S. I

PICTORIAL SHAKESPEARE, 1880-1890

A Study of Major London Productions.

by Russell Bennett Jackson.

In two volumes: Volume One.

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Birmingham.

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SYNOPSIS

This thesis is in two volumes:

VOLUME ONE

After an Introduction, Acknowledgements and a List of Illustrations, Part One discusses critical attitudes in Art Shakespearean Criticism and the Theatre during the eighteen-eighties. Part Two begins with an account of the "Lyceum style" and its critics, and a description of Irving's 1888 Macbeth. The second chapter deals with the work of E.W.Godwin and Lewis Strange Wingfield, and is followed by detailed descriptions and discussions of attempts to challenge Irving's ascendancy as a producer of Shakespeare's plays. These productions are: Wilson Barrett's Hamlet (1884), Mary Anderson's Romeo and Juliet (1884), Mr and Mrs Kendal's As You Like It (1885), Mary Anderson's The Winter's Tale (1887), Daly's The Taming of the Shrew (1888), Miss Calliss's As You Like It (1888), Tree's The Merry Wives of Windsor (1889), Mansfield's Richard III (1889), Benson's A Midsummer Night's Dream (1889) and Mrs Langtry's Antony and Cleopatra (1890). A Conclusion ends the first volume.

VOLUME TWO

Notes to the chapters of Volume One are followed by a Bibliography divided into four sections: (A) manuscript and archive material, (B) promptbooks and editions of the plays, (C) newspaper and magazine articles, and (D) other, printed, sources. The Appendix gives a Calendar of Shakespeare Performances in London, 1880-1890 (inclusive), indexed by play and theatre, and full cast lists of the productions discussed in Volume One, and of Irving's Lyceum Shakespeare productions.

I have endeavoured, and I hope not altogether in vain, by the united accessories of painting, music, and architecture, in conjunction with the rapid movements and multiplied life which belong to the stage alone, to re-embody the past, trusting that the combination may be considered less an exhibition of pageantry appealing to the eye, than an illustration of history addressed to the understanding.

Charles Kean, Preface to his acting edition of The Winter's Tale, 1856.

The archaeologist...must be an artist, endowed with a sense of form and colour, having constructiveness well developed, and in sympathy with the dramatic purpose.

E.W.Godwin, "Archaeology on the Stage", The Dramatic Review, 8 February 1885.

As regards archaeology..., avoid it altogether: archaeology is merely the science of making excuses for bad art;...it is the abyss from which no artist, young or old, ever returns. Or, if he does return, he is so covered with the dust of ages and the mildew of time, that he is quite unrecognisable as an artist, and has to conceal himself for the rest of his days under the cap of a professor, or as a mere illustrator of ancient history. How worthless archaeology is in art you can estimate by the fact of its being so popular. Popularity is the crown of laurel which the world puts on bad art.

Oscar Wilde, "Lecture to Art- tudents", 1883, in Essays and Lectures, edited by Robert Ross (1909).

The director of the future may not be a director of today. He may not be a director at all. He may be one of those artists whose appearance has been such a distinctive and interesting phenomenon of the twentieth century theater.

Kenneth Macgowan and Robert Edmond Jones, Continental Stagecraft (New York, 1922).

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to interpret the major London productions of Shakespeare's plays in the years 1880-1890 in the light of contemporary attitudes to art. During this period theatrical managers sought the approval of a public increasingly conscious of certain values in painting and literature, and it will be argued that the employment of expert "advisors" to help cater to these tastes contributed a good deal to the rise of the director.

The productions discussed in detail were attempts to emulate Irving's Lyceum company, and to adapt Shakespeare to suit a variety of techniques and talents. Although these endeavours may seem unavailing and misguided when compared with the revolutionary stagings of Granville-Barker and Poel, it will be suggested that they helped to produce a climate of opinion in which the production of one of Shakespeare's plays was regarded as an event in the artistic world. The performances in question were all "fashionable", and all took place in West-End theatres. The beginnings of the repertory movement - including Miss Bateman's attempted revival of Sadler's Wells - and the experiments of Poel have not been discussed. This is a study of an unashamedly "rich" theatre, ambitious for a place of equal honour with Grand Opera and the Royal Academy.

The figures most prominent in the chapters which follow are actors, actresses and managers, whose activities must be understood in terms of their personal and professional ambitions, jealousies and fears. The two archaeological "advisers", E. W. Godwin (1833-1886) and Lewis Wingfield (1842-1891), were in some respects the descendents of Planché, but they devoted their efforts almost exclusively to the serious drama, and encountered remarkable hostility and distrust from many quarters. Planché's antiquarianism was a response to a growing public demand for popular enlightenment. In his Recollections and Reflections (1872) Planché acknowledged that he had undertaken a duty:

> does not the historical painter voluntarily offer himself to the public as an illustrator

> of habits and manners, and is he wantonly to abuse the faith accorded to him?
> (I.225)

The Shakespearean productions of Charles Kean discharged this obligation to the full, but by the 'eighties the practice of staging the plays as though they were texts for a series of historical paintings was being questioned. Evangeline and Edwin Blashfield, two American journalists, observed in an article "Pictorial Art on the Stage":

> Since...we must costume our actors, let us learn to apply the laws of beauty in form and colour guided by aesthetics rather than by archaeology; the latter, pure and simple, we do not want; it would hamper us, but decent fitness always holds. Anything outré is bad; unfamiliar archaeological ugliness should, of course, be let alone, but unfamiliar archaeological beauty by usage soon becomes familiar.
> (The Century Magazine, XXXV (1888) 533-546; p.537).

Godwin and Blashfield were obliged to defend themselves on the one hand against accusations of inaccuracy, and on the other against the dismissal of their work as mistakenly archaic pedantry.

.....

The account of critical opinions on Art draws on the art-journalism which proliferated in the last decades of the century. Although this part of the thesis is primarily a study of taste, I have attempted to show the relationship between painters' technique and public judgements and expectations. Similarly, the account of theatrical performances draws wherever possible on information regarding stage techniques - from books in particular - as well as reviews. I have also used private letters and papers of the persons involved where these had any bearing on artistic decisions. Little information has come to light concerning the finances of London theatres during the 'eighties, but it may be noted that by this time duration of run, rather than frequency of revival, had become the criterion of a production's success. From this point of view Irving's Macbeth, Barrett's Hamlet,

Miss Anderson's Romeo and Juliet and the productions by Tree and Daly were successful. Benson's A Midsummer Night's Dream had its first run cut short by the manager's decision to stand by his repertory principles: it continued to please in revival after revival.

Attention has been concentrated on attempts to rival Irving by British managers: consequently only one foreign production, Daly's The Taming of the Shrew, has been included. Two of the chief rivals, however, were American. It seems prudent to regard the productions staged by Mary Anderson and Richard Mansfield in London as British - much was made of their cisatlantic origin when they were presented in America. The work of the Meiningen troupe and of various continental actors has been excluded: Rossi, Ristori, Salvini and Sarah Bernhardt were touring in their own productions, which had little influence on the manner of staging plays in the country they happened to be visiting.

.....

The text of Shakespeare's plays referred to throughout is Peter Alexander's edition of The Complete Works (1951), unless any other is specified. Promptbooks are referred to by their library shelf-mark, followed by their number in the relevant section of Shattuck's The Shakespeare Promptbooks (Urbana, Illinois, 1965). The dates of theatrical reviews quoted in the text may be found summarized in the notes to each chapter, and then in the Bibliography. I have adopted the convention whereby "1a" refers to the first part of a line of verse, "1b" to the second.

Material from chapters two and three of Part Two has appeared in an article, "Designer and Director: E.W. Godwin and Wilson Barrett's Hamlet of 1864" in the 1974 Jahrbuch of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft (West), pp. 186-200.

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Chapter One

ISSUES IN ART-CRITICISM.

In 1882 J.M.Stoddart, a Philadelphia publisher, issued a slim volume of poems by Rennell Rodd, Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf. The verses were printed on the rectos of translucent sheets of rice paper, backed, for legibility, by interleaves of stouter, leaf-green stock. The first seventeen pages of text were devoted to "L'Envoi" - a prefatory note by Oscar Wilde, who had written to Stoddart:

> The preface you will see is most important, signifying my new departure from Mr.Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites, and marks an era in the aesthetic movement.[1]

The author of "L'Envoi" was lecturing in America, and already a past-master of haute-vulgarisation:his"new departure" from Ruskin was chiefly concerned with Oscar Wilde, and Rodd was favoured with the occasional patronising remark. The essay gave a comprehensive account of the Aesthetic temperament, derived from a variety of masters - notably Pater - and gracefully dethroning Ruskin: he had shown that art is supremely important in life, for which the new generation must be thankful, but he had derived its importance wrongly. Art, for the new temperament, offered an escape from the shallow but painful experience of the modern world. It was an escape into the past:

> that longing for the old dead days which is so modern, so incomplete, so touching, being, in a way, the inverted torch of Hope, which burns the hand it should guide; and for many things a little sadness, and for all things a great love.[2]

A clumsy emulation of Pater's cadences is sometimes accompanied by a re-working of his ideas. Wilde's description of the much-desired "intensity" of aesthetic feeling is almost a parody of the Conclusion to Pater's Renaissance, published nine years previously:

> that curious intensity of vision by which, in moments of overmastering sadness and despair ungovernable, artistic things will live in one's memory with a vivid realism caught from the life which they help one to forget...[3]

Such intensity is a means to serenity and "the real gladness of life", which comes from the "absorption" rather than rejection of all passion, "and is like that serene calm that

dwells in the faces of the Greek statues, and which despair and sorrow cannot disturb, but intensify only"[4]. This cultivation of detachment works as a prophylactic, allowing the aesthete to wander near and far, unscathed by commitment, "always testing new forms of belief, tinging his nature with the sentiment that still lingers about some beautiful creeds and searching for experience itself, and not for the fruits of experience"[5].

The criterion of artistic judgement fitting for such a temperament was not far to seek: cultivated personal response, individualistic to the extreme of denying all ethical and social concern. Art may be allowed to have an ethical and social value: it improves and ennobles man. But it need not - indeed, should not - bother itself with social and ethical matters. Wilde appeals to Keats, music and painting for justification, in a passage which alludes to most of the arguments offered on behalf of Aestheticism during the last decades of the century: aesthetic pleasure is

> that incommunicable element of artistic delight, which, in poetry, for instance, comes from what Keats called "the sensuous life of verse", the element of song in the singing,....

He goes on to speak of "the scheme and symphony of colour" in painting, and to praise Albert Moore and Whistler, "who have raised design and colour to the ideal level of poetry and music". The new art,

> rejecting all literary reminiscence and all metaphysical idea, is in itself entirely satisfying to the aesthetic sense - is, as the Greeks would say, an end in itself.[6]

It is a scheme of literary theory which Wilde himself could not maintain in his works: his fairy tales, for example, depend upon what here is stigmatized as "metaphysical idea", and on their ethical purpose. But the extreme egocentricity of approach, rather than systematic and consistent theorizing, marks his own work and that of others during the period. At one end of the scale are the French Impressionist painters, at the other is Dorian Gray who, as Barbara Charlesworth puts it, "takes pleasure not so much in enjoyment of the moment as in watching the effect of the moment upon himself"[7]. The difference in

artistic achievement is considerable, but the underlying assumption is in both instances the supremacy of individual vision and impression.

The debate conducted in the art periodicals, books and public exhibitions of the eighteen-eighties followed two major lines of argument, which frequently converge. Broadly speaking they are the question as to what place literary inspiration and allusion should occupy in the artist's list of priorities, and the relationship between "ideal" and "realistic" painting. Behind the discussion lay the larger question of the degree of freedom which an artist might allow his eye and temperament, and the maintenance of common laws of perception.

.....

i. Looking "through" pictures.

In the course of his libel suit against John Ruskin, witnesses were expected to testify as to whether Whistler was too lazy to finish paintings properly, or did, in fact, see nature as he depicted it. The issue was further confused by the fact that Ruskin had championed Turner, some decades before, on the grounds that nature was as the painter had shown it, and that his genius could simply see and copy more than most men could.[8] The farce of 1878 ended with the award of one farthing damages and the bankruptcy of the painter. Whistler was hardly to be subdued, and in February 1885 he delivered his "Ten o Clock" in London, a lecture stage-managed by Mrs. D'Oyly Carte and containing the most concise and trenchant statement of his views on art. The damage done to taste by Ruskin and his fellow-upholders of literary content was, he claimed, patent:

> people have acquired the habit of looking, as who would say, not <u>at</u> a picture but <u>through</u> it, at some human fact, that shall, or shall not, from a social point of view, better their mental or moral state.

The result has been a harmful dichotomy in attitudes:

> So we have come to hear of the painting that elevates, and of the duty of the painter - of the picture that is full of thoughts, and of the panel that merely decorates.[9]

The pre-eminence of Whistler as a personality and an artist

has tended to obscure the similarity between his statements and those of less creative and radical men. Although few went so far as to proclaim in the journals the sublime moral independence of the artist, many critics were advising their readers that it was not only literary and dramatic subjects in painting that influenced minds and morals.

There was little consistent distinction between the terms "literary", dramatic" and "pictorial" in discussions of new paintings. In October 1868 a note accompanying Albert Moore's Midsummer suggested how the artist had freed himself from the "literary" tradition:

> the dramatic movement of human life is not necessarily literary. It makes appeal to the eyes with a pictorial simplicity, and with all the more simplicity as the people among whom it passes are nationally too young to be literary.

The Art-Journal's anonymous contributor claims Moore's paintings had been for some time "the medicine of a distinct ill" - the confusion of the arts that existed so long in England and the general neglect of their boundaries" (n.s.VIII (1868) 317). No attempt is made to define the terms, and the writer's distaste for the confusion of the arts does not square with that important tenet of the Aesthetes, that musical terminology can be used in talking of graphic art and literature. The claim that some freedom has been newly granted to the painter is, however, significant. Similarly, an unattributed review of Watt's work claimed in 1882 that his effectiveness was independent of literary criteria and inspiration:

> He is absolutely and remarkably consistent, insomuch as his choice, however wide, is strictly confined within the limits of pictorial art; he does not wander into literary interests, showing in this reserve that judgement as to the distinctions of the arts which marks the artist of thought and culture.

This does not admit of the possibility that a painter might depict some visionary narrative, and the term "pictorial" is used vaguely. The new tendency is seen as an abstention from literary traditions, rather than a novel freedom. The writer concludes by suggesting that Watt's other principal activity, portraiture,

> is of course and obviously removed from every adventitious literary interest, the power of portraiture depending upon the impression.
> (The Art-Journal, n.s.II (1882) 61-2)

Not that the portrait painter was an entirely free agent: N.Garstein, writing two years later in the same journal, found among the work of the late Édouard Manet,

> pictures that seem like portraits without the raison d'etre of portraiture, and whose personality is often as unpleasant as its colour.

By failing in his selection of sitters, and by various other sins of omission and commission, wrote Garstein, Manet had forfeited greatness: "it is hardly possible that posterity will accept him as a great painter" (n.s. IV (1884) 109-111; p.111).

More comprehensive attempts to unfold the mysteries governing the distinctions between the arts met with little success. The appearance in 1882 of Rossetti's collection of Ballads and Sonnets and of Pygmalion, a poem by the Pre-Raphaelite sculptor Thomas Woolner, prompted Alice Meynell to a sustained effort of aesthetic theorizing. "The Brush, the Chisel and the Pen", in The Art-Journal, considered the painterly quality of Rossetti's verse and the sculptoresque preoccupations of Woolner. Her most pregnant remarks concern the act of meditation:

> Art gains by faithful and restrained respect to its own methods, and this is true of the separate and distinct arts, and also of the separate branches of one art; that is to say, painting and letters gain in power by studying, the former the impression, and the latter the thought; and the art of sculpture gains by a strict adherence not only to the possibilities, but to the fine properties of its material, - bronze, or marble, or stone.
> (n.s. II (1882) 85-7; p.85)

This has an attractive air of plausibility, but the distinction between "impression" and "thought" is weak and unclear: the critic appears to be placing the former in a lower position on the intellectual scale than the latter, and suggesting that sculptors are able to provide only representations of the objects upon which the literary intellect might brood and form impressions: In The Portfolio William Sharp claimed in his article "D.G. Rossetti and Pictorialism in Verse" that there

are things which poets can do and painters cannot. The poet suggests a picture to the reader's mind in a few words, and can suggest sounds. Those who cannot rise to the poet's communications must make do with the clumsier art of the painter:

> Imagination not being a prevailing possession amongst men and women, a pictorial scene from nature naturally appeals much more quickly and directly to many people than even the most exquisite poetical description.
> (XIII (1882) 176-180; p.177)

This is hard on the painters, but there was no lack of sympathetic literary men who knew ways in which their pictorial colleagues might reach a wider public. Writing in Fraser's Magazine for June, 1880, J.C.Horsfall suggested that the poverty of the common stock of knowledge amongst British people was hindering painters, who were forced to the expedient of attaching long literary quotations to the frames of their works, and inserting copious explanations in exhibition catalogues. Some, it seemed, giving up the struggle, had taken refuge in the extremes of banality and pedantry, insulting or confounding the intelligence of their public. Curiously, Horsfall stumbles upon the theories of the avant-garde:

> So difficult is it to find fit subjects that, in despair, the theory has been adopted that there need not be - that, indeed, there ought not to be, any connection between a picture and a memorable thought and feeling; just as, if few fit subjects for poetry could be found, the theory would soon be established that great verse consists in fine rhythm and rhyme, and that meaning is an impertinent superfluity.

He evidently equates "literary" quality with "memorable thought and feeling"[7].

This yearning for the memorable leads Horsfall to propose the didacticism of mid-century painters as an ideal, and his concept of art as an ennobling and civilising force seems indebted to Ruskin and Arnold. His solution for the problem of "literary" painting is to give books to the public, rather than take them from artists: the Renaissance artists could assume a stock of Catholic legend and knowledge in their audience, but now pictorial art must cleave to "the only ally she can have today, noble literature". Conservatism of a

similar kind sought for the restoration of the status quo which obtained before the Pre-Raphaelite movement. In "The Old System of Art-Culture and the New" W.Cave Thomas inveighed against realism:

> How many a life work has been marred, cribbed, cabined, and confined for want of a stimulus to grand work! The tendency of Art of late years has been down! down! from mind to matter. It is the presence of thought, of ideas, which exalts Art, otherwise it descends to littleness, to things pretty, and perhaps innocent in themselves, but of no great account; to beauties which are not overlooked by the higher culture; but are regarded only in relation to greater. The rendering of the poetry of thought or the facts of history is humanly of far greater import than the exact imitation of the down of a peach or of every filament in a bird's nest.
> (The Art-Journal, XIX (1880) 373-5; p. 375)

Written twenty years later, this might have seemed an unskilful defence of Impressionism, but in 1880 it was recognisably a truculent suggestion that the Pre-Raphaelite rot had set in. For Thomas "poetry", so far as it concerns the painter, is confined to the depiction of men enjoying and arousing in others, nobility of reflection. His quarrel with the moderns is with their lack of ethical loftiness, and more immediately with minute realism of detail. His ideal, noble artist embraces ethical (and perhaps literary) subject-matter, and despises realism: he is a figure offered up as a rival to the contemporary artist.

The major conservative champion was, nevertheless, Ruskinian man, seeking sublimity in pictorial accuracy of detail and striving to present man and nature in moments of telling emotional and physical crisis. Val Prinsep, A.R.A., who had participated with Morris and Rossetti in the painting of the Oxford Union frieze, offered the ideal of the conservative painter to pupils of the St. Martin's School of Art at their prizegiving in 1881. He warned them against eccentricity:

> The greatest geniuses have been the simplest men. Shakespeare lived, dressed, and moved much as other people of his day; Raphael was the simplest and best loved of men; Reynolds

> was the friend of every little child he knew. And these great men, and many more I could mention, are those who might properly be called Aesthetes, professors of the science of the beautiful, expounders of the beauties of nature - that nature that lives and sparkles around us, with grief in it no doubt, and disease and death, but hope at all times, and more joy, I venture to think, than grief. Let us then, be followers of true aestheticism - professors of beauty, healthy and sound, without eccentricity.
> (The Portfolio, XIII (1882) 23).

Prinsep does not disclose the process whereby his commonplace, smug Shakespeare came to write Measure for Measure or Troilus and Cressida. The lucky students were favoured the following year with an address by Philip Hermogenes Calderon, R.A., whose effort appeared in Art-Journal under the title "Affectation in Art". Shakespeare here serves to illustrate the great British virtue:

> the greater the genius, the greater the common sense. No poet ever possessed a more imaginative fancy than your own Shakespeare, and nowhere has he been more lavish of it than in his two plays of The Tempest and Midsummer Night's Dream; but granting the possible existence of such creatures as Ariel or the little folk who play in and out among the ferns around their fairy queen - you will find that all their actions are perfectly sensible, and are always the result of what has happened before. (n.s. III (1883) 300).

After this fashion the poetry critic of The Illustrated London News reminded literary aspirants in 1885 that all our great poets, Chaucer, Spenser, Milton and Shakespeare "have been men of affairs, men possessing that sound common sense which is the pride of Englishmen" ("Poetry as an Art", 8 October, 1885). Nature in such arguments is always something ideal and sensible which only fleshly, morbid realists insist on seeing awry - to the man endowed with common-sense, all is beautiful and hopeful, and even the fairies lurking in the ferns are reasonable beings whose sense of the picturesque is well under control. The Illustrated London News warned its readers against the eccentricities of some contemporary artists and poets:

> Not content with going to Nature, which is as full of youth and inspiration today as it was

> in the earliest dawn of literature, they attempt to gain the public ear by something strange and startling.

Aspirants to fame who ignore this counsel are likely to end up writing like Zola, or - a strange example of morbidity - Feydeau.

The critics quoted in the preceding paragraph are symptomatic of a tendency described by J.Comyns Carr, prominent as an art-journalist and as an "adviser" to Henry Irving. In an intelligent and perceptive appraisal of Rossetti's oeuvre, published in Carr's English Illustrated Magazine soon after the painter's death, he compared English attitudes to literature with opinions on art:

> Men who can read Keats without any violent shock to their commonsense, and who will follow the genius of Shelley in its most aerial flights, have scarce any faith left for the artist who seeks to arouse a kindred emotion by the means proper to painting. They will even doubt that he himself has any true belief in his own creation, so strange to the temper of our time is all art that does not found itself on direct portraiture, or on the little drama of everyday life.
>
> (I (1883) 38).

Carr claims that Rossetti's earlier work began from the desire to present ideal and abstract values of composition and line, and accomodated "nature" to suit these values: a process he identifies as "poetic". Against this he sets the later work, taking as an example Lady Lilith (1864) which "starts from the conception of portraiture, and the ideal suggestion... only follows, and does not directly inspire, the reality". Rossetti "was a poet to the end of his days", but came to terms, in the course of his career, with nature:

> Some of the noblest painting that remains to us is frankly founded upon the direct and simple observation of human character, or the beauty of the outside world, and it therefore implies no reproach against a painter that he should elect in later life to put aside the fanciful ideas that had tempted the vision of a boy.

In attempting to adjust "poetic" (in a sense, literary) values against "painterly" ones, Carr Arrives at a definition of terms that has more sophistication than Prinsep or Calderon or The Illustrated London News could offer. He also attempts a

definition of maturity in art which seemed important at a time of resistance to younger, "eccentric" men. In order to do so he involves himself in the argument of "idealism" against "realism", that constituted the second major point of debate in the eighteen-eighties.

ii. Idealism and realistic detail.

To those seeking a revaluation of the Pre-Raphaelite achievement for praise or blame - the movement's emphasis upon accuracy of natural detail was as much a part of its literary affinities as its selection of poignant human situations, its use of "narrative" subject matter. In The Magazine of Art Cosmo Monkhouse reviewed an exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite paintings held in the Autumn of 1882. In discussion of "literary" values, not only Tennyson's "abstruse" thought and his pathos but his painstaking natural detail find a place:

> Art for the first time in our memory was promising to catch up and keep pace with literature. We had mastered - at least some of us had - our abstruse Tennyson, and grappled with our cryptic Browning; Carlyle and Kingsley were moving us to worship heroes and labour; but our art lingered with Young and Crabbe, with Doctor Johnson and Mrs. Hemans. Study of nature with holy humility, the gospel of hard work preached with the paintbrush, revolt against falsehood and convention - these were but parts of a movement which seemed not only an innovation but a creed. Of course it did but seem; for we know now - or if we do not, it is not for want of telling - that work is an unmitigated evil, that "purpose" destroys art, that Carlyle was dyspeptic and Kingsley no match for Cardinal Newman. But the dreams were not only pleasant but noble.
>
> ("A Pre-Raphaelite Collection", V (1882) 62-8; p.63).

Monkhouse adds that it is not easy "to forget the days when we first saw Tennyson not only in print but in paint". The Tennysonian qualities are enumerated in 1881, in Andrew Lang's catalogue to an exhibition of Millais' work. This painter was a Pre-Raphaelite who had matured and cast off the religious and ascetic devotion to abstract values of ideal form and become absorbed into the artistic Establishment. Lang describes him as he had been in the early days of his eminence:

> His art had very much the qualities of Mr. Tennyson's early poetry. It was felt to be strange, and was, therefore, an offence to

> all conventional circles. It was marked by the distinction of a serious and laborious ambition, reposing on ideas which were new, and more or less original. The minuteness of finish was a kind of reproach to older and less careful artists, who relied on swiftness of glance and "masterly" rapidity of touch. Lastly Mr Millais' earlier works were informed with a sentiment, which puzzled people incapable of sentiment, and were marked by a respect for the early Italian painters, and for the religion and art of a time then generally known as the "Dark Ages".11

Detail and minuteness of finish were seen as the expression of a "literary" temperament when Holman Hunt exhibited The Triumph of the Innocents in 1885: Hunt had remained faithful to the Brotherhood, in his fashion. Great ingenuity was shown by the artist, who represented the holy family fleeing Herod's edict, accompanied on their journey by the spirits of the slaughtered Innocents - happy and unusually well-developed infants. Strange soap-bubbles float across the composition, bearing in them reflections of the scene depicted. A critic in The Magazine of Art objected to the recondite symbolism, and the learning displayed in the depiction of natural detail:

> We expected a picture. What we found was... a confused but earnest and honourable achievement in literature, expressed in the most strenuous terms, with a patience, a laboriousness, a determination of symbolical intention worthy of all respect.
> (VIII (1885) xxii).

Conservative taste of the eighteen-fifties had reproached the Brotherhood and its associates of overworked detail and neglect of the sublime. The same arguments were being used in the eighteen-eighties against the French avant-garde. J.A.Stephens complained in 1885 of Hunt's new work:

> The Virgin, who ought to have been beautiful, and might have been young, is neither one nor the other, but simply a bold matron of large proportions and a pretentious air.
> (The Portfolio, XVI (1885) 80-2; p.82).

Two years earlier, the same journal carried an anonymous review of "twelve well-known French artists" exhibiting at the Dudley Gallery. Amongst them was Rodin:

> There is the nude, coloured plaster of St.John the Baptist, modelled by M.Rodin, with defiant

> realism of skin coarsened by exposure and body worn by ascetic austerities, a powerful but disagreeable study without prophetic dignity. (*AJ* (1883) 145).

In Lang's Millais catalogue it is claimed that "in the collection of his paintings now exhibited, we see him shake off the fallacy that the ugly ought to be selected by the artist",and that Millais' Cleopatra had been "a stout, dusky person, the shortness or length of whose nose would never have troubled the peace of ancient Europe". Lang's most extended comment on the lack of idealism and preponderance of realism in the earlier work is his discussion of The Woodman's Daughter, painted in 1850 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1851. In it he sees "the Pre-Raphaelite seriousness and laboriousness, and the determination to go straight to nature":

> With this determination they cultivated the theory that what is common in nature is good enough for art. Do not select faces or scenes of unusual and abnormal beauty, they say, but draw and paint such things as are set before you. It is unnecessary, perhaps, to observe that this theory leads to a practical fallacy, namely the neglect of the beautiful.

The little girl is, to Lang, "unnecessarily plain and uninteresting", and Millais "must have gone a little out of his way" to find so "uninviting" a model:

> In the same spirit, Wordsworth, when he was the slave of his own ideas, deformed his poetry with lines about
>
> A household tub like one of those
> Which women use to wash their clothes.
>
> Pre-Raphaelitism was always bringing in the household tub. 12

A yearning for the settled laws of sublimity is shadowed in one phrase, "the slave of his own ideas".

The salient feature of these laws - that most debated in the eighteen-eighties - was the requirement that detail be subordinated to overall design and the grand theme. Was Burne-Jones, for example, to be described as a classicist or a mediaevalist? In his case, discussion turned on the status of ornament, and F.G.Stephens suggested in a Portfolio article that attempts to discriminate between mediaeval and classical influence were fruitless: Jones had followed "those admirable laws which were devised for decorative services in Byzantine

and in Gothic times":

> In those times, as in antique Greece, ornament of every kind subserved the function for which it was intended, and, being at once logical and obedient, triumphed in freedom where it was apparently most restricted.
> (Mr E.Burne-Jones, A.R.A., as a Decorative Artist", XX (1889) 214-9; p.215).

In a lecture delivered the same year, William Morris had distinguished Gothic from Greek principles of unity:

> For the iron rule of the classical period, the acknowledged slavery of every one but the great man had gone, and freedom had taken its place; but harmonious freedom. Subordination of effect, not uniformity of detail; true and necessary subordination, not pedantic.[13]

The element of the Pre-Raphaelite theory which called for stylised composition had survived - its effects can be seen most clearly in portraiture - but the accurate copying of nature to provide decorative elements was being questioned.[14] There was, understandably, some confusion between the conservative theory of detail subordinated to form, and the Impressionist theory of natural phenomena subordinated to (or defined by) the artist's perception. A case in point was Waterhouse's The Lady of Shalott, painted in 1888: it had a certain kinship, by subject, with the Pre-Raphaelite painters, but differed from their methods in its treatment of natural detail (see illustrations 1 and 2). In The Art-Journal an anonymous critic wrote:

> The type [Waterhouse] chose for the spell-controlled lady, her action, and the garments in which he has arrayed her, bring his work into kinship with that of the "Pre-Raphaelitism" of the middle of this century, but the difference of the execution is thereby all the more marked; the almost impressionary delicacy of the rendering of the willows, weeds and water is such as claims harmony with French work rather than with what was so intensely English.
> (n.s. IX (1889) 142).

In a volume of satirical verse, Pictures at Play, or Dialogues of the Galleries (1889) the Lady, "open-mouthed and suffering the last agonies of influenza" indignantly claims that, appearances notwithstanding, she is The Lady of Shalott. Waterhouse, she observes,

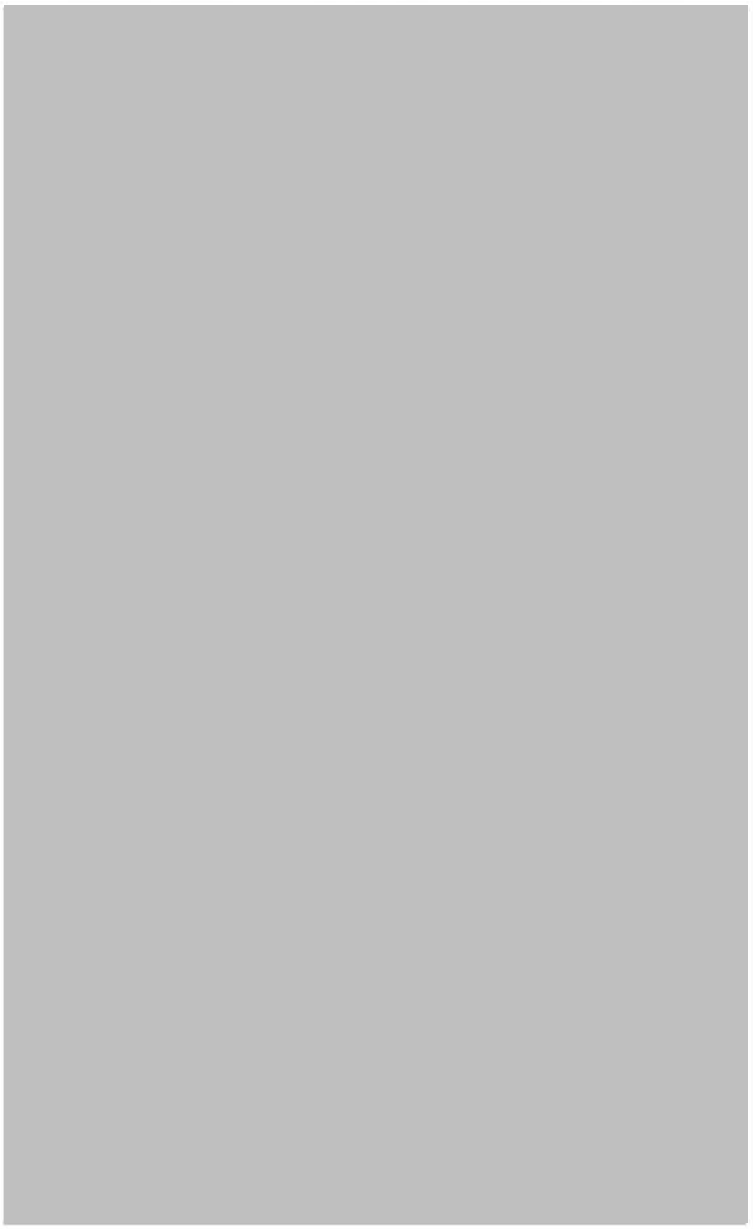


Illustration 1 (a) Following p.15

Natural detail in a Pre-Raphaelite painting - Hughes, *April Love* (1856).

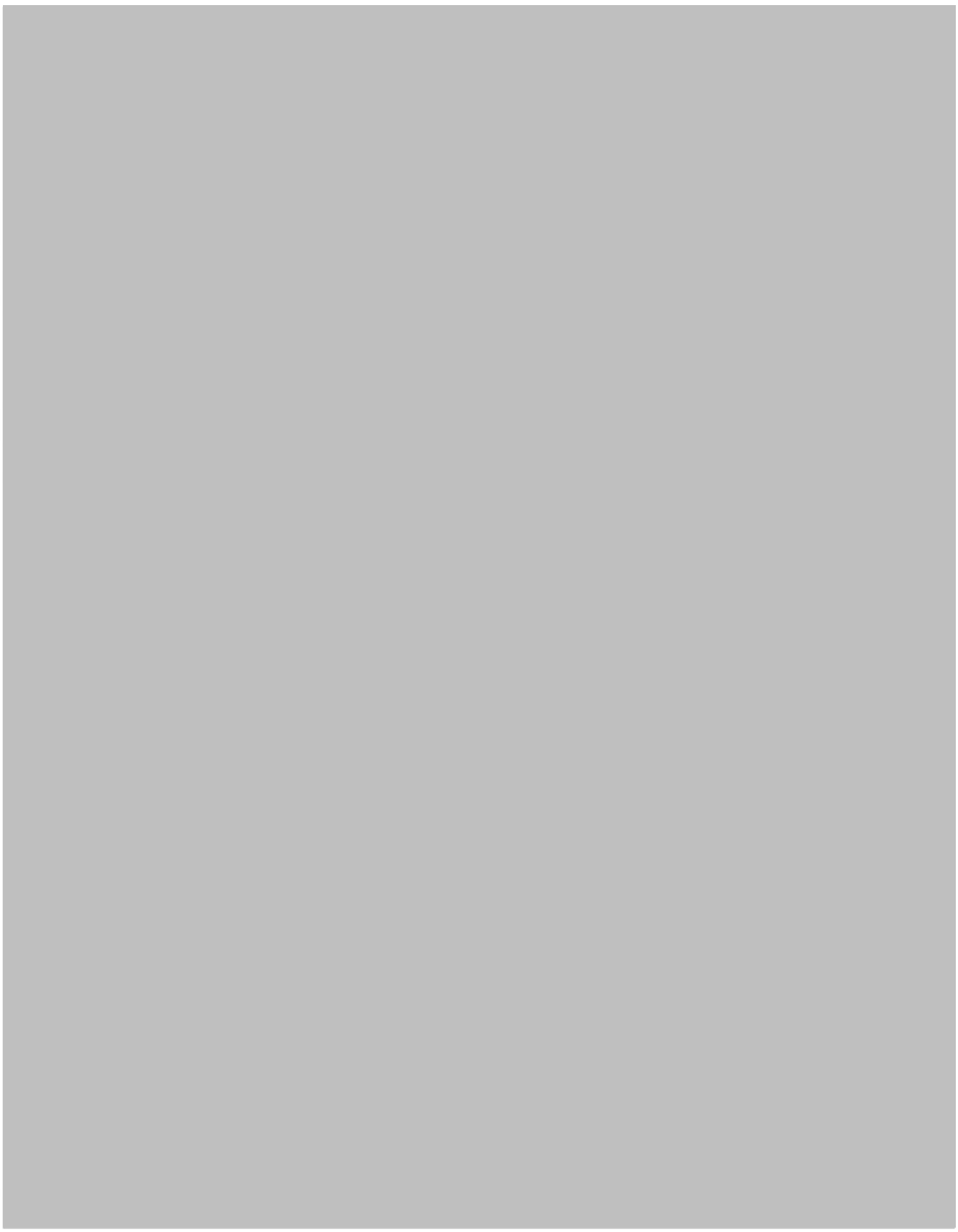


Illustration 1 (b) Following p.15

Hughes, April Love : detail of lower left-hand corner.

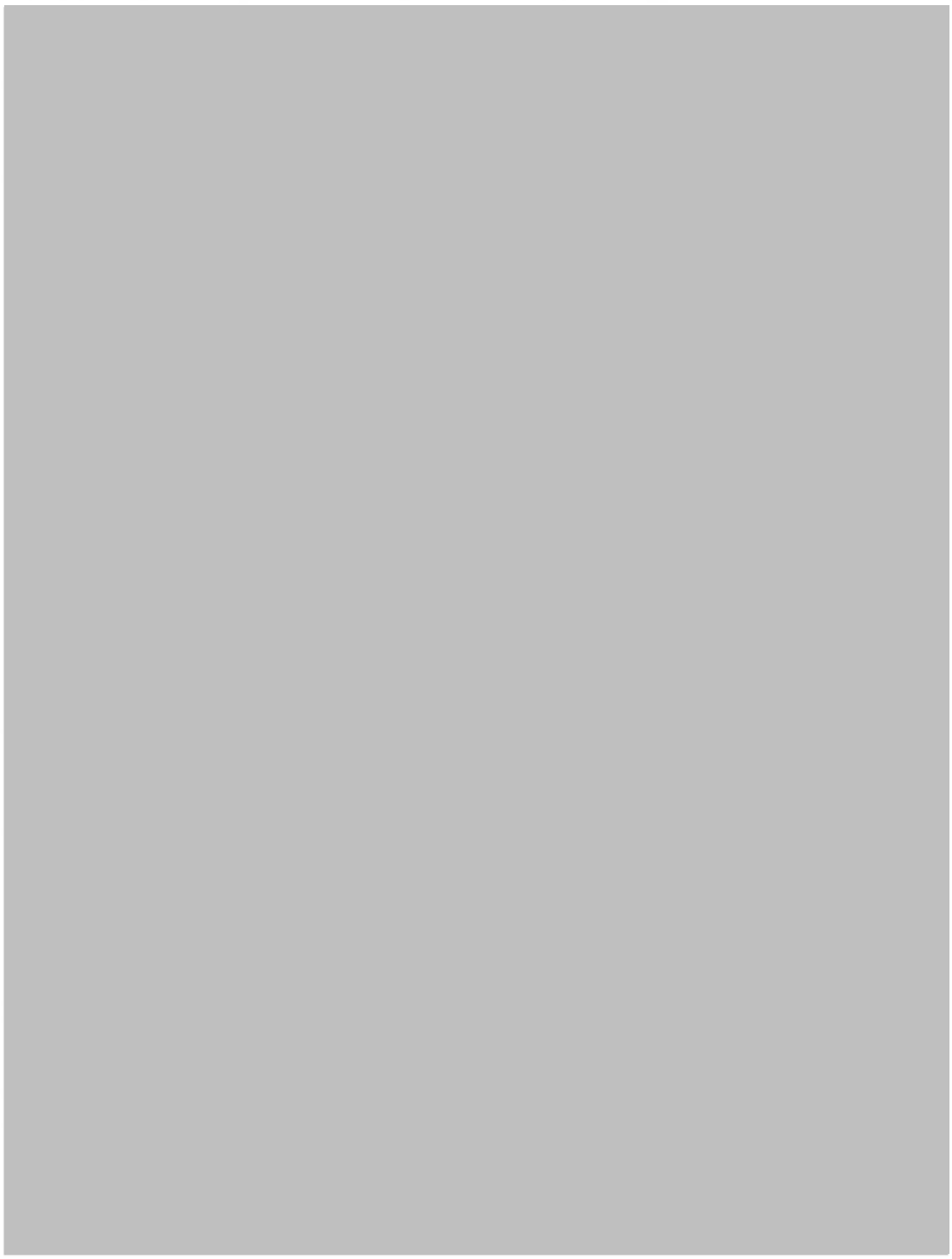


Illustration 2 (a) Following p.15

Natural detail:"almost impressionary delicacy" - Waterhouse, The Lady of Shalott (1888).



