard Burbage was the Roscius of the day, and was known as "Roscius Richard."

### ACTORS. PLAY'D. TRAGEDY.

Why stand we like soft-hearted women here  
Wailing our losses, whiles the foe doth rage ;  
And look upon, as if the tragedy  
Were play'd in jest by counterfeiting actors.

II, 3

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

This night to meet here, they could do no less,  
Out of the great respect they bear to beauty,  
But leave their flocks, and under your fair act  
Crave leave to view these ladies and entreat  
An hour of revels with them.

*Act II, Scene IV*

Crave leave to view these ladies and entreat  
An hour of revels with 'em.

Under the name of Revels was included many kinds of merrymaking and festivities. From the fourteenth century onwards such diversions were held at the Court and at the houses of noblemen. The Revels included dancing, games, masking, mumblings or disguisings and other forms of lively entertainments. In Tudor times these amusements had assumed vast proportions. In Henry VII's reign the Master of the Revels first makes his appearance, and that official post continued to be held until the Restoration. Queen Elizabeth formed a separate company, called Children of the Revels, which took part in many important functions. These children also acted in regular plays, and caused much heart-burning and dissension amongst the adult players.

## KING JOHN

THEATRE. SCENES. ACTS.

As in a theatre, when they gape and point  
At your industrious scenes and acts of death.

It will be generally observed that when Shakespeare introduced a simile drawn from theatrical art, other similes of a like nature regularly follow, and are accounted for by the law of association of ideas. An interesting study could be made of enquiry whether this rule applies to other dramatists of the

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

period. Perhaps some patient and industrious student will collect all the passages bearing on this subject and publish the fruit of his labour. A study of the early stage is of so fascinating a pursuit and of so engrossing a nature that such a work ought easily to find a chronicler, not forgetting the fact that the results would be so welcome and interesting to other students. The worker in such a field of enquiry will not find that his time has been spent in vain, especially as no such collection is to be found amongst the multitudinous books written about the drama.

MASQUE. REVEL.

This harness'd masque and unadvised revel.

V, 2, 132

## JULIUS CÆSAR

CLAP. HISS. PLAYERS. THEATRE.

If the tag-rag people did not clap him and hiss him, according as he pleased and displeased them, as they used to do the players in the theatre, I am no true man.

I, 2, 258

These terms "clap" and "hiss" seem to have been the usual methods of showing signs of approval and disapproval in the theatre in Shakespeare's time, as it is still with us. Dryden confirms this statement by mentioning that to clap and hiss are the privileges of a freeborn subject in a playhouse. Pepys, in his Diary, 1669, says: "Indeed, it was very finely sung as to make the whole house clap her." Both these methods were adopted by the spectators in all playhouses in Europe. In the Spanish theatres, when the players said anything that pleased the audience, everybody cried out "Victor! Victor!"

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

This was a custom peculiar to their country. They also had another custom which, fortunately, did not travel beyond the confines of Spain, when they wished to show signs of disapproval either with the play or the actors, they did so by blowing a whistle, much after the fashion of our football enthusiasts when a goal has been scored.

### ACTORS.

Let not our looks put on our purposes,  
But bear it as our Roman actors do  
With untired spirits and formal constancy.

II, 1, 226

### PLAYS.

He reads much,  
He is a great observer,  
He loves no plays, as thou dost, Antony,  
He hears no music.

### THEATRE.

That done, repair to Pompey's theatre.

### JIGGING.

What should the wars do with those jigging fools?  
IV, 3, 136

### MASQUER. REVELLER.

A peevish schoolboy  
Joined with a masker and a reveller.

### ACTED. SCENE.

How many ages hence shall this our lofty scene be  
acted over.  
III, 1, 112

A favourite device of Shakespeare, often repeated in his plays, of making his characters allude to the stage, thus enveloping his own imaginary dramatic efforts with a reality, which almost deceives the audience that they are witnesses of living actions.

# SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

## KING LEAR

### CATASTROPHE. OLD COMEDY.

(*Enter Edgar.*)

Edm. And pat he comes like the catastrophe of  
the old comedy. I, 2, 149

The catastrophe of a dramatic piece always occurred towards the end, and came when the audience were on the tiptoe of expectation, awaiting the final *dénouement*, as it is called in modern times.

CUE.

My cue is villanous, melancholy, with a sigh like  
Tom o' Bedlam. I, 2, 147

PART.

You come with letters against the King, and take  
vanity the puppet's part, against the royalty of  
her father. II, 2, 40

VANITY.

And take vanity, the puppet's part. II, 2, 40

Vanity was one of the seven deadly sins often presented in old Morality plays, and many references are made to this character by the Elizabethan dramatists.

INTERLUDE.

ALB.

If you will marry, make your loves to me ;  
My lady is bespoken.

GON.

An interlude.

V, 3, 90

Goneril would intimate that the interview is becoming quite interesting, and compares the scene with an interlude or a farcial play.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

### LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

#### NINE WORTHIES.

None so fit as to present the Nine Worthies.

V, I, 130

Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies.

V, I, 110

The original Nine Worthies were composed of three Jews, Joshua, David and Judas Maccabæus; three Pagans, Hector, Alexander and Julius Cæsar and three Christians, King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon. But these original Worthies were not always strictly adhered to; the number remained the same, but other names were substituted in place of those above named.

Nashe, the Elizabethan dramatist and pamphlet writer, remarks in one of his prose works, entitled, *The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jack Wilton*, a book dedicated to Lord Southampton, Shakespeare's patron, to whom he dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*: "To Charles the Fifth, then Emperor, they reported how he shewed the Nine Worthies, David, Solomon, Gideon, and the rest in that similitude and likeness that they lived upon earth." Shakespeare introduces Hercules and Pompey without any authority; thus it would appear that any author might choose his own Worthies, totally ignoring historical precedence. These Worthies formed part of a pageant, a form of entertainment given by our ancestors at Christmas time and on other festive occasions. In some instances, speaking parts were allotted to the performers. Fortunately, a genuine specimen has been preserved in a manuscript of the time of Edward IV, in which the first named Worthies all appear. The text of these pageants were in most parts composed

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

by ignorant people, and were not considered worth preserving. Shakespeare's pageant is a parody on this kind of entertainment, similar to that of the Athenian mechanics in their play of Pyramus and Thisbe in "Midsummer Night's Dream." Shakespeare seems to have taken infinite delight in parodying these monstrous entertainments.

ACTORS. PART. WORTHIES.

B.

By Jove, I always took three three's for nine.

C.

O Lord, sir ! it is a pity you should get your living by reckoning, sir.

B.

How much is it ?

C.

O Lord, sir ! the parties themselves, the actors, sir, will show where until it doth amount ; for mine own part I am, as they say, but to perfect one man in one poor man, Pompey the Great, sir.

B.

Art thou one of the Worthies ?

C.

It pleased them to think me worthy of Pompey the Great ; for mine own part, I know not the degree of Worthy, but I am to stand for him.

V, 2, 501

AUDIENCE. ENTER. EXIT. HISS.

HOL.

Shall I have audience ? He shall present Hercules in minority ; his enter and exit shall be strangling a snake. And I will have an apology for that purpose.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

### MOTH.

An excellent device, so that if any of the audience hiss, you may cry " Well done, Hercules ; now thou crushest the snake ! "

### COMEDY.

Here was a consent,  
Knowing aforehand of our merriment,  
To dash it like a Christmas comedy. V, II, 462

The figurative meaning of the word dash is to destroy, frustrate, spoil ; in this instance it would rather signify throwing cold water upon it. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was the usual word for the rejection of a Bill in Parliament.

As the cry of yea or no is bigger, so the Bill is allowed or dashed.

Sir T. Smith, *Commonwealth of England*, 1633.

The word is now obsolete except in the phrase :  
To dash one's hopes or spirits.

### ZANY.

Some carry tale, some please man, some slight Zany.  
To make my lady laugh. VII, 463

### EXIT.

### ERGO.

I come with this apology.  
Keep some state in thy exit and vanish.

### EPILOGUE.

It is an epilogue or discourse to make plain some  
obscure precedence. III, I, 76

### MASKS. REVELS.

Revels, dances, masks and merry hours  
Forerun fair Love, strewing her way with flowers.  
IV, 3, 379

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

The latter quotation is interesting on account of its having been quoted in an extremely valuable anthology in the last year of the sixteenth century. This publication being of such extreme interest I shall transcribe the title page in full.

ENGLANDS

PARNASSUS

OR

The choysrest Flowers of our Moderne Poets  
with their Poetical comparisons, Descriptions  
of Beauties, Personages, Castles, Pallaces,  
Mountaines, Groves, Seas, Springs, Rivers, &c.

Whereunto are annexed other various discourses,  
both pleasant and profitable.

(Printer's Device)

Imprinted for N. L. C. B.  
and T. H. 1600.

The initials N. L. stand for Nicholas Ling, one of the publishers of the famous piratical "Hamlet" quarto, 1603, also the corrected editions of 1604 and 1605.

There are 2,350 quotations in this Anthology, of which 95 are taken from Shakespeare, 30 from the plays and 65 from the poems. The above is numbered 1,292, under the heading:

PLEASURE

Revels, dances, masks and merry howers,  
Forerun faire love strowing her way with flowers.

W.Sha.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

Although not a rare book, it is of priceless value to the Elizabethan student. Extracts from extant plays being assigned to their proper authors, notwithstanding that the plays in which they appeared were printed anonymously.

Sometimes the editor goes astray and assigns the wrong name to an author ; in this work there are 130 such attributions. This important book has been splendidly edited in recent years by Mr. Charles Crawford, who must have spent laborious hours in tracing the different extracts and allotting them to their rightful owners. Every lover of Elizabethan poetry should possess this book, which can be purchased for quite a moderate sum. I should mention that in a dedication to Sir Thomas Mounson the writer signs himself " R. A." Farmer, the Shakesperean scholar of the eighteenth century, saw a copy with the name Robert Allot printed at length, and ever since, this author has always been considered the editor of this Anthology.

### PLAY.

I will play three myself (three characters).  
V, I, 150

Our wrong doth not end like an old play ;  
Jack hath not Jill. V, 2, 884

A twelvemonth and a day, and then 'twill end,  
That's too long for a play. V, 2, 883

### PROLOGUE. SHOWS.

Their shallow shows and prologues vilely penned.  
V, 2, 305

### SCENE.

Worthies away ! the scene begins to cloud.  
V, 2, 730

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

- Of these four Worthies, in their first show thrive,  
These four will change habits. V, 2, 541
- There is five in the first show. V, 2, 543
- It should have followed in the end of our show. V, 2, 898
- The King would have me present the Princess with  
some delightful ostentation or show a pageant  
or antic or firework. V, I, 115
- WORTHY. (NINE WORTHIES).  
He is not quantity enough for that Worthy's thumb. V, I, 138
- For the rest of the Worthies? I will play three  
myself. V, I, 149
- I will play on the tabor to the Worthies. V, I, 161
- They would know whether the three Worthies  
should come in. V, 2, 486
- I know not the degree of a Worthy but I stand for  
him. V, 2, 508
- Here is like to be a good presence of Worthies. V, 2, 537
- My hat to a halfpenny Pompey proves the best  
Worthy. V, 2, 504
- He will be the ninth Worthy. V, 2, 582
- There a Worthie's acoming. V, 2, 588
- Room for the insensed Worthies. V, 2, 703
- Worthies away the scene begins to cloud. V, 2, 730

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

### MASKS. VIZARD.

You have a double tongue within your mask  
An would afford my speechless vizard half.

V, 2, 242

### HOBBY-HORSE.

But O, but O—the Hobby-horse is forgot.

III, I, 30

## MACBETH

### ACT. PROLOGUE.

Two truths are told  
As happy prologues to the swelling act  
Of the imperial theme.

I, 3, 128

### PLAYER. STAGE.

A poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more.

V, 5, 24

### SHOW.

Then yield thee coward  
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time.  
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,  
Painted on a pole and underwrit :  
“ Here may you see the tyrant.”

V, 7, 53

## MEASURE FOR MEASURE

### STAGE. APPLAUSE.

I love the people,  
But do not like to stage me to their eyes,  
Though it do well, I do not relish well  
Their loud applause and Aves vehement.

I, 1, 69

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

This passage would seem connected in some manner with the theatre. The Duke, who expresses this sentiment, wishes to convey that he is anxious in avoiding the vulgar gaze. The "Aves" may refer to exclamations of applause, and were possibly signs of approval at the Universities in Elizabethan times. Its general signification is Hail! Welcome, or Farewell! adieu. Also a shout of welcome. The word is better known in the angelic salutation *Ave Maria*.

### MERCHANT OF VENICE

#### MASQUE.

Will you prepare for this masque to-night?

II, 4, 23

The mask, or later masque, was an entertainment which had been introduced into England as far back as the reign of Edward III. In 1348, Edward II kept Christmas at Guildford, and a mask was held there in his honour. When first seen in England, dancing was the only factor of the masque, most often in masquerade, somewhat after the fashion of our balmasques, with this difference: that stately dances nearly filled the programme, the Master of the Revels allowing only two or three round dances, such as galliards and corantos. A mask is introduced in Shakespeare's play of "King Henry VIII," the King and his companions, attired as shepherds, with masks covering their faces, enter the palace of Cardinal Wolsey, and take part in the Revels. Early in the sixteenth century, dialogue and scenery were introduced, and soon became a prominent feature of the masque, but very shortly developed into set speeches. This class of entertainment, under the guidance of Ben Jonson and

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

Inigo Jones, had become quite a literary and artistic undertaking. Thousands of pounds were lavished on these court revels, and even the King and Queen took part in them (King James the First and his consort, Anne of Denmark).

The masque at this period, 1620, was a combination in variable proportion of speech, dance and song. The Masquers were dressed in gorgeous costumes in accordance with the characters they represented. During James's reign, the mask for the face was dispensed with, as it was regarded as quite an unnecessary disguise. At the outbreak of the Civil War, 1642, the masque abruptly ceased, and was never revived. Many masques are extant, and survive in manuscript and printed copies.

### PAGEANT.

Your mind is tossing on the ocean,  
There where your argosies of portly sail,  
Like Signors and rich burghers on the flood,  
Or as it were, the pageants of the sea.

An allusion to those enormous machines that were drawn about the streets in the ancient shows or pageants. These machines were in the shape of castle dragons, ships, giants, and were regarded as the most important part of the show.

### DUMB-SHOW.

What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young  
baron of England?

### PORTIA.

He is a proper man's picture, but, alas! who can  
converse with a dumb-show? I, 2, 78

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

### MASQUE.

- I will not say you will see a mask. II, 5, 23
- No masque to-night. II, 6, 64
- What ! are these masques ? II, 5, 28

### PLAY. STAGE. PART.

#### ANT.

I hold the world, but as the world, Gratanio,  
A stage where every man must play a part and mine  
a sad one.

#### GRA.

Let me play fool.

Gratanio wishes to play the Fool, or comic part, which was a regular character in the old morality interludes, whence came the phrase, to 'play the fool.'

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

### PROPERTIES.

Get us properties, and tricking for our fairies. IV, 4, 78

"Properties" for stage purposes was in use much earlier than Shakespeare's time, and has remained in the vocabulary of the theatre until the present day. In its technical theatrical signification, such as the above quotation, it refers to any portable article whether costume, furniture, or weapons required during the acting of the play. In Elizabethan times the properties used were few and simple; they consisted of things that were absolutely necessary, thus giving a realistic appearance to the performance. If a bedroom scene is being represented, a bed,

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

table, chairs or stools and lights are the properties mentioned in the play, and, no doubt, produced on the stage. In scenes of open country, a wood, a park, and artificial trees, mossy banks, and sometimes a rock, or a tomb, would be fixed on the stage. That such properties were in use can be proved from the notes in Henslowe's invaluable Diary, where such things are mentioned. In shop scenes, a counter and a few articles to indicate the nature of the business were no doubt exhibited. No painted scenery was known, but the stage was draped with tapestry and perhaps a few pictures were also displayed. The floor in all scenes was covered with rushes, which were suitable for any setting. If a room was being represented, rushes were quite appropriate, as at that date they were the substitute for our carpet. If a nature scene, they harmonised with the green foliage and completed the picture. Many other articles besides the above-mentioned were brought into use ; thus it is quite evident that, however simple the setting, it sufficed in conveying the proper allusion. Even in our own times, I have witnessed a play of Molière's, in which a table and two chairs were the only properties on the stage.

“ Of all properties for my Lord Admiral's men, the 10th of March, 1598 : 1 rock, 1 cage, 1 tomb, 1 Hell mouth, 2 marchepanes and the sittie (city) of Rome (rather a tall order), 2 wooden canopies, old Mahomet's head, and other accessories.

### ACT. HISS.

If I do not act it, hiss me.

III, 3, 40

### CUE.

Remember you your cue.

III, 3, 40

The concluding word or words of a speech in a play serving as a signal or direction to another to

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

begin his speech. The word cue has been taken as French *queue*, that is, the tail or ending of the preceding speech ; but no such use of queue has even been used in French, where the cue is called *replique*, and no literal sense of queue or cue leading up to this appears in the sixteenth century English. On the other hand, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries it is found written Q, q or qu, and it was explained by seventeenth century writers as a contraction for some Latin word (*qualis*, *quando*), said to have been used to mark in actors' copies of plays the points at which they were to begin. But no evidence confirming this has ever been found.

Q. A qu, a term used among stage-plaiers, a Lat qualis—at what manner of word the Actors are to beginne to speake one after another hath done his speech. 1625.

Q. A note of entrance for actors, because it is the first letter of quando—when, showing when to enter and speak. 1633. From Butler's *English Grammar*. The word is printed both Qu and Cue in the Folios and quartos. All modern editions print cue.

The clock gives me my cue. III, 2, 46.

### MASQUED. VIZARDED.

For they must all be masqued and vizarded.

IV, 6, 40

In the early days of the masque the performers always wore masks or vizards.

### PART.

(*Enter Sir Hugh Evans, disguised with others, as fairies.*)

Trib, fairies ; come ! and remember your parts ; be bold, I pray you ; follow me into the pit, and when I give ords, do as I pid you ; come come ; trib, trib.

V, 4, 2

# THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

## SCENE.

Fat Falstaffe

Hath a great scene.

IV, 6, 17

## COMEDY. PROLOGUE.

After we had embraced, kissed and protested and  
As it were spoke the prologue to our comedy.

III, 5, 76

A comedy was a theatrical piece generally depicting the manners of the period, always of an amusing and cheerful character, a happy conclusion being one of the essential features. Some of Shakespeare's so-called comedies almost verge on the side of tragedy, as, for instance, the plot of the "Merchant of Venice," "The Winter's Tale," and others.

## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

QUINCE.

Is all our company here ?

BOTTOM.

You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

QUIN.

Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the Duke and the Duchess on his wedding-day at night.

BOT.

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on ; then read the names of the actors ; and so grow to a point.

QUIN.

Marry, our play is, the most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

BOT.

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry.  
Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors  
by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

QUIN.

Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOT.

Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUIN.

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOT.

What is Pyramus ? a lover or a tyrant ?

QUIN.

A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOT.

That will ask some tears in the true performing of  
it ; if I do it, let the audience look to their  
eyes ; I will move storms, I will condole in  
some measure. To the rest : yet my chief  
humour is for a tyrant ; I could play Ercles  
rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks  
And shivering shocks  
Shall break the locks  
Of prison-gates ;  
And Phibbus' car  
Shall shine from far,  
And make and mar  
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty ! Now name the rest of the players.  
This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein ; a lover is  
more condoling.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

QUIN.

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLU.

Here, Peter Quince.

QUIN.

Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLU.

What is Thisby ?—a wandering knight ?

QUIN.

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLU.

Nay, faith, let me not play a woman ; I have a beard coming.

QUIN.

That's all one : you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

BOT.

And I may hide my face. Let me play Thisby, too ; I'll speak in a monstrous little voice : " Thisne, Thisne " ; " Ah, Pyramus, my lover, dear ! thy Thisby, dear, and lady dear ! "

QUIN.

No, no ; you must play Pyramus ; and, Flute you Thisby.

BOT.

Well, proceed.

QUIN.

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STAR.

Here, Peter Quince.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

QUIN.

You, Pyramus' father ; myself, Thisby's father ; Snug, the joiner ; you, the lion's part ; and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG.

Have you the lion's part written ? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUIN.

You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

BOT.

Let me play the lion, too : I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me ; I will roar, that I will make the Duke say : " Let him roar again, let him roar again."

QUIN.

And you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek ; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL.

That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOT.

I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us ; but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove ; I will roar you an' 'twere any nightingale.

QUIN.

You can play no part but Pyramus ; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man ; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day ; a most lovely, gentleman-like man ; therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

BOT.

Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in ?

QUIN.

Why, what you will.

BOT.

I will discharge it in either your straw colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French crown colour beard, your perfect yellow.

QUIN.

Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts ; and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night ; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight ; there we will rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

BOT.

We will meet ; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains ; be perfect. Adieu.

QUIN.

At the duke's oak we meet.

BOT.

Enough ; hold or cut bow-strings.

*Act I. Scene II.*

---

BOT.

Are we all met ?

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

QUIN.

Pat, pat ; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house ; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the Duke.

BOT.

Peter Quince ———.

QUIN.

What sayest thou, Bully Bottom ?

BOT.

There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself ; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that ?

SNOUT.

By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

STAR.

I believe we must leave the killing out when all is done.

BOT.

Not a whit : I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue ; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed ; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom, the weaver : this will put them out of fear.

QUIN.

Well, we will have such a prologue ; and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOT.

No, make it two more ; let it be written in eight and eight.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

SNOUT.

Will not the ladies be afraid of the lion ?

STAR.

I fear it, I promise you.

BOT.

Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves : to bring in—God shield us !—a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing ; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living, and we ought to look to't.

SNOUT.

Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOT.

Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck ; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect : " Ladies,"—or, " Fair ladies—I would wish you"—or, " I would request you,"—or, " I would entreat you—not to fear, not to tremble : my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life : no, I am no such thing ; I am a man as other men are " ; and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly, he is Snug, the joiner.

QUIN.

Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things ; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber, for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

SNOUT.

Doth the moon shine that night we play our play ?

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

BOT.

A calendar, a calendar ! look in the almanac ; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUIN.

Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOT.

Why, then, may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

QUIN.