. Illust ation 2 (b) Following p.15

Wate house, The Lady of Shalott : detail of lower left-hand corner.

...painting merely what he saw,
According to the latest law,
Of values and of tones,
He made me, much to my amaze,
A thing whereon the public gaze,
And mock me for the nones.

I am the Lady of Shalott,
And if they tell you I am not,
I say but this one thing,
That here be "values" rare and quaint,
And goodly "quality of paint"
And "workman-like handling".
15

New, more abstract, terms of appraisal had been found for a manner which to some critics seemed simply a deviation from the discoveries of mid-century painters.

Apart from Whistler and Burne- Jones, the most respected of the English contemporaries were Albert Moore and Alma-Tadema, both remarkable for what might be called "non-ethical" classicism. Watts retained a penchant for "ethical" subject-matter, though developing an un-realistic technique, and Hunt was adhering to his mid-century faith. Millais had become respectable. Perhaps it was the reticence of Moore that made him more difficult to deal with than the flamboyantly bohemian Whistler. His pictures had the qualities of line and composition associated with "ethical" classicism, a precision of detail and finish suggestive of Pre-Raphaelitism, and a total lack of literary or "ethical content" which defied classification. A writer in The Art-Journal attempted to account for Moore's appeal by reference to Japanese as well as Classical European influences:

> His art is in intention purely decorative, and has for the mark of its achievement the production of what may be described as ideal realism. Its principal characteristics are an incomparable feeling for the relations of faint, bright, delicate colours, and an admirable sense of symmetry in design...

The first is identified with Japanese, the second with Greek art, from which Moore has learned,

> the uses of serenity, the charm of dignity and repose, the worth of beauty that is unimpassioned, and the potency of a right combination of quiet and harmonious lines.
> (n.s. I (1881) 163-4).

Moore's independence took him to some strange lengths, producing potentially surrealistic effects: Quartette shows a group of demure and classically attired musicians performing before a group of thoughtful onlookers, but the musical instruments are modern.

Alma-Tadema, a Dutch artist who had settled in England, was the most eminent of the painters who used classical themes and settings. Like Moore he eschewed the conventionally "significant" scenes and literary subjects of earlier neo-classicist painters (David, for example) and gave his men and women an ideality unconnected with moral dignity. Reviewing the retrospective of Tadema's paintings at the Grosvenor Gallery, an anonymous columnist in Art and Letters claimed in 1883 that the painter "found the courage to give the characters of the classic age the common attributes of humanity":

> A classic subject had hitherto been held to demand from the artist the higher qualities of style in the treatment of the human form. Events of history , in themselves devoid of poetical suggestion, have been handled with the reverence due to ideal themes, and though now and then the power of the individual artist had availed to secure a design of exceptional beauty, the result as a rule has only the dull virtue of an academic study.

The critic suggests how Alma-Tadema has broken with the old classicism:

> He does not affect to grant the forms with which he peoples the scenes of history the abstract character and ideal beauty that belong to the creations of ancient art. He selects his various types with the instinct of a dramatist who seeks to illustrate an epoch and not to ennoble it... we are made to feel that the distinctions that divide the ancient and modern world are of less moment than the enduring attributes and the unchanging occupations of daily life by which they are united.
>
> (II (1883) 121-2).

In a sense, Alma-Tadema adopted the realism in Pre-Raphaelite painting - the realism which Hunt employed in depicting the Virgin as a "bold matron" - but had refrained from using it to emphasize the immediacy of an ethically significant subject. Pre-Raphaelite realism was used to give a vivid, sometimes startling effect to subjects of great importance - this part of their inheritance from Giotto caused great offence

in Hunt's painting of Christ in the carpenter's shop. Alma-Tadema's realism emphasized the insignificance of the events in his idyllic paintings, rather than the responsibilities of recognition.

iii. "Ideal" and "idyllic" art.

Walter Pater published Marius the Epicurean in 1885, his first book since the revised edition of The Renaissance appeared in 1877. Its form is not so much that of a novel as of a series of situations which provoke the hero's self-examination: indeed, the situations are endowed with so little narrative tension as to become tableaux vivants, which reviewers discussed in terms of painting. In The Academy J.M.Gray observed that the feast in honour of Apuleius (Book IV, chapter 22) was

> a very Tadema in its perfection of finish, in its legitimate and artist-like use of archaeological knowledge for the purposes of mere present beauty; a Tadema, too, in its delightful preoccupation with the lovely details of precious objects of still-life, with the "togas of altogether lost hue and texture", the "crystal cups darkened with old wine", and "the dusky fires of the rare twelve-petalled roses".

Despite his appreciation of the writer-painter's skill, Gray feels the necessity of objecting to its preference for illustration over ennoblement:

> It may, indeed, afford a healthful corrective to many crude and unlovely tendencies of modern thought. In a mood of wise eclecticism we may receive much from it, may linger for a while in its charmed and golden, though ennervating air; but if we would preserve our spiritual health we must press on upwards and breathe the more bracing atmosphere of sterner upland places.
> (21 March 1885)

Pater makes it quite clear that his eclecticism is an attempt to "keep the eye clear by a sort of exquisite personal alacrity and cleanliness", of which Gray found it hard to disapprove - it extends, he adds, "even to his dwelling place". But his distrust of this as a means to moral improvement is evident: a distrust shared by many of Pater's contemporaries. John Morley reviewing The Renaissance in 1873 for The Fortnightly Review, feared a tendency which was bringing readers "back to

fetishism and the worship of little household gods". He welcomed Pater's independent spirit:

> He has no design of interfering with the minor or major morals of the world, but only of dealing with what we may perhaps call the accentuating portion of life.

Some justification could be found for this controlled and purposeful escapism:

> The speculative distractions of the epoch are noisy and multitudinous, and the first effort of the serious spirit must be to disengage itself from the futile hubbub which is sedulously maintained by the bodies of rival partisans in philosophy and philosophical theology. This effort after detachment naturally takes the form of criticism of the past, the only way in which a man can take part in the discussion and propagation of ideas, while yet standing in some sort of aloof from the agitation of the present.
>
> ("Mr Pater's Essays", n.s. XIII (1873) 475).

This accomodates Pater with the view of classical studies put forward by Arnold, by which "commerce with the ancients" is held to produce in writers "a steadying and composing effect upon their judgement, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general". Arnold had proposed as a model "the plain and simple proceedings of the old artists" who

> attained their grand results by penetrating themselves with some noble and significant action, not by inflating themselves with a belief in the pre-eminent importance and greatness of their own times.[16]

But Pater was under suspicion of pre-occupying himself, not with "noble and significant" but insignificant and possibly vicious examples - with Apuleius rather than Cicero and Livy. What literary historians have seen as a further step in the "religionization" of culture begun by Newman and Arnold appeared to many contemporary readers a perversion of religious impulses. T.S.Eliot claims that Marius the Epicurean "represents the point in English history at which the repudiation of revealed religion by men of culture and intellectual leadership coincides with a renewed interest in the visual arts" - a view common to many of Pater's contemporaries.[17]

Representaive of contemporary attitudes to "the accentuating portion of life" in painting is Frederick Wedmore's The Masters of Genre Painting published in 1880. This kind of art, he writes,

> records, not the rare events which stated history chronicles, but the repeated incidents which we know to be events too. It quickens our senses to the spectacle, in actual life, not of a sensation scene, but of every-day drama.[18]

Such work is produced in societies "compact and settled and highly civilized..., not so large as to be very various" and at times "when men's minds were little distracted either by political movement or religious aspiration". In such times and places the masters of genre thrive:

> No overpowering thought of larger issues - of a future, of another world, of a different society - must hang over him as he records our moods and manners and gains his revelation into the permanent character by the accidents of the passing minute.

Such were "the staid and quiet world of our earlier Georges", Holland in the seventeenth century, and "the lighter society of France"[19]. Such a view of art and its social background begs many questions, and Wedmore deals with Hogarth as a genre painter despite his didacticism and the quasi-literary form of much of his work. But he does offer an account of the periods of history in which Aestheticism delighted. Almost any aristocracy would serve, and the "staid and quiet" seventeen-hundreds were extended to include the rest of the eighteenth century and the Regency. Some writings of the mid-century had used the same periods - witness Thackeray's Henry Esmond, Bulwer Lytton's The Last Days of Pompeii, or Dickens' tendency to set his novels (notably David Copperfield) in the days of his childhood. Now the intention and selection were different: Marius the Epicurean owes more to the exoticism of Flaubert's Salâmmbo than it does to Lytton's earnest depiction of early Christianity. Pater did not share Flaubert's interest in immorality and aberration, but he cultivated the instinct for telling and exquisite detail with which the French novelist had described Carthage.

Although one very important element of the new Aestheticism consisted in the rejection of photographic realism, it is evident that in some cases accuracy of archaeological detail was

felt to be essential in evoking the "repeated incidents" which Wedmore proposes as proper subject for genre painting. It was as though Pre-Raphaelitism had been fragmented - from whatever amalgam of several distinct painting techniques it may be said to represent - and divided into two schools. On the one hand, some artists rejected realism and the depiction of nature- Beardsley's mature work may serve as an example. Others sought to achieve a scholarly but untendentious acquaintance with the minutiae of past ages - notable among these were Alma-Tadema, Moore, and the pen-and-ink illustrator, Hugh Thomson.

Thomson's first major commissions came from Comyns Carr's new English Illustrated Magazine, which began publication in October 1883. His work at first included some modern subjects, and he provided competent illustrations for articles on contemporary London life and for Henry Arthur Jones's "The Dramatic Outlook" (II (1885) 280-9 and 341-352). Soon he established himself as an illustrator of eighteenth century subjects, with an edition of Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley papers from The Spectator (first published in The English Illustrated Magazine in 1884-6, and reprinted as a book in 1886). His meticulous and, for the most part, unsentimental view of the eighteenth century had some affinities with the somewhat saccharine idylls of Kate Greenaway, and with Ralph Caldecott's more substantial drawings - his John Gilpin appeared in 1878. A representative account of the appeal of the period chosen by Thomson, Caldecott and Kate Greenaway is that given by an anonymous writer in Art and Letters, describing G.H.Boughton's painting Snow in Spring:

> Among a group of artists who love to study the manners of the past in order that they may escape from the tyranny of the present Mr Boughton holds a prominent place. With such men it is not so much the passion of the archaeologist as the desire for freedom that carries them back to the life of an earlier generation... They like to enjoy a certain liberty in the invention of costume, and in the choice and arrangement of colour that is denied to the uncompromising realist, who has to record the facts of his own time; and yet they do not care to wander so far into the past as to be beyond the range of modern sympathy.
> (I (1881) 41).

The best products of such a school would seem to have been those which, like Pater's imaginary portraits and Moore's

paintings, did observe some degree of archaeological discipline, and refrained from claiming the liberty suggested in the above account of Broughton's painting (a piece of unrivalled insipidity). Others took a more significant liberty, to describe what they saw in the manner they considered appropriate, or to develop techniques which would enable them to express on canvas and paper the darker, libidinous forces controlling their view of the outside world. In so far as the Pre-Raphaelites endorsed the stylisation of nature according to religious vision, they made way for the graphic expression of such less "acceptable" visions as Beardsley's illustrations to Salomé. In this respect their influence survived, in what John Dixon Hunt has called "a continuity of admiration"[20].

iv. Dress and furniture.

In conclusion, it is important to note the manner in which the Aesthetes' consciousness of their advance from mid-century tastes showed itself in attitudes towards the minutiae of contemporary everyday life.

Wilde, defending The Picture of Dorian Gray in a letter to The Daily Chronicle, suggested in 1890 that the moral independence of the decade had been reflected in "certain colours":

> subtle in their loveliness and fascinating in their almost mystical tones. They were, and are, our reaction against the crude primaries of a doubtless more respectable but certainly less cultivated age. My story is an essay on decorative art. It reacts against the crude brutality of plain realism. It is poisonous if you like, but you cannot deny that it is also perfect, and perfection is what we artists aim at.[21]

The "certain colours" and the eclecticism of the new modes of dress were seized on by the satirists: Patience (1881) is a repository of contemporary fashion, from Bunthorne and Grosvenor's velvet knee-breeches (a parody of Wilde's dress in the early years of self-publicity) to the "dirty greens" and "greenery-yallery, Grosvenor Gallery" dyestuffs favoured by the love-sick maidens and the "foot-in-the-grave young man". In female dress, where Aesthetic influence was most apparent, loose-cut, flowing lines were advocated. Sometimes

the new movement was advocated as an aid to health; a writer in The Magazine of Art proposed in 1882 a revolt against "the tyranny of the modist, whose chief idea is to put as much material as possible into a female garment without regard to convenience or health" ("Fitness and Fashion", V (1882) 336-9). Certain concessions to decorum had to be made, and Mrs Haweis in The Art-Journal, after extolling Greek concern for the natural lines of the body, reminded her readers:

> It is not needful to follow the shape of the body servilely, otherwise, one would have to make "tights" the beau ideal of dress; and this would properly not be dress at all, as it would add nothing to nature which dress, with its contributions of light and shadow, colour and texture, is certainly expected to do. ("The Aesthetics of Dress", n.s. XIX (1880) 137-9; p.137).

Dress figured prominently in the galleries of the Health Exhibition held at South Kensington in 1884, and lecturers in the Exhibition commented on the healthful aspects of the freedom modern women exercised in their choice of costume.[22] Wilde's lectures and pronouncements on dress, delivered for the most part during the earlier years of the decade, also proposed reform on hygeinic as well as aesthetic grounds.

In furniture design and interior decoration the leading talents were E.W.Godwin and Whistler. The latter's advocacy of plain, harmonious colour in wall decoration was a reaction against the patterned wallpapers of Morris's designs. His own house, The White House, built in 1877-8, was low, three-storeyed, simple in ornament"and remarkable for

> The white brick of the walls, the green slate of the roof, the stone facings, the blue door and woodwork.

The design and furnishings of the building were by E.W.Godwin, whom the artist met in 1863. A scheme for Mr D'Oyly Carte's home in Adelphi Terrace had a light pink staircase, and a yellow library with green woodwork. Lady Archibald Campbell, another of Whistler's clients, described his principles as "scientific":

> ...to produce harmonious effects in line and colour grouping, the whole plan or scheme should have to be thoroughly thought out so as to be finished before it was practically begun.[23]

The plain colours of the distempered walls should display, not compete with, the paintings and furniture, and Whistler extended his supervision of the execution even to the mixing of paints.

Godwin, who made designs for Whistler and for Wilde's new home in Tite Street (in 1884), had arrived at his mode of furniture design as a means of avoiding both commercially available items, and the products of the Arts and Crafts movement.[24] In 1876 he described the difficulties he had encountered when furnishing his London home in 1867:

> Such effects as I wanted, I endeavoured to gain as in economical building, by the grouping of solid and void, and by more or less broken outline.

This led him to a cultivation of abstract line and form in cabinet-making which, like Whistler's painting and decorative art, owed much to the Japanese example,"in a period when cabinet-making was synonymous with elaborate carving and gilding, and even the advanced work of Morris, Faulkner and Company was elaborately painted"[25]. In 1869 E.J.Poynter suggested a causal connection between furniture design and economics. His argument resembled that of Morris - man had progressed not from one kind of honest design to another, but from honesty to sham:

> It is indeed the dread of appearing not to be able to afford handsome things which is at the bottom of the general decline of good work, which we find surrounding us on all sides. It is, combined with ...the desire of rapidly making fortunes, the root of all that is bad and sham in art about us.[26]

Poynter was not alone in this complaint, nor was it confined to art-critics - in support of his argument he was able to cite Dickens' description of Mr Podsnap's plate:

> ...everything was made to look as heavy as it could, and to take up as much room as possible.[27]

Wilde and his mentor Godwin maintained Morris's criteria for judging decorative design - principally that it should be the expression of an individual's imagination and the product of his skill, and it should enhance the object it adorned without seeking to disguise it. On the other hand the elaboration of Morris's designs, however "honest", was beginning to pall. Wilde wrote in 1885 that Morris wallpapers achieved quite

the wrong effect in a room, where his eye required "a resting place of pure colour"[28]. For the mediaevalism that inspired Morris's designs and politics the new movement substituted an interest in classical, Renaissance amd Augustan art - rediscovering the antique and its previous rediscoverers. These periods were now interpreted as times of repose, idyllic unconcern with great problems of state and ethics, and quasi-aristocratic ease: a view which has been exemplified above from Wedmore's essays on genre painting. A new purity of line and colour was being substituted for the achievement of mid-century reformers.

.....

At first sight the reaction against Pre-Raphaelitism that took place in the late 'seventies and 'eighties appears to have embraced again the views of those who spoke against the movement at its inception. Dr. John Brown, one of the more thoughtful opponents of the Brotherhood's methods, described The Light of the World in 1862 in terms suggestive of later reactions to The Triumph of the Innocents:

> The faults of the picture as a work of art are, like its virtues, those of its school - imitation is sometimes mistaken for representation. There is a want of unity, breadth and spaciousness of nature about the landscape, as if the painter had looked with one eye shut, and thus lost the stereoscopic effect of reality - the solidarity of binocular vision; this gives a displeasing flatness. It is too full of astonishing bits, as if it had been looked at, as well as painted, piece-meal.[29]

Brown evidently feels that the grandeur of the subject has been forfeited to exactitude of detail - a Romantic idea of the spiritual impact of Nature has been lost in the work of the new school. Criticism of the Brotherhood in these terms can be compared with one of the definitions proposed by W.W. Robson, in an important twentieth-century essay on Pre-Raphaelite poetry: "a care for finish of style and polish of phrasing takes the place of a scrupulous effort at definition of meaning".[30]

Another glance at the 1885 discussions of Hunt's painting, or at Lang's Millais catalogue of 1881 shows that the new

movement of the 'eighties was reacting against an excess, rather than a paucity of meaning in the pictures. In its crudest expression, the view of the eighteen-eighties seems to have been that vague and probably dishonest "meanings" had been superceded by precise, honest but obtrusive "meanings". Art was now to be further revolutionised by the denial of any "meaning" at all. Morris had given wallpaper good, pleasant patterns, founded in observation of nature, and now men were to devote their walls to sympathetic but uninsistent distempers. Arthur Symons, writing on Whistler after the artist's death, attempted to summarize the achievements of the past thirty years, from 1873 to 1903:

> One of the first truths of art has needed to be discovered in these times, though it has been put into practice by every great artist, and has only been seriously denied by scientific persons and the inept. It has taken new names, and calls itself now "Symbolism", now "Impressionism"; but it has a single thing to say, under many forms; that art must never be a statement, always an evocation.[31]

Chapter Two

SHAKESPEARE CRITICISM.

The most important English contributions to Shakespeare criticism of the decade were those of Swinburne, Wilde, Pater and Helen Faucit. Wilde and Helen Faucit concerned themselves directly with the stage, and Swinburne published a semi-biographical (but mostly inspirational) study of Shakespeare, whilst Pater's brief studies offered the most radical interpretations. Dowden's Shakespeare: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art had appeared in 1875, followed by a more schematic "Primer" in 1877: his edition of the Sonnets and his two biographical essays for The Henry Irving Shakespeare appeared in 1881 and 1888 respectively. The biographical interpretation proposed by Dowden was imaginative without being unduly fanciful, and its basic premise - that the man may be discerned in his works - found acceptance at once in an age preoccupied with the individuality of authors. Not every critic found it necessary to adopt Dowden's treatment of the plays, poems and sonnets as autobiographical material, but the assumption that an artist creates images of his own personality can be discerned in Wilde and is pre-eminent in Pater.[1]

.....

i. Swinburne on Shakespeare.

Algernon Charles Swinburne has been claimed as "the first in England to apply purely imaginative standards to the whole range of literature without too many concessions to purely moralistic, realistic, or philosophical standards" - in other words, as a founding father of the Aesthetic Movement.[2] His A Study of Shakespeare, published in 1880, surprises by its clinging to conventional moral criteria of judgement in literature and the tedium of its pedantry.

In The Academy, Edward Dowden devoted three columns to the tactful but firm destruction of Swinburne's claims to originality in the biographical framework of the book. Dowden refrained from mention of his own labours, or entry into the controversy which the new book sought to stimulate by its sneers at the New Shakespere Society: he suggested that Swinburne was more convincing in his intuitions than his scholarship.-

Such value as this study of Shakespeare

> possesses - and Mr Swinburne, though he were to try his worst, cannot write many pages without giving us something of value - will be found in scattered pieces of bright, penetrating and original comment.
> (3 January 1880)

Dowden has to admit that the book's prose sometimes obscures the brightness of its penetrations:

> But when one comes to translate such passages the pen drives heavily amid the radiant riot of flower-soft speech, and the supreme spilth of starry syllables. One whose understanding has been darkened by verse tests finds himself, too, as he copies, half unconsciously at work on a painful series of prose tests, including the alliteration-test, the abusive-epithet test, the triple-redundant adjective test, and the never-ending hyperbole test.

Swinburne is a man "with whom the infallibility of genius seems to be a foible", and Dowden reminds readers of Coleridge's suppositions regarding the chronology of the plays, as an example of the "baseless opinions" to which "mere general impression, even when the impression of a man of genius, may lead". The author's rude rejection of verse-tests seems reprehensible to Dowden, in so far as it exhibits a contempt for the new-found scientific spirit of English Shakespeare studies. The anti-rationalism of Swinburne's criticism was summed up in T.S.Eliot's essay in The Sacred Wood:

> There are to be no conclusions, except that Elizabethan literature is very great, and that you can have pleasure and even ecstasy from it, because a sensitive poetic talent has had the experience. One is in risk of becoming fatigued by a hubbub that does not march; the drum is beaten, but the procesession does not advance.[3]

Swinburne appears to be attacking not merely the New Shakespere Society but the spirit of rational enquiry.

The lush prose of A Study of Shakespeare is embarrassing not only on account of the ornamentation suggested in Dowden's "prose-tests" but the devotional piety which informs its rhapsodies and occasional reflective moments. From the dedication, in which Swinburne writes Halliwell-Phillipps's name above his own on "the votive scroll" which "attaches" his "offering" to "the shrine of Shakespeare", to the concluding

paean to Imogen, a quasi-religious aura pervades the work. Swinburne's writing takes on a frankly liturgical form at times. Such is the awed approach he makes to the Last Plays:

> And now, coming at length within the very circle of Shakespeare's culiminant and crowning constellation, bathing my whole soul and spirit for the last time and (if I live long enough) as surely for the first of many thousand times in the splendour of the planet whose glory is the light of his very love itself, standing even as Dante,
>
> in the clear
> Amorous silence of the Swooning-sphere,
>
> what shall I say of thanksgiving before the final feast of Shakespeare?
> (Second edition., (1880) p.220)

This is an introit, and the reading of the plays has become a ritual baptism, a repeated, eucharistic enactment of redemption, and an occult experience - all at once. In commending the verse of Shakespeare's middle period to would-be poetic dramatists, the author of Bothwell speaks of "that faithful and fruitful discipleship of love with which the highest among poets and the most original among workmen have been naturally always the first to study and the most earnest to follow the footsteps of their greatest precursors in that kind" (p.67) - the reflection in Swinburne's face of Shakespeare's glory is obvious.

Such a cult requires a miraculous birth: indeed there are several. First of all comes that of Marlowe:

> Blank verse came to life in England at the birth of the shoemaker's son who had but to open his yet beardless lips, and the high-born poem which had Sackville to father and Sidney to sponsor [i.e. Gorboduc] was silenced and eclipsed for ever among the poor plebian crowd of rhyming shadows that waited in death on the noble nothingness of its patrician shade.
> (p.28)

More wonders are in store for the reader of Love's Labour's Lost, where "during certain scenes we seem almost to stand again by the cradle of new-born comedy, and hear the first lisping and laughing accents run over from her baby lips in bubbling rhyme". Even more awe-inspiring is the manner in which, at other times on this occasion "the note changes" and

"...e recognise the speech of the gods" (pp.47-8). The whole study is interspersed with images of growth and maturing, as Swinburne sets out to follow a chronology which transcends dates:

> It is not, so to speak, the literal but the spiritual order which I have studied to observe and to indicate: the periods which I seek to define belong not to chronology but to art.
>
> (p.16)

This is really no more than an excuse for making points dependent upon chronology, without worrying about dates: Swinburne marks the epochs in his chronicle by displays of language more resplendent than his apocalyptic norm. For example, Marlowe's influence upon the early work of Shakespeare is treated as follows:

> In the heaven of our tragic song the first-born star on the forehead of its herald god was not outshone till the full midsummer meridian of that greater godhead before whom he was sent to prepare a pathway for the sun.
>
> (p.77)

Swinburne's meteorology would have done credit to the Book of Revelations.

Readers of A Study of Shakespeare were mercifully spared the miracle of Shakespeare's own birth: not so the readers of The English Illustrated Magazine which printed in October 1890 "An Autumn Vision" by Algernon Charles Swinburne. In this poem, dated October 31, 1889, the author pondered the conception and birth of the literary saviour:

> In what synod were they sitting,
> All the gods and lords of time,
> Whence they watched as fen-fires flitting,
> Years and names of men sublime,
> When their counsels found it fitting
> One should stand where none might climb-
> None of man begotten, none
> Born of men beneath the sun
> Till the race of time be run,
> Save this heaven-enfranchised one?
>
> With what rapture of creation
> Was the soul supernal thrilled,
> With what pride of adoration
> Was the world's heart fired and filled,
> Heaved in heavenward exultation
> Higher than hopes or dreams might build,

> Grave with awe not known while he
> Was not, mad with glorious glee
> As the sun saluted sea,
> When his hour bade Shakespeare be?
> (VIII (1890) 3-7; p.5).

Such is the Shakespeare who appears in Swinburne's book, notable there for his "godlike equity" and an "implacable and impeccable righteousness of insight" (p.70) - Shakespeare possesses not only artistic but ethical powers of discrimination.

Swinburne's abject adoration of the god-dramatist calls forth not only an abundance of turgid and tasteless prose, but oblique suggestions that the study of the dramatists works had a place in the writer's own psycho-sexual development. In the early pages appears the figure of the boy "whose heart first begins to burn within him, who feels his blood kindle and his spirit dilate, his pulse leap and his eyes lighten, over a first study of Shakespeare" (p.20). The heroines of the plays seem to have had a strong effect on the dilating heart and leaping pulses, not by any conspicuous sexuality, but by their purity. It is suggested that Shakespeare deliberately blackened Goneril, Regan and Iachimo in order to make credible the figures of Cordelia and Imogen:

> But for the contrast and even the contact of antagonists as abominable as these, the gold of their spirit would be too refined, the lily of their holiness too radiant, the violet of their virtue too sweet.
> (p.174).

The expression is unusually extreme (Swinburne never says once what he knows three ways of saying) but the interpretation is by no means orthodox, following as it does the path of Mrs Jameson, Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies (1865) and lesser mid-Victorian sentimentalists. The final paean to Imogen - "the very crown and flower" of Shakespeare's "daughters" - is unusual only in the extravagance of its language. Sensitive persons

> may remember that to their own innocent infantile perceptions the first obscure electric revelations of what Blake calls "the Eternal Female" was given through a blind wondering thrill of childish rapture by a lightening on the baby dawn of their soul from the sunrise of Shakespeare's Cleopatra.
> (p.199)

this tells us much more about Swinburne than about the books he enjoyed: it may be held to be of a piece with the individualism of the Aesthetic Movement, but Swinburne keeps well clear of the movement's favourite figure, the amoral artist. Shakespeare is the supreme moralist, and apart from a suggestion that Iago is an artist in his creation of evil, and another nominating Black Will in Arden of Faversham as "the passionate artist without pity or conscience" (p.141) the poète maudit makes no appearances in A Study of Shakespeare. The villains are simple in their wickedness, the heroes and heroines pure in their goodness. Swinburne deploys more pedantry than scholarship in his attacks on The New Shakespere Society, which take up a good number of pages in his text and a sizeable appendix.

ii. Oscar Wilde: Shakespeare as a theatre poet.

The literary pose of Oscar Wilde needs to be set in the perspective of his frankly commercial and social success: the melancholic Wilde of the 1881 Poems must be compared with the journalist and lecturer. Wilde was constantly seeking, not only self-publicity, but greater effectiveness and variety in the style and modes of his writing: the very variety of authors imitated in Poems testifies to this ambition, as do the different forms of prose attempted (not always successfully) in the years between 1881 and 1894 - prose poems, quasi-biblical parables, 'fairy tales', fantastic short stories (Lord Arthur Savile's Crime, The Canterville Ghost), a short novel, historical sketches ("Pen, pencil and Poison") and literary criticism.[4] Most of these sub-genres were to be found in the popular literary journalism of the eighteen-eighties: if Wilde was in some respects a plagiary, it was with the shrewdness of a popular journalist seeking the impact of newness whilst allowing his audience the pleasures of recognition. What he borrowed from Pater might shock, but the forms borrowed from middle-brow magazine journalism would have a palliatory effect on his more conservative readers.

After the same manner Wilde, like Shaw, adopted and modified existing theatrical forms, a procedure which he seems to have brought to mastery by 1894 in The Importance of being Earnest. Again like Shaw, but on a smaller scale, he published in the course of the "apprenticeship" a number of theatrical reviews

reflecting the way in which he aspired to improve the state of theatrical art. This involvement with the theatre can be contrasted to the attitude of Swinburne, who made no concessions to the demands of public performance. Bothwell was acknowledged by its author to be unfitted for production, and between July and August of 1874, as the veteran Times critic John Oxenford struggled with the adaptation of the drama, Swinburne was obliged to accept a revision dependent not only upon exisions but on dividing the play into a series of tableaux, with the attenuation of such narrative continuity as he had devised.[5] In 1878 Frank Marshall, one of Irving's business managers and editor of The Henry Irving Shakespeare, wrote that "by the help of stern self-discipline" the poet might have found "the highest position among modern dramatists, but that he chose to produce a work which even Oxenford, who "combined the elegant culture of a great scholar with the strong common sense of a practical dramatist", could do nothing to fit the modern stage.[6] To temperamental disinclination was added, by the late eighteen-eighties, physical disability. In 1904 Watts-Dunton wrote to William Archer, declining on the poet's behalf an offer of theatre tickets, that deafness had "for years made it quite impossible for him to go to the theatre at all":

> Some years ago when our friend Beerbohm-Tree first produced The Merry Wives of Windsor [i.e. in 1889], I did in order to gratify Tree persuade the poet to accept a box with me. I regretted it, for the straining to listen brought on a painful singing in the ears which lasted for some days, and yet he did not hear a word.[7]

Swinburne's studies of Shakespeare and his contemporaries did not suffer any intrusions from "the strong common sense" of theatrical insight.

Most of Wilde's writing on Shakespeare arose from theatrical occasions. His first published criticism was an article on Irving's Hamlet in The Dramatic Review for May 9, 1885, and a general article, "Shakespeare on Scenery" had appeared in the same journal on March 14.[8] This was the germ of "The Truth of Masks" (Intentions, 1891), which was first printed as "Shakespeare on Stage Costume" in the May 1885 issue of The Nineteenth Century

(XVII.800-818). The Irving review was followed by reports in The Dramatic Review of the Oxford University Dramatic Society's Henry IV (23 May 1885), As You Like It at Coombe House (6 June 1885), Twelfth Night (another O.U.D.S. production; 20 February 1886), and some non-Shakespearean plays, The Cenci, Ellis's Olivia and Todhunter's Helena in Troas (15 May 1886, 30 May 1885 and 22 May 1886). A short story offering an explanation of problems in the Sonnets, "The Portrait of Mr W.H.", was published in the July 1889 issue of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (CXLVI. 1-21): it was reprinted in 1908 in Ross's edition of the works.

Meanwhile Wilde was pursuing his career as a dramatist. In 1880 he sent Ellen Terry a copy of Vera; or The Nihilists; in 1882 he began his attempts to persuade Mary Anderson to produce The Duchess of Padua, eventually staged in New York in 1891 under the title Guido Ferranti. In a letter to Mary Anderson he described at some length the felicities of the play and made suggestions regarding the scenery and the costumes for both of which he had "already made drawings":

> In the last act, the dungeon, about which I remember your talking to me, I have, I think, got rid of the depressing gloom of most such scenes: first by the gambling soldiers which will give a sort of "Salvator Rosa" effect: secondly by the invention of the two gratings which open into the corridor. One of these gratings is small, the other large (almost a sort of gate), so that when the procession enters of The Lord Justice in his scarlet, and the headsman with his axe, as they pass through the corridor, first, at the first grating, their heads and shoulders are alone seen, then at the second grating they are full three-quarter lengths: this will be new and effective: and the Duchess taking the torch from the wall to look at Guido asleep is a good piece of business.

Concerning a velvet curtain required in the third act, Wilde had changed his mind:

> ...the curtain is of vermilion silk: for three reasons. First, it catches the light better in a dark scene: secondly, it is difficult to get such a good colour in velvet as one can get in silk;thirdly, as the torches cannot be seen at the window, or at the sides, the curtain must be transparent as the light shining through it will be most effective: it will suddenly become a door of crimson fire![10]

Mary Anderson failed to take her opportunity, and by the time Lawrence Barrett opened in Guido Ferranti Wilde was at work on A Good Woman, the first draft of Lady Windermere's Fan. Although he still had hopes of seeing his "poetic tragedy" performed in London, and approached Irving with a view to its production at the Lyceum, his theatrical impulses were turning towards work of a different order.[11]

"Shakespeare on Scenery" represents Shakespeare as a man of the theatre possessing the same anxiety to supervise the artistic presentation of his work that Wilde had shown in his letter to Mary Anderson. The Elizabethan was "constantly protesting against the two special limitations of the sixteenth century stage, the lack os suitable scenery, and the fashion of men playing women's parts" (DR 14 March 1885). Wilde assumes that all theatrical art aspires towards illusion, and that any mention by Shakespeare of the presentational conventions of his stage constitutes evidence of a yearning for more accurately deceptive representation. As one might expect, the speeches of the Chorus in Henry V are taken to be expressions of dissatisfaction with an unrealistic convention, not the poetic exploitation of it. The "scene-setting speeches" are "inartistic devices" which "interrupt the progress of the play", and for which Shakespeare "always amply apologises". Wilde observes that "the quality of drama is action" and that "it is always dangerous to pause for picturesqueness". It is to contemporary production that Wilde devotes most of his one-page article, claiming that scene-painting can expedite matters by accomplishing this part of the poet's work for him, reducing the number of descriptive passages - he does not consider the possibility that descriptive verse can tell an audience things about the character of the person who utters them. Scenic art, he argues is an art in itself, and he concludes with an appeal for the recognition of scene-painters as artists. He regrets the new fashion for built-up scenic units, which need to be lit from both back and front, giving the lighting an overall flatness, and he laments the passing of the good trompe d'oeil painting:

> Properties kill perspective. A painted door is more like a real door than a real door is itself, for the properties of light and shade can be given to it...

This is a typical Wildean paradox, inverting the relationship between art and life, but it is based on some acquaintance with stage technique - the familiarity revealed in the letter to Mary Anderson.

The contention that Shakespeare was a practical dramatist is taken up in the long article "The Truth of Masks", which sets out to demonstrate the playwright's concern with costume and, by an extension of the argument, with archaeological accuracy in costume. In this it takes issue with a remark made by Lord Lytton, Bulwer Lytton's son, in his article "Miss Anderson's Juliet", a defence of Mary Anderson's Lyceum production published in The Nineteenth Century in December 1884. In a footnote Lytton had proclaimed:

> The attempt to archaeologise the Shakespearean drama is one of the stupidest pedantries of this age of prigs. Archaeology would not be more out of place in a fairy tale than it is in a play of Shakespeare. The first scene of the production is beautiful and animated, and that is all that is wanted.
>
> (XVI (1884) 879-900; p.886).[12]

Wilde replies that Shakespeare shows in the matter of dress on stage the informed taste associated with modern artists, and that

> there is absolutely no dramatist of the French, English or Athenian stage who relies so much for his illusionist effects on the dress of his actors as Shakespeare does himself.
>
> (Intentions, (1891) p.218).

The independence of the trammels of worldly considerations, which one might expect the publicised of Aestheticism to find in Shakespeare's artistic temperament, is located in the dramatist's use of 'masques and dances, purely for the sake of the pleasure which they give the eye". Archaeological expertise is subordinated to the production of those effects:

> Art, and art only, can make archaeology beautiful; and the theatric art can use it most directly and most vividly, for it can combine in one exquisite presentation the illusion of actual life with the wonder of the unreal world.
>
> (Intentions, p.235)

This is the paradoxical combination of historical precision and the "unreal world" which constituted the appeal of Alma-

Tadema's and Albert Moore's painting.

The essay documents the archaeological consciousness in some detail, but the reader is constantly reminded that historical data have a subordinate position in works of imagination:

> Truth is independent of facts always, inventing or selecting them at pleasure.
> (Intentions, p.242)

This liberty is extended to the modern theatre: after an admonition that "in mounting a play in the accurate costume of the time...we are carrying out Shakespeare's own wishes and method", Wilde offers a more radical justification of "pictorial" production. According to this,

> there is no more reason that we should continue any imperfections which may be supposed to have characterised Shakespeare's stage-mounting than that we should have Juliet played by a young man, or give up the advantage of changeable scenery, A great work of dramatic art should not merely be made expressive of modern passion by means of the actor, but should be presented to us in the form most suitable to the modern spirit.
> (Intentions, pp.245-6)

The critic moves back and forth from discussion of Shakespeare's theatre to the modern stage, by claiming that the two share illusionist aims. To the list of technicians required by Shakespeare - property - and wig-masters, make-up artists, fencing coach, dance instructor - Wilde adds "an artist to personally direct the whole production" (Intentions, p.225) In his closing pages he returns to this suggestion: the staging of plays calls for a strong sense of harmony and composition, for "as long as the background is painted by one artist, and the foreground figures independently by another, there is a danger of want of harmony in the scene as a picture". Each stage-picture should have its colour scheme "settled as absolutely as for the decoration of a room", and Wilde proceeds to a discussion of the relative usefulness of certain colour, advocating the judicious use of fading, "by which modern colours are often much improved". The need for supervision by one artist is again emphasized:

> Monarchy, Anarchy and Republicanism may contend for the government of nations; but a theatre should be in the power of a culture despot.

This autocrat "not merely should design and arrange everything but should have complete control over the way in which each dress is to be worn", and Wilde advocates dress rehearsals, so that the actors may see how dress and gesture are not merely fitted to but are controlled by and define character - "until an actor is at home in his dress, he is not at home in his part". (Intentions, pp.255-6).

It seems that Wilde's views on the subject were influenced by those of the architect and stage-designer, E.W.Godwin, whose series of articles "Archaeology on the Stage" had appeared in The Dramatic Review during February and March of 1885. These articles are discussed in Part Two, Chapter Two below, in connection with Godwin's theatrical career and influence: it appears that Wilde was not so much a plagiarist as an advocate of the other man's ideas. The detailed examination of Shakespeare's texts which underlies and supports "The truth of Masks" is a contribution to literary criticism of the dramatist in so far as it attempts to show readers something of the Elizabethan's attitude to his craft. It is arguable that it tells us more about Wilde's attitude to the theatre of his own time.

"The Portrait of Mr W.H." has comparitively little interest for the present study, but its basic hypothesis - that the female parts in the plays were written for the boy actor Willie Hughes, to whom the Sonnets are supposed to be addressed - is claimed by Wilde as indicative of "Shakespeare's conception of the true relations between the art of the actor and the art of the dramatist"[13]. That an author should create characters with a particular actor or actress in mind, being a common practice in the theatre of Wilde's time, would seem to reinforce the impression he seeks to give of Shakespeare as a practical dramatist.

iii. An actress and her rôles: Helen Faucit.