Ay ; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine. Then there is another thing : we must have a wall in the great chamber ; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT.

You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom ?

BOT.

Some man or other must present wall ; and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him to signify wall ; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

QUIN.

If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin : when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake, and so every one according to his cue.

*(Enter Puck, behind.)*

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

PUCK.

What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering  
here,  
So near the cradle of the fairy queen ?  
What, a play toward ! I'll be an auditor ;  
An actor, too, perhaps, if I see cause.

QUIN.

Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

BOT.

Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet, ——.

QUIN.

Odours, odours.

BOT.

—— Odours savours sweet :  
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby, dear.  
But hark, a voice ! stay thou but here awhile,  
And by and by I will to thee appear. *(Exit).*

PUCK.

A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here.

FLU.

Must I speak now ?

QUIN.

Ay, marry, must you ; for you must understand he  
goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to  
come again.

FLU.

Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,  
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,  
Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,  
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,  
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

QUIN.

“Ninus’ tomb,” man ; why, you must not speak that yet ; that you answer to Pyramus. You speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus enter : your due is past ; it is, “never tire.”

FLU.

O,—As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

*(Re-enter Puck and Bottom, with an ass’s head.)*

BOT.

If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

QUIN.

O monstrous ! O strange ! we are haunted.  
Pray, masters ! fly, masters ! Help !

*Act III, Sc. I, lines 1-107.*

THESUS.

Come now ; what masques, what dances shall we have

To wear away this long age of three hours

Between our after-supper and bed-time ?

Where is our usual manager of mirth ?

What revels are in hand ? Is there no play

To ease the anguish of a torturing hour ?

Call Philostrate.

PHIL.

Here, mighty Thesus.

THE.

Say, what abridgement have you for this evening ?

What masque ? what music ? How shall we beguile

The lazy time, if not with some delight ?

PHIL.

There is a brief how many sports are ripe :

Make choice of which your highness will see first.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

THE.

(*Reads*) The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung  
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.

We'll none of that : that have I told my love,  
In glory of my kinsman, Hercules.

(*Reads*) The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,  
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.

That is an old decide ; and it was play'd  
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

(*Reads*) The thrice three Muses mourning for the  
death

Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.

That is some satire, keen and critical,  
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

(*Reads*) A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus  
And his love Thisbe ; very tragical mirth.

Merry and tragical ! tedious and brief !

That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.

How shall we find the concord of this discord ?

PHIL.

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,

Which is as brief as I have known a play ;

But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,

Which makes it tedious ; for in all the play

There is not one word apt, one play fitted :

And tragical, my noble lord, it is ;

For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.

Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,

Made mine eyes water ; but more merry tears

The passion of loud laughter never shed.

THE.

What are they that do play it ?

PHIL.

Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,  
Which never labour'd in their minds till now ;

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories  
With this same play, against your nuptial.

THE.

And we will hear it.

PHIL.

No, my noble lord ;  
It is not for you : I have heard it over,  
And it is nothing, nothing in the world ;  
Unless you can find sport in their intents,  
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,  
To do you service.

THE.

I will hear that play ;  
For never anything can be amiss,  
When simpleness and duty tender it.  
Go, bring them in : and take your places, ladies.

HIP.

I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,  
And duty in his service perishing.

THE.

Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIP.

He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THE.

The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.  
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake :  
And what poor duty cannot do noble respect  
Takes in it might, not merit.  
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed  
To greet me with premeditated welcomes ;  
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,  
Make periods in the midst of sentences,  
Throttle their practised accent in their fears,

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

And, in conclusion, dumbly have broken off,  
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,  
Out of this silence yet I picked a welcome ;  
And in the modesty of fearful duty  
I read as much as from the rattling tongue  
Of saucy and audacious eloquence  
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity  
In least speak most, to my capacity.

*(Re-enter Philostrate.)*

PHIL.

So please, your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.  
*(Flourish of trumpets.)*

*(Enter Quince for the Prologue.)*

PRO.

If we offend, it is with our good will.

That you should think, we come not to offend,  
But with good will. To show our simple skill,  
That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider, then, we come but in despite.

We do not come, as minding to content you  
Our true intent is. All for your delight,

We are not here. That you should here repent  
you.

The actors are at hand ; and, by their show,  
You shall know all, that you are like to know.

THE.

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys.

He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt ; he  
Knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord :  
It is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

HIP.

Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder ; a sound, but not in government.

THE.

His speech was like a tangled chain ; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next ?

*(Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine and Lion.)*

PRO.

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show ;  
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.

This man is Pyramus, if you would know ;

This beauteous lady, Thisby, is certain.

This man, with line and rough-cast, doth present  
Wall, that vile Wall, which did these lovers  
sunder ;

And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are  
content

To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.

This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,

Presenteth Moonshine ; for, if you will know,

By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn.

To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.

This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,

The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,

Did scare away, or rather did affright ;

And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,

Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.

Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,

And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain :

Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,

He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast ;

And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,

His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain  
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

*(Exeunt Prologue, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion and Moon-  
shine.)*

THE.

I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEM.

No wonder, my lord : one lion may, when many  
asses do.

WALL.

In this same interlude it doth befall  
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall ;  
And such a wall, as I would have you think,  
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,  
Did whisper often very secretly.  
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show  
That I am that same wall ; the truth is so :  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,  
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THE.

Would you desire lime and hair to speak better ?

DEM.

It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard dis-  
course, my lord.

THE.

Pyramus draws near the wall ; silence !

*(Re-enter Pyramus).*

PYR.

O grim-look'd night ! O night with hue so black !  
O night, which ever art when day is not !

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

O night, O night ! alack, alack, alack,  
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot !  
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,  
That stand'st between her father's ground and  
mine !  
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,  
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine  
eyne!

*(Wall holds up his fingers.)*

Thanks, courteous wall ; Jove shield thee well for  
this !  
But what see I ? No Thisby do I see.  
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss !  
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me !

THE.

The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse  
again.

PYR.

No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me,"  
is Thisby's cue ; she is to enter now, and I am to  
spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall  
pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

*(Re-enter Thisbe.)*

THIS.

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,  
For parting my fair Pyramus and me !  
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,  
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYR.

I see a voice : now will I to the chink,  
To spy an' I can hear my Thisby's face.  
Thisby !

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

THIS.

My love thou art, my love I think.

PYR.

Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grave ;  
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

THIS.

And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

PYR.

Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THIS.

As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYR.

O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall !

THIS.

I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

PYR.

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway ?

THIS.

'Tide life, 'tide death, I'd come without delay.

*(Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.)*

WALL.

Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so ;  
And, being done, this wall away doth go.

THE.

Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

DEM.

No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

HIP.

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THE.

The best in this kind are but shadows ; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

HIP.

It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THE.

If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

*(Re-enter Lion and Moonshine.)*

LION.

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear  
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on  
floor,  
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,  
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am  
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam ;  
For, if I should as lion, come in strife  
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

THE.

A very gentle beast, and of good conscience.

DEM.

The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

LYS.

This lion is a very fox for his valour.

THE.

True ; and a goose for his discretion.

DEM.

Not so, my lord ; for his valour cannot carry his discretions ; and the fox carries the goose.

THE.

His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour for the goose carries not the fox. It is well : leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

MOON.

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present ;—

DEM.

He should have worn the horns on his head.

THE.

He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

MOON.

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present ;  
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

THE.

This is the greatest error of all the rest : the man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the man i' the moon ?

DEM.

He dares not come there for the candle ; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

HIP.

I am awearry of this moon : would he would change !

THE.

It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is on the wane ; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYS.

Proceed, Moon.

MOON.

All that I have to say is to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon ; I, the man i' the moon ; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush ; and this dog, my dog.

DEM.

Why, all these should be in the lantern ; for all these are in the moon. But, silence ! here comes Thisbe.

*(Re-enter Thisbe.)*

THIS.

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love ?

LION.

*(Roaring)* Oh, ——.

DEM.

Well roared, Lion.

THE.

Well run, Thisbe.

HIP.

Well shone, Moon. Truly the moon shines with a good grace.

*(The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.)*

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

THE.

Well moused, Lion.

DEM.

And then came Pyramus.

LYS.

And so the Lion vanished.

*(Re-enter Pyramus.)*

PYR.

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams ;  
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright ;  
For, by thy gravious, golde, glittering gleams,  
I trust to take of truest Thisby's sight.

But stay, O spite !  
But mark, poor knight,  
What dreadful dole is here !  
Eyes, do you see ?  
How can it be ?  
O dainty duck ! O dear !  
Thy mantle good,  
What, stain'd with blood !  
Approach, ye Furies fell !  
O Fates, come, come,  
Cut thread and thrum ;  
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell !

THE.

This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would  
go near to make a man look sad.

HIP.

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

PYR.

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame ?  
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear :

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame  
That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd  
with cheer.

Come, tears, confound ;  
Out, sword, and wound  
The pap of Pyramus ;  
Ay, that left pap,  
Where heart doth hop. (*Stabs himself.*)

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.  
Now am I dead,  
Now am I fled ;  
My soul is in the sky ;  
Tongue, lose thy light ;  
Moon, take thy flight. (*Exit Moonshine*)  
Now die, die, die, die, die. (*Dies.*)

DEM.

No die, but an ace, for him ; for he is but one.

LYS.

Less than an ace, man, for he is dead ; he is nothing.

THE.

With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover,  
and prove an ass.

HIP.

How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe  
comes back and finds her lover ?

THE.

She will find him by starlight. Here she comes ;  
and her passion ends the play.

(*Re-enter Thisbe.*)

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

HIP.

Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus. I hope she will be brief.

DEM.

A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better ; he for a man, God warrant us ; she for a woman, God bless us.

LYS.

She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

DEM.

And thus she means, videlicet :

THIS.

Asleep, my love ?  
What, dead, my dove ?  
O Pyramus, arise !  
Speak, speak. Quite dumb ?  
Dead, dead ! A tomb  
Must cover thy sweet eyes.  
These lily lips,  
This cherry nose,  
These yellow cowslip cheeks,  
Are gone, are gone,  
Lovers, make moan :  
His eyes were green as leeks.  
O Sisters Three,  
Come, come to me,  
With hands as pale as milk :  
Lay them in gore,  
Since you have shore  
With shears his thread of silk.  
Tongue, not a word :  
Come, trusty sword ;  
Come, blade, my breast imbrue :  
(*Stabs herself.*)

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

And, farewell, friends:

Thus Thisbe ends :

Adieu, adieu, adieu.

(Dies.)

THE.

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEM.

Ay, and Wall, too.

BOT.

(Starting up.) No, I assure you, the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company ?

THE.

No epilogue, I pray you ; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse, for when the players are all dead there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy ; and so it is, truly ; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask : let your epilogue alone.

*Act V. Scene I. Line 32—line 369.*

ACTORS.

Read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point. I, 2, 9

Call forth your actors by the scroll,  
Masters spread yourselves. I, 2, 16

I'll be an auditor ;  
An actor, too, perhaps. If I see cause. III, 1, 82

Most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we  
are to utter sweet breath. IV, 2, 43

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

The actors are at hand, and by their show  
You shall know all. V, I, 116

### AUDIENCE

If I do let the audience look to their eyes. V, I, 145

### COMEDY.

Our play is the most lamentable comedy, and most  
cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe. I, II, 12

There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and  
Thisby that will never please. III, I, 9

I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet  
comedy. IV, 2, 45

### CUE. PART.

And so every one according to his cue. III, I, 78

You speak all your parts at once, cues and all  
III, I, 102

When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer.  
IV, I, 205

“ Deceiving me ” is Thisby’s cue. V, I, 186

### ABRIDGEMENT.

Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?  
What masques, what music? How shall we beguile  
The lazy time if not with some delight. V, I, 35

An “ Abridgement ” appears to be an entertainment consisting of a dramatic performance of short duration to while away the time. Another meaning was a compendium of a larger work with the details abridged. I cannot find any contemporary use of this term, as it is employed by Shakespeare.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

AUDITOR.

I'll be an auditor ; an actor, too, perhaps.

III, 1, 81

### EIGHT AND SIX. PROLOGUE.

QUINCE.

We will have such a prologue ; and it shall be written in eight and six.

III, 1, 25

The ballads of the day were generally written in this metre, alternate verses of eight and six syllables. The sonnets of the time were composed in fourteen lines. All Shakespearean sonnets are written in this number. Quince may have had this reckoning in his mind when he recommended eight and six—fourteen. George Gascoigne, the Elizabethan poet, composed the verses for a masque in fourteen syllable metre. In the play as performed before the Duke, the prologue does not appear.

EPILOGUE.

Please you to see the epilogue or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company ?

V, i, 360

A Bergomask dance was performed after the manner of a dance by Bergamo peasants. Bergamo was formerly a town in Venetia ; now it is in the province of Lombardy.

But come, your Bergomask ; let your epilogue alone.

V, i, 369

ERCLES VEIN. PART.

I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in.

I, 2, 31

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein ; a lover is more  
condoling. I, 2, 42.

The " Ercles vein " referred to a style of acting widely prevalent in Shakespeare's day. This method gained his unqualified disapproval, which he specially denounced in Hamlet's advice to the players. Through his influence, this melodramatic bombastic ranting was finally driven from the stage, not, alas, without many pleadings for its retention amongst several playgoers. Robert Greene, the dramatist, in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, the same pamphlet in which he accuses Shakespeare of downright plagiarism, mentions an actor who observes how he heard " The Twelve Labours of Hercules thunder on the stage." Henslowe, in his Diary, notes the name of a play on this subject, and others are also known. It gave an opportunity for a robust actor to carry an audience with him in his display of fiery outbursts of uncontrollable passion.

### EXTEMPORE.

You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but  
roaring. I, 2, 70

### MASK.

### FLUTE.

Nay, faith, let not me play a woman : I have a beard  
coming.

### QUI.

That's all one, you shall play it in a mask.

There is a tradition that masks were worn by ladies attending the theatres in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This custom may have originated from the stage use of boys and men playing female parts, sometimes in masks. Very

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

little is known of the history of wearing masks, both in public and private performances. The above quotation proves that it would not be at all incongruous for an actor to play his part in a mask.

### MASQUE.

What masques, what dances shall we have ?

V, 1, 32

What masque ? what music ? How shall we beguile  
The lazy time, if not with some delight.

V, 1, 40

### INTERLUDE.

Here is the scroll of every man's name which is  
thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our  
interlude.

I, 2, 5

### APPAREL.

Get your apparel together, good strings to your  
beards, new ribbons to your pumps. In any  
case, let Thisby have clean linen.

IV, 2, 36

Although scenic effects did not play a great part in Elizabethan performances, the actors spared no pains in appearing before the audience in most elaborate costumes. The court masques were most gorgeously costumed, and the expenses totalled thousands of pounds. It is on record that noblemen lent their rich doublets and hose to actors on special occasions, all characters, whether ancient or modern, appearing in the costume of the day. Henslowe's Diary affords many glimpses of the dresses supplied to the actors. In fact, the rich apparel of the actors is one of the noteworthy features of an Elizabethan play, and can be attested by many contemporary witnesses. We see here the rude mechanicals aping their betters, and Bottom's request that the performers shall appear in their best and do everything in their power to make a goodly show before the Duke.

# THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

## PLAY.

- Say what the play treats on. I, 2, 9
- Mary! our play is The most lamentable comedy. I, 2, 11
- I could play Ercles rarely. I, 2, 31
- Let me not play a woman, I have a beard coming.
- You shall play it in a mask. I, 2, 51
- Let me play Thisby, too. I, 2, 53
- You must play Pyramus: And Flute, you Thisby. I, 2, 57.
- Robin Starveling you must play Thisby's mother. I, 2, 62
- Here is a play fitted I, 2, 67
- Let me play the lion, too. I will roar. I, 2, 72
- You can play no part but Thisby. I, 2, 87
- What beard where I best to play it in. I, 2, 93
- And then you will play barefaced. I, 2, 100
- I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play  
wants. I, 2, 105
- Doth the moon shine that night we play our play. III, 1, 53
- Leave a casement of the great chamber window  
where we play, open. III, 1, 58

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- What a play toward. III, 1, 81
- To rehearse a play. III, 11, 2
- I will sing it the latter end of the play. IV, 1, 23
- If he come not then the play is marred. IV, 2, 5
- Our play is preferred. IV, 2, 39
- Let not him that plays the lion pare his nails.  
IV, 2, 41
- Is there no play  
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour? V, 1, 36
- A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,  
Which is as brief as I have known a pay.  
V, 1, 61
- For in all the play  
There is not one word apt, one player fitted.  
V, 1, 64
- What are they that do play it? V, 1, 71
- And now have toiled their unbreathed memories  
With this same play. V, 1, 75
- I will hear that play. V, 1, 81
- Here she comes, and her passion ends the play.  
V, 1, 321
- No epilogue, I pray you ; for your play needs no  
excuse. V, 1, 362
- This palpable gross play hath well beguil'd  
The heavy gait of night. V, 1, 374

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

### PLAYED.

A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here. II, I 91

It was play'd

When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.  
V, I, 90

He hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder.  
V, I, 122

If he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter it would have been a fine tragedy.  
V, I, 365

### PLAYER.

Now name the rest of the players. I, 2, 42

For in all the play there is not one word apt, one player fitted.  
V, I, 65

Never excuse, for when the players are all dead there need none to be blamed.  
V, I, 364

### PUPPET.

Fie : you counterfeit, you puppet you !  
Puppet ? why so ? III, 2, 288

### PROLOGUE.

Write me a prologue. III, I, 12

We will have such a prologue. III, I, 24

Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion. III, I, 35

So please, your grace, the prologue is addressed.  
V, I, 106

He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt.  
V, I, 119

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child  
on a recorder. V, 1, 122

### PART.

Name what part I am for and proceed. I, 2, 20

I could play Ercles rarely or a part to tear a cat in.  
I, 2, 31

Snug, the joiner ; you, the lion's part. I, 2, 66

Have you the lion's part written ? I, 2, 68

You can play no part by Pyramus. I, 2, 87

Here are your parts ; and I am to entreat you and  
desire you to con them by to-morrow night.  
I, 2, 101

Sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your  
parts. III, 1, 102

Every man look o'er his part. IV, 2, 38

Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged.

### PLAYING.

O sweet Bully Bottom ; Thus hath he lost six-  
pence a day during his life : he could not have  
scaped sixpence a day ; or the duke had not  
given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus,  
I'll be hanged ; he would have deserved it ;  
sixpence a day in Pyramus or nothing.  
IV, 2, 23

There is probably an allusion here to some  
actor who had been pensioned by the Queen with  
this sum. The author of "Cambyses," Thomas

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

Preston, was pensioned, at the rate of twenty pounds a year, by the Queen for his rare ability in acting. The play in which Preston acted was John Ritwise's "Dido," played before Queen Elizabeth at Cambridge, 1564. Shakespeare likewise ridiculed the title page of "Cambyses" by alluding to the most lamentable comedy of Pyramus and Thisby.

After the lapse of so many years it is doubtful whether the audience fully appreciated or understood the allusion.

### PROPERTIES.

In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties.

I, 2, 108

### REHEARSAL.

A marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal.

III, 1, 3

### REHEARSE.

A mile without the town, by moonlight : there will we rehearse.

I, 2, 105

There may we rehearse most obscenely and courageously.

I, 2, 110

Sit down every mother's son, and rehearse your parts.

III, 1, 75

Were met together to rehearse a play.

III, 2, 11

Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess made more eyes water.

V, i, 68

The first authentic use of this word, in its technical theatrical sense, is made by Shakespeare in this passage : "A marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal." Cunningham, in his Revels Accounts,

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

quotes the use of the word in 1580: "Rehersinge of divers plaies and their sundry Rehersells." There is a grave suspicion of forgery overhanging Cunningham's transcripts of the Revels Account. Most critics would condemn them as modern forgeries, while others uphold their genuineness.

### REVELS.

The King doth keep his Revels here to-night.

II, I, 18

### THESEUS.

Where is our usual manager of mirth?

What revels are in hand? V, I, 36

A fortnight hold we this solemnly

In nightly revels and new jolity. V, I, 377

Where is our usual manager of mirth?

What Revels are in hand? Is there no play

To ease the anguish of a torturing house?

Call Egeus (Philostrate Master of the Revels).

There is a curious error in the above passage, which is copied from the First Folio. Egeus is simply an Athenian Lord, and is in no way connected with the household of Theseus. Philostrate, who is really Master of the Revels to the Duke, is correctly named in this extract in Fisher's quarto edition of the play, issued in Shakespeare's life-time. The error probably arose through the same actor's doubling the characters of both Egeus and Philostrate, and must be attributed to the prompter, who adapted for the stage the quarto edition, dated 1600. This was, in fact, the original quarto, and fraudulently re-issued in 1619. It was called the Robert's quarto, from the name of the printer, and this quarto was used by the editors of the First Folio in reprinting

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the play. Although the date of 1600, the same as that of Fisher's quarto, is stamped on the title page, it has been conclusively proved by Mr. Pollard, of the British Museum, that this edition was really issued in 1619, together with other quartos, some of which bear false dates, and the nine false quartos were bound in one volume in the year 1619.

The Master of the Revels was an important official at the Court. All plays that were publicly acted were obliged beforehand to obtain the sanction of the Master of the Revels, much in the same way as the approval of the Lord Chamberlain must be obtained in our own times. During Elizabeth's reign, Edward Tilney held this post in the Royal Household; his official residence was at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, and here were stored the properties and costumes that were used in the masques and entertainments, which were presented at the palaces of Whitehall, Greenwich, Hampton Court, and other royal residences. During the last years of the Queen's reign, Henry Carey, first Baron Hunsdon, was Lord Chamberlain; after his death, William Brooke, Lord Cobham, succeeded to the office, to be followed by George Carey, second Lord Hunsdon, the son of the earlier Lord Chamberlain.

### SCENE.

Forsook his scene and entered in a brake.

III, 2, 15

A tedious, brief scene of young Pyramus and his love, Thisbe.

V, 1, 56

### SHOW.

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show:  
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.

V, 1, 128

### STAGE.

This green plot shall be our stage.

III, 1, 4

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

### STUDY.

Have you the lion's part written? Pray, if it be, give  
it me; I am slow of study. I, 2, 69

I am told that to study a part belongs to the theatrical vocabulary of to-day. Another proof of the conservatism of the English stage.