The first collected edition of On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters, by Helen Faucit, Lady Martin, appeared in 1885. The essays in the book were conceived as letters by the actress - more commonly known as Helen Faucit - to various correspondents, and were privately printed between 1880 and 1885: they also

appeared in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, of which her husband Sir Theodore Martin, was a director. The characters discussed in the first collection were Ophelia, Portia, Desdemona, Juliet, Imogen, Rosalind, and Beatrice; to the fourth edition (1891) an essay on Hermione was added, and references are to the pagination of this edition.[14]

In 1885 Helen Faucit was very much a legend. Her last London appearances, at Drury Lane in 1864, had reminded critics of Macready's acting, and of the manner in which that actor, in G.H.Lewes' phrase, "strove to introduce as much familiarity of detail as was consistent with ideal presentation"[15]. The accounts of her training and methods given by her essays and the biography written by her husband, suggest that she concerned herself from the first with elevated, literary plays. Her theatrical <u>debut</u> was a performance as Juliet at the Richmond Theatre in 1833, and she retired in 1879, when she played Rosalind in Manchester for the benefit of Charles Calvert's widow. In the course of her career and for the most part under Macready's management, she played Rosalind, Beatrice, Imogen, Hermione, Cordelia, Miranda, Constance, Lady Macbeth and Juliet and "created" characters by Lytton and Browning. Unlike Irving, who served a long apprenticeship in flashy, melodramatic pieces, she nothing common did or mean, and participated from the first in that dignity which Macready had striven to confer on his profession. The list of the recipients of her letters on Shakespeare showed readers that she was on an equal footing with worthies such as Browning and Ruskin, and the index of her biography ranges from Queen Victoria (the dedicatee), Dickens and Carlyle, to Henry Irving and Arthur Sullivan, whom she crowned, informally, with laurels in the course of a house-party at Edgbaston in 1873. Her least formal moments shared the elevated style of her performances.[16]

As one might expect, Helen Faucit's conception of the women she discusses bears considerable similarity to that found in Ruskin's <u>Sesame and Lilies</u> and Swinburne's <u>A Study of Shakespeare</u>: they are ideal characters, inspiring a combination of worship and pity. From childhood reading, the letter on Ophelia informs us, Helen Faucit was preoccupied by "the gorgeous, the wonderful, the grand, the heroic, the self-denying, the self-devoting" (p.5), and the whole of her career consisted of a

series of "efforts to interpret the heart and nature of woman, as drawn by our master-poets" (Juliet, p.97). This suggests a scheme similar to that of Anna Jameson's more systematic Characteristics of Women (1832 - a new edition appeared in 1879), wherein the plays furnish illustrations of "womanliness". In Mrs Jameson's work a generalised psychological theory lends the dramatic presentations of femininity considerable unity: in Helen Faucit, this unity is assimilated to the interpreter's own personality, and praise of the characters devolves on the writer herself.

Thus, at the beginning of the first of two letters on Juliet, she asserts that, in dealing with Desdemona, Portia and Ophelia, she spoke "as of beings outside, as it were, her own personality"-

> ...but Juliet seems inwoven with my life. Of all characters, here is the one which I have found the greatest difficulty, but also the greatest delight, in acting.

She had acted the part from the beginning of her career, but never "without finding fresh cause to wonder at the genius which created this child-woman, raised by love to heroism of the highest type" (p.85). Given that her intention was "to clothe - oh happy privilege! - with form and motion the greatest creations of poetical genius" (p.101), assertions that the roles are difficult become assertions that the actress rose to, or surpassed, the task. Acting becomes a process of adding illustration to the dramatist's words, and he becomes, by implication, a co-worker of Helen Faucit. The essays are filled, legitimately, with reminders of the interpreter's difficulties. In the first balcony scene of Romeo and Juliet, for example:

> As the whole scene is the noblest paean to Love ever written, so is what Juliet now says [II.2.85-106] supreme in sublety of feeling and expression, where all is beautiful. Watch all the fluctuations of emotion which pervade it, and you will understand what a task is laid upon the actress to interpret them, not in voice and tone only, important as these are, but also in manner and action. (p.119)

At times this approach leads the author into detailed and sensitive analyses of passages of the text, at times into paragraphs of self-satisfaction and self-congratulation. After observing that the performance of Rosalind allowed her to give "full expression" to what was best in herself, as well as in her art, she continues:

> It was surely a strange perversion which, we read, assigned Rosalind, as at one time it had assigned Portia, to actresses whose strength lay only in comedy. Even the joyous, boyant side of her nature could hardly have justice done to it in their hands; for that is so inextricably mingled with deep womanly tenderness, with an active intellect disciplined with fine culture, as well as tempered by a certain native distinction, that a mere comedian could not give the true tone and colouring even to her playfulness and wit. (p.236)

The implication that Helen Faucit possessed all these gifts is clear.

In her accounts of performance Helen Faucit often claims that her degree of identification with the character was so great as to move not only the audience but fellow-actors and the actress herself: best-known among such passages is that describing her playing Hermione to Macready's Leontes, but similar reminders of her involvement with the heroines are found throughout the book. Thus, among general reflections on the art of acting, towards the end of the letter on Beatrice, the author argues against the taking of calls during the performance of a play:

> It was ever my desire to forget my audience. Little did they, who only meant kindness, know how much they took from my power of working out my conceptions when they forced me in this way out of my dream-world. (p.332-3)

Realistic staging was another obstacle to the working out of the conception - an "ideal" theatre was preferable to a realistic one. She does not go so far as to propose a return to the techniques of Elizabethan staging, but prefers scenery to be kept in its place:

> ...oh how refreshing it is to have your thoughts centred upon such human beings as Shakespeare drew, each phase of their characters unfolding

> before you, with all their joys, their woes, their affections, sufferings, passions, instead of the immoveable upholstery and painted simulations of reality in which the modern fashion takes delight!
> (Imogen', p.166)

already knew the value of illusion, but kept it appropriately subordinate to "the dramatic interest" ('Beatrice', p.334). In her appreciation of painting is found comparable desire to allow the dream world full freedom: a diary entry, for January 16, 1883, describes a visit to the Burlington Gallery. There she admired "some of the old masters", together with works by Rossetti and Linnell, a mid-century Academician specialising in domestic and rural scenes. Of these, the old masters satisfied best:

> Is it the harmony, with a certain retiring reticence about them, - the feeling that they are not pushing before you all they could, - a self-respecting reserve, so that the fancy can play over them?[17]

The essays make a greater contribution to the literature of the theatre, than to Shakespeare criticism. The heroines are discussed according to the warmth of the sympathy they evoke, all of them are innocent, chaste, beautiful and dignified, and all bear suffering with fortitude. Beatrice, Rosalind and Juliet undergo some sort of maturing process - witness Beatrice before the events of the play:

> Up to this time there had been no call upon the deeper and finer qualities of her nature. The sacred fountain of tears has never been stirred within her. To pain of heart she has been a stranger. She has not learned tenderness or toleration under the discipline of suffering or disappointment, of unsatisfied yearning or failure.
> (p.296).

The "sacred fountain of tears" is a revealing phrase, and it seems that the author has always harboured an affection for Rosalind made so much stronger by her having begun to suffer earlier in life than most other heroines - an Elizabethan Eugenie Grandet, but luckier in her choice of saviour. Helen Faucit does not draw up a league table of Shakespeare's women: they all seem much the same as one another. All are felt to be in some way above their surroundings, too good, in fact, for earthly life. They are objects of worship - as Ophelia possessed

for Hamlet "that subtle charm which the deep, philosophical intellect must ever find in the pure unconscious innocence and wisdom of a guileless heart" (p.9). The actress enjoyed a similar ascendancy in the eyes of "deep, philosophical" contemporaries; after encounter with Carlyle at the home of James Anthony Froude in 1873, she wrote in her diary:

> ...he referred in glowing terms to my Desdemona. Amid much else, he said he had never felt the play so deeply before. One phrase especially struck me - "It quite hurt me to see the fair, delicate creature so brutally used". Would that I could give an idea of his tone and accent, gentle and tremulous, as if a suffering, living creature was there before him![18]

The heroine stands remote from the audience and the other dramatic characters, moving both to feelings of admiration, and, more often, than not, pity.

William Archer reviewed the first edition of On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters in The Theatre, under the title "Ophelia and Portia: A Fable for Critics" (n.s.VI (July 1885) 17-27). He suggested that an actor could only show one side of a role at once, working by selection rather than by comparitive analysis of the rationalist critic - such essays as these had "charm and a certain interest, but at best could contribute very little towards a rational solution of critical problems" (p.18) Although Helen Faucit's work had little to offer Archer, it did exhibit a sensitive artistic temperament whose reflections, if a little old-fashioned, had some affinity with the egocentricity of Aestheticism. The corporate identity of Shakespeare's heroines was by no means a forgotten issue, and the continuing existence of actor and actress-centred theatre helped to perpetuate it. Its appeal to surviving elements of romanticism in the fashionable sensibility was evident. To this Wilde's sonnets to Ellen Terry in Poems (1881) bear witness, as does Dorian Gray's appreciation of Sybil Vane:

> Night after night I go to see her play. One evening she is Rosalind, and the next evening she is Imogen. I have seen her die in the gloom of an Italian tomb, sucking the poison from her lover's lips. I have watched her wandering through the forest of Arden... I have seen her in every age and costume. Ordinary women never appeal to one's imagination. They are limited to their century... But an actress! How different an actress is! Harry! Why didn't you tell me that the only thing worth loving is an actress?[19]

iv. Walter Pater.

Pater published three essays on Shakespearean subjects, bringing them together in 1889, in the volume of Appreciations. The first to appear was "A Fragment on Measure for Measure" in The Fortnightly Review for November 1874. In 1885 "Love's Labour's Lost" (sic) was printed in the December issue of Macmillan's Magazine, and in April 1889 "Shakespeare's English Kings" appeared in Scribner's Magazine. In all three Pater adopted the spelling of the dramatist's name proposed by the New Shakespere Society. In Appreciations the essays were dated 1874, 1878 and 1889, but the order of the two earlier ones was reversed, that on Love's Labour's Lost preceding "A Fragment on Measure for Measure". In the pages which follow the essays are quoted in the text of their first appearance.

The dominant theme in the first of the essays is that of the creative artist's attitude and powers - the process of composition is described in terms suggesting painting and botany (a science beloved of Pre-Raphaelite painters):

> Whetstone himself turned the thing into a tale... a genuine piece, with touches of undesigned poetry, a genuine field-flower here and there of diction or sentiment, the whole strung up to an effective brevity, and with the fr grance of that admirable age of literature about it.
>
> (The Fortnightly Review. XXII (1874) 652-8; p.653)

Shakespeare then appears as a combined architect and painter:

> Here then there is something of the original Italian colour: in this narrative Shakespere may well have caught the first glimpse of a composition with nobler proportions; and some artless sketch from his own hand perhaps, putting together his first impressions, may have insinuated itself between Whetstone's work and the play as we actually read it. Out of these insignificant sources Shakespere's play arises, full of solemn expression, and in a profoundly designed beauty, the new body of a higher, though sometimes remote and difficult poetry, escaping from the imperfect relics of the old story, yet not wholly transformed, and even as it stands the preparation only, we might think, of a still more imposing design.
>
> (p.653)

There is a hint of the magus about this Shakespeare, whose play "rises" as though conjured up rather than constructed, and this

god-like power is reflected in the dramatist's moral stance. Shakespeare views his characters with a degree of detachment, and

> brings before us a group of persons, attractive, full of desire, vessels of the genial, seed-bearing powers of nature, a gaudy life flowering out over the old court and city of Vienna, a spectacle of the fulness and pride of life which to some may seem to touch on the verge of wantonness. Behind this group of people, behind their various action, Shakespere inspires in us the sense of a strong tyranny of Nature and circumstance.
>
> (p.653)

Consequently, the characters are not divided simply into good and wicked:

> The slightest... is at least not ill-natured: the meanest can put forth a plea for existence...

This lends the play a "vivid reality" and "subtle interchange of light and shade" which leads Pater to compare the shadow of Death on each character with the effect of Orcagna's fresco at Pisa:

> The little mirror of existence, which reflects to each for a moment the stage on which he plays, is broken at last by a capricious accident; while all alike, in their yearning for untasted enjoyment, are really discounting their days, grasping so hastily and accepting so inexactly the precious pieces.
>
> (p.654)

Pater finds the figure of Barnardine particularly touching, and praises Shakespeare's sensitivity in placing in the mouth of "a gilded witless youth" words "which seem to exhaust man's deepest sentiment concerning death and life" (p.657).

The importance of death to the sensitive mind is a subject treated in many of Pater's essays. In the Conclusion to the first edition of The Renaissance, published in 1873, the promise of death lies behind one of the author's most famous pronouncements:

> Well! we are all condamné, as Victor Hugo says: we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve - les hommes sont tous condamnés à mort avec des sursis indéfinis: we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among the "children of the world" in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. 20

This view is re-examined by the author in Marius the Epicurean, published in 1885: in chapter sixteen Marius ponders what may be salvaged from the "Cyrenaic" attitudes he had adopted. Some similarities exist between the "old morality" and "Cyrenaicism":

> In the gravity of its conception of life, in its pursuit after nothing less than a perfection, in its apprehension of the value of time - la passion et le serieux qui consacrent - it may be conceived, as regards its main drift, to be not so much opposed to the old morality, as an exaggeration of one special motive of it.

Claudio is cited as an example of a man who, while ambitious to enjoy the most pleasurable sensations life can yield, feels "an inward need of something permanent in its character, to hold by": Pater calls him "the brilliant Claudio" in Marius[21], and in his essay on the play claims for him "thoughts as profound and poetical as Hamlet's".

Shakespeare's attitudes towards the characters of his play coincides with Pater's ideal of sensitive justice:

> this finer justice, a justice based on a more delicate appreciation of the true conditions of men and things, a true respect of persons in our estimate of actions.

It is for this that "the people in Measure for Measure cry out as they pass before us" (p.658). Shakespeare's judgements are those of an observer.

> ...of one who sits as a spectator, and knows how the threads in the design before him hold together under the surface: they are the judgements of the humorist also, who follows with a half-amused but always pitiful sympathy, the various ways of human disposition, and sees less distance than ordinary men between what are called respectively great and little things.

Pater's work is full of such figures - in the Imaginary Portraits, collected in 1887, in The Renaissance and in Marius the Epicurean, where Flavian (fictional author of the Pervigilium Veneris), Marcus Aurelius, Apuleus, Fronto and the hero are variations on a theme. Of many examples, that of Botticelli may suffice: the painter, we are told,

> sets for himself the limits within which art, undisturbed by any moral ambition, does its most sincere and surest work. His interest is neither in the untempered goodness of Angelico's saints,

> nor in the untempered evil of Orcagna's Inferno; but with men and women, in their mixed and uncertain condition, always attractive, clothed sometimes by passion with a character of loveliness and energy, but saddened perpetually by the shadow upon them of the great things from which they shrink. His morality is all sympathy, conveying into his work more than is usual of the true complexion of humanity, which makes him, visionary as he is, so forcible a realist.[22]

Pater only advocates a withdrawal from life by the artist, in so far as he regards detachment a part of the process by which life may be described.

The next piece on Shakespeare finds in Love's Labour's Lost a similar ambivalence - the dramatist has succeeded in bringing " a serious effect out of the trifling of his characters";

> A dainty love-making is interchanged with the more cumbrous play; below the many artifices of Biron's amorous speeches we may trace sometimes the "unutterable longing"; and the lines in which Katherine describes the blighting through love of her younger sister are one of the most touching things in older literature.
>
> (Macmillan's Magazine. LIII (1885) 89-91; p.89).

Pater focuses attention on Biron, as a figure alternately the instrument and butt of satire:

> In this character, which is never quite in touch with, never quite on a level of understanding, with the other persons of the play, we see, perhaps, a reflex of Shakespere himself, just become able to stand aside from and estimate the first period of his poetry. (p.91)

He is compared with Mercutio and similar figures who "resemble those works of art which, though not meant to be very great or imposing, are yet wrought of the choicest material". Pater does not develop the discussion of Biron, but in Marius the Epicurean we find a similar detachment in the hero's attitude towards the "golden youth of Rome":

> In spite of, perhaps partly because of, his habitual reserve of manner, he had become "the fashion", even among those who felt instinctively the irony which lay beneath that remarkable self-possession, as of one taking things with a difference from other people, perceptible in voice, in expression, and even in dress.[23]

This description might be of the author himself - it certainly forms part of an ideal persona, and in the course of the book, as Marius eventually becomes a Christian, it is only a short step from Biron (or Marius, or Pater) to Christ. Again a detached world view brings its rewards, in a newly spiritualised apology for the pursuit of aesthetic pleasure:

> Some transforming spirit was at work to harmonise contrasts, to deepen expression - a spirit which in its dealing with the elements of ancient life, was guided by a wonderful tact of selection, exclusion, juxtaposition, begetting thereby a unique effect of freshness, a grave yet wholesome beauty, because the world of sense, the whole outward world was understood to set forth the veritable unction and royalty of the soul within, among the prerogatives of which was a delightful sense of freedom.[24]

After the publication of Marius the Epicurean, with its reviewed and moral individualism, Pater felt himself able to restore to The Renaissance the Conclusion omitted in 1877 for fear of imputations of advocating hedonism.

In the essay on Measure for Measure Pater treats Shakespeare not only as an impartial creator but as an artist working in a visual medium. Love's Labour's Lost possesses "not so much the unity of a drama as that of a series of pictorial groups, in which the same figures appear, in different combinations but on the same background" - Pater compares the play to an ancient tapestry, in which the figures have been given voices (p.89). This kind of unity - "not so much the unity of a drama" - is the unity Pater seems to have striven for in his own work: Marius the Epicurean is not so much a novel as a series of scenes, Imaginary Portraits with a fully detailed background, men and women seen not in action but in repose. The artists Pater admired were praised in so far as they achieved such effects. In "The School of Georgione", published in 1877 and reprinted posthumously in Miscellaneous Studies (1895), the critic attempted to define the quality which Vasari had called il fuoco Giorgionesco:

> Now it is part of the ideality of the highest sort of dramatic poetry, that it presents us with a kind of profoundly significant and animated instant, a mere gesture, a look, a smile, perhaps - some brief and wholly concrete moment -

> into which however, all the motives, all the interests and effects of a long history have condensed themselves, and which seem to absorb the past and future in an intense consciousness of the present.[25]

Pater associates the ability to achieve such poignant effects with the artist's aesthetic detachment - with the unconventionally wistful madonnas of Botticelli and Bellini, or the "cold light" of the Primavera and the Birth of Venus. In the treatment of Watteau in Imaginary Portraits we find some hints as to the probable behaviour of such a painter. The narrator is a young woman of Valenciennes, who senses the artist's detachment as it affects his acquaintances and relations. Watteau takes a party of friends for a picnic in the country in order to paint the scene, and engages a wandering lutanist as part of the composition. The young woman describes his paintings:

> ...as I gaze upon those windless afternoons, I find myself always saying to myself involuntarily, "The evening will be a wet one". The storm is always brooding through the massy splendour of the trees, above those sun-dried glades and lawns, where deliacte children may be trusted thinly clad; and the secular trees themselves will hardly outlast another generation.[26]

Pater often attempted this kind of effect - near the end of Marius the Epicurean the hero revisits his childhood home in the Campagna. Arriving at the villa he has an old servant open the family tomb:

> ... the great seals were broken, the rusty key turned at last in the lock, the door was forced out among the weeds grown thickly about it, and Marius was actually in the place which had been so often in his thoughts.
> He was struck, not however without a touch of remorse thereupon, chiefly by an odd air of neglect, the neglect of a place allowed to remain as it was when it was last used, and left in a hurry, till long years had covered all alike with thick dust - the faded flowers, the burnt-out lamps, the tools and hardened mortar of the workmen who had something to do here. A heavy fragment of wood-work had fallen and chipped open one of the oldest of the mortuary urns, many hundreds in number ranged around the walls.[27]

The ennumeration of detail is reminiscent of Tennyson's Mariana:

in Measure for Measure Pater admired the episode of Mariana, with its glimpses of "pleasant places - the field without the town, Angelo's garden house, the consecrated fountain".

This appreciation of poignancy combines the passage of time, the fragility of life, the approach of death or rain, and a saddened toleration in dealing with human affairs. In "Shakespere's English Kings" Pater refuses to treat the monarchs as text-book examples of heroism or wickedness, and allows the audience to be caual in their interest as the characters are human in their fault and virtues:

> It is no Henriade Shakespere writes, and no history of the English people, but the sad fortunes of some English kings as conspicuous examples of the ordinary human condition. As in a children's story, all princes are in extremes. Delightful in the sunshine above the wall into which chance lifts the flower for a season, they can but plead somewhat more touchingly than others their everyday weakness in the storm. Such is the motive that gives unity to these unequal and intermittent contributions toward a slowly evolved romantic chronicle, which it would have taken many days to rehearse; a not distant story from real life still well remembered in its general course, to which people might listen now and then as long as they cared, finding human nature at least wherever their attention struck ground in it.
> (Scribner's V (1889) 506-512; p.506)

Again, unity is treated as a matter of mood, rather than of narrative organisation, and Pater makes it clear in a footnote that he is not interested in the attribution of the early plays, but seeks "to trace the leading sentiment" - in a similar manner, he had not bothered with the considerable difficulties of attribution that complicates the study of Giorgione.

The "leading sentiment" is the benignly suspended judgement of the artistic temperament. King John, who despite his faults had "something of heroic force about him" is allowed by Shakespeare to die in a beautiful orchard; La Pucelle is "the one person of genius in these English plays"; Bolingbroke, as Henry IV, is remarkable for his weariness -

> ...still true to his leading motive, Shakespere ...has left the high water mark of his poetry in the soliloquy which represents royalty longing only for the toiler's sleep.
> (p.507)

Henry V exhibits a contrast between "the popularity, the showy heroism" of the king, and the material preoccupations of humanity - there is a poignancy in the isolation of the monarch which appeals to Pater, and he finds it even in Richard of Gloucester:

> ...touched, like John, with an effect of real heroism,...spoiled like him by something of criminal madness, Richard reaches his highest level of tragic expression when cinrcumstances reduce him to the terms of mere human nature... (p.508)

Pater reserves most of his space for Richard II, who emerges as a gently cynical aesthete, not unlike Biron, except in so far as his detachment is the source of tragedy. His eloquence never forsakes him and becomes, "like any other of those fantastic ineffectual easily discredited, personal graces, as capricious in its operation on men's wills as more physical beauty". Richard is a sensitive outsider, able to move the philistines who victimise him by "an eloquent self-pity, infecting others in spite of themselves, till they too become irresistibly eloquent about him" (p.510). He has "an extraordinary refinement of intelligance and variety of piteous appeal" and "facility of poetic invention" which places him in a class with Keats and Chatterton - whose best work is "vermeil and ivory". The examples chosen by Pater to show the character's and the play's, poetic power are illustrative of a process by which "the grandiose aspects of war" are set against its evil and unsightly consequences. We are reminded that the countryside is described as pale ("That pale, that white fac'd shore", and "her mild-pale peace") and green ("The fresh green lap of fair King Richard's land") and peaceful. Richard's nature is, according to Pater, correlated with "the delicate sweetness of the English field, still sweet and fresh, like London and her other fair towns in that England of Chaucer" (p.508). This comparison may not have been present in Shakespeare's mind, and Pater does not produce evidence that he conceived of Richard II's England as being different from that of Elizabeth. Indeed, as Pater wrote he may have had in mind William Morris's comparison of Ricardian and Victorian London:

> Forget six counties overhung with smoke,
> Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke,
> Forget the spreading of the hideous town;
> Think rather of the pack-horse on the down,
> And dream of London, small and white, and clean,
> The clear Thames bordered by its gardens green;...

In Morris's London Chaucer is at work:

> ...nigh the thronged wharf Geoffrey Chaucer's pen
> Moves over bills of lading...[28]

This picture seems to have influenced Pater's description of Auxerre in "Denys L'Auxerrois", where the river Yonne,

> has all the lightsome characteristics of French river-side scenery on a smaller scale than usual, and might pass for the child's fancy of a river, like the rivers of old miniature-painters, blue and full to a fair green margin.[29]

Pater's Shakespeare, it appears, had anticipated Morris.

The poet William Watson, reviewing Appreciations in The Academy discerned a quality of humility in Pater's method:

> by virtue of this very humility and apparent self-repression he attains to something like kinship and equality with the masters whom it is his ambition simply to understand and report.
>
> (21 December 1889)

To one modern critic, it appears that Pater's "real gift" is for "the discernment of the delicate nuance rather than of power" - he deals on a small scale with works conceived on a small scale and "is more successful in dealing with Luca della Robbia than with Michelangelo"[30].

Pater's selection of three relatively unpopular plays in order to characterise Shakespeare is significant - it reflects the paradox of his humility: he writes about the qualities in artists that he aspires to in his own work. This egocentricity is something Pater acknowledged and welcomed in the study of past ages. In Marius the Epicurean the past is seen to be interesting not in itself but in so far as it contributed to a continual process which includes present and future - an abstract value going beyond archaeology:

> The fragments of older architecture, the mosaics, the spiral columns, the precious corner-stones of immemorial building, had now on, by such juxtaposition with a new creed, a new and singular expressiveness,

> an air of grave thought, of an intellectual purpose, in itself, aesthetically, very pleasing.[31]

This awareness of transience, rather than permanence, has been traced from Keats to Rossetti, who "with only a slight darkening of his mood... may become more aware of the moment's passing than its permanence" [32]. The figures in Keats' urn and in Pater's Imaginary Portraits have considerable similarities, but whereas Keats'figures seem unafraid, unconscious of the passage of time and frozen in moments of pleasure and anticipation, Pater's characters are acutely aware of change and loss - they have a sense of their own poignancy. In Keats this sense is confined to the observer, but in Pater author and creation share one personality, one consciousness; as Duke Carl of Rosenmold recognises:

> Surely past ages, could one get at the historic soul of them, were not dead, but living, rich in company, for the entertainment, the expansion, of the present: and Duke Carl was still without suspicion of the cynic after thought that such historic soul was but an arbitrary substitution, a generous loan of one's self.[33]

In Oscar Wilde's review of Appreciations it was claimed that "It is only about things that do not interest one, that one gives a really unbiased opinion; and this is no doubt the reason why an unbiased opinion is always absolutely valueless"[34] The style is less subtle than Pater's, but the idea is not wholly unfaithful to his critical approach. His humility was paradoxically egotistic, his advocacy and admiration of impartial moral judgement a curious companion for the evident partiality of his choice of subjects. This kind of receptive, passive intellect proposed by Pater is in many respects analogous to that canvassed by Wilde in "L'Envoi". Pater becomes what he studies in a manner that reflects the glory of his subjects upon himself, and the process is not unlike that by which Swinburne, Wilde and Helen Faucit assimilate Shakespeare to their own personality.

.....

The first volume of the New Shakespere Society's Transactions, published in 1874, included a copy of the Society's prospectus:

> Dramatic poet though Shakespere is, bound to lose himself in his wondrous and manifold creations; taciturn "as the secrets of Nature" though he be; yet in this Victorian time, when our geniuses of Science are so wresting her secrets from Nature as to make our days memorable for ever, the faithful student of Shakespere need not fear that he will be unable to pierce through the crowds of forms that exhibit Shakespere's mind, to the mind itself, the man himself, and see him as he was; while in the effort, in the enjoyment of his new gain, the worker will find his own reward.[35]

The scientific optimism of the Society is scarcely reflected in the English criticism surveyed in this chapter: Pater's impartial Shakespeare partakes of that Negative Capability which Keats described, and which sorted ill with Furnivall's preoccupations -

> ...I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.[36]

Pater modifies the quality and Wilde accepts it implicitly- going so far as to quote Keats without acknowledgement in "The Truth of Masks" - whilst Swinburne glories in uncertainties, pausing occasionally to attack the scientists.[37] Helen Faucit does not concern herself with such matters, but takes up the romantic actress's posture before the shrine of the national Poet.

In 1889 John Addington Symonds's "Comparison of Elizabethan with Victorian Poetry" was published in The Fortnightly Review. Symonds sees the sixteenth century as an age of optimism and happy eclecticism - the Continental Renaissance had accomplished "the hard work of assimilating the humanities" and the English "had only to survey and enjoy, to feel and to express, to lay themselves open to delightful influences, to con the noble lessons of the past, to thrill beneath the beauty and the awe of an authentic revelation" (XLV (1889) 55-79; p.57). Thus the Elisabethans, described as passive cognoscenti are made devotees of art for its own sake:

> Our first question with regard to an Elizabethan is: what grasp and grip does he possess upon the common stuff of art? Our first question with regard to a Victorian is: how does the man envisage things, from what point of view does he start, by what scientific spirit is he controlled? (p.79)

Whilst Wilde accomodated Shakespeare to his own ideas by setting him firmly among "the common stuff of art", and Pater described him as a dramatist who was not so much irresponsible as impartial, both owed something to Arnold's vision of a sage who keeps his freedom while others abide our question - withholding not only moral commitment but biographical information. But the stage had to accomodate Shakespeare according to its own special limitations and licences. It partook of the painter's skill, and, in a time when painting was liable to censure if it dealt excessively in anecdote and "meaning", the pictorial representation of a play was an artistically hazardous business. Rival theories of graphic and plastic art, as well as of literary and dramatic skill, would be called into question. Wilde, in The Critic as Artist, wrote slightingly of illustrative painting, which, he argued, did not "stir the imagination", but "set bound to it":

> The painter is so far limited that it is only through the mask of the body that he can show us the mystery of the soul; only through conventional images that he can handle ideas; only through its physical equivalents that he can handle psychology. And how inadequately does he do it then, asking us to accept the torn turban of the Moor for the noble rage of Othello; or a dotard in a storm for the wild madness of Lear![38]

It is no great distance from such a view of painting, to the Romantic impatience with the stage, and Lear revealed as an old man in a nightshirt - perhaps the older criticism was in Wilde's mind.[39] When painting was being freed from narrative, was it reasonable to join the two in theatrical performances?

Chapter Three

THEATRICAL WRITING AND PRODUCTION.

It has been suggested that one of the leading topics of art-criticism in the eighteen-eighties was the relationship between "literary" and more abstract values, and that a further problem, arising from the first, was that of "finish" - the importance and nature of detail in painting. In this chapter it is proposed to examine the similar debate in theatrical criticism of the period - a debate as to the relative importance of literary and pictorial values in stage plays and their presentation.

The prevailing mood amongst literary men was pessimistic - A.W.Ward's article on Drama in the ninth edition of The Encyclopedia Britannica is representative:

> The history of the English stage in the present century has been one of gradual decline and decay, not (especially at the present day) without prospects of recovery, of which a praiseworthy hopefulness is ever willing to make the most.[1]

Against this must be set the "praiseworthy hopefulness" of some individuals, notably Henry Irving, whose public pronouncements represent the contempoary stage as an achievement of Victorian democracy:

> The genuine spread of education, the increased community of taste between classes, and the almost absolute divorce of the stage from mere wealth and aristocracy... It is now the property of educated people. It has to satisfy them or pine in neglect.[2]

This is a manager's optimism - indeed an actor's optimism - and it was through such managers that the author had to reach his public. Various alternatives were sought to the conditions of the fashionable, commercial theatre, but in the chapters that follow it is the work of the reformists that is examined, rather than that of the revolutionists.

i. The author and the theatre.

In one respect the author's lot had improved since the middle of the century: he was better paid. George Augustus Sala and his brother Charles, dissatisfied with their position under Charles Kean's management of the Princess's, took their services

- and their version of The Corsican Brothers - to the Surrey Theatre, where Creswick and Shepherd offered them twenty-five shillings a night in royalties: "a sum considered in those days to be prodigious for an author's rights at a minor theatre". This was in the eighteen-fifties. Boucicault, retained as author at the Princess's, was receiving in the early eighteen-fifties a salary not exceeding fifteen pounds a week and "the deprivation of authorial rights".[3] Edmund Yates quotes in his memoirs a letter from J. B.Buckstone to a manager claiming seventy pounds for a three-act play, "such sum securing to you the sole acting right for ever in London, and to you alone for one year, or, say to the first October following its production": this was for The Rake, produced at the Adelphi in 1833.[4] In the eighteen-sixties Robertson was paid "at the rate of five pounds for each performance of his comedies" - Squire Bancroft remembered that "in earlier days" the author had "been content with a single payment of fifty pounds an act": this was "a powerful contrast to the percentage demanded by modern dramatists."[5]

To emphasize the difference between the conditions in the eighteen-eighties and the mid-century, Yates cited the example of an anonymous friend engaged in the composition of popular melodramas: he had examined

> a return of fees which he has received for one piece alone which at the time of writing are within £150 of a total of ten thousand pounds, and which are still rolling in at the rate of £100 a week.

This did not include £800 in American royalties and an estimated £3000 from the English provinces. Considering the prodigious output of some authors - especially melodramatists such as George Sims, Paul Merritt and Henry Pettitt, and comic authors like Burnand and Byron - it is not surprising to read of immense sums earned by playwrights. Sims, according to Arnold Bennett's journal, was earning "certainly over £15,000" a year by 1898: his tax assessment, generous by modern standards, was £5,000.[7] In the eighteen-eighties an "average medical man in London" might expect to earn between one and two thousand pounds, whilst a successful specialist could be one for anything from five to twelve thousand. A journalist, "not being the editor of a journal,"

would earn "not more than £1,500 or at the most £2,000 a year": about half the salary of a barrister or a doctor.[7] It should be remembered that many dramatists were also members of a profession - Gilbert was a barrister, for example, and Burnand was editor of Punch.

The dramatist's work could bring considerable material rewards, but it was at the same time subject to conditions. In a letter to The Times in 1888 Gilbert drew attention to the resposibilities of a theatrical manager, whose duty it was

> ... to keep an audience entertained from half-past 7 to 11, with carefully-written and elaborately-constructed stage plays (represented by actors, who, in many cases, must be provided with opportunities for the display of their special abilities) and probably involving at least three changes of scene, which must of necessity be effected within the regulation 15 minutes of entr'acte.
> (The Times, 2 May 1888)

The entertainment required by managers differed from theatre to theatre: at its lowest level it can befound in the plays presented by Augustus Harris at Drury Lane. Harris, enthusing in a magazine article over the democratic nature and didactic effectiveness of the Drury Lane melodramas, enumerated the qualities expected by an average Drury Lane audience:

> They demand a performance which must be, above all things, dramatic, full of life, novelty, and movement; treating, as a rule, of the age in which we live, dealing with characters they can sympathise with, and written in a language they can easily understand. It must be well-mounted, well-acted, and should appeal rather to the feelings of the public at large than to the prejudice of a class.[8]

It was by the successful meeting of these demands that Harris earned Bernard Shaw's contempt - "Quite the most entertaining memorial of him would be the publication of his accounts"[9].

The crudeness of the plays produced for such an audience was a cause of much discontent among responsible critics. Taking as an example the opinions of the reviewer employed by Vanity Fair, a fashionable and not over-solemn weekly, we find that in 1882 the playgoer was offered three successive kinds of melodrama. In January was the premiere of Henry Pettitt's Taken from Life

at the Adelphi - it had a simplicity which the critic could accept:

> This theatre is the real cradle of this kind of amusement, and Mr Pettitt has rushed boldly and bravely at his work. To fine writing or delicacy of phrasing he has made no pretence, but he slashes his sentiments and high-flown dialogue about right fearlessly.
> (7 January 1882)

This the critic can enjoy, but in August Drury Lane presented Pluck; a Story of £50,000 by Augustus Harris and Henry Pettitt:

> Nothing that mechanist's or scene-painter's art can manage has been unattempted; the supper of horrors (in seven courses) is full and complete. But what of the play and the characters? Do they interest? Are they real? Not a bit of it. In the mad hunger after "effect" the authors...have crushed all semblance of humanity out of their puppets.
> (12 August 1882)

The incidents of Pluck include a double train crash, an interrupted wedding-breakfast (with the arrest of the bridegroom), the installation of the corpse of a murdered banker in a Chatwood safe and the appearance of all the characters (with exception of the banker) outside the Criterion Restaurant during a snowstorm. During the same snowstorm a long-lost child is encountered by its father in the middle of Piccadilly Circus at dead of night. The villain dies with no little éclat during a fire which destroys a three-storey slum. George Augustus Sala, in The Illustrated London News, found the play little more than a succession of sensation scenes, and thought that the public must by now be weary of such exhibitions - he adduced the cool first-night reception in support of this. (12 August 1882). "What next?" asked Vanity Fair, "Shall we dramatise the deluge or the Apocalypse?".

As if in answer to this cry of unhappy reviewers, The Silver King was produced by Wilson Barrett at the Princess's in November. This dramatised neither Deluge not Apocalypse and was frankly loyal to its melodramatic origins: its plot deals with the wrongful conviction and dispossession of the hero, his escape from the law, and his eventual return to material and spiritual well-being. The play uses "stock" characters - Jeikes, a faithful old servant, Nelly Denver, the

hero's faithful wife, and Geoffrey Ware, a subsidiary villain killed at the end of the first act. Motivations are simple and strongly expressed - in Ware's case an early rivalry for Nelly's hand is made sufficient reason for a lifetime's hatred of the hero. Apart from some novelty of plot, especially in the hero's prolonged and nearly catastrophic loss of memory, The Silver King has the lines of an old-fashioned melodrama: it was considered to be a simple inversion of East Lynne.[10]

The appeal of the play lay in its avoidance of Drury Lane excesses. Vanity Fair exulted:

> The authors ...have by no means fought shy of the startling or the shudder-producing business; but the desired effect is produced by excellently - contrived situations, rapid, concentrated dialogue, and good acting - not by fire, noise, or smoke.
> (25 November 1882)

In The Illustrated London News Clement Scott, who had taken over dramatic notices from Sala, wrote:

> There is a rift in the clouds, a break of blue in the dramatic heavens, and it seems as if we were sic fairly at the end of the unlovely.
> (25 November 1882)

A critic, possibly Scott, in The Theatre congratulated Barrett on the literary qualities of the play:

> The tone of The Silver King is pitched in a much higher key than the ordinary melodramas of the day, and, in truth, it must not be confounded with the sensational panoramas which nowadays so often pass for plays. The dialogue of the play is throughout clever and witty, and much of the language is lofty and poetic...

The author concluded - in terms typical of Clement Scott's criticism - by pronluncing The Silver King "thoroughly honest in purpose, dramatic, pathetic, full of human nature, and, withal, an original drama of English life, and sentiment, and feeling". (The Theatre.n.s.VI (1882) 357-360). The dialogue was praised by Matthew Arnold in The Pall Mall Gazette.

> ...in general throughout the piece the diction and sentiments are natural, they have sobriety and propriety, they are literature.
> (6 December 1882)[11]

This w s "an excellent and hopeful sign".

The dialogue does not seem quite as fresh as it may have

in 1882, but with the exception of a few passages - notably the hero's description of a dream in II,2 - it is unpretentious and life-like. The villainous "Spider" has some lines which anticipate the manner of Shavian dialogue: at the beginning of the third act the villain and his wife are in the parlour of their villa at Bromley. The wife, looking out of the window at the thickly-falling snow, suggests that "The Spider" is being needlessly cruel in evicting a poor widow and her family from a cottage he owns. This does not seem to be intended as a comic situation - Bromley would suggest the affluence of a man able to live in the countryside of Kent, and not the suburban dullness which the name now ~~in~~evokes. The villain's reasons for proceeding with his cruelty have the cynical humour we associate with Andrew Undershaft or Alfred Doolittle: he is determined not to have poor people cluttering his grounds -

> ...It's no fault in England to be poor. It's a crime. That's the reason I'm rich.
> 12

The part was played by the much-admired melodramatic actor, E.S.Willard, and, according to The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, would have been hissed in the customary manner, "but that the audience feared to lose one line of his, much as they disapproved of his morals and sentiments." (25 Nov 1882)

The success of The Silver King was due to its enlivening of a dying genre - it was felt that melodrama, whilst relying upon certain simplifications and extravagances of writing and presentation, was subject to certain restrictions. At Drury Lane the simplicities of plot and character were being used to link together scenes of spectacular rather than pathetic interest. Harris was cultivating an inferior kind of exoticism. Barrett's efforts at the Princess's were, he claimed on the play's hundredth night, "to raise what for want of a better word was called Melodrama into the region of literature and poetry, and natural tragedy" and to "produce on the melodramatic stage work which would have a more than ephemeral existence" (The Times, 19 March 1882).