### TIRING HOUSE.

This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn  
brake our tiring house. III, 1, 4

Every Elizabethan theatre possessed a tiring house or a tiring room, as it is generally named. The word is an abbreviation of attiring house: the place where the actors dressed or attired themselves. From the very earliest times the tiring room was a part of theatrical equipment. In the early days of the Greek drama, the Coryphæus mounted on a table, surrounded by choristers, who danced and chanted the dithyrambs in the orchestra. This was the name given to the flat service enclosed between the stage buildings and the inside boundary of the auditorium. It was called the orchestra, or dancing place, because in Greek theatres it was reserved for the performance of the chorus.

Thespis, who first introduced an actor on the scene, in the latter part of the sixth century B.C., erected a booth at the back of the orchestra in order to facilitate the changing of his costume. As this one actor impersonated all the characters in the play, it can easily be imagined how necessary the tiring room became. In later years, when the dramas of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were produced, regular stage buildings, with ample accommodation for the actors, were then in vogue. The tiring house of the Globe Theatre was in all probability constructed at the back or on the side of

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

the lower stage. Some critics would also allot a space on the first floor for a second tiring room, adjoining the music room, which was known to be situated in that part of the building. There can be no doubt that in the engraving of the so-called "Inside of the Red Bull Theatre," spectators are watching the play from these rooms, but it is not safe to deduct any dogmatic conclusions from this drawing: one critic would place the tiring room behind the proscenium doors on the ground floor, and the second room behind the balcony windows on the first floor. It would also seem, by a quotation from Melton's *Astrologaster*, 1620, that the tiring room was used for preparing scenic illusion. "While Drummer's made thunder in the Tiring-house." The whole subject of the exact situation and the uses of this room is beset with difficulties, and no one so far has grappled with them successfully. That an actors' dressing room did exist is a positive certainty. The most convenient place would be at the back of the lower stage, and, until further proof is forthcoming, there it must be located. This is the only instance in which Shakespeare uses the word.

### TRAGEDY.

Mary, if he that writ it had play'd Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy; and so it is, truly and very notably discharged. V, 1, 367

By the above quotation, the word discharge bore some theatrical meaning, but I have failed to trace the use of the word as connected specially with the stage.

### TRAGICAL.

Very tragical mirth. Merry and tragical. V, 1, 57

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And tragical, my noble lord, it is  
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself. V, 1, 66

THESEUS.

Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth,  
Joy, gentle friends ; joy and fresh days of love  
Accompany your hearts.  
Come now, what masques, what dances shall we  
have  
To wear away this long age of three hours  
Between our after-supper and bed-time ?  
Where is our usual manager of mirth ?  
What revels are in hand ? Is there no play  
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour.  
Call Philostrate. V, 1, 37

When a marriage was celebrated in a nobleman's family it was customary for a play, interlude or some kind of dramatic entertainment to be represented, in presence of the invited guests. This play of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" may have been written and acted to solemnize the marriage of the Earl of Southampton to Elizabeth Vernon, or that of Edward Russell to Lucy Harrington. Noblemen, who were nominally the patrons of the different actors' companies, often requisitioned their services at their private houses or summoned them to their country houses, to play before them on some festive occasion. The assumption that this play was acted in honour of Southampton's marriage is the merest guess, no atom of proof being available that such was the case. Perhaps a version of the play was acted before the Court, but even this statement is pure surmise.

Flourish of Trumpets. V, 1, 107

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

The above stage direction appears only in the First Folio ; it is omitted in the quartos, but retained in all modern editions. These musical honours announced the commencement of the play. In the sketch of the Swan Theatre, the trumpet is being sounded, although the action of the drama is in progress. To account for this anomaly, we must infer that the artist drew his sketch from memory, and inadvertently overlooked this slight discrepancy. Dekker, in his *Gulls Hornbook*, first printed in 1609, addresses the Gallant, who is about to visit the theatre, not to present himself until the quaking prologue hath, by rubbing himself, got colour in his cheeks, and is ready to give the trumpets their cue that he's about to enter. On the modern English stage a bell is rung to indicate the rise of the curtain. In France, three knocks on the stage announce the appearance of the actors.

### TAWYERS WITH A TRUMPET BEFORE THEM.

Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine and  
Lion. V, 1, 127

This is a stage direction peculiar only to the First Folio ; it is not included in modern editions. The correct direction should be : Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Moonshine and Lion, Tawyers before them with a trumpet. Tawyer was an actor who played subordinate parts ; at one time he was in the employment of Heminge, one of the chief actors of the Lord Chamberlain's servants, and more important still, one of the editors of the famous and the most precious books in all literature, the *First Folio of Shakespeare's Works*, 1623. There is a monument erected in his honour and that of his fellow editor, Henry Condell, in the churchyard of St. Mary's, Aldermanbury, in the City of London.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

No true Shakesporean should omit paying a visit to this shrine. The real names of the actors occur several times in the Folio edition. In "Much Ado About Nothing" a certain Jacke Wilson is mentioned in the stage directions: "Enter Prince Leonato, Claudio and Jacke Wilson." This Jacke Wilson impersonated the character of Balthazar, a servant of Don Pedro, who sings the well-known song in the second act, entitled, "Sigh no more, Ladies."

There has been some controversy respecting the identity of this actor. He has been confounded with Dr. John Wilson, who composed the music to "Sigh no more, Ladies." Jack Wilson, the actor and singer, belonged to St. Giles's, Cripplegate, where he was baptized in 1585, whereas John Wilson, the Doctor of Music, was born at Faversham, Kent, in 1594. Dr. Wilson set to music many of Shakespeare's lyrics, and is the author of a rare book, entitled *Cheerful Ayres and Ballads*, 1660. This book is also noted as being the first essay of printing music at Oxford. Although the editors strongly assert that the plays are printed from the author's manuscripts, a slight acquaintance with the original edition will prove that this statement is not accurate. In fact, I doubt that any single play in the entire collection was copied from a Shakespeare holograph. The many stage directions alone indicate that transcript copies, expressly written out for the prompter, formed the basis of the text as it has come down to us. In some instances it can be proved that the latest printed quarto before 1623 served the composers for setting up the type. The question is of great interest, and deserves a thoroughly exhaustive examination.

Enter Quince for the Prologue.

V, 1, 108

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

In a prologue prefixed to Beaumont and Fletcher's "Woman Hater," 1607, the authors affirm that the person who delivered the prologue wore a garland of bay leaves, and was dressed in a black velvet coat. The bay was the sign of authorship, and the person who delivered the prologue was generally the author or his representative. In this instance, we are to accept Quince as the author of the interlude.

### PYRAMUS AND THISBE.

The interlude of Pyramus and Thisbe, acted by the rude mechanicals, is a burlesque of a famous legend, related originally by Ovid, in the fourth book of the *Metamorphoses*. This poem, which consists of fifteen books, was composed shortly after the first years of the Christian era. The first printed edition, which was in Latin, was issued at Bologna, 1471. Dr. Rouse, in his beautiful edition of Golding's translation (which, by the way, cost me more than the second complete edition of 1575) relates, in his interesting introduction, the following important information. In the Bodleian Library is a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, printed by Aldus in 1502, which bears on the title page the signature "Wm. Shr," and opposite is written, in what appears to be a seventeenth century hand: "This little book of Ovid was given to me by W. Hall, who sayd it was once Will Shakespere's T. N., 1682." John Hall, it will be remembered, married Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna. The genuineness of the inscription has, of course, been questioned, and, no doubt, it is a clever forgery. The book has been used by more than one person for study. One has written in a fine minute hand meanings and paraphrases in Latin above the text throughout the earlier part of the volume. Many verses have been

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

underlined, especially in the earlier books, and but very few pages show no marks of use. There are also marginal scribblings and caricatures, which are carelessly done, and do not appear to be so old as the rest. The first English translation of the *Metamorphoses* was made by Arthur Golding, which consisted of the first four books, and consequently included the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. This edition was printed and perhaps published, although the latter fact is not stated, by William Seres. The title page is as follows: "Imprynted at London by William Seres, anno 1565." Two years later the entire fifteen books were published, and other editions followed in 1575, 1587, 1603, 1612. The Pyramus and Thisbe legend is found in most European literature. I possess an edition of Montemayer's *Diana*, in Spanish, dated 1585, a pastoral romance well known to Shakespeare. At the end of this romance is related in verse the history of Pyramus and Thisbe. In French the same story is dramatised by Theophile de Vian, published in 1627. Other versions are known in Greek, Italian, German, Dutch and Roumanian.

Shakespeare has treated the story very unkindly, burlesqueing it in a most merciless fashion; even the rustic amateurs have not been spared being ridiculed in no less degree. Although exaggerated beyond recognition, the burlesque is most amusing, and must have caused endless delight and roaring laughter from the groundlings for whom it would appear it was principally intended.

# THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

### BILLS.

#### BEATRICE.

He set up his bills here in Messina and challenged  
Cupid at the flight. I, 1, 39

In Shakespeare's day the only means of advertising were by posting bills all over the town. As early as 1579 we are told the players used to set up their bills upon posts certain days before the performances, to admonish the people to make resort unto their theatres, and that the players, by sticking up their bills in London, defile the streets with their infectious filthiness. These bills were mostly set up around St. Paul's Cathedral. The monopoly of this trade was for many years held by Charlwood, a London printer. By marrying Charlwood's widow James Roberts, the notorious piratical publisher of Shakespeare's plays, succeeded to this business, and at his death, Jaggard, the chief promoter in publishing the *First Folio*, obtained this lucrative post. Roberts' connexion with printing the bills for the players may in some way account for the fact that he managed to secure the manuscripts of the plays from the playhouse proprietors, and then print and publish them, either by bribing the players or some official connected with the theatre.

The first authentic quarto of "Hamlet" was published by Roberts in 1604, without doubt from a manuscript copy, whatever modern critics may say to the contrary. The idea that it was taken down in shorthand or longhand from the actors' lips is preposterous; the copy could only have been obtained from genuine sources. The mutilated edition of 1603 is quite another story, and only

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confirms my theory. Many of the quarto editions of Shakespeare's plays, although they may have been published without the sanction of the author or the owners of the manuscript, were nevertheless derived from authentic copies of the original manuscripts.

An excellent story, illustrating the nature of setting up bills for the play will be found in an early English jest book, entitled "Mery Tales, Wittie Questions, and Quicke Answeres, Very pleasant to be Readde."

Imprinted  
at London  
in Fleete Strete by  
H. Wykes. 1567.

Another book of this kind is more famous, having been mentioned by Shakespeare in this very play. The quotation will be found in Act 2, Scene 1, where Beatrice mentions Benedick as having said: "That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the *Hundred Merry Tales*."

Well, this was Signor Benedick that said so.

A. C. Mery

Tales.

Thus endeth the booke of a C mery talys. Empryntyd at London at the sygne of the Merymayd at Powlys gate next to Chepe side. The yere of our Lord M.D.C.XXVI.

The XXII day of November.

How a merry man divided to call people to a play  
C XXX III.

"A mery man, called Qualitees, in a time set up bills upon posts about London, that whosoever

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would come to Northumberland place should hear such an antic play, that both for the matter and handling the like was never heard before. For all that they should play therein were gentlemen. Those bills moved the people when the day came to come thither thick and threefold. Now he had hired two men to stand at the gate with a box as the fashion is, who took of every person that came in a penny or an halfpenny at the least. So when he thought the market was at the best he came to the gate and took from the man the box with money, and giving them their duty, bad them go into the hall, and see the room kept, for he should go and fetch in the players. They went in, and he went out and lockt the gate fast and took the key with him, and got him on his gelding, which stood ready saddled without Aldersgate, at an Inn, and toward Barnet he rode apace. The people tarried from two o'clock till three, from three to four, still asking and crying 'When shall the play begin? How long shall we tarry?' When the clock struck four all the people murmured and said, 'Wherefore tarry we any longer? Here shall be no play. Where is the knave that hath beguiled us hither?' It were alms to thrust a dagger through his cheeks,' sayeth one. 'It were well done to cut off his ears,' sayeth another. 'Have him to Newgate,' sayeth one; 'Nay, have him to Tyburn,' sayeth another. 'Shall we lose our money?' thus sayeth he. 'Shall we be thus beguiled,' sayeth this man. 'Should this be suffered?' sayeth that man. And so muttering and chiding, they came to the gate to go out, but they could not, for it was fast locked and Qualitees had the key away with him. Now began they afresh to fret and fume, now they swear and stare, now they stamp and threaten. For the locking in grieved them more than all the loss and mockery before; but all avail not. For there must they abide till ways be found to open the gate that they may

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go out. The maidens that should have dressed their masters' suppers, they weep and cry, boys and 'prentices sorrow and lament, they wot not what to say when they come home, for all this foul array, for all this great fray, Qualitees is merry riding on his way.

Another well known story, illustrating the custom of setting up bills, occurs in *Tales and Quick Answers*, a book printed by Thomas Berthelet, in Fleet Street, about 1533 :

“ Of him that lost his purse in London.”

“ A certain man of the country, the which for business came up to London, lost his purse, as he went late in the evening. And by cause the sum therein was great, he set up bills in divers places, that if any man of the city had found the purse and could bring it again to him, he should have well for his labour. A gentleman of the Temple wrote under one of the bills how the man should come to his chamber, and told where. So when he was come, the gentleman asked him, first what was in the purse ; secondly, what countryman he was ; and thirdly, what was his name. ‘ Sir,’ quoth he, ‘ twenty nobles was in the purse. I am half a Welshman, and my name is John ap Janken.’ ‘ John ap Janken,’ said the gentleman, ‘ I am glad I know thy name, for now so long as I live thou nor none of thy name shall have my purse to keep. And now farewell, gentle John ap Janken.’ Thus he was mocked to scorn and went his way.”

CUE.

Speak, Count, 'tis your cue.

II, 1, 316

DUMB SHOW SCENE.

That's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb show.

II, 3, 226

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### PLAYED.

- My Lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame. II, 1, 225  
Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts  
with Beatrice. III, 2, 79

### PART DIALOGUE.

- Fear you not my part of the dialogue. III, 1, 30

## OTHELLO

### PROMPTER.

- Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it  
without a prompter. I, 2, 84

In a special theatrical sense, the prompter denotes a person stationed out of sight of the audience to prompt or assist any actor who is at a loss in remembering his part. In early days of the drama, the usual word for this official was book-holder, and is so quoted in Higgins' *Junius Nomenclator*, 1588: "He that telleth the players their part when they are out and have forgotten. The prompter or book-holder."

Ben Jonson uses the word book-holder in several of his plays, likewise many dramatists of this period. The word is now obsolete.

Other references :

### PROLOGUE.

- Is he often thus ?  
'Tis ever more the prologue to his sleep. II, 3, 134  
An index and obscure prologue. II, 1, 264

### CUE.

- Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it  
without a prompter. I, 2, 84

# SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

## PERICLES

### PLAY.

Our scene must play  
His daughter's woe. IV, 4, 48

### SCENE.

Whom our fast-growing scene must find at Tarsus.  
*Chorus IV, line 6, IV, 4, 6*

We commit no crime  
To use one language in each several clime  
Where our scenes seem to live. IV, 4, 7

While our scene must play  
His daughter's woe. IV, 4, 48

### DUMB-SHOW.

Enter Pericles talking with Cleon  
*Chorus II, line 16*

Enter Pericles and Simonides. *Chorus III, line 15*

### SHOWS.

What pageantry, what feats, what shows,  
What minstreling, and pretty din,  
The regent made in Mitylene  
To greet the King. V, 2, 6

### STAGE.

In your imagination hold  
This stage the ship, upon whose deck  
The sea-tost Pericles appears to speak.

## POEMS

### ACT. DUMB-PLAY. CHORUS.

And all this dumb-play had his acts made plain  
With tears, which chorus-like her eyes did rain.  
*Venus and Adonis, line 359*

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

Many critics have inferred that this poem was composed whilst Shakespeare still resided in Stratford. By the above lines it would be nearer the mark to assert that the first heir of his invention was composed after he had been acquainted with the theatrical literature of the London theatres.

### ACTOR. STAGE. PART.

As an imperfect actor on the stage  
Who with his fear is put beside his part.

*Sonnet 23, line 1*

### CHORUS. SCENE.

Co-supremes and stars of love  
As chorus to their tragic scene.

*Phoenix and Turtle, line 52*

### STAGE. SHOWS.

This huge stage presenteth nought but shows.

*Sonnet 15, line 3*

### STAGE. PART.

My part is youth and beat these from the stage.

*Lucrece, line 278*

Black stage for tragedies and murders fell.

*Lucrece, line 766*

“ My part is youth ” may refer to some particular play, but “ Lusty Juventus,” suggested by Stevens, contains no such scene.

In the interlude of “ Youth,” youth drives charity from the stage, but with threats not blows. Malone supposes that Shakespeare was thinking of the conflicts between the Devil and the Vice in the old Morality plays, where the Vice was always victorious and drove the Devil roaring off the stage.

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Black stage for tragedies refers to the custom of draping the stage in black when tragedies were performed. Another allusion to this custom is found in the first part of Henry VI.

### SHOWS.

Or to turn white and swoon at tragic shows.

*Lover's Complaint, line 308*

## RICHARD II

### ACTOR. THEATRE. STAGE. ENTERS.

As in a theatre the eyes of men,  
After a well grac'd actor leaves the stage,  
Are idly bent on him that enters next,  
Thinking his prattle to be tedious.

V, 2, 24

This passage is an excellent example of the use Shakespeare made of theatrical metaphors in giving life and reality to his dialogue. The well graced actor can only refer to Richard Burbage, the creator of Shakespeare's most important characters. He was a fellow member of the same company of actors as Shakespeare, both belonging to the Lord Chamberlain's company.

### SCENE.

Al owing him a breath, a little scene to monarchise.

III, 2, 164

Our scene is altered from a serious thing. V, 3, 79

## RICHARD III

### ACT. SCENE.

### DUCHESS.

What means this scene of rude impatience ?

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

### QUEEN.

To make an act of tragic violence. II, 2, 39

### CUE. PART.

Had not you come upon your cue, my Lord,  
William Lord Hastings had pronounced your part,  
I mean your voice. III, 4, 27

In the First Folio, cue is written Q. ; in the later  
folios it is spelt kew. III, 4, 27

### PAGEANT.

The flattering index of a direful pageant. IV, 4, 85

Pageants are dumb-shows, and the poet, no doubt, alluded to one of these shows, the index of which promised a happier conclusion. The pageants then displayed on public occasions were generally preceded by a brief account of the order in which the characters were to walk. These indexes were distributed among the spectators that they might understand the meaning of such allegorical stuff as was usually exhibited.

### PLAY.

The beholders of this tragic play. IV, 4, 68

### SCENE.

A Queen in jest only to fill the scene. IV, 4, 91

### VICE. INIQUITY.

I say without characters, fame lives long,  
Thus, like the formal vice iniquity,  
I moralize two meanings in one word. III, 1, 82

“ Formal ” appears to be here used as we now use “ conventional ” to describe that which was

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regular and in accordance with ordinary rule and custom. The vice of the stage was a familiar figure to the audience, and they were thoroughly accustomed to his proceedings. It would appear from the present passage that one of his devices, in order to create a laugh, was to play upon the double meaning of words.

TRAGEDIAN.

GLOU.

Come cousin,  
Canst thou quake, and change thy colour,  
Murder thy breath in middle of a word,  
And then begin again and stop again  
As if thou were distraught and mad with terror ?

BUCK.

Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,  
Speak and look back and pry on every side,  
Tumble and start at wagging of a straw,  
Intending deep suspicion ; ghastly looks  
Are at my service, like enforced smiles,  
And both are ready in their offices,  
At any time to grace any stratagems.

III, 5, 5

This admirable passage forcibly illustrates the methods adopted by the actors in the art of acting in Elizabethan times. In our days this mode of producing stage effects is chiefly associated with the style of acting pursued by followers of the melodramatic school. If we examine carefully the sub-structure of Shakespeare's tragic plays, we shall perforce arrive at the conclusion that melodrama enters largely into their composition.

Stript of their dialogue, the acts of these plays bear a striking resemblance to the lurid and blood

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curdling dramas nightly performed at our provincial theatres, and during the nineteenth century presented at the London theatres, principally those situated on the Surrey side of the Metropolis, and merely gaining the well-known sobriquet of the transpontine drama. These plays were interpreted by the actors in rather a boisterous manner by ranting and martial stalk, in reality tearing a passion to tatters, to very rags, tricks of the actors preserved by tradition from the very days of Shakespeare himself, who often alluded to and deprecated this inartistic and uncritical style of acting.

### ROMEO AND JULIET

ACT. SCENE.

My dismal scene I needs must act alone. IV, 3, 19

MASQUERS.

Enter Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio, with five or six other Masquers, Torchbearers and others.

WITHOUT-BOOK PROLOGUE. PROMPTER. ENTRANCE.

Nor so without-book prologue faintly spoke

After the prompter, for our entrance. I, 4, 7

The prompter was much in evidence in the early days of the theatre. The actor who spoke the prologue (not in the book of the play, but written by another hand at the command of the manager), no doubt, was much in need of that useful functionary.

MASK.

We mean well in going to this mask ;

But 'tis no wit to go.

I, 4, 48

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

How long is't now since last yourself and I  
Were in the mask ?

'Tis since the nuptial of Incentio,  
Some five and twenty years, and then we mask'd.  
I, 5, 35

### SCENE.

In fair Verona, where we lay our scene.

*Chorus I, line 2*

### CHORUS.

The first chorus is omitted in the First Folio. The second chorus at the end of the first act, or beginning of the second act, is included. Most critics would deny to Shakespeare both these compositions.

### STAGE.

Is now the two hours' traffic of the stage.

*Chorus I, line 12*

The opening chorus of "Romeo and Juliet" contains the interesting information concerning the duration of an Elizabethan play. In those early days there were no long waits between the acts, no scenic effects to be staged, and but few properties required. Even allowing for the quick action without interruption, two hours is all too short for the proper representation of a Shakesperean play. There is evidence to prove that three hours was the limit. Ben Jonson, in the "Induction to Bartholomew Fair," acted in 1614 at the Hope, refers to the space of two hours and a half, and somewhat more. Dekker, the prose writer and dramatist, mentions three hours : "Ye shall be glad to play three hours for twopence to the basest groundlings in London, whose breath is stronger than garlick and able to poison all the twelvepenny rooms." The last phrase refers to the best places in the house.