While some writers of popular plays were seeking the approval of literary men, some literati were attempting to accomodate their talents to the stage. In "literary" plays

two proceedures can be observed: the author seeking to make a remote and picturesque situation familiar, or giving to familiar situations a touch of the remote and picturesque. As an example of the former process one might take William Gorman Wills's "Tragedy" Juana, produced by Wilson Barrett at the Court Theatre in May 1881, with designs by E.W.Godwin and Helen Modjeska in the title role. The play deals with the love of a Friar for a Spanish noblewoman - he had been her lover, but prudently tore himself away and took orders, much as a sensible person, with no feeling for poetic justice, might join the French Foreign Legion. Now the Friar returns, foolishly, to become Juana's confessor, and to mortify himself with the spectacle of her becoming the betrothed of another, less worthy man. The story is extravagant and violent, and itssetting exotic, but Wills labours to make it familiar. After the dishonour of a poor reception in London, Wills revised the play: both versions, the second entitled The Ordeal; A Tragedy in Three Acts entirely reconstructed from Juana, are in the Lord Chamberlain's collection of plays.

In the preface to the first version Wills claims that he has aimed for a natural effect in his verse - "a short line is so often precious to an actor - monotonous finish so often fatal". His avoidence of "monotonous finish" appears to owe something to Browning's influence, but whereas Browning's dramatic verse was "difficult" in response to the "difficulty" of his thoughts, Wills's shows a poet striving by enjambement and misplaced rhythms for the common touch:

> Pedro
> As to the new confessor, Friar John,
> I know him better than thou wottest of;
> He was my Lady's tutor, taught me all
> I ever know. That is a pretty smock,
> Is't wool? No, linen.
> (Wipes his fingers on her apron) [13]

Friar John, the goomy lover, has a talent for feeble sententiousness:

> Friendship cannot keep pace with fleetfoot joy,
> And gratulation plays the hypocrite,
> Rejoicing in an unknown jubilee. [14]

Pedro's speech is an example of verse pretending to be casual and unpretentious, Prior John's is the reverse - often Wills packs both effects into speeches of remarkable bathos. Later in the first act Prior John plays the organ while Juana and Carlos, the new lover, look out upon the landscape visible through the arches of the loggia:

> Juana
> The season is too late for nightingales,
> But see the pomegranate in crimson blossom
> Like little flowery sunsets underneath
> Their cloud of leaves; beyond is a wild plain
> Flushing with heather. You can see Granada!

This is mainly for the audience's benefit, for Carlos is not afflicted with poor eyesight. Indeed, he has other preoccupations:

> There is no charm outside today, my love,
> Whilst thou art here enchantress of the place.
> Give me thine hand, in very homely sooth
> I love thee. 15

Wills's second version shows the process which his preface had described as "continually cutting and pruning away literature - an article which has sunk many a good play that might have sailed into port", and Juana's speech is cut to one line, "Most like my garden", Carlos packing all the original feeling into another, heavily emphasized utterance, "There is no charm <u>outside</u> today my love".[16]

William Archer had little respect for the familiarizing process embarked upon in Wills's plays:

> If Mr Wills has refrained from putting modern morality in his work, he has not failed to endow it with occasional touches of modern commonplace and even vulgarity.

Wills was totally innocent of the art of suggesting psychological development in action and dialogue and his method was revealed in <u>Nell</u> (1880) as anything but methodical. Of this "Musical Drama" Archer wrote:

> Its motives are anything but closely knit, its scenes hang loosely together, and many of its situations are worked in purely for their own sake, without developing the action in the smallest degree. 17

Wills conceived of his plays as a series of fine effects,

speeches and tableaux. This was a common criticism of poetic dramatists. In a review by Sidney Lee of Colombe's Birthday, produced at St. George's Hall in November 1885, we find the accusation levelled at Browning:

> ...Mr Browning is unable to control the rapid workings of his own intelligance, and leaves gaps in his dramatic argument to be supplied by the reader, or spectator at the expense of much mental labour, which the supreme artist i.e. Shakespeare invariably spares him.
> (The Academy, 28 November 1885)

Archer complains of Tennyson's Queen Mary:

> There is nothing in it of the conflict essential to a true drama. The scenes follow each other without vital connection. It is a panorama of a period of history, its sole claim to organic unity lying in the elaborate and interesting character-study which gives the play its name.[18]

This is reminiscent of the accusation against such pieces as Pluck, that they were simply a succession of spectacular tableaux, lacking organic shape.

The Athenaeum, in a notice of Tennyson's The Cup and The Falcon (1884), offered a lengthy discussion of the problems encountered by poets who wished to write for the theatre. One almost insurmountable obstacle was the prevailing mode of realism, given added weight by the technical refinements of illusionist scene-building. It was by now an accepted fact "that literary beauties seem positively out of place in an acted play, whether tragic or comic, being destructive of that realism which the dramatist is obliged to make his one quest" (8 March 1884). Three of the Laureate's plays were performed in the eighteen-eighties: The Falcon (St. James's, 18 December 1880), The Cup (Lyceum, 3 January 1881), and The Promise of May (Globe, 11 November 1884). Becket was performed at the Lyceum on 6 February 1893, four months after the poet's death on 6 October 1892.

The two early productions were more notable for their staging than for any outstanding literary qualities in the text. In The Promise of May Tennyson attempted a modern subject and, so far as he was able, a drama of ideas: the play was written in prose and verse, and dealt with the relationship between

Philip Edgar, "a free-thinking artist, who lounges about... dressed in the garb of Bedford Park and Hampstead, and perusing as he goes the last volume of the very newest philosophy", and Eva, "a simple-minded young girl". He betrays Eva's trust, and after explaining his ideas on free love, leaves her. Six years pass, and Dora, Eva's sister, believes the seduced girl, who has disappeared, to be dead. Philip Edgar re-appears (passing himself off as Harold, a kinsman of the now notorious seducer), and Dora falls in love with him. Farmer Dobson, "the incarnation of all that is straightforward and all that is orthodox", meets Edgar and challenges him, but he claims to be Harold and escapes unharmed. Edgar is ready to marry Dora - he has learned his lesson - but Eva returns, after "years of servitude and misery", to ask her father's forgiveness. Unfortunately her father is too old to understand anything. She suddenly meets Edgar and drops down dead at his feet. "These" said Frederick Wedmore, whose Academy notice has been quoted above, "are pathetic passages, and they have their value". (18 November 1884). Dobson returns, and is about to deal brutally with Edgar, but Dora prevents him, arguing that as Edgar is repentant and she loves him, he should be spared. Edgar must leave the village, and when the curtain falls Dora is left alone, to face a lifetime of loneliness. The actions of Edgar, Dora and Eva are set in some sort of perspective by a chorus of prose-speaking rustics and the two girls, unlike their old father, do not speak dialect.

The play appears to owe something to Hardy, both in theme and treatment, though Tennyson's command of the Lincolnshire dialect, and his interest in pastoral subjects, were lonstanding. The "Northern Farmer" poems had appeared in 1864 and 1869 and the intrusion of a young artist in the country world is found in "The Gardener's Daughter; or, The Pictures" (1842). The plot of the play is bold and, for its age, unusual, but its organisation was so unskilled as to irritate audiences and critics. Wedmore, like most other reviewers, found the play's action weak and slight, and inadequate for the support of the characters. Edgar's character is crudely drawn and his motives in returning to the village poorly accounted for. It was too

great a coincidence that Eva should seek her father's forgiveness at the precise moment of Edgar's return.

Having adopted a realistic and modern subject, Tennyson appears to have treated it in a semi-realistic manner. Philip Edgar enters in act One, soliloquising:

> This author, with his charm of simple style
> And close dialectic, all but proving men
> An automatic series of sensations,
> Has often numb'd me into apathy,
> Against the unpleasant jolts of this rough road
> That breaks off short into the abysses - made me
> A Quietist taking all things easily.
> 19

Edgar dispenses free-thinking to the audience with the intimacy of Hamlet or Richard III, but he has nothing of any urgency to confide, no scheme to justify. The verse has a limpness and repose that bespeak the character's dullness, and his moments of figurative language are laboured and unilluminating:

> Conventionalism,
> Who shrieks by day at what she does by night,
> Would call this vice; but one time's vice may be
> The virtue of another; and Vice and Virtue
> Are but two masks of self; and what hereafter
> Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in the gulf
> Of never-dawning darkness?
> 20

The hero's introspection is plainly in debt to that of Hamlet, but he does not live in a world of objects - he lives by ideas, and his soliloquies compare one idea with another. Edgar has probably never seen a bare bodkin, and whereas Hamlet's reflections are provoked by harsh circumstances and dilemmas, Edgar's are the prevailing taste for realism in staging and writing. Irving could "do justice" to Tennyson only when provided with material subservient to his peculiar talents as an actor and producer, which will be discussed presently, and for Irving's purposes Tennyson's texts were simply a more illustrious equivalent for those of Wills and Comyns Carr. But before examining the nature and ambitions of pictorial staging, it will be useful to look at a commercially successful playwright's attempts to write on serious topics.

Arthur Wing Pinero established himself as a writer of comedies and farces during the eighteen-eighties, and in the

ensuing decade turned to the serious treatment of problematic subjects. The work that has survived in the modern repertoire from his early output is limited to the farces Dandy Dick (1887) and The Magistrate (1885). To contemporaries Pinero appeared one of a group of young playwrights whose work had a solidity and frshness of dialogue more rewarding than that of the older authors, Byron and Gilbert. Of The Magistrate (Court Theatre, 21 March 1885) The Referee observed:

> Though the piece is termed a farce, the situations are evolved in a perfectly rational manner, and many a so-called comedy is far more preposterous in its development. Some of the episodes are irresistibly laughable and the dialogue, with the exception of a few lines, is extremely smart.
> (22 March 1885)

Clement Scott, in The Illustrated London News, found the dialogue "written with a dry humour and quaintness of expression very seldom found in the best plays of the kind" (28 March 1885). The praise of such qualities can be found in most reviews of the early farces: Imprudence (Folly Theatre, 27 January 1881) was judged by The Weekly Dispatch to be "vastly superior to many pieces by more celebrated authors which have gained the approval of the public" and to Scott it appeared that in Dandy Dick (Court Theatre, 27 January 1887) Pinero had "paid as much attention to the dialogue" as if he were "writing a comedy that would be live and be acted when we are all passed away" (WD 31 July 1881, ILN 5 February 1887). By the end of the decade Frederick Wedmore could refer to Pinero as "our greatest living master of the comedy that is farcical" in the course of a notice of Robert Buchanan's Miss Tomboy (Academy, 29 March 1890).

Pinero is credited with the creation of a new genre, a resuscitation of farce comparable in achievement to The Silver King as a worthwhile melodrama. There were some reservations, the most important being the accusation that he was cynical. The Academy suggested in its review of The Money Spinner (St. James, 8 January 1881) that, should Pinero "continuously study the world he lives in as well as the stage he acts upon" he might "probably give us work which shall belong to literature

as well as to the theatre", but discerned a cynicism it attributed to theatrical cliche (29 January 1881). Of Lords and Commons (Haymarket 24 November 1883) The Athenaeum observed:

> He will do better and more successful work... when he will infuse into his plays more human sympathy. (1 December 1883)

Clement Scott compared the same play with the work of Tom Robertson, who was "loved" and popular,

> Because with all his cynicism he looked upon the best side of human nature, hoped for the best, loved the best, encouraged the best.

Pinero, on the other hand, was "altogether too clever":

> ...he writes too well, he is too epigrammatic and thoughtful, to be led away by the heartlessness and emptiness of the age he loves.

He might show signs of cynicism but for him, as for Robertson, there was hope (Illustrated London News, 1 December 1883).

Pinero made two important excursions into serious drama during the eighteen-eighties. The first, in 1881, was The Squire, which generated some controversy as to whether the author had plagiarized Far From The Madding Crowd (published in 1874). It was reasonably successful and Scott was very kind to the new dramatist in his Daily Telegraph review:

> not a success only in an ordinary and conventional sense; its merit is deeper, its worth more solid than one is accustomed to find in the hollow ring of theatrical applause.

It shared the qualities of Hardy's novels, Scott observed with no ironic intention, as though the novelist "had turned dramatic author". The Squire was "English and true, dramatic and interesting, sound and good" (30 December 1881). "English" as a term of approbation is common in Scott's critical vocabulary: here it carries two meanings. In the first place, Pinero's play was not based on a French original; in addition, it was free from an objectionable worldliness, in so far as it did not deal with salacious persons or actions, and was not cynical. The connection between cynicism and "English-ness" can be seen in Scott's review of Sweet Lavender, Pinero's second major "drama".

Scott responded to the "genuine humour and wholesome manly sentiment" in the play - it was thoroughly "English" and Pinero appeared to have lost the cynicism which Scott disliked. Formerly he had been compared, like Robertson, to Thackeray: now he was likened to Dickens. Scott reported that the first-night audience were much moved:

> ...the laughter that pealed around the house was only occasionally checked by those fits of sudden coughing that denote suppressed emotion.
>
> (Illustrated London News, 21 March 1888)

He does not attempt to differentiate between suppressed emotion and the effects of March winds.

Sweet Lavender (Terry's Theatre, 21 March 1888) has not been treated kindly by posterity. By 26 November 1890 it had completed a total of seven hundred and thirty-seven performances at Terry's, and by 5 November 1891, six hundred and ninety-seven performances had been given in the provinces[23]. To Max Beerbohm, in 1899, it seemed a link with Tom Robertson "with some, at least, of the modern improvements", while to a more recent critic it is no more than "an ably concocted weepie with no noticeable claims to sense"[24]. The plot is indeed sentimental, and its reminders that wealth and virtue are not synonymous is typical of Robertson. Clement Hale and Dick Phenyl share rooms in the Temple, where they are cared for by Ruth Holt, housekeeper and launderess. She has a daughter, called Lavender, and is to all appearances a respectable widow. Dick is an alcoholic and is the subject of Clement's attempts to cure him; Clement, for his part, is in love with Sweet Lavender, whom he is tutoring. But Clement is the adopted son of a rich banker, Wedderburn, who wishes him to marry his niece, Minnie Gilfillian. A young and brash American, Horace Bream, arrives with the news that Mrs Gilfillian and Minnie have returned to London from the Continent, and Clement, with some reluctance, prepares to go and meet them at their hotel. While he is dressing, Dick decides that Lavender ought to be sent to the country, and prepares to sell his books to pay for her journey. Presently, Clement emerges from his room, finds Lavender in the sitting-room, and declares his love, which she requites. Mrs Gilfillian and Minnie arrive, and Clement's declaration is discovered. After summon-

ing Ruth Holt and speaking with her, Mrs Gilfillian sits down to write a telegram to the banker. As she is writing, Ruth notices some photographs of Wedderburn which Mrs Gilfillian has brought for Clement, and which are lying on the table. She "stares at them for a moment blankly":

Ruth
Commanding herself - going a step or two towards Dick. Mr Phenyl. Pointing to the photograph Who - who is that?

Dick
Mr Wedderburn, I think.

Ruth
With a start. Wedderburn!

Dick
Banker at Barnchester - Mr Hale is his adopted son.

Ruth
In - indeed. After a pause, she goes quickly to Mrs Gilfillian, and whispers. Madam! Madam! Mrs Gilfillian turns You - you have misunderstood me. I - I give you my word my daughter shall never marry Mr Hale.

Mrs Gilfillian
Rising, with the written telegram in her hand. What!

Ruth
Glancing round. Hush!

Lavender enters the passage, and takes up the tray from the butler's stand. Clement follows and stands whispering to her. Minnie and Horace are in close conversation.

END OF FIRST ACT 25

The secret of Ruth Holt is, of course, that Lavender is Wedderburn's child, and this emerges in the final act. Meanwhile, Wedderburn returns, disapproves of Clement's marriage to Lavender, confronts Ruth, and realises that she is his former mistress (a recognition left to the audience's imagination). Word arrives that Wedderburn's partners have absconded and his bank has failed. We are informed incidentally that Dick

Phenyl had inherited a fortune which is lost in the failure. Consequently Mrs Gilfillian and Minnie are impoverished, and take up temporary residence in the rooms. So does the shocked and ailing Wedderburn. By the end of the play Minnie has decided to accept the proposals of Horace Bream, Lavender returns from her exile, Wedderburn 's creditors release him from his most crushing obligations (thanks to Phenyl, who is chief creditor). Everyone is the better for their experience, especially Mrs Gilfillian, who was dragonish in the days of her wealth and is now gentle and affectionate. We are not told that Wedderburn will marry Ruth - indeed he promises never to reveal Lavender's origin.

The plot is entirely conventional, an optimistic picture of what ought to happen in the circumstances, rather than what might. For Wedderburn to marry his mistress would be unacceptable; for Dick Phenyl to renounce his claims on Wedderburn for the sake of the failed banker and his relations is praiseworthy and, in the play's terms, probable; that Mrs Gilfillian should be chastened into humanity is in accordance with the best Robertsonian virtues. Scott, an ardent supporter of these moral standards and the achievements of Tom Robertson, found plenty to appeal to his susceptibilities. The play uses morality, rather than submits it to any scrutiny.

When Sweet Lavender was published by Heineman in 1893, as one of a series of Pinero's plays, it appeared with a preface disclaiming any serious intention:

> The very simplicity and unpretentiousness of this domestic comedy have apparently disarmed any antagonistic criticism which might have been expected from those critics of cynical temper and pessimistic mood who are wont to look for the stern realities of life even in the most purposely genial of theatrical entertainments.

The author "avowedly designed the piece as a pleasant entertainment", and was content to have it regarded as "a sort of modern fairy-tale rather than actual and realistic study of life"[26]. This is not quite in accord with the play's description in the programmes (and in its printed text) as "an original domestic drama", which suggests more strenuous ambition. The "Cautious Critic" of The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News took the point up:

> I note, by the bye, that Sweet Lavender in the playbill is described as a drama. From a drama we expect a lesson, or at least a serious purpose. Beyond its attempts at character and laughter, which are partially successful, I do not see much purpose in Mr Pinero's latest play.
> (7 April 1888)

The play is in many respects equivocal. Wedderburn's relationship with Ruth, and Dick Phenyl's pathetic dipsomania, are hardly comic. Mrs Gilfillian is, in the first instance, a ludricous caricature. Her demeanour and her speeches occasionally fore-shadow Lady Bracknell - of the pushy Horace Bream she confides to Clement:

> We shall never shake him off. He saved Minnie's life in Paris by pulling her from under a tram-car in the Avenue Mirabeau...So careless of her to get there! I closed my eyes and in imagination heard the crackling of her bones. This person rushed forward and restored her to the sidewalk, as he will persist in calling the pavement. [27]

Mrs Gilfillian is conceived, in the first act, as an artificially callous and cynical figure: later she is given more human attributes. The change is not so much the development of a personality, as an alteration in the dramatist's method. Bream never develops, and we are led to assume that a change in Minnie brings about the change in her attitude to him. Wedderburn is a thankless part for an actor, demanding an "overnight" transformation from a paternal worldling to repentant and sententious sinner.

These inconsistencies suggest a degree of indecision in Pinero's mind as to what kind of play he was writing. Alongside crudities of plot - coincidences, poor exposition, and an absurdly providential happy reunion of Ruth and Wedderburn brought about by a deus ex machina, Doctor Delaney - is a well-contrived and interesting character, Dick Phenyl. Phenyl, being a drunkard, is obliged to feign sobriety, and has a self-awareness which is quite unlaboured. Whereas Wedderburn, Mrs Gilfillian, Minnie and Ruth are allowed to comment without subtlety on their new-found knowledge of themselves, Phenyl knows from the beginning what sort of man he is, and is aware of each mood as he passes through it. Max Beerbohm described the technique required of the actor playing Phenyl as "the grotesque-pathetic style" [28].

Melodrama and farce deal in simple, unqualified emotions and characters, and it seems clear that Pinero aimed for equivocal and complex effects. Phenyl is a drunken barrister, strangely dependent upon the young, hearty man with whom he shares lodgings. Like the Dean of St. Marvell's in Dandy Dick or the title character of The Magistrate he is forced to take stock of his settled opinions of himself and of life: the characters are not simply brought to an extreme test of virtue, or mace ridiculous by forfeit of dignity, as the persons in melodrama or farce might be, but are submitted to a subtler and more reflective process of self-revaluation. In Sweet Lavender some of the characters are put through the extreme test of fortitude and humanity, and the result is sentimentality. It is likely that Pinero never found the effective way of accomplishing his aims within the commercial theatre: The Second Mrs Tanqueray owes its essential failure as much to the author's inability to dispense with or modify crudities of plot as to the shortcomings in his understanding of people that Shaw discerned.[29] In the farces the presence of conventional dilemmas and characters can subserve the presentation of fully-developed and recognisably human beings: in the serious plays, for some reason, the contrived situations and false characters are too intimately involved with the difficulties encountered by the central character. The means by which Pinero could make the fatigued genre of farce new and vital could not be applied with success to "drama".

The four plays duscussed above are representative of the way in which some authors were attempting to alter and develop the existing forms of popular play: none of them has survived in the repertoire of the nineteen-seventies, and of Pinero's plays only the major farces can command a popular audience - one, The Magistrate, has received six important London revivals since the turn of the century (in 1943, 1944, 1950, 1964 and 1969). Apart from Pinero's work and the Savoy Operas, nothing of the prodigious dramatic output of the eighteen-eighties survives on the contemporary stage. A count based on reviews published in The Times shows that twenty-two pieces by F.C.Burnand were produced in the course of the decade, and four of his older plays revived; twenty-three by H.J.Byron, who died in 1884,

were produced, twelve of them revivals; of twenty-one pieces by W.S.Gilbert in repertoire, eleven were revivals, and ten out of the total number were collaborations with Sullivan; Robert Buchanan, remarkable for industry and pretension if not for genius, had twenty-four new plays produced, and George R.Sims, whose income has been cited above, saw the production of sixteen new plays in which he had at least a main finger. These figures are not conclusive, for The Times was selective in its reviewing policy, and did not always print notices of new or revived curtain-raisers, or revived main pieces. Gilbert is performed only as librettist to Sullivan, Sims is remembered mainly for his melodramatic monologues, Buchanan is known to literary historians mainly on account of his attack on Rossetti and Swinburne, The Fleshly School of Poetry, in 1870, and Burnand's adaptation of Madison Morton's Box and Cox (Cox and Box, with music by Sullivan) is the only relic of his work that is performed today. Byron's pantomimes have received some attention from The Pantomime Society of Great Britain, and an adaptation of one of his Cinderella scripts was performed in 1970 by the Oxford University Dramatic Society, under the direction of Gyles Brandreth.

Harley Granville-Barker described the "drama of the early 'eighties" as "a rather childish affair":

> A fancy dress bazaar in the Vicarage garden, with everyone enjoying it very innocently; suddenly the wind veers to the east! Such was Ibsen's advent. [30]

There is a good deal of justice in the remark, but it seems clear that some dramatists were attempting, with a measure of success, to enlarge the scope of the theatre - which often meant conferring upon it the dignity of literature. In 1892 Pinero wrote to Archer:

> A few years ago the native authors were working with a distinct and sound aim and with every prospect of popularising a rational, observant, home-grown play. Then came the Scandinavian drama, held up by the New Critics as the Perfect drama and used by them as a means of discrediting native produce. Just for the present everything is knocked askew; the English dramatist has little influence, and the public urged to witness A Doll's House, patronises the Empire Theatre of Varieties! [31]

The dramatists of the eighteen-eighties were not a very impressive or effective group, but they did explore a number of ways in which later authors were able to follow.

ii. The play and its production.

The improvement in remuneration of playwrights was accompanied by a higher social standing and increased influence within the theatrical profession. The reasons for this are unclear - perhaps the English stage adopted French attitudes to playwrights along with the texts and production standards that it tried to imitate. When Boucicault worked for Charles Kean, he was essentially a poorly-paid hack with no professional influence in the adaptations he made: when he re-appeared at the Princess's now managed by Vining, in 1865, he was author, director and chief actor in the Irish plays which made his fortune in America, Ireland and England. As if by way of reparation, his own translation of Arrah-na-Pogue was acted

> ...at the Théâtre de la Gaîeté, Paris, for 140 nights, and received by the French press and public with the same pleasure it aroused in England, amd wherever in the world the English language is spoken.[32]

Boucicault's success was that of an actor-manager who wrote his own plays, and may be claimed as a success for the dramatist's profession. As a stage-manager he has been credited with the introduction of the "box-set" into American theatres and the initiation of the touring company - known in America as the "combination" or road company[33]. The balance of power between actor, company manager and author must have varied from company to company, possibly from play to play within a company. It seems reasonable to suppose that the touring companies owed their origin to a desire on the part of the play's proprietors to have it adequately represented in the provinces by touring facsimiles of the metropolitan production wherever the original cast did not tour. By the end of the eighteen-eighties this proceedure had for most purposes replaced the "stock" system, and many commentators complained that the old regime had given young actors the chance to develop a versalility which could not be acquired by the constant repetition of one performance.

These changes in the way in which plays were commercially exploited reflect a change in the nature of the dramatic event: the text was no longer an independent property, to be sold to provincial managers to treat as they wished; nor was it the possession of one actor, who might play it anywhere with whatever support and in whatever staging the local impressario could provide. It had become part of an ensemble - company, scenery, business and text - the whole of which must be presented together.

The degree of influence enjoyed by the author depended upon the individual circumstances. Gilbert, the best-known example of an author who "directed" his plays without being an actor or manager, was able to demand strict adherance to his intentions. In April 1885 he wrote to John Hare outlining his terms for the performance of his plays:

> The money made by these performances is not the only matter to be considered. If the pieces are badly produced - if "gag" is introduced - if any coarseness or vulgarity should find its way into the pieces, I should like to be able to feel an end to the agreement.[34]

Gilbert told William Archer that "the author who cannot be his own stage-manager is certainly at a serious disadvantage"[35]. In this opinion he was voicing the sentiments of a number of authors - Boucicault, Pinero, Tom Robertson among them - who insisted not only on the integrity of their text, but on adherance to their directions.

When Caste was produced, in April 1867, "Under the Superintendence of the Author", it was hailed by The Illustrated London News as an indication "that an English school of dramatic writing is among the possibilities of no very remote future":

> Some two or three English authors have already arrived at theatrical direction or influence, and manifest a power which the public is willing to acknowledge.
>
> (13 April 1867)

The Times credited Robertson with the integration of literary and theatrical techniques, and "an eye to picturesque effects". These effects arose "less from the employment of accessories than from the arrangement of groups that are the natural result of the action..." (11 April 1867) When the Bancrofts retired in 1885 The Era claimed that "the whole system of 'putting on' -

perhaps the whole theory of comedy acting - felt the effect of them", and drew analogies between the sentiment of the Robertsonian comedies and their staging. The plays were part of "a reaction into the commonplace of peace" following the Crimean War:

> There was a general distaste for heroics, and a sneaking kindness for the genteel, amongst all classes of the community.

The plays were "instinct with Toryism" -

> ...not the angry Toryism of the present day, but the comfortable Toryism of 1870. The gentlemen are all honourable, handsome and refined. The parvenues are invariably coarse, disgusting creatures, as vulgar in mind as in manner and appearance.

This was "easy, shallow, and open to objections" but it reflected the theatre and its audience:

> ...a tiny theatre, where the stalls, boxes and balcony were the paying portions of the audience, where the pit and gallery were small, and somewhat higher priced than at ordinary theatres. But what fascinated the public most was the perfect harmony of the whole entertainment. Never had been such delicacy and dainty staging, such photographic reproduction of familiar types.
>
> (The Era, 24 January 1885)

Bancroft made much of the new-found respectability conferred by his company upon the profession. Robertson "rendered a public service by proving that the refined and educated classes were as ready as ever to crowd the playhouses". This was a direct result of the truthfulness of staging and acting, for "in those now far-off days there had been little attempt to follow Nature, either in the plays or in the manner of producing them"[36].

The tendency to familiarity and intimacy in acting and staging was continued by Bancroft's associates, Mr and Mrs Kendal, in their own management, and by Clayton and Cecil at the Court Theatre. On the closing of the Court in 1887, The Era praised the two managers for their cultivation of "the true comedy tone",

> the habitude of quiet, unemphasized drollery, the unconsciousness of the artist who feels his audience so closely 'in touch' with him that he is not impelled to exaggerate in order to secure attention.
>
> (30 July 1887)

Clayton in his speech on the closing night proudly claimed that he had "been careful never to make a play a medium for advancing the interests of one person, to the detriment of others" and avoided "what is known as the star-system".[37] It was for the Court that Pinero wrote Dandy Dick and The Magistrate, and it was the theatrical values of Robertson that he adopted in the writing and staging of his plays. The ultimate practical celebration of those values was Bancroft's re-fitting of the Haymarket in 1880: the orchestra was hidden, giving stalls spectators an uninterrupted view of the stage, and the footlights were modified. According to Bancroft's own account

> My intention was to contrive hidden footlights, which, when the curtain fell, and was within a few feet of them, would descend to make room for the heavy roller, and which would, when the curtain was raised, follow it immediately, so that the stage should never perceptibly be darkened in either case.

The auditorium was not to be raked as it was at Bayreuth, nor were side-boxes dispensed with, but the aim was complete illusion. To this end, the stage was surrounded with a huge picture-frame; the effect was described by Henry James in an article for Scribner's Monthly Magazine:

> Brilliant, luxuriant, softly cushioned and perfectly aired, it is almost entertainment enough to sit there and admire the excellent device by which the old-fashioned and awkward proscenium has been supressed and the stage set all around in an immense gilded frame like that of some magnificent picture.[38]

But it was not quite entertainment enough: Bancroft opened his new management with Lytton's Money, written for Macready in 1840. However much the stage in its frame might glow "with a radiance that seems the very atmosphere of comedy" it could not be denied that the play was, as James pointed out, "hackneyed". Not only could no new play be found: the transfer of the pit patrons to the gallery caused disturbances on the first night. Wedmore, commenting on the affair in The Academy, complained of a rise in the price of stalls from seven shillings to half-a guinea, and blamed excessive and costly display in the staging:

> A disproportionate outlay on scenic decoration and furniture for the performance of modern comedy - nay, even on the playhouse itself - is at the root of the question. It began, no doubt, with genuinely artistic intentions, and has never been dissociated from good taste. But what was an adroit and a justifiable bait to begin with ends by being hardly an attraction at all, and only a tyranny.
> (7 February 1880)

Punch gave Bancroft the blunt advice, "Give us less costly realism, and more real acting" (7 February 1880).

Enthusiasm for the virtues of Bancroft's method had been qualified for some time by a fear that it imposed limitations upon the writer who, by becoming a stage-manager, had lost a larger freedom. It was the avoidance of heroism and broad effects, which The Era attributed to the aftermath of war, which was beginning to pall. Robert Buchanan wrote in 1876:

> The best of Mr Robertson's drama surpass the best of Mr Boucicault's, as the best of Mr Blackmore's novels surpass the best of Mr Trollope's - by virtue of their gleams of simple poetic feeling... There is obviously poetry in it - os situation, of picture, though not of character and dialogue.

He felt that this attenuation of the literary content of drama had been accompanied by a reduction of emotional scale, and that there had been a consequent lessening of "the art of the scene-painter, who used to produce grand effects by Turneresque delineations of the brush" - now it had been "exchanged for the microscopic skill of the Cabinet designer". In 1886 he added a postscript to this, in a less courteous vein:

> When Robertson loomed above the horizon, the world prepared for something cosmic, only to discover that what it imagined to be a sun was a sort of gigantic tea-cup.[39]

Punch's obituary verses on the death of Benjamin Webster, who died in 1882, represent the "venerable sage" as turning his back on "'coat-and-trouser' pieces and a milk-and-water stage" and despising "a decorated drama and an Art of bric-à-brac" (22 July 1882). The subtleties of the reformed stage

palled on many observers - the critic of Vanity Fair, whose disgust with Pluck and delight in The Silver King have been mentioned in the preceding section, found solace in the fresher air of the East End theatres. On October 7, 1882 he reviewed Hope at the Standard, Islington, Mazeppa at Astley's and For Ever at the Surrey: in the last named, George Conquest, as an ape-man chased the heroine round the room and cut her to pieces behind the sofa. The critic found such delights a pleasant change:

> A rare place is your East-End for acting, no finickin fiddling with cigarettes, no toying with teapots, no subtleties of situation, nor delicacies of dialogue; but great big slashing stuff, sturdy and strong, is slung at you as you sit in your exceedingly comfortable three-shilling stall in a smoking-jacket, if you are too idle to dress.

It seemed that in the West End there was no alternative to the genteel niceties of the Court, the St. James's or the Haymarket and the realistic but empty sensation scenes of Drury Lane and - increasingly - the Adelphi. Even pantomime had been debased, and Truth, castigating Drury Lane for its "pantomime of panoply rather than the pantomime of fun" laid the blame at Bancroft's door - "Years ago the Bancrofts started the era of stage extravagance" (2 January 1890). The story of the yearly pantomime had been buried under the costly trappings of costumes and scenery, and interrupted by processions and dances designed to show off these appointments to their best advantage.

If the literary content of pantomime was jeopardised, it is not surprising to find the literary content of the classics subordinated to display. Not only were new plays being written to provide managements with excuses for lavish expenditure, but old ones were being re-written. The vagaries of Bancroft's productions of "old comedy" are representative.

Since Robertson's death, in 1871, both the Bancrofts and the Kendals had been obliged to seek new material. No English author, save Gilbert in his less cynical and fantastic moods, could provide plays of the right kind with a range defined by domestic pathos at one extreme, and domestic comedy at the other.

Both managements had recourse to bowdlerized adaptations of French plays and remnants of the eighteenth-century repertoire. Bancroft had abandoned broad effects in acting which were essential to the Comedy of Manners - a mode imitated by the work of Lytton (in Money) and Boucicault (in London Assurance). The "types" had been deposed:

> I believe, at the time, I was by more than one actor thought to be mad for venturing to clothe what was supposed to be, more or less, a comic part, in the quietest of fashionable clothes, and to appear as a pale-faced man with short, straight black hair. The innovation proved to be as successful as it was daring.[40]

The world of the comedy had changed, and it was no longer viewed with the aristocratic - or, at least, "town" - detachment of the older comedy.

Changes in the nature of stage scenery, from the swift changes of shutter-and-groove to the ponderous rhythm of set-scenes punctuated by carpenter-scenes, sorted ill with the structure of plays like The School for Scandal. In 1874 Bancroft revised the comedy to make four single set scenes, without any regard for the plot. Although Sheridan vouchsafed Punch's critic a visitation in which he pronounced the new version "an improvement - yes, really an improvement - on my own plan" (18 April 1874), most of the reviewers shared Wedmore's dismay at the atrocity. In his Academy review he suggested that Sheridan had been ill-used, but recognised that the author was a secondary consideration for the manager:

> Mrs Bancroft promised - and the promise has been kept - that it should be produced with unexampled attention to scenery and appointments. It should illustrate last century life, and that would suit the movement of the day.
> (11 April 1874)

The "movement" was a renewed interest in eighteenth-century architecture and decoration, to which the representation of eighteenth-century characters in action clearly deferred. Henry James, reviewing a production of the same play at the Boston Museum in December of the same year, thought that Bancroft had given a new lease of life to Sheridan, but found the antique furnishings displayed on stage "melancholy tokens that, for a sceptical age, even The School for Scandal cannot

maintain itself on its intellectual merits alone";

> But if the chairs and tables in London were very natural, the actors were rather stiff, and the thing, on the whole, is better done at the Boston Museum.[41]

Ten years later, when Bancroft revived The Rivals at the Haymarket in a text revised by Pinero, reviewers complained of the anaemic and lifeless quality of the acting:

> If, as there seems reason to fear, theatrical art of the highest character is moribund, and the vigorous, hearty, aggressive life of past ages can only be shown through the opaque lenses of today, the style of revival adopted at the Haymarket is the best thing to be hoped.
> (The Athenaeum, 10 May 1884)

Bancroft had lost the ability to stage and act all but the most genteelly pallid simlacra of "old comedy".

The same difficulties were encountered by Mr and Mrs Kendal at the St. James's. Their production of William and Susan, in 1880, used a revision of W.G.Wills of Douglas Jerrold's Black-Ey'd Susan - first performed in 1829. The first two acts were completely re-written, eliminating the villains Doggrass, Hacket and Raker and the comic Gnatbrain. Captain Crosstree is now principal villain; he attempts to woo Susan, is challenged by William and has the unfortunate tar court-martialled for striking an officer. William is on the point of being strung from the yard-arm, when it is revealed that his discharge had been delayed by a villainous postman (he, too, had designs on Susan). William was no longer in the King's service when he struck Crosstree, and is saved from hanging. The man who would tackle such stuff only two years after H.M.S.Pinafore (Opera Comique, 25 May,1878) needed to be brave, but Wills was no coward in such matters. William is expected to speak the figurative language of stage sailors - "All my cable is run out. I am brought to," he proclaims when death is moments away, and as Susan prays for his release, he proudly asserts:

> I die in defense of the virtue of a wife - her tears will fall like spring rain on the grass that covers my grave![42]

A little of this goes a long way: Wills provides a good deal of it. In the first act there is some simple and unforced dialogue but Wills's "fine writing" devolves on some long passages of unbearable sentimentality. Characteristic of these is William's answer to Susan's question," And you knew I was thinking of you, and praying for you?":

> Aye, in the battle, Susan, 'mid the roar of the big guns and the clash of cutlasses, and death spinning and whistling about me, I thought I heard for a moment that little whisper rising and falling,"Sue at her bedside praying for me" - always in danger it seemed to come. Once in the tropics, when we manned the Captain's cutter and got separated from the ship, we saw a little white cloud the size of your hand, and it rose and rose like a white horse, larger and whiter. We reefed our sail and it was on us with a scream - the white squall. The whole sky seemed torn to ribbons, and the sea was crushed flat down in foam, and we ran before it with bare poles, like a withered leaf, every moment seemed our last in that death race. So help me God, I heard that little whisper rising and falling, "Susan at her bedside praying for me".[43]

This is Wills, not Jerrold, and it is writing, which manages to be self-conscious and faux-naif at one and the same time. Like Juana's description of the landscape, it is self-contained and has the effect of causing a halt in the progress of the play - Wills pauses for his poetic effects.

The chief attraction of the performance was its staging, especially that of the first two acts, which Henry James found "as trim and tidy as a Dutch picture". But the new text was "flat and monotonous" and resisted the attempts of Mrs Kendal to "infuse the vital spark". James was generous in his notice, but with reservations:

> Mrs Kendal is natural and delightful; she has the art of representing goodness and yet redeeming it from insipidity. Mr Kendal, who plays the high-toned and unfortunate tar, is a graceful and gentlemanly actor, but he is not another T.P. Cooke. He has not the breadth and body the part requires. The play, as it now stands, is of about the intellectual substance of a nursery rhyme. The mise-en-scene is as usual delightful.[44]

Among those who regretted the passing of the broad style of acting was the reviewer of The Era, who suggested that audiences

were "becoming so nice and genteel" that they found it necessary "to ridicule pathos and tenderness when they have expression upon the rough but honest lips of the poor" (10 October 1880). Robert Buchanan, in an essay devoted largely to attacks upon a less genteel kind of realism than Robertson's (indeed he is so kind to Robertson as to praise his "touching modern commonplace with the hues of a really prismatic imagination"), called for a return to the clear and fresher world of Dumas pere:

> Are not people turning back, in despair of gross Realism, to the old fairyland of the heroine and the swashbuckler - to the grand Dumas, without one "moral" idea, one modern thought in his dear old head, and to the grander Shakespeare, monarch of a glodfied feudal realm?

Henry James - a "superfine over-educated young American"- might pine for the day when the stage "shall become as lifeless as his own stories", but the "great public" were showing by their patronage that Fielding was not dead and that Dickens was "not likely to die". The drama was beginning to feel the benefit of its new-found appeal "to the broad sympathy and unerring common-sense of general humanity", and was reviving slowly at the hands of a dedicated group - Sims, Wills, Henry Arthur Jones and, of course, Robert Buchanan.[45]

A biography of Buchanan would be a study of dedicated self interest and hysterical self-publicity: according to George R.Sims,he was a deeply eccentric man, equally fond of conversing directly with the Almighty and placing bets on race-horses, and accustomed to direct rehearsals of his plays with an umbrella in his hand, to beat out the measure of the verse.[46] His attack upon Rossetti and Swinburne in 1870 is remarkable for its violence and ill-will, and his subsequent retraction was grovelling in equal measure. His choice of dramatic material ranged from Tom Jones (Sophia in 1886) to Dostoievsky (The Sixth Commandment, based upon Crime and Punishment, in 1890), and he appears to have written consistently with the mixture of lameness and ornament found in Wills. In his discontent with the contemporary theatre's ability to produce and encourage "poetry", Buchanan is, however, in the same camp as Tennyson and Browning - it is interesting that his faith in public taste, and his praise of its "broad sympathy and unerring common-sense" approximates to that of Augustus Harris.