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Whetstone, as early as 1582, in his *Civil Discourses*, would allow three hours for a performance. If we bear in mind that a jig, which we should now call a farce, was performed after the regular piece and lasted at least half an hour, it must be conceded that three hours is none too many for the entire afternoon performance.

In winter the play commenced about two and lasted till dusk; in summer, three o'clock was the appointed hour. In a letter from Lord Hunsdon to the Lord Mayor in 1594, it is stated "that where heretofore they began not their plays till towards four o'clock, they will now begin at two and have done between four or five. By this evidence about two hours and a half was the time required to act an Elizabethan play.

The quarto editions are not divided into scenes or acts. The text forming some of these plays was actually taken down from the actor's lips, either by stenography or from memory, and if any interval had occurred it would have been recorded, which goes a long way to prove that the play was continuous throughout, otherwise three hours would be all too short to see the play through, especially a lengthy one like "Hamlet," which has nearly four thousand lines. It is quite possible that a break of a few minutes may have taken place during certain scenes, but no stage directions exist sanctioning the usage.

## TAMING OF THE SHREW

### THE PRESENTERS ABOVE SPEAK.

The presenter in former times was one who took part in a play, an actor. The word is now obsolete. Even in Shakespeare's day it is rarely met with. The Presenters in this scene were represented by

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Sly, the Page and the First Serving man, all being seated in the balcony above the stage.

ENTER A MESSENGER.

Your honour's players hearing your amendment  
Are come to play a pleasant comedy :  
For so your doctors hold it very meet,  
Seeing too much sadness hath congealed your blood,  
And melancholy is the nurse of frenzy.  
Therefore they thought it good you hear a play  
And frame your mind to mirth and merriment,  
Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.

SLY.

Marry, I will let them play it. Is not a Christmas gambol or a tumbling trick ?

PAGE.

No, my good lord ; it is more pleasing stuff.

SLY.

What, household stuff ?

PAGE.

It is a kind of history.

SLY.

Well, we'll see it, Come, madam, wife, sit by my side. And let the world slip ; we shall ne'er be younger.

COMEDY. PLAY. PLAYERS.

Your honour's players hearing your amendment,  
Are come to play a pleasant comedy.

*Ind. Sc. 2, 1, 136*

Therefore, they thought it good you hear a play.

*Ind. Sc. 2, line 136*

Marry, I will let them play it. Is not a Christmas gambol or a tumbling trick ?

*Ind. Sc. II, line 140*

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

Every actor in the time of Elizabeth was forced to serve in some company of actors, who were under the protection of a nobleman, otherwise the poor actor was classed as a rogue and a vagabond, and liable to be sent to prison. "Your honour's players" does not necessarily infer that they owed entire allegiance to their patron, but most likely they were prepared at all times to offer their services to their Lord protector. During the last two decades of the sixteenth century this patronage became merely formality, but owing to the strictures of the law this regulation was almost compulsory, so that in all England every play actor was under the patronage of some nobleman. As every one knows, Shakespeare belonged for many years to the servants of the Lord Chamberlain, and Edward Alleyn, the Founder of Dulwich College, and the greatest actor of his time, was a member of the Lord Admiral's company. Even to-day there is a well known case of a gentleman owning his own orchestra a band of musicians, so that it is not at all unlikely that some wealthy or powerful nobleman retained a company of actors who only performed at his pleasure.

### PART. PLAY.

My Lord, I warrant you we will play our part.  
*Ind. Sc. I, line 69*

### PLAY'D. PLAY. PLAYERS.

There is a lord will hear you play to-night.  
*Ind. Sc. I, line 93*

For yet his honour never heard a play.  
*Ind. Sc. I, line 86*

They thought it good you hear a play  
And frame your mind to mirth.  
*Ind. Sc. II, line 139*

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My lord, you nod ; you do not mind the play.

I, 1, 2

Players that offer service to your lordship.

*Ind. Sc. I, line 77*

PART. ENTER PLAYERS. PERFORMED.

LORD.

Now, fellows you are welcome.

PLAYERS.

We thank your honour.

LORD.

Do you intend to stay with me to-night ?

PLAYERS.

So please your lordship to accept our duty.

LORD.

With all my heart. This fellow I remember  
Since once he played a farmer's eldest son,  
'Twas where you woo'd the gentlewoman so well :  
I have forgotten your name, but sure, that part  
Was aptly fitted and naturally performed.

PLAYERS.

I think 'twas Soto that your honour means.

LORD.

'Tis very true : thou did'st it excellent.

After having copied out the above passage, which was quite a *bonne bouche* for my theory, that Shakespeare on all occasions that offered themselves, introduced theatrical affairs into his plays, it came as rather a disappointment to find, on consulting

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

the old drama of "The Taming of a Shrew," the same scene slightly differently treated.

This old play was the one on which Shakespeare founded his own comedy of "The Taming of the Shrew." The scene in which the players are introduced is called The Induction, and is founded on an episode in the life of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, which is related in a Latin work by Heuterus, 1584, called *De Rebus Burgundias*. The story relates how the Duke, suddenly stumbling upon a drunken fellow lying in the road, has him conveyed to his palace, attires him like a lord, and when he wakes, the Duke and his followers keep the game up. The players present a comedy before him, and when he falls asleep he is again placed outside the ale house, and, on waking again, tells the host that he has had the grandest dream of his life, and if his wife vexes him he knows how to tame her. Strange to say, plays are mentioned in this Latin chronicle in which, to amuse the mock lord, the same incident is used in both English plays to entertain the so-called lord. I possess a late English book called *Admirable Events*. The fifth event relates the same adventures under the heading of "The Waking Man's Dream." It is believed that an early edition of this book was in circulation before Shakespeare's time, but is now lost.

I have printed the players scene on account of its theatrical interest. It will be noted that the unusual word properties is used, also that the Duke is patron of a company of actors. The entire scene has an air of being taken straight from life. It was quite a common custom for actors to travel in the country or, as we should say, to go on tour. The company must have been a fairly large one, as several characters are introduced in the real play.

# SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

## PLAYERS SCENE FROM THE OLD PLAY.

MESSENGER.

And it please your honour your players be come,  
And do attend your honour's pleasure here.

LORD.

The fittest time they could have chosen out ;  
Bid one or two of them come hither straight,  
Now will I fit myself accordingly,  
For they shall play to him when he wakes.

*(Enter two of the players with packs at their backs  
and a boy.)*

Now, sirs, what store of plays have you ?

SAN. (SANDER).

Marry, my Lord, you may have a tragical or comedy or what you will.

THE OTHER.

A comedy, thou shouldst say :  
Souns, thou'lt shame us all.

LORD.

And what's the name of your comedy ?

SAN.

Marry, my lord, 'tis called "The Taming of a Shrew."

'Tis a good lesson for us my lord that are married men.

LORD.

"The Taming of a Shrew," that's excellent sure,  
Go, see that you make ready straight,  
For you must play before a lord to-night.  
Say, you are his men and I your fellow,

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He's something foolish, but whatso'er he says,  
See that you be not dashed out of countenance.  
Now, sirs, go you and make you ready, too,  
For you must play as soon as he doth wake.

SAN.

O brave, sirrah Tom, we must play before  
A foolish lord ; come, let's go make us ready :  
Go get a dishclout to make clean your shoes,  
And I'll speak for the properties. My lord, we must  
Have a shoulder of mutton for a property,  
And a little vinegar to make our devil roar.

LORD.

Very well, sirrah, see that they want nothing.

LORD.

May it please you, your honour's players be come to  
offer your honour a play.

SLY.

A play, Sim. O brave be they my players ?

LORD.

Ay, my lord.

SLY.

Is there not a fool in the play ?

LORD.

Yes, my lord.

SLY.

When will they play him ?

LORD.

Even when it please your honour, they be ready.

BOY.

I'll go bid them begin the play.

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SLY.

Do, but look that you come again.

BOY.

I warrant you, my lord, I will not leave you.

SLY.

Come, Sim, where be the players? Sim, stand by me and we'll flout the players out of their coats.

LORD.

I'll call them, my lord. Ho, where are you there?

## TEMPEST

PERFORM. CAST. ACT. PROLOGUE. DISCHARGE.

We all were sea-swallowed, though some cast again  
And by that destiny, to perform an act  
Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come  
In yours and my discharge. II, 1, 252

ACTORS.

These our actors  
As I foretold you, were all spirits. IV, 1, 148

CAST.

We all were sea-swallowed though some cast again.

W. A. Wright would associate cast with its modern theatrical meaning, namely, of a company of actors to whom different parts of a play are assigned. The word in this sense was unknown in Shakespeare's day; its earliest use as a theatrical term dates from 1631.

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### PLAYED. PART.

To have no screen between this part, he play'd,  
And him he played it for. I, 2, 107

### REVELS.

Be cheerful, Sir,  
Our revels now are ended. IV, 1, 148

## TIMON OF ATHENS

### ACT.

Performance is ever the duller for his act. V, 1, 26

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

I have read this disagreeable play very carefully, and can find therein no theatrical allusion of any kind.

Although included in the *First Folio*, and mentioned by Meres, Shakespeare's contemporary, in a book published by him in 1598, a great many critics refuse to believe in the Shakesporean authorship. Many monographs have been written on the subject for and against. The weight of evidence is rather against the Shakesporean authorship. The plot is of a most blood-curdling nature, and many of the episodes are too terrible and nasty to be represented on the stage. There are many passages in the play which are truly poetical. It is to be hoped for Shakespeare's reputation that he had no hand in this vile composition.

# SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

## TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

ACTOR. PROLOGUE. ARGUMENT.

PLAY.

And hither am I come  
A prologue armed, but not in confidence  
Of author's pen or actor's voice, but suited  
In like condition as our argument.  
To tell you fair beholders, that our play  
Leaps o'er the vaunt and firstlings of these broils,  
Beginning in the middle, starting thence away  
To what may be digested in a play.

*Prologue, line 23*

HISS.

Some two months hence my will shall here be made.  
It should be now, but that my fear is this,  
Some galled goose of Winchester would hiss.

V, 10, 55

PAGEANT.

Q.

Let my lady apprehend no fear ; in all  
Cupid's pageant there is represented no monster.

III, 2, 80

From this passage it must be inferred that a Fear was a part played or impersonated in our old pageants or moralities. To this circumstance, Aspatia alludes in *The Maid's Tragedy*, "And then a Fear," "Do that Fear bravely wench."

Let Patroclus make demands to me,  
You shall see the pageant of Ajax.

III, 3, 275

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

### PLAYER. SCAFFOLDAGE.

And like a strutting player, whose conceit  
Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich  
To hear the wooden dialogue and sound  
'Twi't his stretched footing and the scaffoldage.  
Such to be pitied and o'er wrested seeming  
He acts thy greatness in.

Good all round acting in Shakespeare's time was not the order of the day, as practised in ours. One or two stars, and the rest nowhere. Thus Shakespeare compares the strutting actor to the wooden boards on which he treads, making up in martial gait and heavy tread what he lacks in spiritual fire. The scaffoldage refers to the wooden platform on which plays were enacted. A hamstring is one of the tendons which form the sides of the ham or space at the back of the knee.

### APPLAUSE.

From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause.

I, 11, 163

### PLAY.

Now play me Nestor.