.....

Harley Granville-Barker, whose dismissal of the eighteen-eighties has been quoted, wrote in an essay on W.S.Gilbert of the manner in which the British theatre underwent a "disciplining" to rescue it from "a state of slovenly chaos", and listed those responsible as being Irving, the Bancrofts and Kendals, Hare, Wyndham, Sydney Grundy "and most particularly, Pinero and Gilbert"[47]. Without dwelling upon the question of Ibsen's influence, it is possible to discern in the fashionable theatre of the eighteen-eighties the tensions that underlie the best dramatic writing of the ensuing decades. The problem was not simply that of reconciling "Tragedy" with modern dress, but of relating undeniable advances in the techniques of stage presentation to the alarming lack of good plays. There was some contradiction between the qualities that had made actors respectable, and had given authors influence and money, and the inability of the stage to cope with what was considered "poetic material". But in one respect the meticulous realism of staging was allied to the ambitions of poetic playwrights. Plays conceived - as Tennyson's evidently were - to be a series of tableaux and poetic speeches set apart from the action of the play, were symptoms of a common understanding of "effectiveness". Poetry in character was conceived by the stage-manager and by the poet as being static - the telling pose or speech, the thrilling suspension of motion. In 1881 The Stage offered guidance on "Stage 'Pictures' and 'Calls'", the arrangement of which it claimed to be "one of the most delicate and trying tasks of stage-management":

> To intensifya particular climax forming a picture in which each character takes a different attitude, though at the same time one exemplifying the dominant idea, or a portion of it, is a task to fulfill which successfully taxes the imagination, ingenuity and general perception of effect of the person responsible for it...

The same article instructs the actor that "during an outburst of applause the most sculptural rigidity capable in the human form should be maintained in the exact moment which induced the interruption" (19 August 1881).

The idea of the actor as a figure in a pictorial composition is by no means a new one. It is possible,however, that

in the course of the century the shift from actor-centred to designer-oriented theatre had brought about the dilemma in which authors of the eighteen-eighties found themselves. Actor-centred pieces were not notable for continuity and integrated development, Robert Garis, in The Dickens Theatre draws an analogy between the "points" of the older plays and some of Dickens's effects:

> ...the several effects or "points" made by the artist are not "integrated" into a "continuity" as we ordinarily understand the word, and do not need to be, since each one is sponsored directly by the artist to achieve his obvious moment by moment plans and purposes, one of which is self-display.[48]

The series of tableaux found in Dickens's earlier work owed much to the influence of the illustrator - especially in Cruikshank's case. They were also derived from Hogarth's great example and stimulated by the more mundane pressure of publication in instalments. But the relationship between the illustrator's plates and the theatre was intimate, to the extent of playwrights adopting the story-line of Cruikshank's The Bottle, and scene-designers striving to reproduce the pictures on stage.[49] The taste for the striking composition and setting balanced in some degree that for dislocated "points" in acting. Planché describes how he secured the success of The BrigandChief(at Drury Lane in 1829) by introducing "tableaux from Eastlake's well-known pictures, "An Italian Chief Reposing", "The Wife of a Brigand Chief Watching the Result of a Battle" and "The Dying Brigand" - these were "very effective",

> and led to the adoption of this attractive feature in several subsequent dramas, Doglas Jerrold's Rent Day founded upon Wilkie's celebrated picture, in particular.[50]

The dramatic event was organised - composed - by persons other than the author, much in the way that Cruikshank claimed to have organised Oliver Twist and Ainsworth's The Tower of London.[51]

The authors dealt with this problem by becoming stage-managers themselves, in Gilbert's case extending their authority even to the design of costumes[52], but this entailed a partial capitulation to the established taste, and to the resposibilities listed in Gilbert's letter to The Times: at least three scene-changes, and opportunities to be provided for the actors'

peculiar talents. In Gilbert's case this organising genius complemented an orderliness in the plays and libretti - "something consistent in form", in Granville-Barker's phrase, or, as G.K.Chesterton more grandly put it:

> ...the author of The Bab Ballads was the only Englishman who understood and observed the unities of Greek tragedy.[53]

In the second part of this thesis, it is proposed to examine the treatment which Shakespeare's plays received at the hands of two designers, E.W.Godwin and Lewis Wingfield, who were working towards a designer's (as opposed to an actor's or author's) theatre, and who were doing so not only with the burden of resposibility associated with the National Poet, but under what Henry Arthur Jones would later call "The Shadow of Henry Irving". Irving was also striving to achieve artistic success in the face of some difficulty, and in the next chapter his management is considered in its relationship to the tendencies of contemporary Shakespeare criticism, and the ideas about painting outlined in Chapter One. Tennyson said on his deathbed that he knew Irving would do him justice. The Laureate had himself striven to do Irving justice; but how well did Irving serve an author who, living, had no thought of writing for the Lyceum?

PART TWO

The Production of Shakespeare's Plays.

Chapter One

THE LYCEUM STYLE AND ITS CRITICS

On March 24, 1874 Edward Fitzgerald wrote to a correspondent that he had called "for an hour" at the Lyceum Theatre "to see a bit of Mr Irving's Hamlet". It was a disappointment:

> ...incomparably the worst I ever saw in my life - and I have seen Hamlet in a worm.[1]

James A.Davidson, music critic of The Times, chanced upon the performance in a similar way, and afterwards wrote to Charles Lamb Kenney, sometime dramatic critic of the newspaper:

> My impulse was to go to Irving, and say, "How are you, Hamlet?" I had witnessed for the first time in my life a human being styled "Hamlet". I believe in no other Hamlet - for Shakespeare's men and women are all of God's own make.[2]

Comments on Irving's acting and production methods fall for the most part into one or the other of these two extremes, contempt or admiration. According to a contemporary observer of Aestheticism, Walter Hamilton, he was "undeniably intense", inspiring "worship" among the Aesthetes:

> ...indeed, one fair votary of the sunflower cult was heard to remark that his left leg was a poem in itself.[3]

The more robust, but shamelessly sentimental, American critic William Winter wrote on Irving's departure from the United States in 1884:

> His life has made this iron age
> More grand and fair in story;
> Illumed our Shakespeare's sacred page
> With new and deathless glory;
> Refreshed the love of noble fame
> In hearts all sadly waning,
> And lit anew the dying flame
> Of genius and of daring.

Winter is confident in the concurrence with these feelings of transatlantic admirers:

> Far off beyond the shining sea,
> Where scarlet poppies flutter,
> And dahlias on the emerald lea
> Lift up their heads and mutter,
> Where Thames on Avon glance and glow,
> To-day the waters, straying
> Will murmur in their tranquil flow
> The words that we are saying.[4]

Irving wrote to Austin Brereton towards the end of this tour:

> The seed we have sown I mean to reap - our work has been a revelation & our success beyond precedent.

In his second engagement in Boston receipts totalled $24,089 for seven performances - £4,800 by Irving's reckoning.[5] These figures, if accurate, are sensational indeed: in 1865-1866 it took Charles Kean two hundred and twenty-nine performances to realise $90,000 (£18,000), including $969.50 for his farewell benefit in New York, when the gross takings were $3,000.[6]

Not all criticism of the American performances was as complimentary as Winter's: Henry James and E.Ranken Towse, the critic of The New York Evening Post, had considerable reservations concerning Irving's technical abilities. Some less respectable critics upheld the spirit of the 1840s, and the "patriotic" battle against Macready which culminated in the riot of the Astor Place Opera House - by one anonymous newspaperman Irving was hailed as "A London Idol, the Very Aesthetic, Highly Magentic, Somewhat Idiotic Actor" and by "John Carboy" he was vilified as "A Theatric Mountebank"[7]. Most of this vilification followed the lines of Archer's The Fashionable Tragedian, which will be discussed presently.

A more serious accusation, current in theatrical circles, was that Irving had corrupted the press. Certainly he employed Joseph Hatton to write an account of the tour (Henry Irving's Impressions of America, 1884) and maintained The Theatre, of which he made a present to Clement Scott[8]. The implications of this were considerable, for Scott also wrote dramatic notices in The Daily Telegraph and The Illustrated London News, but the critic was not so much hired as flattered - he had a natural and dangerous sympathy for the artists he admired. In London, Scott's position was well-known, and may have been the direct inspiration of Walter Mowbray Morris's complaints about "chicken and champagne" - the deliterious effects of managerial hospitality upon critical integrity. Morris was for a short time the dramatic correspondent of The Times, and in 1882 he

published a collection of Essays in Theatrical Criticism. In the introduction he expressed his concern at the kindness with which Irving's Romeo was received: this he construed as a "lamentable want of balance, of repression, of sanity" and an equally lamentable "exaltation of the individual at the expense of his work" (p.11). Percy Fitzgerald, an Irving acolyte, had suggested that the expense of a production at the Lyceum placed the reviewer under a moral obligation to praise:

> ...this is plainly to make of criticism only form of theatrical advertisement; and seeing how large a space is already given to these interesting and ingenious documents, this is surely a little superfluous. The critic's proper business is to be the mouthpiece to the actor of intelligent and impartial opinion; if Mr Fitzgerald's view be the correct one, he can be no more than the mouthpiece of the actor to a slavish and unthinking public. (p.13)

In the editorial "Omnibus-Box" of The Theatre, Scott described Morris's as "a silly prejudiced, unnecessary and misleading work, evidently written by a soured and disappointed man"[9], and the essays were not generally well-received, but some of the mud stuck.

In America the accusations were more serious and more difficult of proof or disproof. In addition to his customary wining and dining of public figures and the representatives of the press, Irving may have used underhand means to clear the field of rivals. Wilson Barrett, whose financial difficulties made him preternaturally suspicious, told William Winter in 1887 that bad notices of his American tour had been cabled to the British newspapers, and good ones had been supressed:

> This my dear Winter is not accident, nor is it unimportant. My theatre i.e. the Princess's in London is taken from me & I am fighting heavy odds - but I see my place in the world - I mean to win, & to hold it. I have never tried to injure those who are striking at me - & the truth, not they - will prevail.[10]

From a letter written later in the year it appears that a rumour was current that Winter himself "conspired with J. Hatton" to "write against" Barrett, but the actor dissociated

himself from such gossip. In December he wrote to a friend in Ealing about a cable - the purpose of which is not clear - and other prejudicial activities, apparently having their source in Irving.[11] Richard Mansfield entertained similar suspicions - still less cordial ones - about Irving's rivalry. In 1893 he wrote to Dithmar, the New York Times critic, that he was"shocked and disgusted" by William Winter's admiration for Irving at a time when he and others were striving to obtain recognition for the native product - "Confound these lick-spittles"[12]. Mansfield's quarrel with Winter was made up before long, but in the course of it Mrs Winter received a very acrimonious letter, showing the financial grounds of the actor's grievance:

> Irving can play to $36,000 a week - we can barely play to $4,000 - our share of that is $2,400, our expenses over $3,000. The work of the critics is bearing fruit - and it's dead sea fruit - Irving has as usual feted wined and dined & supped and beseiged the critics - they condemn my Merchant of Venice to please him & send him the articles to read and nod over - and we starve here where we have worked so long. I think I could bear it if he were really great and good and anything but a charlatan and a fraud.

One of Irving's acts of unkindness appears to have been his announcing that he would produce and act in a version of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in London: a direct challenge to Mansfield who had "created" the dual role in America and in England. To this letter is appended a reply from Mrs Winter, which is conciliatory in tone but does not, however, clear Irving.[13] A later letter to her from Mansfield, written in Columbus, Ohio on 7 May, 1894 breaks off after the phrase "I hope by now he has forgotten my" - a page is missing, and the extant letter continues with an account of Mansfield's grippe, a malady from which he habitually suffered.[14]

Whatever truth there was in the accusations made by Barret and Mansfield, their correspondence with Winter and Dithmar reveals an intimacy between critic and actor-manager that might be supposed to have some danger in it. Similar relationships existed between critics and authors, and although Irving did not produce any of Scott's plays, other managers

who did can hardly have been unaware of his influence. Daly employed Scott as an advisor in the selecting and editing of plays, and correspondence between the two shows the shrewdness of such a move. In 1886 Daly approached Scott with the suggestion of collaboration. In his letter of acceptance Scott wrote:

> I can say between ourselves that I did not have the first say about your plays and your admirable company but I have done what I could conscientiously in several places and I will write another article for the September number of The Theatre.

In a letter of July 2, 1886 Scott agreed to a draft contract, adding:

> The reports on the plays will be ready very soon. Look at Illustrated London News today.[15]

A succession of letters in which Scott comments on plays submitted to him by Daly is followed by a request for a favour:

> Don't forget me if you ever hear of a newspaper editor requiring a London correspondent. I should like to sign my name to a good letter that might be mailed to a score of towns by a clever agent in New York. Think of this.[16]

Scott was a sincere admirer of Daly and his company - to Ada Rehan he wrote in 1890 that his work was a "weariness", but that he could "pick up courage when our opinions are strengthened by such an art as yours"[17] - but it was easy to take advantage of his enthusiasm.

It is important to bear in mind the practical origins of the partiality of some critics when approaching the descriptions of Irving's work published in his lifetime. Wilde, who wrote flattering verses to Ellen Terry and to Irving (whom he advises to return from melodrama to Shakespeare), lived in hope of seeing his play produced in a theatre which had been for him "the one link between our stage and our literature"[18]. Even Shaw, whose campaign against the Lyceum in the Saturday Review was relentless and sincere, hoped to have the forces of the Lyceum placed in service of The Man of Destiny, and it is unlikely that Buchanan, who praised Irving for his "vitalising the energies of the stage and absorbing its noblest traditions" did not entertain similar aspirations[19].

In this chapter Irving's personal and managerial techniques are examined through the comments of contemporary reviewers, and one of his major Shakespearean productions, the Macbeth of 1888-1889, is discussed as an example of the qualities and shortcomings of Lyceum production methods.

i. The praise and dispraise of Irving.

William Archer's first book on Henry Irving, The Fashionable Tragedian, appeared in 1877 and was written in collaboration with Robert Lowe. In 1883 he published a second, more temperate essay, Henry Irving, Actor and Manager. In the intervening years Irving had aquired a reputation as manager of a theatre - a reputation less in dispute than his talent as an actor. Archer's comments on the Lyceum stage-management arise from the same premises as his strictures on the actor. In the earlier book Irving is rudely attacked as the possessor of a poor physique and bearing, wrongly interpreted by some as "picturesque", and a limited range. His only talent is for the depiction of "abject terror, sarcasm and frenzy" (The Fashionable Tragedian (second edition,1877) p.9); his voice is as unprepossessing as his appearance - Archer transcribes a representative passage:

> Now is the winter of our discontent
> Made glawrious summer by this sun of Yark;
> And aall the clouds that lowr'd upon our house
> In the deep buzzum of the awshun - burred. (p.8)

Irving's physique is mocked in a number of cartoons, and in such descriptions as this, of his walk:

> ...he plants one foot upon the stage as if his whole "eminence" depended upon its firmness, and then drags the other leg after it in a limp and nerveless fashion,...all the while working spasmodically with his shoulders, and very often nodding his head backwards and forwards in a manner which is positively painful to contemplate. (p.7)

Some writers, the pamphlet admits, find Irving's idiosyncrasies "picturesque", but "There are those who would discover picturesqueness in the writhings of the octopus in Brighton

Aquarium" (p.15).

Against this may be set one of the most favourable accounts of Irving published in the early years of his success. Hall Caine in 1877 issued a "Dramatic Study" entitled Richard III and Macbeth: the Spirit of Romantic Play in Relation to the Principles of Greek and of Gothic Art and to the Picturesque Interpretations of Mr Henry Irving. Caine claims that Irving's success can be attributed to his being endowed with a mind that is "essentially and eminently the Gothic mind" (p.15). After lengthy passages discussing the definition of his terms, he attempts to show the actor's interpretations in their relation to general theories of art. Thus, Irving's Hamlet

> ...is, first, the offspring of untoward events, and finally, the overpowered victim of a world of injustice, but the austere symmetry and statuesque singleness of purpose in Greek art admit of no such imaginative development...(p.16)

This is hardly adequate as a judgement on Greek art, but it does not lack significance as an appraisal of Irving. In 1874 Caine attended the first night of the new Hamlet as critic of the Liverpool Town Crier, and pointed out in his review that Irving's method was admirably suited to a play which included not only "the language of terror and pity, the language of impassioned intellect", but also that of "everyday life"[20]. In the 1877 pamphlet he praises Irving's "Pre-Raphelite [sic] minuteness of detail", visible in every line and revealing effects "equally curious and exquisite" (p.40). From many contemporary descriptions of the detail in Irving's acting, two will suffice. In 1879 the New York paper Wilkes' Spirit of the Times printed a despatch from its London correspondent on Irving's performance as Hamlet:

> He sits in easy mannish attitudes during the great soliloquies, often grasping the ankle which is under his hands, as he rocks backwards and forwards with one leg up. During the whole of the exciting scene with Horatio after the King has rushed away from the play scene, Irving still holds on to the peacock feather fan which he took from Ophelia as he lay at her feet, and from which during the mimic play, he keeps [sic] abstractedly biting out feathers, as he watched the King. Nowhere does he bully or brawl, the effort to

> round sentences and to place sound before sense is always avoided.[21]

Frederick Wedmore, in his autobiography Memories (1912), describes Irving's acting as Digby Grant in Albery's Two Roses:

> Anxious that nobody should fail to be the witness of his gratitude, he mounts a kitchen or cottage chair, in nervous agitation, and with one most artful and revealing stumble. His feelings are too much for him. It was the cleverest imaginable little bit of genre painting - a thing appropriate to comedy alone.
>
> (p.176)

Wedmore compares Irving's method with that of Mounet-Sully:

> Irving's was an art of endlessly considered detail. Touch upon touch built up his impressiveness. The right relation of all these ingenious, well-imagined details - the welding them in this wise into a whole that had unity - gave him his breadth; but it was a breadth got very differently from the doyen of the Français... with his art of large neglect of detail - his art of concentration on great gesture, great voice, great mien.
>
> (pp.177-8)

There were two basic interpretations, from which critics could choose: either Irving's physical peculiarities were a substitute for genuine presence and technique, or they were part of an elaborate strategy. To the detractors he was uncontrolled, and "picturesque" only after the manner of the octopus in Brighton Aquarium, whilst to the admirers he was a master of control, and his detail - whether they judged it "Pre-Raphaelite" or "Gothic" or simply part of the naturalism associated with genre - was painterly.

When Irving became manager of the Lyceum Theatre, in the 1878-9 season, the peculiarities of his personal technique were to be seen in the context of an artistic whole, over which he exercised control. His new leading lady, Ellen Terry, was noted for a precision and minuteness of detail similar to his own. In 1875 Wedmore praised her performance as Peg Woffington (In Masks and Faces) in The Academy. His description of the actress resembles his reminiscence of Irving:

> Her attitudes become more and more what they always inclined to be - studies for

> pictures: but always without any of the unreality of the posed model and with far more than any model's expressiveness. One would beg the reader specially to note the series - or is that too hard a word? - say rather the ordered yet seemingly spontaneous flow of gestures - with which she leaves, in the second act, the room where Mr Vane has been entertaining the Town, and to consider, when he has noted that flow of gesture, what are the words to be spoken.
> (13 November 1875)

Under the new regime the actor and actress were to be placed in the appropriate surroundings; ensemble was to be the guiding principle of the Lyceum, as Irving claimed in his speech at Harvard in 1885:

> It is most important that an actor should learn that he is a figure in a picture, and that the least exaggeration destroys the harmony of a composition. All the members of a company should work towards a common end, with the nicest subordination of their individuality to the general purpose.

To this end the actor "who is devoted to his profession" should study painting, music, and sculpture, for he is "susceptible to every harmony of colour, form and sound"[22]. It is clear that Irving in his public pronouncements was careful to stress the manner in which the theatre might embrace all the arts. In the Harvard speech he emphasizes his distaste for "certain kinds of realism" which are "simply vulgar", and his belief that "harmony of colour and grace of outline have a legitimate sphere in the theatre":

> Absolute realism on the stage is not always desirable any more than the photographic reproduction of Nature can claim to rank with the highest art.[23]

This speech, like the others collected in the 1893 volume of "Addresses", is a masterly exercise in public relations. Its tone is dignified and modest, and its appeal to the contemporary enthusiasm for art is not allowed to outweigh its wooing of more conservative opinion. Irving was careful to emphasize his respectability, and some of his remarks remind the reader of Augustus Harris's "democratic" appeal. Thus, speaking in 1881 at the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, he maintained

that managers did not force standards of taste upon the public, but respond to its wishes - "Believe me, the right direction is public criticism and public discrimination"[24]. At the same function ten years later he dissociated himself from some aspects of the modern movement in art: "A morose and hopeless dissatisfaction is not a part of a true national life. This is hopeful and earnest, and, if need be, militant"[25].

This double appeal - to aesthetic discrimination and to a conservatively moral theory of art - were reflected in the theatre's policy. The literary conservatism, and often mediocrity, of the repertoire was compensated by the scenic effects. William Archer's second book on Irving, Henry Irving, Actor and Manager, was published in 1883, five years after the actor had become his own manager. Archer, like Walter Hamilton, recognizes Irving's fashionable appeal:

> The Lyceum drama came into existence along with - I had almost said for the sake of - the new art hues and fabrics. (p.97)

But two reservations must be made about the quality of the theatre's work. The plays cannot be said to represent any advance in the dramatic literature - "a dead drama skilfully galvanized" (p.95) - and Irving's own acting is egocentric and "singularly deficient in purely mimetic technique" (p.77). The actor presents in each role "a fresh development of his own individuality" rather than, "as is the case with mimetic actors", a study "from the life" or "a generalisation of many studies from the life".

The conservatism of Irving's repertoire may be seen from the list of "new" pieces produced in the eighteen-eighties: out of ten major productions four were by contemporaries (Wills's Iolanthe and Olivia, Merivale's Ravenswood, and The Cup). The first three of these were in some sense adaptations, and Olivia had first been performed at the Court Theatre in 1878. To these may be added Wills's version of Faust. The remaining six plays were revivals - Mrs Centlivre's The Belle's Stratagem, Albery's Two Roses, Watts Phillips' The Lead Heart and, on special occasions, The Merchant of Venice, Robert Macaire, and Byron's Werner.[26]. The relationship between Irving's production techniques and the texts he used can be seen clearly in reviews

of the three major "new" plays, The Cup, Faust and The Dead Heart.

Tennyson's brief tragedy, The Cup, opened on January 3, 1881, and was well-received.- it was remarkable, claims Stoker, for the number of h. .h-church clergy who visited it[27]. The plot is simple: Synorix, a Galatian serving Rome, has admired Camma, the wife of the Tetrarch Sinnatus, ever since he saw her "A maiden moving slowly on to music" at the temple of Artemis. Now he brings her a cup, saved from the shrine of the goddess which the legions had destroyed. He contrives to have Sinnatus invite him to dinner, and represents himself to Camma as a well-wisher, who only serves Rome in order to serve Galatia, and warns her that the Romans suspect Sinnatus of plotting against them. Then he contrives the assassination of Sinnatus, and Camma takes refuge in the temple of which she is a priestess. Synorix becomes Tetrarch, and Camma, surprisingly, agrees to marry him. During the ceremony, which forms most of the play's second act, she poisons Synorix and herself, and dies with Sinnatus's name on her lips. The play's appeal to the high Anglicans is not far to seek: it offers a re-creation of an ancient and aesthetically appealing religious ritual, with incense and singing, and suggests the defeat of a new order in religion (the Roman worship of Diana) by an older one (Camma's devotion to Artemis). The subject is not biblical, for representation of Christian rites on the stage would hardly be acceptable to the censor, but it touches on the same sensibilities as inform Marius the Epicurean - an aesthetically pleasing religiosity. Moreover, its plot may have influenced Wilde in Salomé - a central female character who in a context of exotic ritualism compasses the death of a man.

The character of Synorix shows to what extent Irving was capable of creating the melancholic effects beloved of the new movement in art, whilst remaining true to his proclaimed distaste for morbidity. It was a remote and equivocal figure, whose evil nature was never in doubt but whose passionate devotion to the ideal figure of Camma redeemed him in some respects. Synorix shared in the audience's admiration of Camma

in a manner which prompted Sala, in The Illustrated London News, to compare him with Claude Frollo, in Victor Hugo's Notre Dame de Paris:

> The wretched suitor of Camma comes before us as a man rent by a devouring and irresistible passion; and his crime and its expiation seem alike inscribed on the irrevokable rolls of Fate. He is foredoomed from the beginning to be the slayer and the slain...He is less a Crook-Backed Richard or a fiendish Iago than a guilty yet still noble Claude Frollo.
> (15 January 1881)

According to Ellen Terry, Irving "conceived his own type of the blend of Roman intellect and sensuality with barbarian cruelty and lust"[28]. The repertoire of the Lyceum included many such parts for the actor - Vanderdecken, Eugene Aram, Mephistophiles and, most famous of all, Mathias - in which evil is qualified by a sense of the character's sensitivity and uneasy conscience.

Camma is a simpler role - an admirable woman whose innocence is tinged by a little cunning. Wilde's sonnet compares her, "antique-limbed and stern", to a figure on a Grecian urn, but ends with a plea that the actress will play Cleopatra:

> And yet - methinks I'd rather see thee play
> That serpent of old Nile, whose witchery
> Made Emperors drunken, - come, great Egypt, shake
> Our stage with all thy mimic pageants! Day
> I am grown sick of unreal pageants, make
> The world thine Actium, me thine Antony![29]

In some quarters it was thought that Ellen Terry's dresses contributed more to the drama than any subtlety or interest in the heroine she portrayed. An anonymous reviewer in The Athenaeum complained that "from first to last our sympathy is with her robes, not herself, and the gold and silver threads in her cobweb veil interest us more than the weaving of her destiny" (I (1881) 189: see illustration 3). There was general praise for the mise en scène, which The Illustrated London News considered "one of the most remarkable examples of theatrical pageantry that has been witnessed on the English stage" since Charles Kean's Corsican Brothers in 1852 (ILN, 5 February 1881). Irving had assembled a collection of learned authorities for his staging, and achieved striking effects of spaciousness and

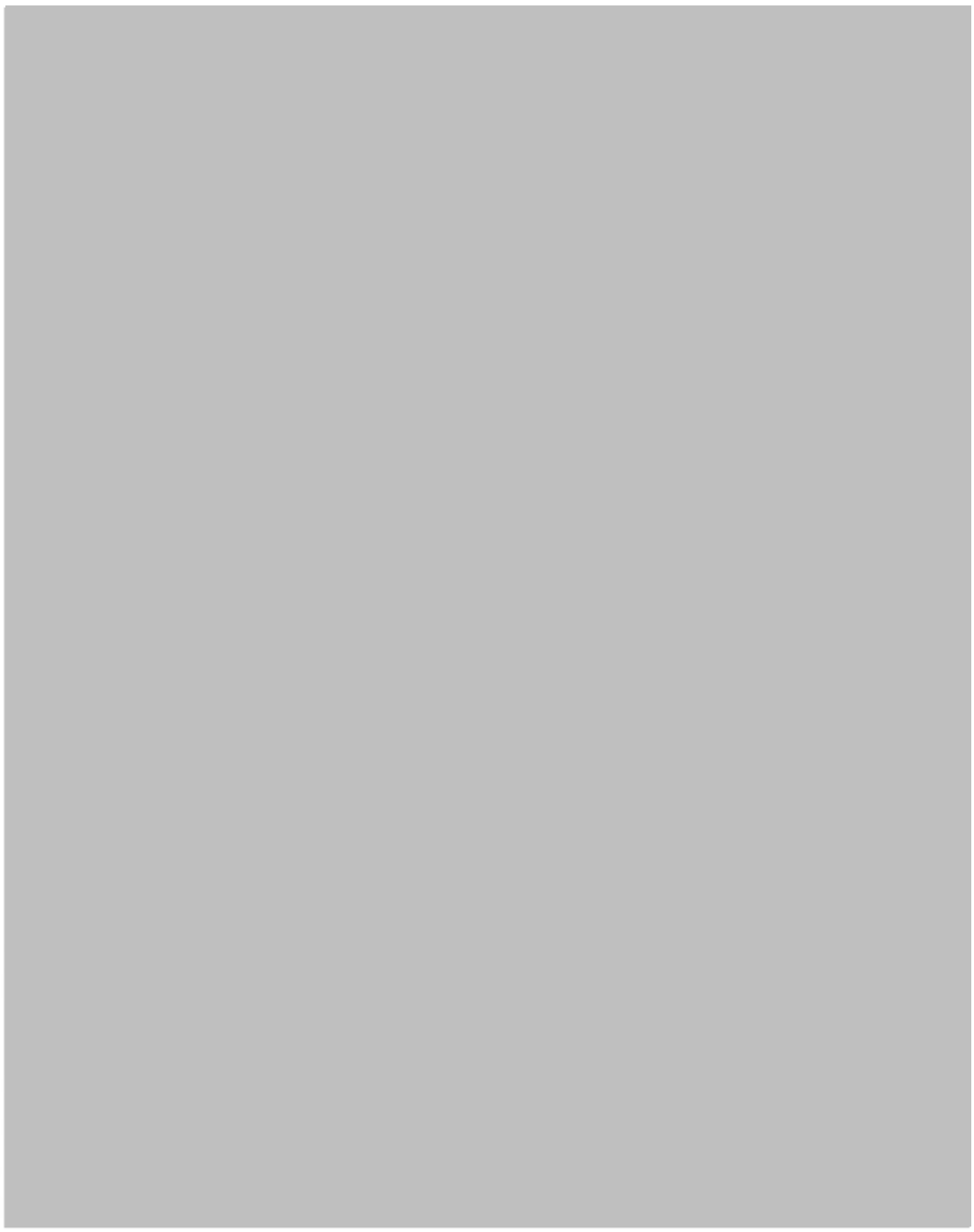


Illustration 3 Following p.103

Ellen Terry as Camma in The Cup

depth in the second act - it was a huge canvas upon which the relatively small figures of the actors stood out, by virtue of their exquisite costumes, in what The Illustrated London News called "lurid relief". Approval of such stagecraft was accompanied by a suspicion that Tennyson had contributed little to the play's success.

If Tennyson played a minor part in the success of The Cup Goethe played even less in that of the Lyceum Faust. Again, the pictorial effects were remarkable, and again their tendency was to throw the major characters into "lurid relief". Joseph and Elizabeth R.Pennell, the future biographers of Whistler, wrote in The Century Magazine on "The Pictorial Successes of Mr Irving's Faust". They dwelt on the scenery and the groupings, "fine not only in themselves but in their harmonious relation to the play":

> For Mr Irving sees himself and Mr Alexander [Faust] not only as the chief characters in the tragedy, but as the principal figures in a picture rich in colour, vigorous in composition.

Irving was for the most part more prominently lit than Alexander, but "their every pose" was "a subject for a painter, and the result of long and careful study"[30]. When the Brocken Scene was introduced, some time after the beginning of the play's run, Clement Scott described in The Illustrated London News the painterly effect of Irving's Mephistopheles:

> He has nothing to say, only to look. His words are immaterial - but in that face there is a world of meaning. No one but an imaginative actor could have conceived such a picture, or overmastered it with such a commanding presence. All the preconceived visions of Manfred and Sardanapulus and Belshazzar pale before this extraordinary scene. In it we detect the weird fancy of Gustave Dore, the splendid daring and invention of John Martin.
>
> (26 December 1885)

Joined to the chorus of praise for the staging were two articles in The Art-Journal by Joseph Hatton, presenting Irving as an artist who used the stage as a canvas. He represented Faust as as "unstageable" work, and defended its episodic treatment at the hands of Wills and Irving - the lover of Goethe can no more complain "than can the student of history when the drama-

tist selects one episode from a reign or an incident in a life for dramatic illustration"[31]. Among the dissenters was Henry James, who considered the Witches' Sabbath "a horror cheaply conceived, and executed with more zeal than discretion", and cared nothing for "the importunate limelight which is perpetually projected upon somebody or something". Irving's sinister nature was "superficial - a terrible fault for an archfiend", and the acting, especially that of Ellen Terry, was grossly inadequate.[32]

The Lyceum Faust was, according to opinion, a worthy illustration or a gross vugarization of an acknowledged masterpiece. The Dead Heart was less open to charges of desecration. Ellen Terry disclosed her opinion of it in a letter to Elizabeth Winter, the critic's wife:

> When we change our programme at the Lyceum we are going to do The Dead Heart - an old Adelphi play by Watts Phillips - the situations of the play are fine (the words are rubbish - "but Hush !!!!!!!!!!!! - we must dissemble) (one or two S's?)...
> 33.

The play's story is that of a young man who is wrongfully imprisoned in the Bastille, and after his release during the Revolution, takes revenge upon those who have wronged him: it resembles A Tale of Two Cities and The Count of Monte Cristo and was perhaps a sign of that revival of Dumas and Dickens heralded by Robert Buchanan. The first act is preceded by a prologue, in which the circumstances of Robert Landry's imprisonment are shown, and then the curtain rises on the taking of the Bastille. Landry is brought out and placed on a gun-carriage, and slowly realises that he has been freed. This, according to The Daily Graphic, was a scene in which "dramatic picturesqueness" attained its "highest level":

> His strange, unearthly utterances add something to the gloom and terror of the position, though it must be confessed that they here go much, as do some of his attitudes and gestures - not to speak of an exaggerated patriarchal beard which, in the limelight, looks blue - rather perilously near to the borderline that separates serious acting from burlesque.
> (5 October 1889)

The text of the scene covers barely four pages and, at a

moderate pace, might be spoken in about five minutes. Landry has some ten or fifteen lines to speak, few of them longer than ten words. In production this became a long scene, as a hostile account by George Moore suggests:

> Mr Irving is brought out, and, in such crazed and dilapidated condition as seventeen years in a dungeon would produce, he lies down in front of the audience, moaning from time to time. Inconceivable as it may seem, he elects to lie there for several minutes, holding the attention of the audience by the help of occasional moans or grunts and furtive grimacing.[34]

Irving lavished the attentions of the Lyceum technical staff, a good deal of money and no little historical research on the play, but it could not be denied that the text was of little account, and was indeed incidental to the actor-manager's true purposes.

Irving became pre-eminent as a stage-manager, being by 1895 "admittedly the finest...in Europe", as The Theatre claimed in its editorial on his knighthood (n.s.xxvi (1895) 1 - 4). It seemed to some that Irving's acting directed attention towards appearance and gesture, and away from his voice:

> He is what is called a picturesque actor; that is, he depends for his effects upon the art with which he presents a certain figure to the eye, rather than upon the manner in which he speaks his part.[35]

Henry James continues with the reflection that Irving is more acceptable in modern drama than in Shakespeare, "because, if we are obliged to sacrifice the text, the less we are obliged to sacrifice the better". If his production methods could be accused of deflecting the audience's interest away from the play, there were consolations. An editorial in The Era on the actor's return from America in 1884 credits Irving with an important reform:

> A cultivated man can now sit through a drama of the Elizabethan period without a shudder at an anachronism. And this is the result of one man's pervading and presiding genius.
> (17 May 1884)

The virtues of Irving's stagecraft were not new ones - his cultivation of ensemble in movement and grouping, and the idea that one man should supervise the entire production were affirmations of the qualities sought by Phelps, Charles Kean and Macready. But unlike Charles Kean, the most lavish and most recently comparable manager, Irving was himself a pictorially effective actor. Lewes described Kean as unable "to let the emotions play in his face", but it is evident that Irving's genius lay in precisely this quarter - judging by Gordon Craig's account of Mathias, he could let the emotions play in the top of his head and his fingers as he bent to untie a bootlace.[36]. Irving conducted meticulous rehearsals of each play on stage, but, according to Ellen Terry, paid little attention to the interpretation of individual parts - he covered his copies of the text with groupings and moves.[37].

The conservatism of the Lyceum repretoire undoubtedly owed much to Irving's melodramatic training - H.Chance Newton attributed his pictorial style to this background - and the appeal of the performance lay to a great extent in the combination of textual simplicity and technical sophistication: he contrived to achieve the breadth and romantic magnetism missing in the Robertsonian school, whilst avoiding the vulgarity of Drury Lane dramas. The display of personality on a grand scale accompanied by "psychological" detail was something original and, in the theatre of the century's last decades, unique. Lyceum audiences were given the visual appeal of Charles Kean and Helen Faucit, together with a dynamism - a "common touch" - derived from melodrama. George Moore thought that Irving substituted appeal to "the sensual instincts" for a more legitimate stimulus to the "imagination", and Shaw, writing to Archer in February 1901 complained:

> Now the whole history of the Lyceum is the history of Herodifying Shakespeare - getting the brains and realism out & the Belsize Park suburban Jewish glamour in.[38]

But Irving had at least made the theatre exciting again, however suspect the cause of the excitement might be. It was kind of excitement that appealed to the new movement in Art -

sensuous, lacking the "educational" pretensions of Charles Kean's play-bills, and making use of the new-found subtleties of colour and psychology. Irving's characters - detached, melancholic, noble minds fallen into sin - were seen in an eerie half-light, or were picked out by limelight from their colourful surroundings. Nothing suggests the visual appeal and the melancholy of the stage-pictures at their best so well as Ellen Terry's description of Eugene Aram. She explains that Irving was fond of using a cedar tree as a symbol of Fate - it appeared in Hamlet, among other plays:

> In Eugene Aram the Fate Tree drooped low over the graves in the churchyard. On one of them Henry used to be lying in a black cloak as the curtain went up on the last act. Not until a moonbeam struck the dark mass did you see that it was a man.[39]

ii. "Macbeth" at the Lyceum, December 1888.

In her autobiography Ellen Terry suggests that Macbeth marked an epoch in the Lyceum regime:

> Macbeth was the most important of all our productions, if I judge it by the amount of preparation and thought that it cost us and by the discussion which it provoked.[40]

Macbeth was Irving's seventh Shakespearean production since he assumed management of the theatre, being preceded by Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, Otello, Romeo and Juliet, Much Ado about Nothing and Twelfth Night. He had played the title role in 1875 during Bateman's management, to a mixed reception - "Mr Irving was not then fully accepted as a Shakespearean actor" reflected The Academy, in anticipation of the forthcoming production (14 July 1888). Henry James found the 1875 performance unimaginative and suggestive of "a very superior amateur" who might benefit from a proper training:

> In declamation he is decidedly flat; his voice is without charm, and his utterance without subtlety.

It was evident that Irving had thought out his part:

> and the interest of his rendering of it lies in seeing a spare, refined man, of an un-histrionic - of a rather sedentary - aspect, and with a thick unmodulated voice, but with a decided sense of

> the picturesque grappling in a deliberate and conscientious manner with a series of great tragic points. This hardly gives the impression of strength, of authority, and it is not for force and natural magic that Mr Irving's acting is remarkable.[41]

In 1875 Irving had the inadequate support of Miss Bateman's Lady Macbeth: in the new production he would be partnered by Ellen Terry. The interpretation of Lady Macbeth was to be a noteworthy feature of the production: the dresses, properties and scenery were to be another.

The play's production was announced in July 1888, for performance in December, and work began on the properties and costumes. M.H.Spielman, in an article in The Magazine of Art (XII (1889) 98-100), claims that forty "skilled 'hands'" were employed in the Lyceum workshops, and that no outside costumiers were involved in the making of the four hundred and eight costumes for subsidiary characters. This number excluded the principals' dresses, and all were designed by George Cattermole. Ellen Terry's dresses were made by Alice Comyns Carr, who described the first, and most important of them in her Reminiscences (1925):

> Mrs Nettleship bought the fine yarn for me in Bohemia - a twist of soft green silk and blue tinsel. I then cut out the patterns from the diagrams in the wonderful costume book of Viollet le Duc, and the yarn was crocheted to match them. When the straight thirteenth century dress with sweeping sleeves was finished it hung beautifully, but we did not think that it was brilliant enough, so it was sewn all over with real green beetle wings, and a narrow border in Celtic designs, worked out in rubies and diamonds, hemmed all the edges. To this was added a cloak of shot velvet in heather tones, upon which great griffins were embroidered in flame coloured tinsel.The wimple, or veil, was held in place by a circlet of rubies, and two long plaits twisted with gold hung to the knees. (pp.211-2)

Spielman's article shows how the brilliance of this design - and of Cattermole's costumes for Macbeth - was set against a sombre background:

> For the most part low tones and sober harmonies prevail throughout the whole mounting of the play, but there are one or two exceptions - Macbeth's second costume, for example, being of heavy bullion-gold damask, hand embroidered with maroon-coloured silk, with sleeves of light blue silk. In the last act, too, the golden armour of the now desperate king is in strong relief against the sadder hues.

Alice Comyns Carr relates that Irving appropriated one of Lady Macbeth's articles of clothing:

> ...when, after the murder of the King, Nell appeared in the balcony wrapped in a vivid, blood-red cloak, Henry turned to me and exclaimed, "That's a wonderful splash of colour"...when the first night came it was he who was wrapped in that scarlet cloak, whilst Nell wore the less striking, though extremely becoming, heather - coloured wrap which I had hurriedly designed at the last moment.
>
> (p.213)

Lady Macbeth, however, stood out most from the "low tones and sober harmonies", and prompted Wilde to his often-quoted remark:

> Judging from the banquet, Lady Macbeth seems an economical housekeeper and evidently patronises local industries for her husband's clothes and the servants' liveries, but she takes care to do all her own shopping in Byzantium.[42]

It was in the dress described by Mrs Comyns Carr that Ellen Terry posed for Sargent's painting, now in the National Portrait Gallery (see illustrations 4 and 5).

The strong contrasts of the staging were accompanied by strongly contrasted performances of the major characters: Irving's Macbeth was guilt-ridden and, to some eyes, ignoble, whilst Ellen Terry's performance was mild and womanly. The controversy over these interpretations evoked all the enmities and dissatisfactions associated with Irving and his company. Truth accused the actor and actress of egocentricity:

> What wonder that a Macbeth evolved from the psychology of the "Newgate Calendar" and a Lady Macbeth based upon purely Pre-Raphaelite principles, should draw the town? It is all based on a splendid principle of inversion. The actor and actress do not work

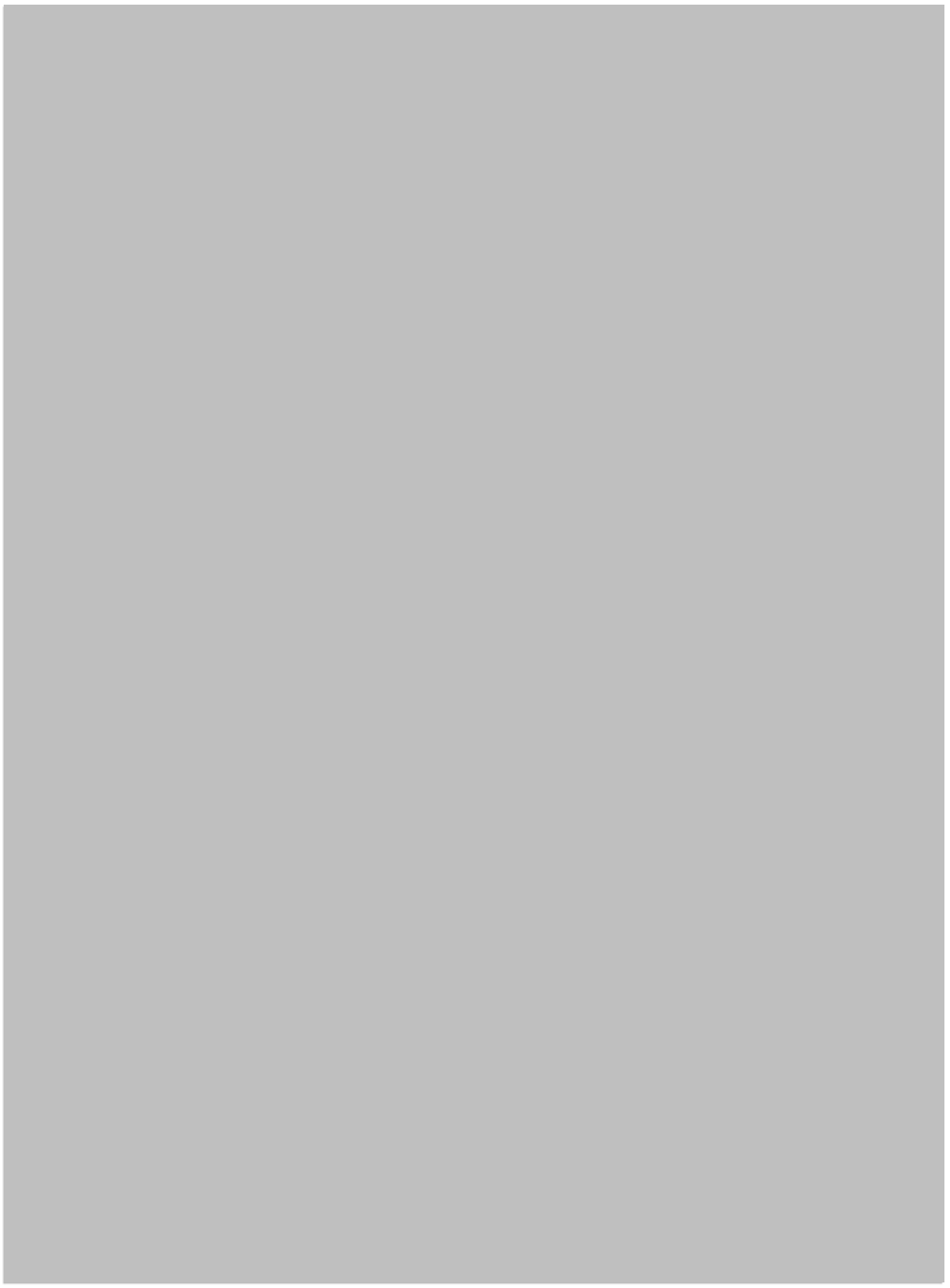


Illustration 4 Following p.110

Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth

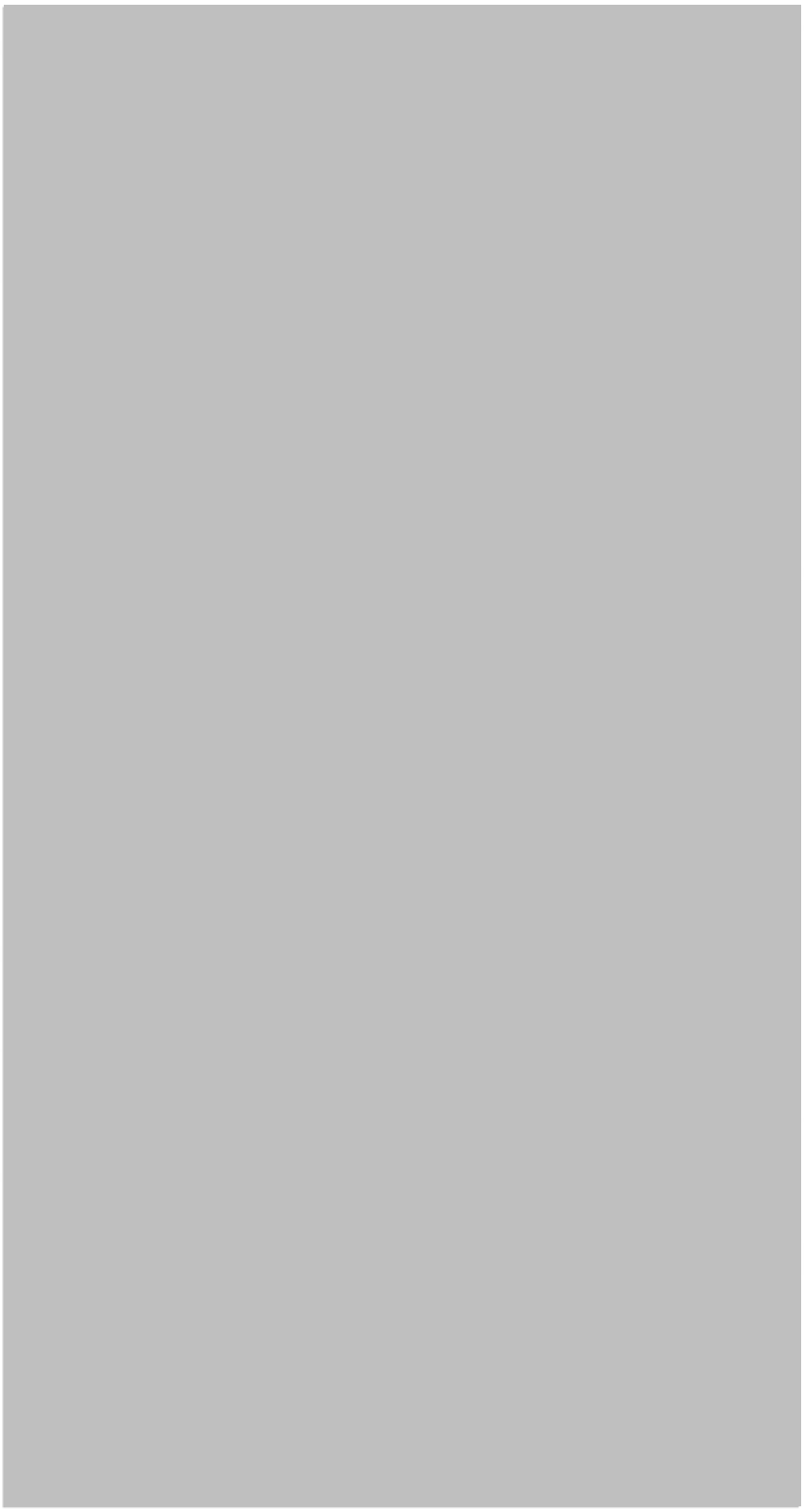


Illustration 5 Following p.110

Sargent, Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth (1888-9)

> up to Macbeth and his wife - they work back to Henry Irving and Ellen Terry - and a very clever proceeding it is...
> (3 January 1889)

The "official" answer to these charges was Joseph Comyns Carr's Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, An Essay (1889). Carr's overall view of the play reflects the Lyceum productions contrasts:

> The whole after-action of the story passes in this darkened and shadowed light: the forms of the principal characters starting out from a background of crime, illumined as by the lurid gleam of a stormy night whose clouds drip blood. (p.14)

In this context is played out "a sublime study of sexual contrast, a superb embodiment of the force and the weakness of the conjugal relation" (p.13). He maintains that man and wife interact and that some sort of Jekyll and Hyde transformation takes place:

> It needed this fatal combination to effect what neither would have accomplished alone - the man's guilty conception poisoning and possessing the woman's soul, the woman's surrender to his will so complete and passionate that when he fails she stands before him as the glittering image of his former self, a superb creation of his own brain, endowed with all, and more than all, the courage he had lost. (pp.26-7)

The clue to the interpretation is held to lie in the two characters' exchange of personality after the banquet scene, she becoming distraught with conscience, he gaining a reckless courage. The view does not account for Irving's Macbeth being fearful from the very beginning, nor for Ellen Terry's being mild all the way through: it seems an unavailing equivocation, rather than a defence of what happened on stage.

A better defence was that published a decade later by Christopher St John (the pseudonym of Christabel Marshall, a close friend of Edy Craig). In Ellen Terry (1899) the interpretation of Lady Macbeth is explained in terms of "nervous force" - a nexquisite and intellectualised criminality, with an androgynous quality appropriate to the "Decadent Movement":

> Crime in its most interesting aspects is made of nerves and steel, not of beef and iron. Not

> a line in this short, great part of Lady Macbeth ...but points to the fact that the partner of Macbeth's greatness and guilt is a woman with the nervous force of a woman, not the hard, beefy strength of demi-men. (p.64)

Of adverse criticisms, perhaps the most balanced was that of The Pall Mall Gazette, whose reviewer found Lady Macbeth a "strangely impressive, subtle, and exquisite character":

> We can well understand that she should turn her husband round her little finger; the difficulty is to explain why she should turn him in the direction of crime.
> (31 December 1888)

Archer, in The World, was able to accept the "clinging and cajoling enchantress", who committed a crime in a trance-like state, and afterwards woke to "pallid anguish and sleepless remorse" - such a process did not, he thought, conflict with Shakespeare's text. Archer found the performance unconvincing, nevertheless, for, despite the fact that the actress's "subtle and enigmatic charm" had never been so strongly felt, her gestures and intonation "became distressing at times...and many of her speeches were given without understanding, or at least without significance" (2 January 1889). The interpretation leant heavily on the support of Ellen Terry's "intensity".

Archer's acceptance of the playing of Macbeth is similarly qualified - "To make a perfect performance, execution must go hand in hand with conception, and Mr Irving's execution lags far behind". But the conception was good:

> He accentuates that side of the character - the nervous or tremulous side - which appeals most directly to his individual temperament; but that is what every actor is not only permitted but compelled to do.

As for the question of Macbeth's cowardice:

> Bravery does not mean insensibility to fear, but the power of conquering it. Macbeth's own account of himself is that he can face the armed rhinoceros or the Hyrcanian tiger without flinching but that the sense of guilt, reinforced by supernatural visitings, unmans him; and with this statement Mr Irving's rendering is quite consistent.

But the obstruction that prevented the actor's success was

the inadequacy of his voice. Archer does not object to the mannerism and mispronunciation which had been criticised in The Fashionable Tragedian, but to the dry, prosaic delivery:

> The fault lies, of course, mainly in the insuperable limitations of Mr Irving's voice, but partly, I cannot help thinking, in his desire to let us see the thought preceding the speech, and to avoid the appearance of spouting a rote-learned lesson.

The result is "a jerkiness of style fatal to the finest beauties of such a part as Macbeth". It seems from Archer's account that a physical depiction of psychological activity was predominating over oral effectiveness in Irving's performance.

During the preparations for the Lyceum Macbeth Percy Fitzgerald compiled for Irving a book of "Notes and Suggestions". The book is now in the Folger Shakespeare Library (Prompt Mac 48 - Shattuck 90). It includes a summary of the play's "three scenic points of attraction - which exhibit Macbeth under different views". These are:

> 1. The Murder Scene - where he is interesting from his hesitation and remorse: 2. The Banquet Scene, where he is conscience stricken and cowed! 3. The scenes with the witches & with the Battle where he is desperate and defiant.
>
> The Banquet Scene however is the grandest of all & from its opportunity for show and crowds & the dramatic, ought to be the central point.

This gives an indication of the priorities of Irving's staging: the central character is to be seen in critical moments, which will coincide with "scenic points of attraction" - crises in his mind will coincide with visually arresting effects.

By reference to the reviews of the production, and to one of the actor's prompt copies (in the Harvard Theatre Collection, 65..-109 - Shattuck 92) it is possible to discern the manner in which Irving incorporated the "crises" into the context of a full production.

After Sullivan's new overture, "thoroughly characteristic and masterly, weird, picturesque, powerful, and impressive" (The Era) the curtain rose on a "desert place", and the strange "crooning" of the witches was heard. Presently their figures

became visible in the lightning which flashed across the scene - according to The Stage, the background of this setting was a "blood-red cloud". Irving cast the witches carefully; Locke's music was discarded and the first Witch was played by Alice Marriott, whose voice came "like an organ across the foot-lights" and proved "how useful was the old school in the matter of voice training" (The Stage). This scene ended with the flight of the witches, and was followed by the bleeding captain's report to Duncan and his retinue: a sequence omitted in Irving's 1875 performance and now wisely restored to provide an indication of Macbeth's normal state of self-possession and bravery.

The third scene returned to the heath, and gave the audience its first sight of Macbeth, "a person of scowling and villainous mien, with a wiry moustache of reddish hue" who seemed to The Times "the last to win the confidence of Duncan". By The Saturday Review he was compared unfavourably with Banquo: the reviewer wondered why Macbeth's superstitious fear of the witches should be so much more intense than that shown by Banquo, and did not consider adequate the explanation that Macbeth had for some time been pondering the murder of Duncan:

> His lined and haggard features, his restless movements, his wild and wandering eye, give him altogether the air of a prey of the Furies at his first entrance upon the scene.

The Era described Macbeth's demeanour as betraying his feelings upon realisation that "his lofty imaginings begin to shape themselves":

> With the greeting of the witches fate points the way; and if chance will have him King, why chance may crown him without his stir. His superstition helps to fire his imagination; nervous excitement sets his whole frame quivering.

The Saturday Review described how these lines ("If chance will have me King...") were "given with a sigh of such relief as is felt only by the irresolute when they see a hope that events may spare them the dreaded necessity of making up their minds". The markings in the Harvard copy suggest an excitement of anticipation rather than of fear - Macbeth must "struggle

to be calm" when the news of Cawdor's death is brought, and the two speeches beginning "Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor -/ The greatest is behind!..." and "Two truths are told"..."are spoken by an "exultant" man. In the ending of the scene Macbeth begins to dissimulate ("hypocrisy" in the margin), and his "Come, friends" is delivered "cheerily" - the second notice in The Saturday Review describes this as "the exact air of a man in command who wishes to conceal his thought", and, in reconsideration of its former unfavourable opinion, claimed this first scene as "the key to a true and noble conception of the character of Macbeth". A scene, like the second scene of Hamlet, which showed the principal character set apart from the others and which relied upon the actor's silent reactions as much as upon any spoken ones, it was entirely suited to Irving's method.

After the short scene in the Palace at Forres came Ellen Terry's first appearance. The set, by Hawes Craven, represented a room in Macbeth's castle, with walls of "solid masonry" in which a large open fireplace was cut downstage on the right. Lady Macbeth read the letter by the light of the embers, at one point gazing on her husband's portrait (The Era). According to The Times she read with satisfaction, rather than surprise, and settled in an arm-chair to ponder the situation. The combination of naturalistic detail and picturesque lighting was characteristic of Irving's stage-management, and his emulators often strove to achieve similar effects. The soliloquy is described in some detail by The Times reviewer. "Yet I do fear thy nature" was spoken in "an affectionate, half-regretful tone, as if speaking of some too-generous-minded person who did not sufficiently study his own interests"; "Hie thee hither..." was a joyous and affectionate exclamation, and the actress appeared throughout "a gentle, affectionate wife, wrapped up in her husband". Even "unsex me here" betrayed "a manifest effort to repress her feminine instincts, her voice faltering at the more terrible passages". The same witness reports that Irving gave the usually innocent line "Tomorrow, as he purposes" a "curiously sinister meaning", and averting his eyes, uttered them "with an affected indifference that obviously covers a guilty thought". The prompt copy indicates

a reaction of "horror" to Lady Macbeth's "O, never/ Shall sun that morrow see!", and the interjection "Ha!" at her suggestion that his face is a book where men may read strange matters. At the end of her speech is the direction "Pause, look at her" before "We will speak further", and at the end of the scene is a note "go dejectedly - then hold out arm - put round her & go together". It is a curious reminder of the end of Act One, Scene Three, with Macbeth again fearing to disclose his feelings, and leaving the stage with the other characters, as if for some kind of security.

The next scene, Duncan's arrival at Inverness, was remarkable for its setting. The Times expressed some doubt that Irving might not have staged the play too much in a gloomy half-light, and found that a sense of mystery was not enhanced by the "beams of limelight that occasionally follow[ed] the principal performers." But in this scene, with its torches and "Macbeth's dark and frowning castle" in the background, the scheme justified itself. The Stage gave a fuller description:

> It is close on night, and the dark, sombre building is lighted up from within, while from its gate enter the servants and attendants with torches, awaiting the arrival of Duncan with his friends and soldiers. The latter make their entrance up from the valley to the left of the ground upon which the castle stands, and are met by Lady Macbeth, who conducts her "honoured guest" up to the building and through an avenue of servants bearing torches.

The lighting of the scene solely by torches does not appear to have been possible, and the use of limelights to give adequate visibility to the performers resulted in some anomalies. The Pall Mall Gazette, like The Times, objected to the arbitrary placing of these supplementary light-sources, and thought them reminiscent of "Adelphi melodrama". The "unaccountable beams of light" were reminders that Irving's pictorial sense was the product of his stage career, as much as any extraordinary appreciation of artistic principles of composition.

In the soliloquy that followed - "If it were done..." - Irving again used naturalistic detail, leaning on a pillar at the lines "But in these cases/ We still have judgement

here", and folding his arms at "He's here in double trust". A "great change" is indicated in the Harvard copy at the lines:

> I have no spur
> To prick the sides of my intent, but only
> Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
> and falls on the other side.

With Lady Macbeth's entrance the scene becomes a further exploration of their relationship, reflected in the physical reactions of the two characters. The prompt copy indicates a "sigh" in response to Lady Macbeth's "Know you not, he has?" and Macbeth's next speech - "We will proceed no further in this business..." - is"quick!" During Lady Macbeth's "low and amazed" remonstrations ("Was the hope drunk/ Wherein you dressed yourself?") Macbeth crossed to the stage left and sat down, to jump up with "prithee peace! . At the end of the scene, Lady Macbeth is "pettish and seemingly annoyed":

> Who dares receive it other,
> As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
> Upon his death?

But when, after a pause and a silent look, Macbeth agrees to the plan, "she places both hands on his shoulders admiringly". They leave the stage by separate doors, stage right and left, but "she goes off L[eft] & returns hastily to R[ight] door as curtain falls".

The first scene of Irving's second act is made up of the first three scenes of Act Two, the fourth scene (Ross, the Old Man and Macduff) being omitted. The scene was the courtyard of the castle, roofed over and with a balcony at the back. A "heavy staircase" came down on the left, whilst on the right winding stone steps led round a butress to Duncan's room and that of the grooms (The Stage). The Pall Mall Gazette complained again of anomalies in the lighting, for the only visible source of light was a "single pendant lamp", and Irving, having roofed in the yard, "was forced to have recourse to a strong shaft of lime-light obviously proceeding from nowhere at all". When the alarm was raised, the stage suddenly filled with attendants casting "over all...the lurid, smoky light from many torches" (The Stage). In The Era the servants are described

as having pale faces, and in the first notice of The Saturday Review the act-ending is praised as "one of the most exciting and successful feats of scenic illusion ever achieved upon the stage". To a number of observers it seemed that the degeneration in Macbeth had begun too early:

> The climax of physical tension is surely reached when Macbeth staggers to the foot of the winding staircase leading to Duncan's chamber; and here, thanks to Mr Irving's unrivalled mastery of the terrible, his acting could not be surpassed.

But The Saturday Review thought the sustaining of this mood incongruous, and censured Irving's delivery of the apostrophe to sleep "in the broken and gasping accents of a man under the influence of mortal affright". Archer noted that Irving excelled "in most of the conversational passages, and in such speeches as the dagger soliloquy, where the verse is, so to speak, short-winded and hesitating". He was "sadly to seek" in passages requiring "melodious smoothness or rushing resonance". According to The Pall Mall Gazette, Irving's delivery of the dagger soliloquy was good until he reached the line "There's no such thing". At this point the prompt copy indicates a "long sigh":

> It is a bloody business which informs
> Thus to mine eyes.

Irving looked "again and again" to make sure the dagger was no longer visible.

The Saturday Review noticed that Ellen Terry delivered "Had he not resembled/My father as he slept..." in a tone that conveyed almost an "impatient contempt for her own weakness", and that this, the one line of tenderness in most performances of the part, had become the cruelest in the new reading.[44] After the discovery of the crime, Lady Macbeth fainted and was carried out ("Help me hence, ho!" - "Look to the lady!") and the act-ending was rearranged, to conclude with Macbeth's proposal to meet and investigate the murder, rather than with the plans of Donalbain and Malcolm to flee. Like many nineteenth century "curtains" the effect of this alteration is static: the original emphasizes the movement

of events, by the urgency of the decision to escape - the new version leaves the audience with the picture of Macbeth, confirmed in his kingship and exercising an easy hypocrisy.

The version's third act consisted of the first two and the fourth scene of the original: the murder of Banquo, Hecate's scene and the dialogue between Lennox and "A Lord" were omitted. So, two fairly brief scenes prepare for the banquet scene, which ends the act. The first, after Banquo's departure, deals with Macbeth's employment of the Murderers. The second is his conversation with Lady Macbeth. The prompt copy has detailed notes for their movements, which are restless and anxious. When Lady Macbeth enters she goes to her husband and makes him sit down. He sits, and puts his hand in hers. "We have scotch'd the snake, not killed it" is spoken through the teeth, and Macbeth sighs when he mentions sleep ("and sleep/ In the affliction of these terrible dreams/ That shake us nightly") Lady Macbeth "shudders" in response, and Macbeth gets to his feet and begins to walk up and down. She comes to comfort him ("Come on"). Macbeth revives a little at the idea of Banquo and Fleance being assailable, and "laughs". When his wife asks what is to be done he pauses, and says "Ha!"-

> Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
> Till thou applaud the deed.

The first line and the end of the sentence are marked by a kiss, and, smiling, Macbeth goes upstage. With passion he continues:

> Come, seeling night,
> Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
> And with thy bloody and invisible hand
> Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
> Which keeps me pale. Light thickens, and the crow
> Makes wing to th' rooky wood.

Since the line "O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!" Macbeth has been speaking quickly: now he pauses, before the final five lines, speaks them, and leaves quickly. Lady Macbeth, as the curtain falls "drops head-standing alone". Again, the state of Macbeth's mind is shown in terms of his physical behaviour towards his wife: the scene begins with her attempts to comfort him, and his rekindled optimism gives him a certain independence from her.

The next stage in the development came at the end of the banquet scene. The general effect of the setting was decribed in The Stage:

> The King and Lady Macbeth are seated down left, while up the stge from right to left are the guests seated at huge tables. Servants hurry to and fro, assisting, and, while a page and maid are waiting upon Lady Macbeth, Macbeth himself leans to one side and hears the murderer from behind the arras tell him of the death of Banquo and the escape of Fleance.
> (see illustration 6)

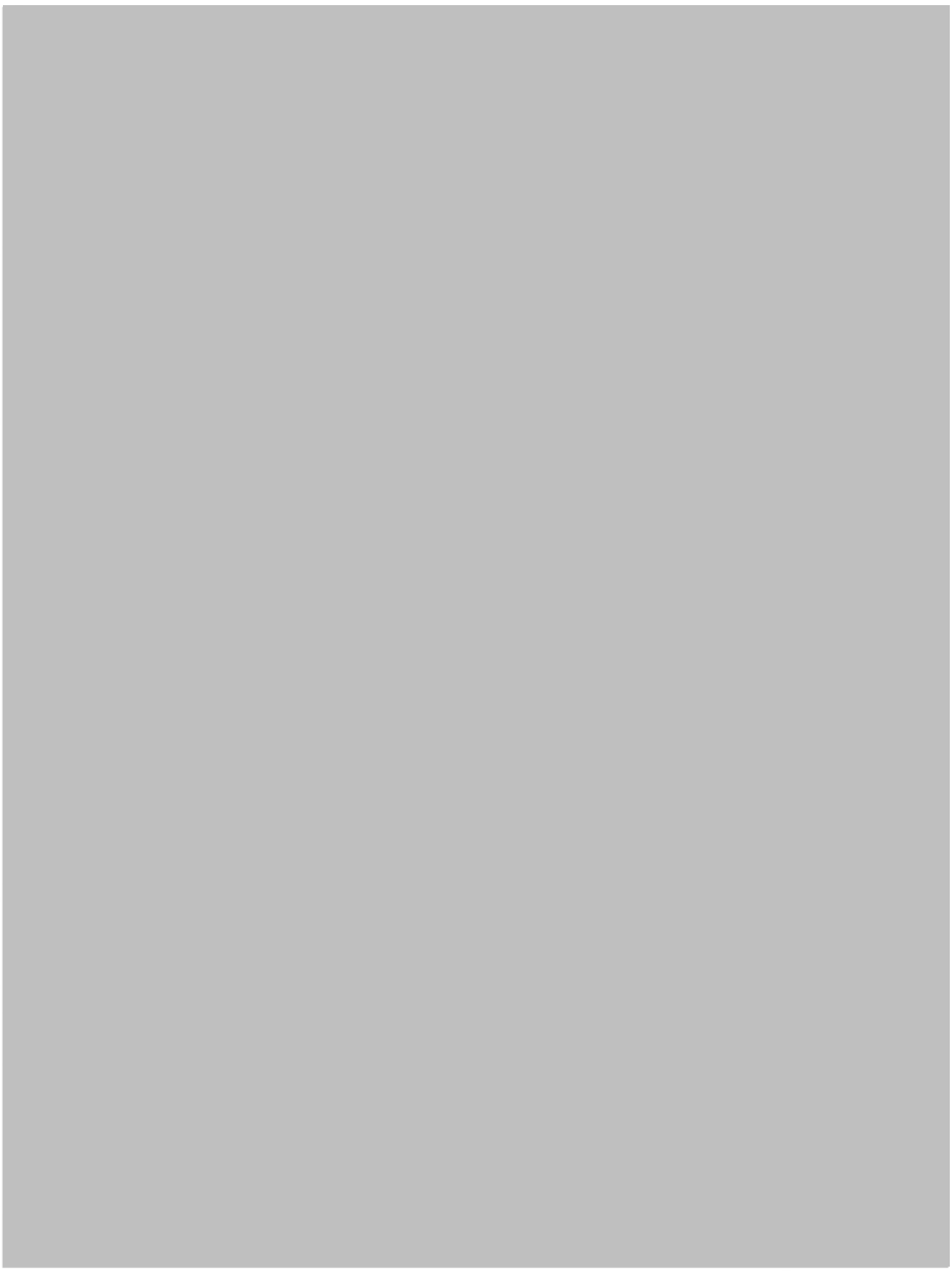
The ghost rose from a trap, and the lights were lowered to accompany (and partially conceal) his appearance. A number of critics objected to this, among them Archer, who thought it unrealistic and clumsy. The Pall Mall Gazette found this blunder "bewildering and destructive to all illusion", and suggested that Banquo's ghost should be seen in the full light of the banqueting hall. In the course of the run the lighting was altered..

Irving's copy shows an almost hysterical attempt on Macbeth's part to maintain some semblance of dignity, degenerating into a desperate pretence at joking in the lines:

> Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
> If charnel houses and our graves must send
> Those that we bury back, our monuments
> Shall be the maws of kites.

After "If I stand here, I saw him" there was an uneasy pause, and another before "Blood hath been shed ere now". Meanwhile the guests felt "instinctive terror in presence of something", and by the ghost's second disappearance and Macbeth's "Why so; being gone/ I am a man again". they were beginning to leave, as Macbeth walked up and down, "very agitated". When they had left, Macbeth threw himself down and Lady Macbeth, who until now had avoided trying to comfort him in their presence, went to him. Graham remembered "the dull hopelessness of Ellen Terry's voice as she mechanically answered Macbeth's "What is the night?"...while from her throne she watched the chill dawn-light creep into the hall of feasting.[45] The act ended with a tableau:

> The act-drop slowly descending shows Macbeth



. Illustration 6

Following p.120

> fairly giving way under the mental strain to which he has been subjected, and the bold, bad wife who had dismissed the guests with courtly grace, sinking at his feet...It is a picture of absolute despair, that almost moves to pity for the blood-stained actors in it.
> (The Era)

The Stage adds to this the details of Macbeth's falling against the wall as he tried to leave the hall, and his wife's falling at his feet, "sobbing, catching at his garment". Previous tableaux had suggested one partner or the other in better spirits: now both were equally despondent.

The Harvard prompt copy divides the acts of the play according to season: a cycle completes itself by the end of the third act, and a lapse of years divides it from the fourth, where a note suggests "Change all Beards". Act Five is summer and Act Six autumn, whilst the last scene of all takes place at sunset. Irving's fourth act consists of the original Act Four's first scenes (the witches); his fifth act uses Act Four, Scene Three and Act Five, Scene One; the sixth has the second, third, fourth and fifth scenes of the play's final act.

Irving's fourth act was set in a cavern, where Hecate appeared, to command the witches' pains, equipped with an electrically-lit headdress. The Era compared the effects to those of the Brocken scene in Faust:

> The figure of Macbeth on a rocky eminence stands out bold and picturesque against the lurid sky, and while the hell broth steams, and the spectres rise, there is heard in tuneful chorus the witches' chant "Black spirits and white", while later, the scene is changing to a Scotch lake, beneath a stormy sky, the stage is filled with Hecate's host who, waving their arms, break forth with the beautifully melodic chorus, "Come away", and bring down the curtains...

The Stage gave a description which adds some details - the cauldron was set in a rock, Hecate's head-dress took the form of a star, and the eight kings were seen "as walking in a steam-cloud":

> The second tableaux is heralded by the voice of witches singing, and as the scene is disclosed, we find what appear to be hundreds of grey-draped spirits wandering about with uplifted arms in a sort of valley, while far above

> to the back a grand effect is obtained by means of an extraordinary bit of sky that must be seen to be understood, so wild and frenzied is its appearance.

Sullivan's music received considerable praise and was greeted on the opening night with some enthusiasm. The Times devoted an entire column to the score, of which it regarded this fourth act as the most important passage. The words of the witches' dialogue were declaimed to the music, rather than spoken or sung, and the orchestra was hidden, after the manner of Bayreuth.

> The incantation is introduced by an andante maestoso of a singularly weird character, and that character is well sustained throughout the scene. As each apparition rises from the cauldron the strains of the orchestra emphasize its nature in an individual and striking manner.

The critic was reminded by the first chorus of The Golden Legend, but did not approve of the conclusion to the act, which seemed reminiscent (as "operatic, evil-tongued" persons might object) of H.M.S.Pinafore. Sullivan and Irving were called before the curtain at the end of the act, in true operatic fashion.

Such an elaborate episode might seem out of place in the context of Irving's carefully worked-out development of Macbeth's psychology, but it was in some respects consistent with his approach to the play. It conformed to his presentation of the hero's mental crises against a background of visual effects, as a more elaborate equivalent of the "significant" tableaux at the end of important scenes. It was in keeping with his policy of combining all the arts, in a Gesamtkunstwerk whose Wagnerian affinities were emphasized by its use of the most advanced technical apparatus (steam, electric lighting, "transformations") and the concealment of the orchestra. This overall artistic policy and Irving's personal, pictorial technique as an actor were complementary. It was, moreover, a new departure, for the witches were played by actresses rather than actors, and the music attributed to Locke had been discarded. The opinion of The Times was representative of the

majority of its contemporaries in expressing no regret at the passing of the traditional settings:

> Locke...lived in the age of the Restoration, which, although little removed from Shakespeare by length of time, knew less of his spirit than does the 19th century. The melodies and harmonics, the instrumentation and the vocal writing do not lack a certain rugged force, but they are wanting in those subtleties of workmanship and of emotion which are the birthright of the modern composer.

Irving, ever represented as an innovator, was now credited with having brought Macbeth into the music-theatre of the Romantics.[46]

Although the scene might be excused on the grounds suggested above, the arrangement of the text within it presents considerable problems. In Irving's version, as in Shakespeare's, the apparitions are followed by the arrival of Lennox, and by the usurper's business-like preparations for the murder of Macduff's wife and children: the original scene-ending is brisk -

> But no more sights! - Where are these gentlemen?
> Come, bring me where they are.

This is retained in Irving's text, and followed by the transformation, and the chorus "Come away", which can only appear as an appendage designed for the audience's pleasure. Such a conclusion would seem to weaken the play and, unlike most of Irving's scene-endings, focus attention not upon the central character but upon the general forces at work in the drama. Irving obviously enjoyed suggesting the presence of such forces - as witness the "Fate tree" - but they were for the most part used in direct connection with the character he played, and not indulged for their own sake. In Macbeth the forces seen at work were time (in the changing seasons and hours) and supernatural evil, but in this gigantic tableau of the fourth act Macbeth must have seemed almost insignificant, a figure included only to show the scale of the background, like the unfortunate victims of the apocalypses painted by John Martin.

After an interval, and the "charming picture of an English country lane" (The Era) in which Macduff's grief was seen came the sleepwalking scene. Lady Macbeth appears alone, watched

by the Doctor and the Gentlewoman and unsupported by Macbeth. If, as has been suggested above, Irving emphasized the importance of the physical contact and mutual comforting on the part of Macbeth and his wife, this scene would appear to have had a special significance in his production. It certainly lent itself to Ellen Terry's faculty for expressive gesture - according to The Times:

> While Miss Terry walks in her sleep she holds the house in a state of absolute, almost painful, stillness: her face is haggard and worn, her eyes have a far away look, and as she soliloquizes, her body sways to and fro in a strangely awe-inspiring fashion...After the actress's withdrawal, the house recovers itself with an effort, as if it had been hypnotised.

The Saturday Review was similarly impressed, and noticed that "the recapitulation of the actual scene" of the murder was done "with just that air of reality which carries with it conviction without a touch of brutality". Archer found the scene inadequate - "she looked it to admiration, but did little more" - while The Stage, admitting that the actress looked "a beautiful picture, the conception of a poetic mind", thought that the "white clinging garments and pain-strained face" called for "admiration rather than pity and awe". Gordon Craig, in Ellen Terry and her Secret Self (1931), suggested a reason for the ineffectiveness of the scene:

> ...you did not shudder at the thought beneath the words: "The Thane of Fife had a wife - where is she now?" you only felt: "Poor Ellen Terry - she is so sorry for the Thane of Fife's wife, and is wondering where she can possibly be now, poor, poor dear. What a nice woman."
>
> (p.159)

Not every critic may have felt the filial sympathy of Craig for his mother, but there was obviously some connection between the effects of her pictorial style and the "mild" interpretation of the character. Other actresses could impress by their silent appearance in this scene, and "lay hold of" the audience's "very souls", as an admirer once wrote to Helen Faucit[47], but the feeling aroused by Ellen Terry in such scenes - even that in The Cup - was one of warm sympathy and attraction, rather than pity qualified by awe-struck respect.

The short scene which began the sixth act of the new version was Shakespeare's Act Five, Scene Two, in which the audience learns from Caithness and Menteith of Macduff's approach. In the next scene Macbeth appeared for the first time since the interval of seventeen years - at his death, wrote the critic of The Times, he was "visibly an old man... his grey hair dishevelled, floating wildly in the wind". His death in the final scene had a wild, despairing bravery in it: after a "last weary, impotent effort to kill his adversary by flinging his dagger at him" (The Stage) he died, face down to hide his shame. The most memorable scene remained the first of the act - The Era described his delivery of "I have lived long enough; my May of life /Is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf..." as "eloquent of hopelessness and life-weariness". He was "the picture of weariness and utter despair". The prompt copy indicates that Macbeth's reaction to the messenger's hasty entrance - "The Devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!" - was laughter: he treated the man's fear as a joke. Then the messenger's insistence,

...What soldiers, whey-face?

Servant
The English force, so please you.

was followed by a pause. After "Take thy face hence" was another pause, whilst the officers looked at one another. Macbeth called for Seyton, speaking "I have lived long enough" with a deep sigh, and Seyton's report that "all is confirmed" was followed by yet another pause. Then "action first", as Macbeth leapt up -

I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.

The effect of this was to be "shattering". Archer thought the dialogue between Macbeth and the Doctor to be Irving's "best elocutionary effort" in the play. The scene ended with Macbeth's exit, and the Doctor's couplet, "Were I from Dunsinane away and clear/Profit again would hardly draw me here", was, as usual, omitted. At the end of the play only Macduff's "Hail, King, for so thou art... Hail, King of Scotland!" and the soldiers' echo of it followed Macbeth's death.

.....

Macbeth was in continuous performance from its opening on December 29, 1888 to June 26 of the following year: for a short period in January the title role was taken by Hermann Vezin, whilst Irving recovered from an attack of laryngitis. In a final notice, published on July 6, The Saturday Review acclaimed the production as "a unique work of formative art" in which

> the scenery was an excellent subsidiary, and nothing more, and played neither more nor less than the same part as did the picturesque dresses of the actors.

This was praise for the visual ensemble, but begged the question as to what place the text occupied in the total effect. Irving always maintained that visual effects were subordinated to the aims of the dramatist. In the preface to the published edition of his Macbeth version, he re-affirmed the principle which, he said, had "always guided" him:

> namely, that to meet the requirements of the stage, without sacrificing the purpose or the poetry of the author, should be the aim of those who produce the plays of Shakespeare.[48]

It was not a view which many contemporaries were inclined to dispute. The reservations of Archer's account of the production were concerned with the precision with which visual effects were obtained and with the interpretation of the major characters, but the basic premises - that the play should be presented as a succession of stage-pictures composed about the figures of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Irving was not unjustly regarded as an innovator by his contemporaries - he brought melodramatic techniques to the playing and staging of Shakespeare, he maintained a complete control over the entire production of each play in his repertoire, and he continually sought new "points" and new business in his own performances. His ideals and methods were, in due time, superseded - Sidney Lee, by no means a revolutionary, included the Lyceum management among those which had treated Shakespeare as a provider of "tasteless and colourless commodities" which only came to life when "reinforced by the independent arts of music and painting"[49]. Lee was writing in

1912, and had witnessed the work of Poel and Harley Granville-Barker: despite his suspicion of Poel's extreme bareness of staging, he was no longer happy to accept a realistic mode which constantly reminded spectators of its artificial skills, and which reduced drama "to the level of the cinematograph"[50].