I, 3, 165

Now play him me Patroclus.

I, 3, 170

### SCENE.

In Troy there lies the scene.

*Prologue, line 1*

## TWELFTH NIGHT

### STAGE. PLAYED.

### FABIAN.

If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as improbable fiction.

III, 4, 140

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

This passage refers to the interview between Malvolio, Sir Toby, Maria and Fabian, after his appearance before the Countess in yellow stockings and the keep-smiling face. Shakespeare always strove to impress on his audience that his chief characters were impersonating events of everyday life, in order to heighten this belief, he frequently contrasts the real with the stage life or life of fiction.

### VICE.

I am gone, sir, and Anon, sir,  
I'll be with you again. In a trice, Like to the old Vice  
Your need to sustain ; Who with dagger of lath  
In his rage and his wrath, Cries ha ! ha ! to the devil  
Like a mad lad, Pare his nails, dad.

Adieu, goodman devil.

IV, 2, 134

The Vice is a character chiefly to be met with in interludes, for the sake of comic relief, much in the same manner as in our melodramas of to-day comic characters are introduced, in order to render less oppressive the serious or tragic situations. This personality was dressed in a cap with ass's ears, a long coat, and provided with a dagger of lath. One of his chief employments was to make sport with the devil by leaping on his back and belabouring him with his cardboard property till he made him roar. The devil, however, always carried him off in the end. His Satanic Majesty was supposed from choice to keep his nails always unpared, therefore to pare them was considered an affront.

In an interlude, "The Trial of Treasure," he appeared in his customary stage apparel, with the addition of a pair of huge spectacles, no doubt to render him more ridiculous. The character seems to have been quite a popular one in mediæval times. The Vice appears in several plays of the

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

sixteenth century, and is frequently mentioned by Elizabethan dramatists.

### INTERLUDE.

I was one, sir, in this interlude, one  
Sir Topaz, sir, but that's all one. V, 1, 380

The *New English Dictionary* describes an interlude as a dramatic representation of a light and humourous kind, such as was commonly introduced between the acts of the long mystery play or moralities, or exhibited as a part of an elaborate entertainment. This title was given to the first comedy written in English, "Our Comedie or Interlude which we intend to play is named 'Ralph Royster Doyster in deede.'"

Sir A. Ward, the learned author of a history of English dramatic literature, writes: "It seems to have been applied to plays performed by professional actors from the time of Edward IV onwards. Its origin is doubtless to be found in the fact that such plays were occasionally performed in the interval of banquets and entertainments which, of course, would have been out of question in the case of religious plays proper." Mr. E. K. Chambers, in his magnificent and scholarly work, *The Mediæval Stage*, would apply the meaning of the word Interlude to any kind of play, religious or otherwise, but instead of deriving the word from a "ludus" during the interval of something else, he would give it the meaning of a play carried on between (inter) two or more performers; in fact, a ludus in dialogue.

*Ludus* is the Latin for a play.

### COMEDIAN.

Are you a comedian. I, 5, 194

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

This word, now in general use, was quite a novel introduction in Shakespeare's time. The *New English Dictionary* quotes this passage as the first instance of the words being used in this sense. The date of this play is about 1601, which is proved from an entry in Manningham's Diary, dated February 2nd, 1601, ; by our present reckoning this performance took place in 1602, as formerly the New Year began on the 25th of March.

"Feb. 2, 1601. At our feast we had a play called "Twelve Night," or What you Will. Much like the "Comedy of Errors" or Menechmi in Plautus, but most like and near to that in Italian called Inganni.

There is also a reference in the play to the map of the Indies. This map was issued in 1599, so between this date and the entry in the Diary 1601, this comedy must have been written.

ACT.

VIOLA.

My father had a mole upon his brow.

SEBASTIAN.

And so had mine.

VIOLA.

And died that day when Viola from her birth  
Had numbered thirteen years.

SEBASTIAN.

O, that record is lively in my soul,  
He finished indeed his mortal act  
That day that made my sister thirteen years.

V, 1, 249

It shall become thee well to act my woes. I, 4, 26

MASQUE. REVELS.

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

### SIR ANDREW.

I delight in masques and revels sometimes altogether. I, 3, 121

### PART.

And all is semblative a woman's part. I, 4, 34

### WITHOUT BOOK.

An affectioned ass, that can state without book.

Without book was a technical theatrical term used by actors when they had got their part by heart. The phrase is now obsolete.

These pastimes were in great vogue when this play was written.

### PLAY.

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool. III, 1, 67

That's all one, our play is done  
And we'll strive to please you every day. V, 1, 416

### REVELS.

Shall we set about some revels? I, 3, 145

### ZANY.

### MALVOLIO.

I take these Wisemen that crow so at these set kind  
of fools,  
No better than the fool's Zanies. I, 5, 96

The Italian Zanni or Zany is a contraction for Giovanni in the dialect of Bergamo, and is a nickname for a peasant of that place. The term Zany was generally applied in England to an inferior kind of fool imitating another or professional jester, corresponding in some degree to our own clown and pantaloon, the latter being the zany.

In connexion with the word Zany, it should be noted that Molière, the greatest dramatist after

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

Shakespeare, usually introduced this character into his farces, under the name of Sgnarelle, which is a French rendering of the Italian word Zanarelle, the diminutive of Zanni. Molière himself generally acted this comic rôle.

### TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

ACTED. PAGEANTS. WOMAN'S PART. PLAY. PART.  
PLAY'D.

How tall was she ?

About my stature : for at Pentecost  
When all our pageants of delight were play'd,  
Our youth got me to play the woman's part,  
And I was trimm'd in Madam Julia's gown ;  
Which served me as fit by all men's judgment,  
As if the garment had been made for me ;  
Therefore I know she is about my height,  
And at that time I made her weep a good,  
For I did play a lamentable part ;  
Madam, 'twas Ariadne passioning  
For Theseus' perjury and unjust flight :  
Which I so lively acted with my tears,  
That my poor mistress moved therewithal  
Wept bitterly, and would I might be dead  
If I in thought felt not her very sorrow. IV, 4, 163

The page who delivered this speech relates how he played the woman's part. In Shakespeare's time, and until half a century later, no woman appeared on the public stage. I have always held the opinion that it was on this account that so many of Shakespeare's heroines were disguised as pages, thus enabling the boys who took their parts to be more natural. Most readers will call to mind Rosalind in "As you Like It" and Imogen in "Cymbeline,"

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

but principally Viola in that delightful of all comedies "Twelfth Night." Julia, one of the heroines in this play, also played the part of a page. The observant will notice that Madam Julia lent her gown to the impersonator of Ariadne, but in those days the costume of the period delineated was not regarded. By all accounts, all the characters were clothed in contemporary costumes. Even as late as the eighteenth century, David Garrick played Macbeth, dressed in a scarlet coat like a military officer, a waistcoat laced with silver, with a wig and breeches of the cut of the time. Macklin, a great actor of the eighteenth century, was the first to appear in a tartan and kilt about the year 1772.

### MOTION. PUPPET.

O excellent motion ! O exceeding puppet !  
Now will he interpret to her. II, 1, 92.

A puppet was a figure dressed up like a doll and moved by strings by a person concealed behind a curtain, similar to our Punch and Judy and marionettes shows of to-day. The word was frequently used metaphorically by the early dramatists, when they wished to describe a person's actions controlled by others, also applied contemptuously to a person as in the above passage. These puppet shows or motions, as they were termed, were exceedingly popular in Shakespeare's time, and a special one is mentioned by Ben Jonson in *Every Man Out of his Humour* : " They say there's a new Motion of the City of Nineveh with Jonas (not Maurice) and the whale to be seen at Fleet Bridge." A Motion that was extremely popular was the history of the prodigal son, quoted by Shakespeare in a " Winter's Tale." " Then he compassed a motion of the

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

Prodigal Son." Biblical episodes often formed the subject of these shows.

Both puppet and motion, in their original sense, are now obsolete. "Now will he interpret her" refers to the dialogue spoken by the manipulation of the puppets

"The peeling accents of her voice, is like  
a fained treble on one's voice  
that interprets to the puppets."

### THE WINTER'S TALE

#### ACT. AUDIENCE. ACTED.

The dignity of this act was worth the audience of  
Kings and princes,  
For by such was it acted. V, 2, 86

#### PART. PLAY. HISS.

Thy Mother plays and I  
Play too, but so disgraced a part whose issue.  
Will hiss me to my grave. I, 2, 188

I see the play so lies  
That I must bear a part IV, 4, 670

#### PART. PERFORMED.

Good Paulina,  
Lead us from hence, where we may leisurely  
Each one demand and answer to his part  
Performed in this wide gap of time since first  
We were dissevered. V, 3, 151

#### MOTION.

Then he compassed a motion of the Prodigal son.  
IV, 3, 103

## THEATRICAL ALLUSIONS

The puppet or motion showman exclaims in "Bartholomew Fair": "O, the motions that I, Lanthorn Leatherhead, have given light to in my time."

### PLAY. SCENE.

My care to have you royally appointed as if  
The scene you play were mine. IV, 4, 604

### SPECTATORS.

Though devised  
And played to take spectators. III, 2, 38

### PASTORAL.

I play as I have seen them do  
In Whitsun pastorals. IV, 4, 134

The reference is to the several kinds of May games which were performed at this season of the year. They consisted of short dramatic pieces of French origin. The earliest known is that of the "Jeu de Robin et Marian," which was played in 1392. M. Guy quotes it as folk going "desguiziez un Jeu qui l'endit Robin et Marian ainsi qu'il est accoutume de fere chacun an en les foiries de Penthecouste." These pieces were a mixture of folk song and minstreling, which developed into a kind of primitive drama. The principal characters being represented by Shepherds and Shepherdesses, surrounded by woodland scenery. In Molière's plays will be found two of these pastoral dramas, "Melicente," comedie pastorale heroique; another was simply entitled, "Pastorale comique."

I cannot close this book without mentioning the assistance rendered me respecting the illustrations. As in a previous volume, my friend, Mr. H. Franklin Waghorn, kindly holds himself responsible for the

**THE**  
**LONDON**  
Prodigall.

As it was plaide by the Kings Maie-  
sties seruants.

By *William Shakespeare,*



**LONDON.**

Printed by T. C. for Nathaniel Butter, and  
are to be sold neere S. Austins gate,  
at the signe of the pyde Bull.

1605.

Title page of an English Play.

# ANDROMEDE

## TRAGEDIE.

Representée avec les Machines sur le  
Theatre Royal de Bourbon.



A ROVEN,  
Chez LAURENS MAURRY, près le Palais.

---

*AVEC PRIVILEGE DU ROY.*

M. D. C. L I.

*Et se vendent A PARIS,*  
Chez CHARLES DE SERCY, au Palais, dans la Salle  
Dauphine, à la bonne Foy Couronnée.

Title page of a French Tragedy by Pierre Corneille, indicating at which Theatre the play was produced, showing a similarity with dramatic title pages of the seventeenth century.

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

photographic work he has so ably executed. My friend, in order to help me, made many visits to the British Museum on my behalf. The authorities of that marvellous institution graciously permitted Mr. Waghorn to take photographs of any rare books which he desired for my work, for which permission I beg to offer my best thanks. Mr. Fleming, who made the blocks for the facsimiles, has executed his work beyond all praise.

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