But Irving's methods of production, however outmoded, had contributed to the new movement in the theatre. Craig admired the actor-manager's authority and the artistic unity of his work, as is clear from his short account of it in Henry Irving (1930). He might reject the realism and the concentration on one or two central characters, but the abstract qualities of the Lyceum settings influenced his own monumental conceptions. Ellen Terry noticed this, and remarked in her autobiography that Craig's set for the church-scene in the 1903 Much Ado About Nothing shared qualities of "vastness and spaciousness" with the temple of Artemis in The Cup.[51] There was also a similarity between Irving's tendency towards non-literary effects and Craig's ambitions - "the theatre", he wrote in the first dialogue On the Art of the Theatre, "must not forever rely upon having a play to perform, but must in time perform pieces of its own art"[52].

The next step was the establishment of a new figure in the theatre, the independent director, who neither wrote nor acted in the plays to be performed. The actor, the manager and the author were already pressing their claims to be the supervisor of the theatrical event, and by the eighteen-eighties a fourth contender was beginning to assert himself: the designer.

Chapter Two

SCENE PAINTER, DESIGNER AND DIRECTOR - THE WORK OF GODWIN AND LOCKFIELD.

An undistinguished but commercially successful response to Wilson Barrett's 1884 production of Hamlet was the Gaiety burlesque Very Lit le Hamlot by William Yardley, first given on 29 November 1884. The mood of cheerful philistinism, in which the new staging was mocked, was established at the beginning of the piece by a chorus of courtiers celebrating the royal marriage ("Wolf the ale and the cakes - Shout hip, hip, hooray") and by their scornful reception of two comic pedants, the Hon. Lewes Rosencrenz (sic) and J.W.Guildenstern, F.S.A. The pair introduce themselves as antiquarian advisers:

> We're here to guarantee the play,
> Archaeologically all O.K.

They have little to do in Yardley's minimal plot, and at the end, when they take exception to the unwarranted reconciliation between Hamlet and Claudius, the royal majesty of Denmark orders them to "Shut up!"[1].

The Hon. Lewis Wingfield and Edward William Godwin, F.S.A., were the two most prominent representatives of a new breed, the archaeological supervisor of theatrical productions. No "outsiders" had enjoyed as much influence with managements since Planché, and it was arguable that the powers entrusted to them exceeded those given to their distinguished predecessor. Both wished to exercise control over all aspects of the productions upon which managers engaged them, and Godwin was the more articulate of the two. In his work as an interior decorator and furniture-designer he sought to combine these functions with practice as an architect: in the words of his obituary in The British Architect, he "forever pleaded for a greater reconciliation between the decorative and constructive arts" (15 October 1886). His ambitions with regard to the production of plays were similar.

.....

Godwin was born in 1833, and did not do any significant work in the professional theatre until 1875, when he advised Bancroft in his production of The Merchant of Venice at the Prince of Wales Theatre. The first production in which he was professionally concerned - for which, that is, he was paid a fee - was John Coleman's King V, at the Queen's theatre in September 1876.

Between 1874 and 1875 Godwin had printed in The Architect a series of articles on "The Architecture and Costume of Shakespeare's Plays" (31 October 1874 - 26 June 1875). The main subject of this series is the documentation of the dress and furniture designs of the periods appropriate to the plays, but two theoretical assumptions emerge: archaeology is always to be put at the service of a well-developed aesthetic sense, and accuracy in matters of historical fact will in almost every case lead to an aesthetically pleasing stage picture. Moreover, the productions of Charles Kean, hitherto the ne plus ultra of stage-management and historical accuracy, must be recognised as being superseded by recent advances in knowledge and techniques:

> I refrain from comparisons, but I will venture thus far and say that, when a theatrical manager proposes to produce for the public a play of such a king amongst men as Shakespeare, it would become him to reflect on the great progress of knowledge among his audience since the days of Kemble and even the younger Kean.

Recent productions have assembled "a series of the most foolish and inane pictures the historian's art has to show us", and have been a discredit to the stage (31 October 1874) - it should be noted that Godwin never doubted that a reincarnated Shakespeare would approve of his endeavours or endorse his theories.

It was unfortunate that after the qualified success of The Merchant of Venice, Godwin should become involved with a manager as inept and vulgar as Coleman. Coleman's imagination was similar to that of Charles Kean, but by 1876 it was beginning to appear a little out of fashion. His Henry V was conceived as a series of grand tableaux, accompanied by excerpts from Shakespeare and explained by a programme only slightly less long-winded than the playbills issued by Charles Kean. There were twenty-nine scene-changes and the choruses were spoken by Miss Leighton as Clio, the Muse of History, who introduced such illustrative tableaux as "An Orgie [sic] in the Dauphin's Tent". The device and its setting (a neo-classical "Temple of History") were derived from Kean's production. Less didactic and completely inexcusable, was the inclusion of two "Grand Incidental Ballets" representing "The Falcon Chase" and "The Twelve Angels" and choreographed by M.Leon Espinosa, to music by Mr Isaacson, who

had the honour of arranging the Music upon the occasion of the last production of this piece in London by Mr Charles Kean". On the first night, September 16, an inaugural address was spoken by Miss Leighton, warning the audience in an entirely appropriate manner:

> Tonight, ye come to see strange pageants pass
> Obscurely in a great Magician's glass.[2]

"The Entire Archaeology of the Play has been under the superintendence of Mr E.W.Godwin, F.S.A." figures prominently amongst the credits in a programme embellished with vignettes of Shakespeare and his characters, and set in a multitude of ornamental type-faces. To add the crowning laurels of legitimacy upon Coleman's brow, Samuel Phelps was to play Henry IV in a prologue cobbled together from parts of Henry IV, Part Two. Odell, tolerant of display, observes that this would seem to have been an "absurd" production, and that "one act of Phelps hardly make up for four of Coleman", and contemporary opinion bears him out in this conjecture.[3]

One of Godwin's most interesting talents was that of perceiving absurdity in theatrical performances: he had exercised it publicly in his Bristol days, in a controversy over the standards of staging and casting at the Theatre Royal[4]. It is not surprising that he should have found himself ill at ease working for Coleman. His wish to disassociate himself from the production was expressed in an article, "Henry V, a Theatrical Experience" published in the isuue of The Architect for 30 September 1876. It is a bitter and unhappy attack upon the unco-operative and obtuse colleagues he found at the Queen's Theatre:

> It is not merely the costumier and the wardrobe women who look on the antiquary whom the manager consults as an intruder to be resisted, even the scene-painter, whose knowledge of mediæval art is of course boundless, will scarcely even listen to any mere antiquary, or deign to explain to him the reasons for the adoption of forms and combinations unknown to those whose study of the subject has only been life-long, and whose drawings from the architecture, sculpture, painting, or other arts of the past have only been faithful transcripts, wholly unattractive by the side of those delightfully coloured studies for the stage that are superior to details and regardless of centuries.

The solution of this unedifying situation is a review of the qualifications required of stage-managers:

> No doubt dresses, like scenery, require rehearsal before well-versed archaeologists and artists if actors wish to be natural and at ease, and perhaps the time is not far off when this desirable attention may be given to the details of historic pictures on or off stage. This is entirely a matter of time and stage-management. By securing a week for full dress rehearsals, and by engaging men more cultured than those who now endeavour but are wholly incapable to fill the position of stage manager or assistant stage manager, the stage may easily be made complete.

There were, no doubt, failures of tact on both sides, but it took the intractable Coleman to bring Godwin to the realisation that his position in any professional theatre must be a precarious one, and that until it was consolidated he could do little of value.

In the years that followed, Godwin pursued a number of paths towards the theatre. He undertook more engagements to "advise" or "supervise" the presentation of plays under London managements; he remained an assiduous playgoer, often annotating his programme in a manner suggestive of the Bristol controversy, and of Bernard Shaw's attacks on Daly and Augustus Harris. He became manager of the Pastoral Players, a society patronised by Lady Archibald Campbell and financed partly by subscriptions, partly by the sale of seats at its performances, and partly by its noble patroness. He also continued work as an architect and designer of decorations and furnishings, preparing and supervising the execution of schemes for the interiors of Whistler's and Oscar Wilde's houses. Of these activities, the Pastoral Players and the architecture have attracted most attention - the former most notably in John Stokes's book Resistible Theatres. Godwin's dealings with the fashionable professional theatre have received no full examination, save for Meerwyn Merchant's study of the 1874 Merchant of Venice.[5]

Godwin's next major venture after the disastrous Henry V was in 1879, when he produced Othello for a one-week season at Sadlers Wells. The title role was played by Charles Warner, an actor famous for his melodramatic parts more than for

"legitimate" ones, and Iago was taken by Hermann Vezin, a Philadelphian long since absorbed into the British theatre and proud possessor of a degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Vezin was indeed considered to be inordinately proud of his unusual qualification, but he was dedicated to the advancement of literary drama and his name occurs often in the casts of unusual or adventurous productions. In 1887 he played Count Cenci in the Shelley Society's daring production of the poet's play, and in the Pastoral Players' open-air As You Like It, in 1884 and 1885, he played Jaques. From Godwin's notebooks in the Department of Prints and Drawings of the Victoria and Albert Museum can be judged the kind of attention paid by the designer to the staging and, more significantly, acting of the play. In addition to costume sketches are some notes on Vezin's acting in Act III: Othello's "Leave me" at II.3.244 is "too high and scolding tone", and Iago's "God buy you" at 379, when he is sarcastically offering his resignation, since honesty is become vice, is "too flippant after such passion as Othello". Gesture and tone are criticised and suggested in notes which resemble many jotted down by Godwin on programmes, scraps of paper, and pages in the note-books[6]. A similar note on the Sadler's Wells Macbeth in the same year, with which Godwin does not seem to have been involved, observes

> large plaid on Vezin makes him look smaller than he otherwise would.[7]

Godwin may not at this stage have been giving these notes to the actors involved, but the nature of his approach to what would now be termed "directing" is evident.

The programmes and playbills among the Godwin Papers in the Victoria and Albert Museum's Enthoven Collection are covered with such observations. Why, in the first act of Forget-Me-Not at the Prince of Wales's in April 1880, was the lamp lit "with St. Peter's Rome in full sunlight" visible through the open window? And why did a female character in the same play wear a velvet dress in such supposedly hot weather? In the "Grand Romantic Ballet D'Action" Hawaia or the Burning Gulf at the

Alhambra Theatre in December 1880 three of the principals were too stout. The programme for Masks and Faces (Haymarket, January 1881) is covered with memoranda of the mistakes made in a production whose archaeological details were under Wingfield's care - Godwin wrote a letter to a newspaper to complain of these inaccuracies. When bored, he drew designs, such as the swords with different hilts which appear on a programme for Clemency, or the Power of Love (by Hugh Marston, after Augier's Diane) at the Park Theatre, Camden Town on February 21, 1881. Some of the notes offer information of a different kind, such as a description of Mercutio's "laugh ah ah to begin" in the Court Theatre production of 1881 (with Mme Modjeska) as "like Whistler".

The programmes of the Meiningen Company's 1881 visit to Drury Lane are especially interesting. Together with a sketch of the assassination scene in Julius Caesar are "Phosphorescence sweeping by no thunder and lightening ever so real" and "Ist scene back cloth forum fine", against which is set "Scene of forum during speeches over body fine the rabble too well dressed". In Twelfth Night, whilst appreciating the use of a staircase and the felicity of some details ("heap of melons in corner to ripen") he complained:

> Viola enters not dishevelled sailors weak but all have shoes prettily tied.

On reflection he struck out "tied" and substituted "strapped". The [illegible] dismayed him by its multiplicity of architectural styles ranging from "Alhambra" (Leontes palace) to "12th Centy... Cimabue...German Renaissance Cabinet" and, least congruous of all, "modern Cairo". On a programme for one of the plays presented by the Dutch company during their visit in 1880, Godwin remarked that in a barber's shop scene:

> customer with pipe going talking with it in as he goes...pause before beginning new subject not follow cue at once.

His attention was focused not only on the properties and scenery of the productions he saw, but on acting style and the "direction" of the piece[8].

Meanwhile he was continuing his work as a designer. In 1881 he agreed to design costumes and, it appears, scenery for Wills's "Tragedy" Juana, produced by Wilson Barrett at the Court Theatre on May 7, 1881. Among the Godwin papers in the Enthoven Collection is a promptbook of Juana, with many sketches and stage-directions, and a copy of a letter to Barrett, dated March 31, 1881: Godwin agreed to a fee of twenty pounds down, and five for every week of the play's run. Unfortunately Mme Modjeska refused to wear the dresses designed by the consultant, and in a letter to The World he returned to the theme of his complaints after Henry V:

> It is...one thing to draw an historical costume in detail from careful illuminations or contemporary documents, and quite another to get anybody in this country to make them or wear them...I had hoped also for something different from what I see in one or two other costumes; but what can you do when you find at the last moment a dress made from a design by another hand, when one exclaims against this and another rebels against that? The idea of control in the matter of theatrical costume has not yet got into the actor's mind, and any individuality or obstinacy I have had to contend with has not been greater than experience led me to expect. It is but fair to add that Mr Wilson Barrett has aided my attempt in every way.
>
> (11 October 1881)

That one actor or actress should use dresses made to their own specification, rather than suited to the ensemble of the production was a long-standing custom of the stage - a letter from George Alexander to Godwin, asking the designer to prepare him costumes for Romeo, Orlando, Bassanio and other roles he was to play in Charles Bernard's company suggests that not only international stars but young men joining touring companies were still expected to provide their own dresses. The custom is still met with in productions requiring modern dress, where a leading lady's gowns might well be the work of a couturier, rather than a wardrobe mistress. But that a play whose historical detail had some pretension to accuracy, and which was intended to be dressed accordingly, should suffer from the personal preferences of the star would be at least unusual. To Godwin the affair was scandalous, for it offended all the canons of taste by which he worked, not simply as a theatrical designer

but as an architect and interior decorator and cabinet-maker[9].

The terms according to which Godwin had worked on Juana were reflected in his subsequent commisions. In 1883, for instance, he undertook to design the dresses, but not the scenery, of Robert Buchanan's Storm-Beaten. The fee for this was twenty pounds, and a royalty of two pounds for every week of the run. In a letter agreeing to the arrangement, sent on 4 January 1883, Godwin makes his desire to keep absolute control of the costumes quite clear to Buchanan - "It being understood that I have not to call on any one"[10]. The association with Wilson Barrett continued: in December, 1883 Godwin supervised the production of Claudian by Wills and Henry Herman, and published before the first night A Few Notes On the Architecture and Costume...A Letter to Wilson Barrett, esq., by E.W.Godwin, F.S.A. The five pages of this pamphlet, evidently published for the benefit of the press, give justifications for the details of costume and scenic design. A note on the wearing of Greek garments reflects the standards of simplicity and comfort propounded by the Aesthetic and hygienic reformers of contemporary dress:

> Hitherto such Greek dresses as I have seen on the stage have been so worried with pins, and puckered into artificial folds that I trust we shall have agreeable surprise by seeing these simple garments worn in the artistic, unaffected and simply beautiful way that distinguished the wearers of them in Byzantium, or Bithynia.
>
> (p.5)

Barrett did not accept all of Godwin's recommendations - he refused to make use of a conveyance resembling a wheel-barrow which the designer prepared for his entry in the first act - but the two men appear to have established a good working relationship. In 1884 Godwin had charge of the archaeology of Hamlet, discussed in the next chapter, and in 1885 he superintended "the scenery, the dresses and the groupings" of Lytton's Junius. The critics were divided as to the necessity of antiquarian knowledge in theatrical productions, and many took John Coleman's view of the business, but of the more sympathetic judges the reviewer from Truth was typical in his appreciation of Godwin's efforts:

> All move and walk as though they were in Rome, and I would advise everyone who wishes to form a clear idea of how the Romans looked and lived to pay a visit to the Princess's Theatre.
>
> (Truth, 27 June 1885)

In this case the staging was more attractive than the play, described by Punch as a tragedy "in five acts and a head-ache".

The Coombe theatricals of the Pastoral Players were attracting some attention in the mid-decade. The 1884 As You Like It, with Vezin as Jaques and Eleanor Calhoun as Rosalind was repeated in the following year - on both occasions Lady Campbell played Orlando - and in 1885 Fletcher's The Faithfull Shepherdesse was added to the repertoire. In 1886 the venue was changed to Cannizaro Woods, Wimbledon Common, where Fair Rosamund, adapted, designed and directed by Godwin, was presented, with Genevieve Ward in the title part. This was an adaptation of Tennyson's Becket. Tickets cost a guinea and the programme informed patrons, "Horses can be taken out and picketed, and Carriages drawn up in shade in a neighbouring field".[11]

The direct result of these performances was a fashionable enthusiasm for open-air theatricals, in suburbs of varying degrees of glamour and by actors of varying skills: one such evening, made miserable by poor weather, forms the subject of the opening sketch in Anstey's Voces Populi, published in 1890, where Caliban objects to playing with a wet hump, and the audience find themselves unexpectedly summoned away at the first opportunity. Aesthetically, the effect of the performances at Coombe would seem to have been very fine. The circular advertising the activities of the group proclaims their aim:

> By quitting the artificialities of the theatre the PASTORAL PLAYERS are enabled to take advantage of natural beauties, so as to exhibit their art in a light peculiarly adapted to the revival of Classical effect.

"Classicism" - the presentation of the ancient world in a faithful manner - had been the appeal of such spectacles as Charles Kean's productions of The Winter's Tale and Byron's Sardanapulus in the eighteen-fifties. Now the appeal was directed not so much at the hunger of the middle and lower classes for edification, as the desire of the wealthy and educated to see

in the flesh the customs of the classical world. This did not, of course, apply to As You Like It in the same degree as to Junius, Claudian or The Faithfull Shepherdesse, but the intention and the appeal were similar. What might be partially achieved in the public theatres, with the co-operation of an enlightened manager such as Barrett, would be allowed to flourish in the woods of Coombe and Cannizaro, with tickets at one guinea and carriages drawn up in the shade in a neighbouring field. Finance still dogged the manager in these pastoral surroundings, as the account sheets reveal. In 1884, Vezin was paid ninety pounds - but a note by Godwin reads:

> under the circumstances I think he may take £5 instead of £10 for each performance perhaps until there is a balance in our favour.[12]

Lady Campbell's aid notwithstanding, the Players found some difficulty in keeping their books balanced. The success of the plays was undoubted, and it seemed that, despite financial difficulties, Godwin had achieved the working arrangements he required: one of the players wrote, anonymously, in The Graphic on August 2, 1884; that "no-one, not even Mr Hermann Vezin, ventured to interfere with the lines laid down by Mr Godwin". He had now control, over not only the dresses and surroundings, but the text and acting of the plays.

The final important production by Godwin was that of John Todhunter's Helena in Troas at Hengler's Circus on May 17,1886. For this he constructed "stage surroundings" which, a programe note explained,"a play on such a subject may have received at Athens or Corinth in the days of Sophocles". The reviewer sent by The Morning Post observed that the theatre, with its arena covered in linoleum painted to resmble marble paving, its altar and its skene, resembled "one of Mr Alma Tadema's pictures magnified and turned into stone" (18 May 1886). The acting of a largely amateur company, including Constance Wilde, was uneven in quality, but the ensemble was impressive. According to The Pall Mall Gazette:

> fifteen ladies in white robes, singing together, and executing their graceful movements and uniform gestures with an accuracy which showed the most careful training,

were adequate consolation for the shortcomings of the play and some of the acting. Priam was played by Hermann Vezin, and because the performance was in the first instance a matinee for benefit of the British School at Athens, a number of theatrical celebrities, including Irving and Ellen Terry, were able to attend. It is this production by which Godwin has been represented to posterity - its classical form, its set built from simple geometrical shapes and its open arena have been seen as suggestive of the work of Craig and Appia. It is illustrated by Denis Bablet, in his standard work on the origins of modern stage design, and by Sybil Rosenfeld in her recent history of scenic art in Britain. A photograph of the skene, with the chorus draped about it, has been reproduced in a popular account of Aestheticism and elsewhere.[13] Oscar Wilde, influenced no doubt by his friendship with Godwin, and his wife's participation in the production, wrote of it in terms which must have appealed directly to Godwin's ambitions:

> Mr Godwin is something more than a mere antiquarian. He takes the facts of archaeology, but he converts them into artistic and dramatic effects, and the historical accuracy, that underlies the visible shapes of beauty that he presents to us, is not by any means the distinguishing quality of the completed work of art. This quality is the absolute unity and harmony of the entire presentation, the presence of one mind controlling the minutest details, and revealing itself only in that true perfection that hides personality.
>
> (The Dramatic Review, 22 May 1886)

The last phrase may seem a strange one for Wilde, the least impersonal of artists, to use, but it was appropriate to the ideas of Godwin, which Wilde had absorbed and was now, after his usual fashion, retailing and endorsing.

Godwin's first series of articles on the principles of stage design, published in the mid-seventies, have been discussed by W. Bolwyn Merchant in his book, Shakespeare and the Artist (1959) and in a subsequent article, but the second series, published a decade later in The Dramatic Review, appear to have been overlooked[14]. The earlier pieces deal for the most part with the establishment of the historical period appropriate to

each of the plays in the Shakespeare canon: the series which begins in February,1885, deals with general principles and with Godwin's own experiences as a designer. Thus, the first article (February 8) argues that "stage pictures of the past times should be treated pari passu, as life itself is treated by the dramatist", and contains the suggestion which Wilde was reflecting (if not copying intentionally) in his review of Helena in Troas:

> The archaeologist, in a word, must be an artist, endowed with the sense of form and colour, having constructiveness well developed, and in sympathy with the dramatic purpose.

Distinctions must be made in understanding the requirements of different periods: the eighteenth century demands attention first and foremost to the fine details of dress and habit, whereas "the higher poetical drama represented by Shakespeare" needs, "first of all, for its costume, scenery and properties, artistic treatment". The assumption behind this is the familiar Victorian one - that Shakespeare and "higher poetical" plays are to be treated in an idealized manner. The argument, in its least enlightened form, was used against the "realism" of Godwin's and Wingfield's productions by such critics as Clement Scott, and it is interesting to see that Godwin (whose idea of "artistic treatment" was more sophisticated than any similar ideas entertained by Scott) also thinks of plays according to a scale of values with "idealism" at one end and "realism" at the other.

The article also offers the argument that critics are mistaken in attacking elaborate stage-settings and costumes as a cause of poor acting - is the pulpit to blame for the preacher's sermon? As affairs stand,"the artistic archaeology of the stage is far below the standard it might reach". The plea for control is reiterated:

> When Reckitt's blue and magenta figure prominently in ball scenes, we may be quite sure there has been no artist about; or his word has been over-ruled. Occasionally the eminent actor or actress - nay, even the actor, eminent only in his amusing conceit - pretend to be a better judge of the art of costume than the artist who has devoted a lifetime to it. If, however, the actor have confidence in his artist-

> antiquary, it is due to him to let him stand or fall by his own merits or demerits; but if he have little or no confidence in him, the actor should seek advice elsewhere.

The indignation expressed in 1876 has been generalized, but the claim is identical - a touch of absolutism in some of the phrases seems to anticipate the utterances of Edward Gordon Craig.

The next article, "Archaeology on the Stage, II" appeared on February 22. Godwin suggests that three critics should be sent by serious publications to cover each play, dividing their assignment into acting, text and accuracy of mise-en-scène. Then he discusses his own experiences with Bancroft's Merchant of Venice and Coleman's Henry V. It appears that Godwin's main point of disagreement with Coleman was the setting for Westminster Abbey, of which he wished to represent two bays, in full size "and filling up with hangings, screens, banners, carpets, etc.". Coleman insisted on having the whole church reconstructed "in toylike proportions" and obstinately refused to consider a plan later adopted by Irving for the Church Scene in Much Ado about Nothing. In the 1874 Merchant of Venice,

> some pages of the Doge entered in cloth of gold, apparently untoned and unrelieved. The glare of it was quite enough to destroy any scene, and was as childish in effect as the whole interior of Westminster Abbey was on the stage of the Queen's Theatre.

This was, to say the least, tactless, and must have seemed petty, especially in the light of Godwin's failure to specify the reasons for his statement that both productions "suffered from bad acting" as well as "glaring blunders that should have been avoided". In the issue of March 28 Coleman replied, indignantly maintaining that Godwin was employed "not as an artist but an archaeologist":

> I regard the former as a creator, the latter as a copyist - hence I retained this gentleman to copy certain costumes, scenes and properties.

He returned to the attack in an article "On Stage Management", in the issue of March 14: Coleman lists the superhuman qualities demanded of a good manager, who should possess amongst other talents "the painter's eye for colour, the sculptor's sense of

the beauty of proportion, and the mechanic's skill for invention". As for the antiquary, his place is well below that of the manager, whose duty it is,

> to point out to the archaeologist the particular archaeological "cram" required; to the costumier the shape, material and colour of the costume; to the property man the make, size, dimensions, and date of the furniture and properties requisite.

Coleman's own talent as a manager was slight, as his productions testified - the most memorable was a catastrophic Pericles at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1900[15] - but his view of Godwin's pretensions was not unrepresentative of such kindred spirits as Daly and Harris.

Godwin's series of articles continued with a discussion of the St. James's Theatre As You Like It (7 March), which will be referred to in the subsequent chapter dealing with that production. The discussion was extended in the next article (15 September), where Godwin claimed that poor acting should not be blamed on good staging:

> The fact is, the supply of actors, though plentiful enough, is bad, and the more scholarly and artistic your scenery and surroundings the more evident does this unwelcome fact become -- that there is no school of acting in England.

The fifth article describes the author's work on Claudian (19 September) and the sixth returns to the desirability of one artist being given sole command over all matters of design. Godwin mentions that Mary Anderson, having obtained designs from the painter G.F.Watts for her own costumes as Rosalind, offered him the commission for all the other dresses in her production of As You Like It - he refused the offer:

> As You Like It, from the designs of Mr G.F.Watts, would have been as interesting and, possibly, as instructive as Coriolanus by Mr Alma-Tadema. Mr Irving, however, is far too clever than to dream of giving only a bit of his stage picture by Mr Alma-Tadema. He is good enough manager to know that if he starts in A Major he must keep in the same key...
>
> (10 October 1885)[16]

The final piece, published on October 24, attacks as "unscientific" the proposals of the designer Alfred Thompson for a New York production of Romeo and Juliet, mentioned in the October

10 issue of The Dramatic Review. It also includes a reiteration of Godwin's defence of antiquarianism as an artistic pursuit. In his "Ten O'Clock" of February 20, 1885, Whistler had complained:

> There are those also, sombre of mien, and wise with the wisdom of books, who frequent museums and burrow in crypts...True clerks of the collection, they mix memoranda with ambition, and, reducing Art to statistics, they "file" the fifteenth-century and "pigeon-hole" the antique![17]

If this was directed at his friend Godwin, it was unkind (but not uncharacteristic) of Whistler. Godwin replied:

> The Archaeologist or Antiquary, however much Mr Whistler may think to the contrary, is something more than a frequenter of museums and a patron of pigeon-holes. His method or mental attitude is of special significance; and you can no more make him off-hand than you can make an artist: indeed he must have some of the artist's qualities, or, at least, be able to imagine in his mind's eye the features of the past and interpret its records and memorials.

Godwin had attempted in July the management of a fully professional company, when he presented The Fool's Revenge at the Opéra Comique, with Vezin as Bertuccio: the combination of hot weather and Taylor's old-fashioned play was not propitious, and the venture was unsuccessful. John Coleman reviewed it in The Dramatic Review in a manner far from complimentary, describing Godwin as the "Man-Milliner" - a gratuitous insinuation of effeminacy. The designer's last success was Helena in Troas, and on October 6, 1886 he died after a lithotomy. His burial was described, appropriately, in the column "Dress and the Drama" of The Dramatic Review:

> Though all was made as bright as possible, at least in the hearts of the many sorrowing friends who congregated round his grave, the bells must have tolled for the funeral of Mr Godwin. His remains were laid in the old church near Chalbery, where many of his artistic suggestions have been carried out. The coffin, draped in white and covered in flowers, was borne to the grave by six farm-labourers. Mrs Godwin...was in black, though not in widow's weeds, and carried a large bouquet of tea-roses, whilst Lady Archibald Campbell...wore a purple velvet dress and cap to match. (By Honor Fay, 23 October 1886)

The stage-management of the ceremony would presumably have been appreciated by the deceased. After a decent but brief widowhood, Beatrix Godwin was married to Whistler on August 11, 1888.

The career of the Hon. Lewis Strange Wingfield was more varied and less distinguished than that of Godwin. By turns he was actor, surgeon, painter, war correspondent, balloonist, dramatic critic, novelist, historian of dress and theatrical designer. Educated with a view to the diplomatic service, he took up acting and appeared as Roderigo in 1865 to Ira Aldridge's Othello.[18] For a while he studied painting, and then went to Antwerp to train as a surgeon. Returning to art he became a pupil of the Parisian painter Édouard Frère. During the days of the Commune he distinguished himself by his energy and devotion as a surgeon, and joined to this activity that of war correspondent to The Times and The Daily Telegraph. He returned to London, set up a studio at Maida Vale, and exhibited paintings at the Royal Academy and the Suffolk Street Gallery. At intervals in his life he travelled in the near and far orient, publishing accounts of his adventures. He indulged in a number of whimsical experiments, such as attending the Derby in the guise of a nigger minstrel and becoming an attendant at a madhouse and a prison. He also spent exploratory nights in workhouses and "pauper lodgings".

Under the pseudonym "Whyte Tyghe" he wrote dramatic notices for The Globe, and he was responsible, propria personæ, for the translation of Schiller's Maria Stuart used by Mme Modjeska at the Court Theatre in 1880. His most successful novel was the three-volume Lady Grizel: an Impression of a Momentous Epoch (1878), which dealt with incidents in the life of Elizabeth Chudleigh, Duchess of Kingston (1720-1788) - a lady notable for a life of promiscuity and her successful trial on a charge of bigamy. After a life no less crowded, but less incecorous than that of his heroine, Wingfield died at the age of forty-nine on November 12, 1891, of a disease contracted during his service as a war correspondent on the 1884 Sudan campaign. The Morning Post, in its obituary, described him as "essentially a man of action", whose theatrical work had shown a "singularly accurate" knowledge of costume.

The Illustrated London News reminded readers that his antiquarian knowledge had been combined with an understanding of stage technique and effect, and that he had been "an absolutely fearless and independent critic".[19]

.....

Both Kingfield and Godwin had to contend with the frequent obduracy of stage-managers and actors. Scene-painters, too, offered resistance to the interference of learned advisors. Charles Kean can be seen, from correspondence in the Folger Library, keeping a balance between advisors (Colonel Hamilton Smith, Emma, his daughter, and George Godwin the architect) and the scene-painter, Telbin. With Kean, as with most managers, the ultimate consideration was "effect"; to Godwin he wrote asking for suggestions concerning his production of The Winter's Tale:

> I am very anxious about the said Palace of Polixenes - I should like to make a grand display in this situation but cannot find a cause - A Banquet would not do, as Leontes has one in the 1st act & a Procession would be too much like Sardanapulus - Can you think any reason for an effect ?[20]

Later in the same exchange Kean mentions the background for "the first scene of the Temple of Minerva", which Grieve cannot decide on:

> I have recommended the Fountain of Arethusa in the perspective & the city wall. The Fountain would be a feature in the bill & to this I should think there could be no objection, as it was in the same part of the city as the Temple -[21]

Kean is finding a compromise between his desire for impressive display, the need to be archaeologically accurate, and the self-respect of Grieve. There is a suggestion of Crummles and the pump about his solicitude for the Fountain of Arethusa, and he reveals a greater concern with quasi-educational values in his letters - and, indeed, in the playbills of his productions. It is clear from an earlier letter, in which he expresses a desire to show Godwin and Grieve, over dinner, a few archaeological illustrations he has obtained, that Kean exercised

considerable diplomacy in dealing with an unpaid learned advisor and a paid and important scenic artist.[22]

The diplomacy of managers occasionally broke down, but it was all the more necessary in the 'eighties, when a distinguished artist might be called in to provide materials for the scenic artists. Joseph Harker, who first achieved prominence in the last two decades of the century as an assistant to Hawes Craven at the Lyceum, takes pains in his reminiscences to assert the independence of the men who painted cloths and flats, and to remind his readers that Alma-Tadema, Millais and Burne-Jones might offer suggestions but did not themselves execute the scenery. In Alice Comyns Carr's memoirs, the designs submitted by Burne-Jones for <u>King Arthur</u> (Lyceum,1895) are described as "very different from the usual bald sketches given to a manager to play about with as he pleased" - a phrase suggesting that it was Coleman's approach to artistic and learned authority that prevailed on most occasions.[23] Notes on Godwin's programmes expressing reservations about the scenery of productions of which he was nominally in control, remind us that the paint-frame was another kingdom, proud of its autonomy.

Another factor to be taken into account when considering the efforts of the "experts" is the growing sophistication of the frankly commercial and popular theatre. Critics might disapprove of the tendency for ballet, pantomime and extravaganza to lean heavily on display and lavish settings, rather than on literary, or at least narrative, content, but this was a sphere in which designers were striving for effects not unlike those which applied to Shakespeare. C.A. Wilhelm - the pseudonym of William John Charles Pitcher - was insistent that in him should be vested sole authority over the ballets and pantomimes he designed:

> the success of the stage picture - grouping and background - depends on its initial conception as a whole; and this must undoubtedly emanate from one brain.[24]

Where did this leave Augustus Harris, or the choreographer and scene-painter appointed by him to prepare the pantomimes in which Wilhelm's processions and tableaux played an increasingly

important part? Wilhelm, in the article quoted, mentions his successful co-operation with Telbin and others, and it is possible that his theatrical, as opposed to antiquarian, background was an asset in establishing working relationships - his first work had been as an assistant to Beverley, one of the most prominent of scenic artists.[25]

It is clear from Wilhelm's article, published in 1895, that his concern with accuracy of historical detail and with subtlety of colour was of a piece with Godwin's, and with the Aesthetic revolt against Reckitt's blue and magenta. He did not like to use supplementary lime-lighting - "reinforcing the fiery-furnace of the footlights" - and he sought pleasing gradations of colour in his compositions:

> successive lines of dancers merged almost imperceptibly from rhododendron mauve, through orchid and petunia peach tones, into a full azalea rose-pink, the coral of a begonia, and the pale flame of the amaryllis lily, followed by the warm maize, the clear amber, and deep primrose and other exotics.[26]

This display suggests a "purple" passage from a romantic novel of the time - an over-ripe, slightly unhealthy hot-house - or the magic garden of Parsifal, the vegetation of which had aroused some hostility at Bayreuth in 1882. Wilhelm hopes to see "the three graces of Melody, Movement and Colour, animating an ideal world of beauty and fantasy" where "the jaded nineteenth century galley-slaves might find a respite from social and commercial wear and tear, and a stimulus to the imaginative faculty". The provision of a respite for galley-slaves might not accord with the sterner purposes of labour, but Wilhelm's desire to produce a combined effect of "Melody, Movement and Colour" was comparable to the musician's ideal of a Gesamtkunstwerk.

Gordon Craig, in an encomiastic account of his father's achievements published in 1930, claimed that Godwin "fathered the new movement in the European theatre and founded that race of theatrical artists of whom the Theatre of the future shall be born". In the course of the eulogy, Godwin's professional employers and his theatrical contemporaries in general receive short shrift:

> We hope we are doing Sir Squire Bancroft, the late Mr Wilson Barrett and others no wrong in assuming that, though they were instrumental in forwarding the movement inaugurated by E.W.Godwin, they were not the source from which the whole movement sprang.[27]

He added that Bancroft, Barrett and the rest did little of any value without Godwin - a characteristically absolute and tactless statement, interesting in so far as it draws attention to Godwin's dealings with these men, rather than to his more obviously avant-garde work at Coombe or in Hengler's Circus. Godwin and Kingfield, like the managements which employed them, were obliged to achieve a compromise. On the one hand was the kind of absurdity evident in Coleman's Henry V - a pale imitation of Charles Kean's didactic and haphazardly pleasing approach - and with it the near disappearance of the text. On the other was the tasteful and seductive display of the Alhambra, and of the tableaux in Drury Lane pantomimes. If it was accepted that display was required, it had to have some relation to the literary text. In addition to this problem was the more fundamental one posed by the logical conclusion of the antiquarian pursuit: should the original circumstances of performance be reproduced? One of Godwin's experiments, Helena in Troas, provided a Greek equivalent of William Poel's efforts to reconstruct Shakespearean staging. As You Like It, by contrast, offered the ultimate romantic realism - a real wood. This was probably resolved for Godwin, in so far as his professional Shakespeare productions were concerned, by the assumption that Greek plays (or the "matter of Greece") could only be shown in the Greek manner, whilst Shakespeare's playhouse was only an imperfect and make-shift arrangement, erected while the world awaited the picture frame stage. Greek dramatists had values of their own, Shakespeare's were those of contemporary Victorian playwrights.

His failure to make the step towards Poel's kind of antiquarian theatre has left Godwin and his Shakespearean productions with little prominence in most theatre-history. In the following chapter his Hamlet is discussed as an attempt on the part of a commercial management to provide a tasteful,

lively and pleasing alternative to Irving's methods - not so much by negating them, as by shifting the emphasis of the play and lightening its melancholic, romantic burden.

Chapter Three

GODWIN, WILSON BARRETT AND HAMLET - 1884.

On 16 October, 1884 the first major London production of Hamlet since Irving 's opened at the Princess's Theatre, under the management of Wilson Barrett. The performance combined the talents of a rising actor-manager and of E.W.Godwin, and it incorporated a number of interpretative innovations. It moved quickly, avoiding the "funereal gloom" which, Clement Scott observed in his Daily Telegraph notice, too often associated itself with the play (17 October 1884)[1]. Hamlet and, more notably, Claudius and Gertrude were younger than they had hitherto appeared; the play was set in tenth-century Denmark, rather than in a vaguely Renaissance kingdom, and the text had been newly arranged and edited to give a number of "new readings" which startled experienced playgoers and readers.

The theatrical career of E.W.Godwin has been described in the preceding chapter: some account remains to be given of the standing of the management which was responsible for the new production.

.....

i. Wilson Barrett and the Princess's Theatre.

In 1880 Wilson Barrett merited an entry of one inch in Pascoe's Dramatic List, where it was noted that before becoming manager of the Court Theatre he had acquired "considerable reputation in the provinces as an actor and manager", being lessee of the Grand Theatre, Leeds and the Theatre Royal, Hull. After a season at the Court Theatre, during which Elena Modjeska made her first appearance on the London stage (as Constance in Mortimer's Heartsease on 1 May, 1880, he took possession of the Princess's Theatre in June, 1881. Edwin Booth had in March completed a season which had begun in November with Hamlet, and had displayed him in a repertoire of "over twenty-five different impersonations". In the seasons which followed Barrett established his management as no unworthy successor to that of the visitor, and by 1892, when The Dramatic Peerage was published, he merited two pages of biography.[2]

Barrett's rapid rise in public esteem was due in great part to his espousal of "serious" melodrama, eliciting the

approval of literate and intelligent playgoers and critics, without alienating those of more conservative tastes. The most important of these plays was The Silver King, whose success has been discussed in Part One, Chapter Three (pp.61 - 3), and which was revived, without serious loss of credit, in 1888 (at the Globe) and 1889 (at the Princess's). By the end of the decade Barrett had produced works of a similar appeal, if not all of equal success, by a number of writers with some literary standing or pretension. These plays included Chatterton by Herman and Henry Arthur Jones (22 May 1884), Goodman Blind by Jones, and the same author's The Lord Harry (18 August 1885 and 22 February 1886). Barrett collaborated with Hall Caine to produce The Ben-my-Chree (17 May 1888) and The Good Old Times (12 February 1889). Sidney Grundy's Clito (a "Tragedy", 1 May 1886) and Palgrave Simpson's The Golden Ladder (22 December 1887) were produced, and Wills's Claudian (in collaboration with Henry Herman, 6 December 1883) had considerable success. Barrett ceased to be the lessee of the Princess's for two seasons in the middle of the decade (1886/7 and 1887/ - he returned in May 1888), but he associated the theatre's name with exciting and literate drama. When he undertook Hamlet he was already"fortified by a course of superior melodrama" (The Times, 17 October 1884), and The Daily News claimed that

> The recent performances of Mr Wilson Barrett in Romantic drama have finally placed him in the estimation of playgoers in the foremost rank of living actors.
>
> (17 October 1884)

He was in a position to challenge Irving on his own ground.

Unfortunately Barrett's announcement of the play had not met with universal approval. The Era, a professional paper, warned him in February that he should steer clear of Shakespeare, and suggested that "strong emotional drama is demanded at the Princess's, and nothing else ever prospered there to any extent" (2 February, 1884). Another theatrical paper, The Entr'acte, began its review of the first night ominously, with remarks about "vaulting ambition":

> Speaking for ourselves, we have no great hopes of the venture, for, in the first place, the Princess's

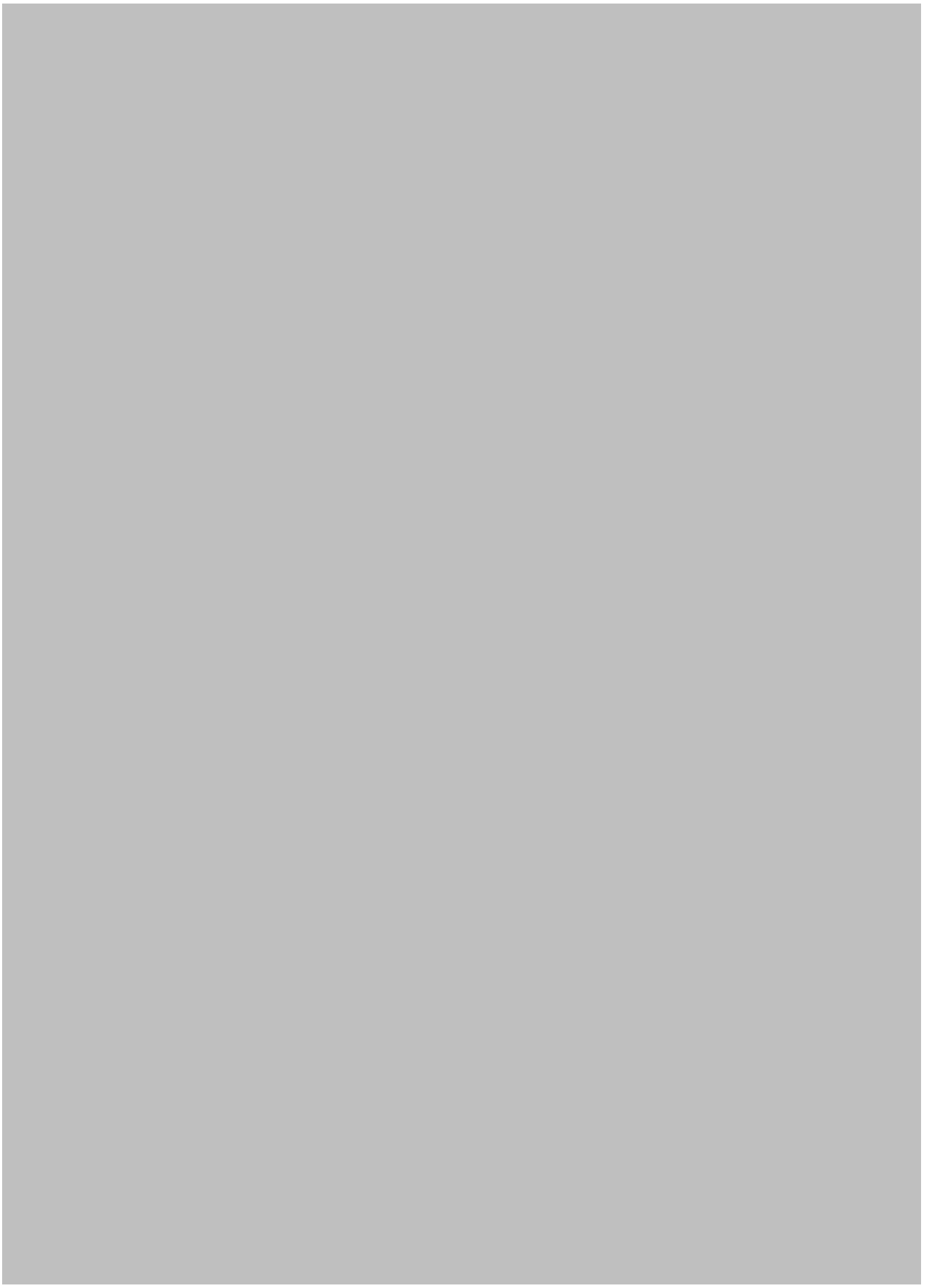


Illustration 7

Following p.152

> has never been generous to the Bard; and, secondly, while admitting Mr Barrett's general soundness as an actor, we have yet to see him propel [sic] any of those striking links of evidence likely to convince us that as Hamlet he would be anything approaching a revelation.
>
> (25 October 1884)

It was a criticism with which Barrett met often in the professional journals - in 1888, on his return to the Princess's The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News declared him to be sure of success "if only he would not trouble about Shakespeare and that sort of thing" (2 June 1888, reviewing The Ben-my-Chree). In other quarters his cultivation of literary and artistic society was viewed with some suspicion. William Archer observed the presence of Lord Lytton, John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold among the first-night audience of Hamlet, and described them in The World as a superior sort of claque:

> The Americans have a convenient term for the managerial miracle by which this and other equally surprising results are brought about. They call it "getting up a boom"; and of this art Mr Barrett is past master.
>
> (22 October 1884)

It was ironic that Barrett, whose fear of Irving's supposedly unfair managerial tactics has been mentioned (p.93 above), should be accused of "getting up a boom".

The measures taken by Barrett to publicise his productions were probably no more or less devious than those of most managers: he was a melodramatic actor who wished to broaden his repertoire, and he suffered in consequence from the jealousy or snobbishness of fellow-artists. His management was remarkable for its ambitious contemporary repertoire - in which respect it surpassed the Lyceum - and its ensemble. Not only did Barrett employ Godwin as an adviser and Beverley amongst his painting staff: he was praised for the unity and consistently high standard of acting in his company. Matthew Arnold observed in his review of The Silver King:

> Instead of the company with a single powerful and intelligent performer, with two or three middling ones, and the rest moping and mowing

> in what was not to be called English but rather stagese, here was a whole company of actors, able to speak English, playing intelligently, supporting one another effectively.

The praise which Arnold had hitherto reserved for French acting and staging was now bestowed upon Barrett, and although some critics (such as The Athenaeum's) were unshaken in their suspicion of the principles of actor-managers, it was generally agreed that Barrett was reaching Continental standards of ensemble playing.[3]

It seems that Godwin's collaboration was instrumental in the establishment of this reputation. As always, it is difficult to decide the extent of Godwin's powers and responsibility: a manager was obliged to have regard for the self-respect of the technical staff, and for his own reputation as stage-manager - it would have been impolitic to credit Godwin with "direction" of the performances. In the first-night programme of Hamlet he was ascribed "Costumes, Properties and Furniture" (not, it is important to note, scenery); later in the run Godwin was credited simply with "The Archaeology of the Play". The designs for Hamlet in the Enthoven Collection bear out the former programme note, for Godwin devised spears, shields, a throne and drinking vessels, as well as costumes[4]. Similarly, he must have been responsible for the colour-scheme of the production - brilliant reds and golds against the generally sombre scenic backgrounds - and for some of its novelties. The arrangement of the play-scene in the gardens of the castle owed much to the Coombe theatricals. Some notes on an envelope, which survives among the Godwin papers at the Enthoven Collection, suggest that he gave advice on grouping and on matters of acting at a fairly advanced stage in the rehearsals, and that his influence extended to make-up as well as to dress - the sailors who bring news from Hamlet to Horatio in Act Four should have longer moustaches, he suggests.[5] In an interview published by Life on the morning of the first performance, Godwin described his researches in Denmark and his efforts to present

> a picture of the people as they lived, with their leather-bonded legs, their huge personal

> adornments, bold embroideries, and semi-spherical or Phrygian head gear.
>
> (16 October 1884)

For his services in staging Hamlet, he was paid ninety pounds, and ten shillings for each performance after the hundredth.[9] The financial aspect of Godwin's employment was not, of course, publicized, but his active collaboration and the Life interview were valuable to Barrett's campaign to make the Princess's a competitor of the Lyceum. The articles and press releases of Irving's company always seemed to give the impression that the actor-manager was personally responsible for all aspects of the production: Barrett was known to give Godwin considerable licence - though its full extent was not disclosed. By the same token, Irving was known to have organised an ensemble about himself, a figure invariably pre-eminent in the Lyceum's stage-pictures. Barrett had the reputation of being a democratically-minded manager - at least in comparison with his rival.

ii. The Performance and its Reception.

No working prompt copy of the 1884 Hamlet has come to light: in the Enthoven Collection is a copy of the printed acting edition, marked by a spectator with some moves and other notes, In the account which follows this will be referred to as "the prompt-copy", adopting Charles Shattuck's catholic use of the term for any methodical record of a performance.

.....

In his review of Henry Irving's Hamlet, in 1874, Clement Scott described how the audience, having waited all day, sat with little more than patience through the opening scene.[12] Although it revealed something of the production's style - with the brown and red of the sentries' armour - reviewers in 1884 paid little attention to the scene. Horatio was played by J.R. Crauford and appeared a "tame cat" to the Captious Critic of The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News (25 October). The Stage found him "little more than a lay figure" and missed "all the poetry of this splendid part" (24 October), whilst The Entr'acte, kindly admitting Crauford to be a "very

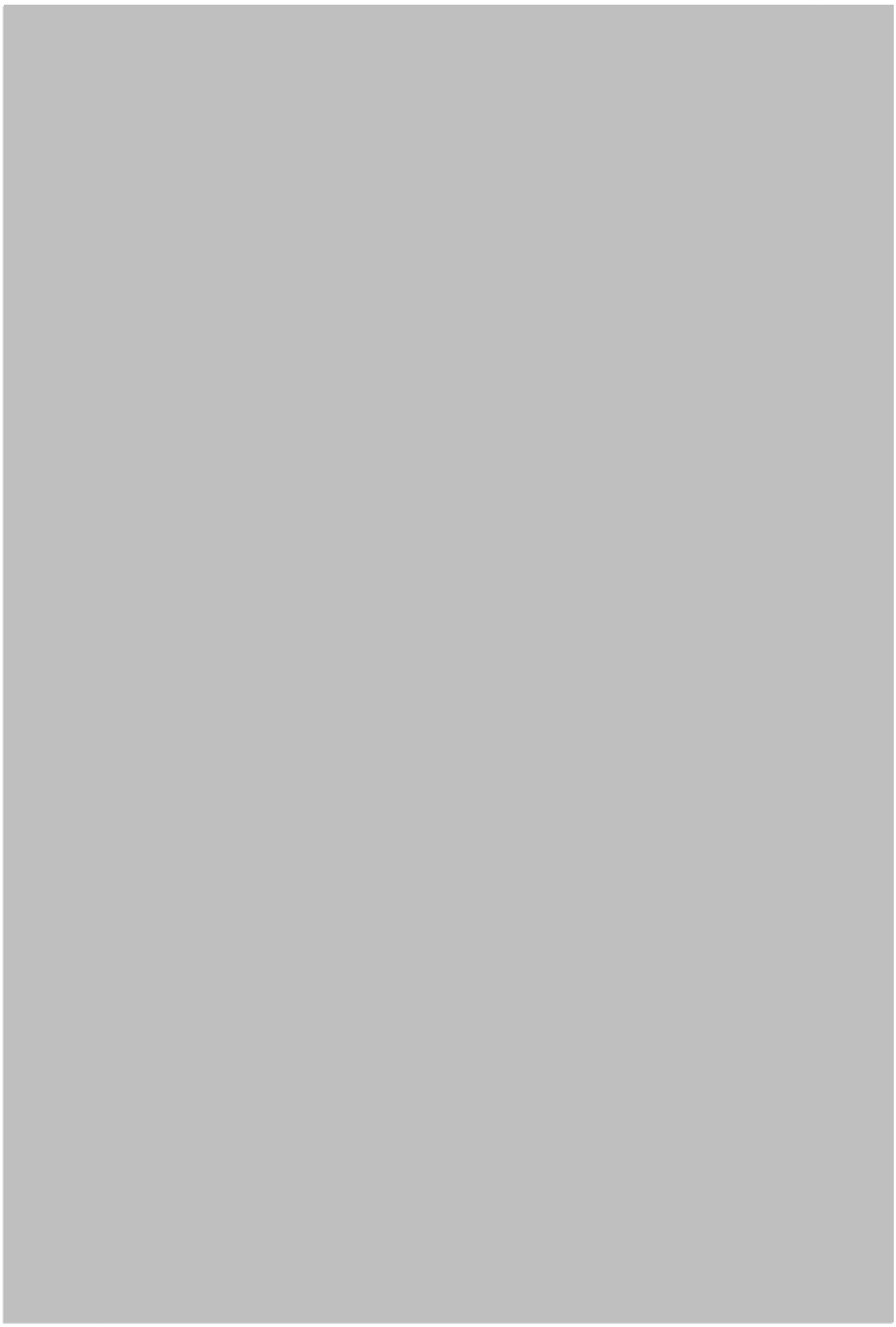


Illustration 8 Following p.155

E.W.Godwin,costume design for Francisco

good actor" in modern comedy, was compelled to censure him as "very insubstantial" in this part, and suggested he lacked interest in his job (25 October). Horatio in Barrett's version is identified as a scholar by Marcellus ("Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio", - omitted by Irving[13]). Like his Lyceum counterpart, he is relieved of the discussion with Marcellus of the political history of Denmark and Rome in relation to supernatural visitations (70-125) - a cut which forfeits the moment of relaxation ("Good now, sit down...") which creates suspense before the next apparition. Though Crauford does not seem to have taken them, the scene offers the actor playing Horatio opportunities to establish his coolness and authority: Barrett's omission of Marcellus's speech at 157-164 concerning ghosts and Christmas, and his suggestion,"We do it wrong being so majestical" (143-6) leaves Horatio as sole purveyor of information in the scene.

If Crauford failed to make anything remarkable of Horatio, John Dewhurst, as the Ghost, made all too strong an impression. Punch ridiculed his size and costume:

> Considerable disappointment was felt when a stout spectre walked on like any other individual, only a trifle heavier, for he wouldn't ride a pound under fifteen stone at the least...The only novelty about this Ghost is his costume. He is attired in a non-descript sort of garment, contrived out of, apparently, some old star spangled muslin mosquito-curtains, which ought to have been sent to the wash, in the Stygian laundry below, long ago.
>
> (25 October 1884)

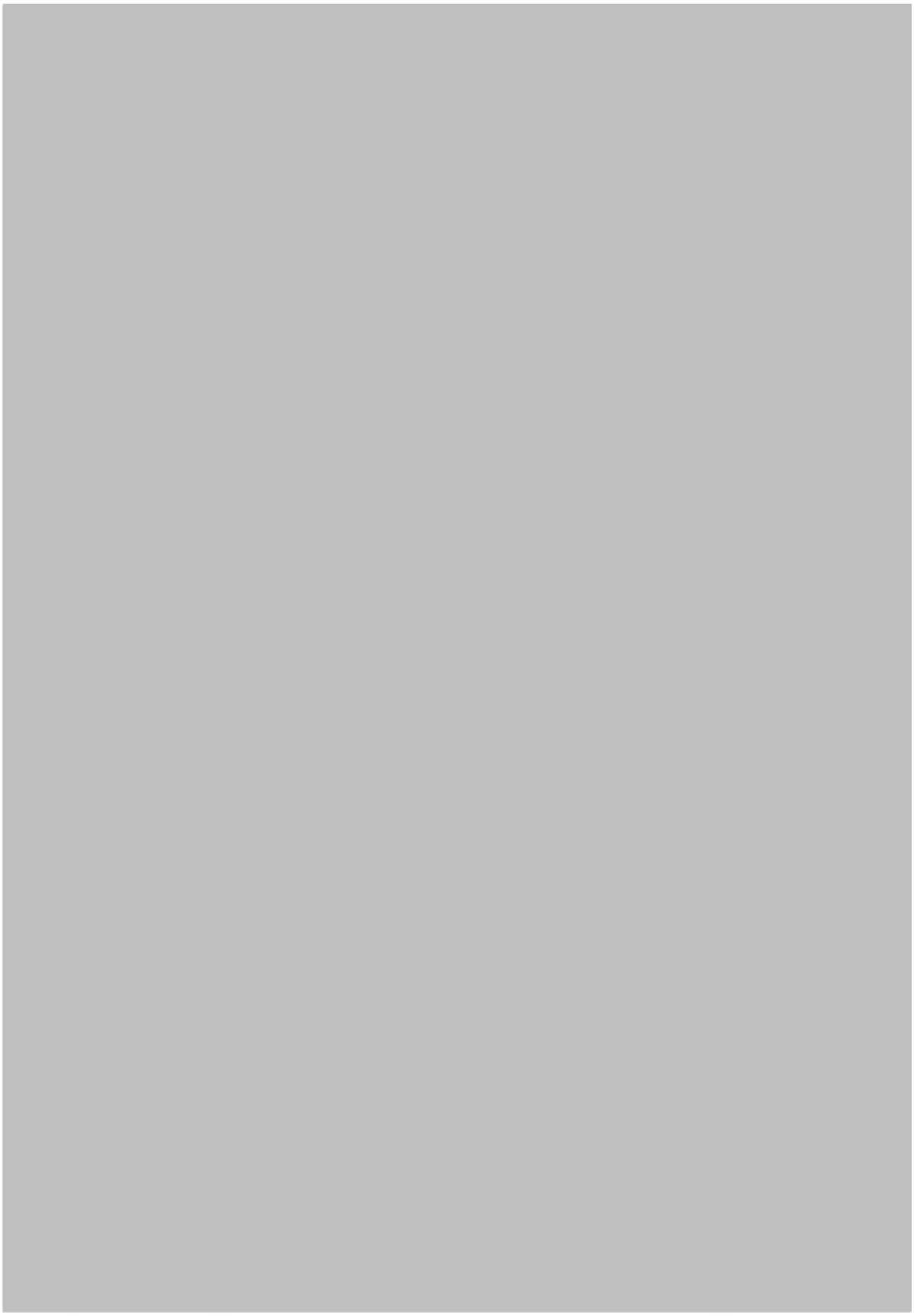
Punch observed that the later description of the Ghost as clad in complete steel and a helmet "only shows how our senses may be deceived where a Ghost is concerned", and that the blue spectacles worn by Dewhurst were a touch of realistic detail, "as even the early morning light must be very trying to a Ghost's eyes". Godwin had intimated in his Life interview that the Ghost would "appear without any apparent ground to stand on, and ...after a time, glide rather than walk along the platform". It appears that a transparency was to be used, but that on the first night the effect had to be abandoned, to the "considerable disappointment" of the Punch reviewer. Dewhurst did not displease all reviewers in equal measure - The Times (17 October) found him "ponderous but impressive" - but

his relative immobility was not very satisfactory. The lines "'Tis here! - 'Tis here!- 'Tis gone!" were cut. The omission take a moment of physical crisis from the scene, and like the loss of "Good now, sit down...", deprives it of its variations in tempo.

This static and rather dull beginning was followed by the brilliant and noisy opening of Scene Two. As the cloth went up, according to the prompt copy, there was a shout of "Long live the King!", and Claudius and his queen appeared "amid a joyous blare of trumpets and with a brilliant suite of courtiers" (Scott, in The Daily Telegraph, 17 October). The Daily News found the arrangement "both novel and pleasing":

> ...the great hall with its primitive simplicity of arches and column, rudely decorated with coloured drawings, its walls hung with arras painted with figures and groups was striking... (17 October)

The courtiers gathered in a semi-circle about an ivory and vermilion throne downstage left, and a court-jester sat on the steps of the dais[14]. Willard, as Claudius, entered laughing, "as if he had heard a good joke" (Punch), and showed a "triumphant bearing" which The Stage found a good contrast with his subsequent growing fear of Hamlet. Both King and Queen were "in the passionate heyday of middle life" (Scott). A second shout, "Long live the Prince!", heralded the arrival of Hamlet, "a strippling, beardless and slim", wearing a simple black tunic whose low neckline revealed a white, unbuttoned shirt. Hamlet was "the one dark and sombre figure amidst the brilliancy of colour" (Scott) - he patted a child on the head and sat down, at some distance from the dais[15]. Claudius, resplendent in blue, yellow and red[16], began his first speech. At the words "Your better wisdoms" the courtiers bowed, and after giving Laertes permission to leave for France (Cornelius and Voltemand being, as usual, absent) Claudius turned to Hamlet. At Claudius's first words the prince rose, "as though resentful at being spoken to" (The Stage)."A little more than kin, and less than kind" was spoken with a short "i" in the last word, making it rhyme with the German kind (though with an english "d"). At his mother's remonstration, Hamlet rose (prompt copy) and spoke "with a tone of indignation" (The Stage).



. Illustration 9

Following p.157

Seems, madam! Nay, it is; I know not seems.

After the speech he sat down again, rising only to acknowledge his mother's plea that he should not return to Wittenberg:

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

The Stage interpreted this behaviour as evidence that Hamlet was "convinced" of Claudius's guilt, and that he regarded his mother "with no filial devotion". Scott noted that Hamlet held up to Claudius's face a miniature of his father, which he carried about his neck, in order to insult the usurper, but did not specify when the insult was delivered. The exchange was the first indication of Hamlet's extreme devotion to his father, and of the lack of "tenderness" in his demeanour towards Gertrude.

The royal party and its retinue left the stage, and Hamlet began his soliloquy, "O, that is too too solid [sic] flesh...",

> with his gaze attracted in the direction whither the King and Queen had gone, by the sound of laughter at the words "That it should come to this". Here, also, he produced the medallion of his beloved father...
>
> (The Stage)

He looked at the portrait fondly. The Captious Critic objected to the pace adopted by Barrett in some of the soliloquies - although he did not specify which - complaining that he "rattled along" with "a roar and a rush like that of an express train going through a tunnel". The same critic took exception to other points in his technique:

> Continually recurrent contortions almost suggest the application of a galvanic battery to his facial muscles, and an affected turning of the head might imply hollowness equally well as the loss of memory it is supposed to denote.

Again the placing of the gesture is not specified - it may have been a reminiscence of Charles Kean's reflective manner, for that actor, much admired by Barrett, had preceded "In my mind's eye, Horatio" with "three solemn taps on the brow"[17]. Speed was one of Barrett's attributes as an actor - a review of The Lord Harry, for example, noted that so rapid was his speech "that scarcely a distinct sentence fell upon the ear" (Daily Telegraph, 19 December 1886). By the end of the speech the actor had already established some of the traits listed by

Sala in his Illustrated London News account:

> ... a very young man - eager, restless, impulsive, impetuous, full of loving and lovable qualities, prompt to forget and forgive, implacable and ruthless only towards the murderer of his father.
>
> (25 October 1884)

Even in the soliloquy, the usual tendency to melancholic withdrawal was absent.

Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo arrived, with their news of the Ghost's appearance. Hamlet seemed "quite prepared for the supernatural" when told that Horatio had seen his father: according to The Stage he spoke "Saw who?" (190) in "a quick note of interrogation", which seemed to the reviewer to rob Hamlet's meeting with the Ghost "of all awe and terror". The prompt-copy notes a long pause between "The King" and "my father", in Hamlet's next line, and some speed in the dialogue between "Indeed, indeed, sirs..." and "I warrant you it will" (224-242). The Captious Critic found Horatio's "where, my lord?" (earlier, at 195) a further example of Crauford's ineptitude, spoken "in the same tone as though Denmark's buried majesty were not defunct at all, and had just been caught a glimpse of by his son through the window".

Miss Eastlake, the new Ophelia, did not impress in her scene with Laertes and Polonius, and was thought by the reviewer from The Morning Post to be considerably better later, in the mad scene, than in the earlier ones where she proved "ineffective" (17 October). The Captious Critic was cruelly specific in his objections to her acting:

> In the opening scenes she does not show to very great advantage and her trick of simultaneously rounding her eyes and mouth is rather painfully apparent. It is a pity, too, that since nature did not give her a little longer neck, art does not step in to keep her from raising her shoulders from time to time to the level of her ears.

He also noticed that, being a leading lady, she had three changes of dress, to Gertrude's two:

> Ophelia is lectured by Laertes in blue, rated by Hamlet in pink, and goes mad in the orthodox white satin. But with all the flourish about archæological

> accuracy, those high-heeled satin shoes are surely out of place.

Mary Eastlake may, like Elena Modjeska, have prevailed against Godwin in the matter of her own costume. Polonius is decribed by the same reviewer as wearing a brocade robe, and this does not correspond to the design among Godwin's papers for a grey mantle, brown over-gown, and red under-gown. It is possible that the designs were changed by Godwin or by another, but it is equally possible that the critic's eyes or his memory were at fault - his statement that Ophelia in her interview with Hamlet wore pink not in accord with the silver-grey veil, and yellow and pale blue-green of Godwin's costume sketch.[18]. Whatever their costumes, the performances of Ophelia, Laertes and Polonius in this scene did not elicit much praise. The Entr'acte found Laertes, played by Frank Cooper, "hard and somewhat affected", and the Captious Critic ventured to suggest that his "most terribly didactic" tone was evidence of a family trait in the male line of Polonius' family. Clifford Cooper, as Polonius, cut a better figure than many of his younger colleagues, but spoke too quickly for the taste of The Entr'acte, though, as the Captious Critic observed, he gave his part sufficient humour "to serve as a foil to the more serious characters", without playing to the gallery. According to the prompt-copy, Ophelia's closing line ("I shall obey, my Lord") was "tearful", but, as usual, the annotator offers no critical comment on the interpretation.

The first words of the fourth scene held the next surprise for the audience:

> The air bites shrewdly. Is it very cold?

Opinions varied on the new reading. Some dismissed it as a wilful eccentricity - "frivolous" and "redolent of affectation", inthe words of The Entr'acte. Archer was mocking:

> ...such reverence for the blunders of learning and Cordell's eye-setters as suits of no defence. The remark is utterly meaningless, unless Hamlet wished Horatio to take the reading of the thermometer.
>
> (The World, 22 October)

The Academy correspondent Frederick Wedmore argued that although Barrett had set the play in late spring, his Hamlet felt

an unusual chill in the air, which might be attributed to psychological factors:

> Hamlet's own feelings of apprehension and anxiety have more to do with his physical sensations of the moment than has any fall in the temperature which the quicksilver might chronicle.
>
> (1 November)

The notice in The Stage acknowledged the possibility of so scientific a justification, but suggested that the actor's general conception of the part did not warrant any uncertainty in his judgement or mood. If he were a "dreamy, meditative person", he might ask such a question "in order to convince himself that he felt no unnatural chill at the approach of his father's ghost":

> But Mr Barrett's Hamlet would have been so thoroughly convinced that the air was cold that he would not have thought of inquiring of his companions as to whether it was or not.

This is in line with the same reviewer's contention that Barrett's prince would not have hesitated, after his interview with the Ghost, but would have killed Claudius at the first opportunity, "and there would have been no need for the play to proceed beyond the second act". None of the critics appears to have taken up Dyce's enterprising suggestion that the Folio's "Is it very cold?" was intended as a sign of Hamlet's madness.[19]

The cutting of the scene removed Hamlet's lines on the implications of the "heavy-headed revel" (17-38) and the last five lines, which include Marcellus's remark, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark". The effect of the deletions, and of Fortinbras's absence from the play, in person and report, was to isolate the personal drama from its public setting. Neither Barrett nor Irving showed any interest in the wider political implications of the affairs of the Danish royal family.

Bewhurst, as the Ghost, had not made a favourable impression with his silent appearance in the first scene: his voice now proved as unsatisfactory as his deportment. To the Captious Critic it sounded "meek, feeble, and altogether unimpressive", and Clement Scott described the incongruous effect of "a very

unusual mincing manner" combined with "the most delicate of affected voices". Punch thought his tone too colloquial - "more friendly than formidable" -

> in fact, quite a Ghost to whom you would offer a pair of slippers, and then ask him to chat cosily and tell you all about it, over a pipe and a glass of very hot grog, before a cheerful fire.

Yardley's burlesque, Very Little Hamlet, had the Ghost sit down and chat amiably, but recent productions by Dr Jonathan Miller have shown that the Ghost's sitting down and adressing Hamlet with some intimacy can be more unnerving than amusing[20].

Barrett fell to the ground at the Ghost's suggestion that Gertrude had been won to Claudius' "shameful lust" (45-6), and The Daily News thought this the first stage in Hamlet's mental decline[21]. The reviewer, aligning himself with "the later school of German critics", took Hamlet to be a sensitive and intelligent young man whose indecision was a sign of immaturity. His affections lying predominantly with his father, he had turned now to his mother, "only to find her the wife of the uncle he detested, and finally to learn the awful story of her sin and shame". The next blow would be his discovery that Ophelia was an instrument of Claudius. This extreme reaction to the intimation of Gertrude's felicity was a sign that a certain intemperance of disposition was turning to hysteria. Hamlet's hand had been on his sword when he vowed to sweep to his revenge (31) - like most of his predecessors he took the line "O Horrible! O horrible! Most horrible!" (80). His soliloquy after the Ghost's exit ("O all you host of heaven...") was spoken in "an hysterical manner" (The Times). According to the prompt-copy his behaviour with Horatio and Marcellus continued this hysteria: after "There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark" he paused, looked at the two men, and changing his tone from the "earnest purpose" of the first phrase, added "But he's an arrant knave". This was regarded by The Times as the first sign of Hamlet's antic disposition. The impassioned acting of Barrett in this scene, serving to establish a frenzied disgust underlying the character's assumption of madness, was unfortunately over-emphasized by its contrast with the blandness of Crauford as Horatio. The

Captious Critic found him incongruous and amusing, His "Heaven secure him" (114) being uttered with a "placid indifference as to whether such a result may or may not be arrived at".

Like Irving, Barrett had cut from the Ghost's speech the graphic description of the "vile and loathsome crust", but, unlike Irving, had let stand the line "Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled" (69-73,77). Irving had included the six lines beginning "O Hamlet, what a falling off was there!" (47-52) in his published acting edition, but removed them in his 1878 prompt book[22]. Both Barrett and Irving removed 53-7: the reflection that virtue is immoveable, but lust will mate itself on a celestial bed and turn to garbage. In some lines Barrett repeated words - "yes, by Heaven" became "yes, yes, by Heaven", and "My tables, meet it is I set it down" was altered to "My tables, my tables, meet it is I set it down" (104, 107). He simplified the swearing by cutting the lines from "Nay but swear't" up to and including "Indeed, upon my sword, indeed", and those from "Hic et ubique?" to "A worthy pioneer! Once more remove, good friends" (145-9, 156-163). Irving cut neither passage. The prompt-copy shows that Barrett accompanied "My tables" by writing "on ivory", and "Rest perturbed spirit" by moving the cross of his sword "over", as if to lay the Ghost.

.....

The first scene of Barrett's second act corresponds to that of the full text, but omitted the character of Reynaldo. Irving had removed the entire scene from his 1878 prompt book, but his printed version included the first five lines (and Reynaldo, briefly) and gave a shortened version of the dialogue between Ophelia and Polonius. Both Irving and Barrett removed the lines:

> No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
> Ungartered, and down-gyved to his ankle.
> (79-80)

Barrett further removed two and a half lines at 82-84:

> And with a look so piteous in purport
> As if he had been loosed out of hell
> To speak of Horrors -

According to the prompt-copy, Ophelia rushed on, "terrified",

and was followed by Polonius, but no other business of any interest was observed.

Barrett's second scene opened with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern kneeling, one on each side of Claudius (prompt-copy). It ran continuously through the original II,2 and III,1, from the arrival of the two friends, and Polonius's conference with the King and Queen, to Hamlet's teasing of the old man, his conversation with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and the arrival of the Players. Rather than stop after the "Rogue and peasant slave" soliloquy, as Irving and most others had done, Barrett passed immediately to the scene with Ophelia, ending that act with Claudius's "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go". Clement Scott praised the new order, which gave a sufficient lapse of time for the supposed preparation of The Murder of Gonzago, but observed that Barrett seemed tired by the furious pace he adopted.

The most important passages in the elongated second act were Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be, or not to be", and his confrontation with Ophelia. The soliloquy was delivered in a manner which Scott praised as a "noble example of untricky declamation" - Barrett leaned against a table with his arms folded, as an illustration in The Illustrated London News reveals. The soliloquies conveyed, it seems, a calmness and deliberation missing in his conversations with other characters. For the Polonius scene (II.2.167 etc) the prompt-copy gives minute directions whose tenor is "all conversations with Pol. Hysterical style". Hamlet's response to Polonius's initial enquiry, "Well, God-a-mercy", is spoken "snappishly" as he "throws himself on a couch", and his wish that Polonius were "so honest a man" as a fishmonger is sarcastic in tone. "For if the sun breed maggots..." is read from a book held by Hamlet, while Polonius "creeps round & peers over Hamlet's shoulder at the book. Hamlet "shuts it up sharply" and asks "Have you a daughter?". His next speech is hysterical, and with "Slanders, sir" he "glances at book now & then as if reading".

This madness is evidently more energetic than melancholic. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern speak "fawningly", and Hamlet imitates them with "My excellent good friends", eyeing them suspiciously throughout the scene, and catching them making

signals to each other surreptitiously at "Nay then, I have an eye of you" (239). The Stage found Rosencrantz "too villainous in appearance" and his fellow "too clerical in manner". The Athenaeum noted that Hamlet's detection of the fraud removed doubt from his mind at too early a stage in the scene, and felt this to be yet another manifestation of an interpretation which rejected the "reflective Hamlet" for "a Hamlet who is a man of action". This it could not readily accept (25 October). At Guidenstern's admission, "My lord, we were sent for" the prompt-copy notes "Express by gesture",'I know as much'". After another "hysterical" confrontation between Polonius and and Hamlet, the Players arrived.

The Player Queen, Miss Dickens, was on her first appearance dressed as a boy (an innovation welcomed by The Morning Post), and Speakman's performance as First Player elicited some praise - his elocution and acting were, to the mind of The Stage's critic, "perfect". Scott considered his playing next in distinction to that of Barrett, Willard and George Barrett, who played First Gravedigger. Wedmore, in The Academy, thought his best effect was achieved in the decription of the hush before the storm:

> A silence in the heavens, the rock stand still,
> The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
> As hush as death...
> (477-480)

Twenty-four lines were cut from the First Player's speeches - Irving had cut twenty-eight in his prompt book. As the First Player was about to leave the stage, Hamlet made "a secret sign to detain him" and drew the curtains hanging between the pillars of the arches. Before his soliloquy, at "How I am alone", he closed all the curtains, and looked around with some relief (prompt-copy). The speech moved from anger (fortissimo markings in the prompt-copy at "Am I a coward?" and "kindless villain") to exhaustion ("Fie upon't! foh!"). The prompt-copy suggests a distinct naturalism in Barrett's demeanour: "I'll have these players/Play something like the murder of my father/Before mine uncle" was spoken, as a "sudden thought strikes him"[23]. Irving had made a strong curtain of this speech, rushing to

a pillar, setting his tables against it and writing furiously as the curtain fell. Barrett does not appear to have made any especial "point"[24].

The Scene continued with the entrance of Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, Ophelia and the two fellow-students: Barrett left in Claudius's guilty reflection, "O, 'tis too true/How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience..." (49-54) - lines omitted in Irving's version, but important in the presentation of Claudius. In the scene with Ophelia, Barrett began gently. At "Ha,Ha! Are you honest?" a note in the prompt-copy suggests the point at which his demeanour towards her lost its tenderness. Hamlet turned up-stage after her lines:

> Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
> There, my lord.
> (101-2)

He came down again, and was about to speak "tenderly" when he caught sight of Claudius behind the arras and rushed out "savagely". He did not see Polonius, but continued to walk up and down, bursting out "angrily and passionately" at "Go thy ways" (130). He caught sight of Polonius at "Where's your father?", and, after a sudden and prolonged pause, put his hand on Ophelia's head and turned it round, bringing her face to face with him. In the line "Those that are married already", Barrett pointed to Claudius's hiding place with the words "all but one". This was, in the opinion of The Morning Post, one of Barrett's best scenes, in which he "took a strong hold upon the audience". His lack of tenderness towards Ophelia seemed unusual to The Stage, and The Athenaeum thought his very definite detection of the imposture yet another interpretation destructive of the part's mysterious qualities. The Daily News appreciated the scene as a further stage in Hamlet's growing sense of isolation, as he realizes that, after Gertrude's fall, "Ophelia, in like manner, seems to have forsaken him, and leagued with spies and enemies against him". The "seeming duplicity" of Ophelia - "nothing more than a weak and blind obedience to her father's will" - was seen by The Times as the force checking Hamlet's natural feelings towards her. The acting of the scene was generally well-received,

and would appear, from the prompt-copy's notes, to have been simply and effectively conceived - "even old playgoers," wrote Scott, "must have trembled behind their convictions", so thoroughly had Barrett "braced up the nerves of the audience and communicated to them his own electricity". The danger lay in the actor's exhausting himself and his audience by so energetic and sustained a pace.

.....

The first scene of Barrett's third act (III.2 of the original) was a front scene, and began with a "Procession of attendants &c with torches on their way to see the play" (prompt-copy). The Times described Hamlet's manner with the players as "respectful and even deprecatory":

> he does not hurl his maxims at the tragedian's head or rumble them from the depths of his throat, but submits them with the diffidence of an amateur.

At "Get you a place" (89) the scene changed to another part of the castle grounds, where the play was to be performed. Godwin described the arrangements in his Life interview, justifying the outdoor setting in terms of the Danish climate and the play's time-span (between spring and autumn, he thought). The scene bore some resemblance to the Pastoral Players' theatre at Coombe, except that performances there had not used a raised platform. In the interview Godwin gave the following account of the scene in Hamlet:

> There is a garden portal, and the curtain is hung between the two trees, where there is a little stage up three steps. The whole court are spread round the garden, the ladies having fans, as well as head-cloths wrapped around them to protect their throats. There will be plenty of torches, and a reflection of the moon on the sea.

The Times, after pointing out the dramatic effectiveness of Hamlet's presenting the play in the very orchard where the crime had been committed, described further advantages of the new staging:

> Spectacularly at all events the change is a great improvement upon what has always been a somewhat absurd scene when represented indoors, from the necessity of ranging the King and Queen and the courtiers diagonally across the stage, so as to leave the view of the audience uninterrupted. How

> the whole depth of the scene can be utilized. A temporary platform for the players is erected between a couple of trees with a curtain drawn across; and the whole scene, lighted up with torches, which compete with a lovely moonlight, forms a picturesque court pageant. The King and Queen sit, not upon a throne, but upon a rustic bench, as do also Ophelia and Hamlet.

Hamlet was thus "relieved from the odious necessity of grovelling upon his stomach" in order to cross the stage and shout in Claudius's face "He poisons him i'th' garden for's estate" (255). Scott felt that Hamlet and Ophelia had been placed too far upstage - the Prince retired into the background "instead of sprawling on the floor" - but was pleased by the strange but not unwelcome contrast to the stereotyped regularity of the celebrated picture by Maclise". Irving had retained the traditional arrangement, with the King and Queen to one side, and Hamlet and Ophelia to the other of a small stage, and had executed the familiar crawl[25].

Hamlet adopted an "assumed unnatural gaiety" at the beginning of the scene (prompt-copy), and Scott noted the "amorous attitudes of the King and Queen whispering together amidst the excitement of the representation". The King started, and jumped to his feet at the words "On wholesome life usurp immediately" (254), before Hamlet's sarcastic "'A poisons him i' th' garden..." and Ophelia's "The King rises". The confusion and the withdrawal of the torchbearers caused a sudden darkening of the stage, which was praised by The Times as "a striking dramatic effect". This lent forcible emphasis to Hamlet's "hysterical exclamation of triumph", as leapt "not upon the seat occupied by the King, as Mr Irving does, but upon the improvised platform". Scott also admired this new idea, which he thought one of Barrett's best, and he pointed out that "the whole bent of mind of Hamlet has been turned upon acting". The prompt-copy notes that Barrett dwelt on the word "world" in the last line of the verse:

> Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
> The hart ungalled play:
> For some must watch, while some must sleep;
> Thus runs the world away.

"World" was fortissimo. "Pajock" in the second verse became

"paddock" (Theobald's emendation), and after the hysterical "impromptus" (to which The Stage referred, mysteriously, as Barrett's "only point") Hamlet sank into Horatio's arms[26]. "You might have rhymed" was cut - Irving had allowed Horatio this touch of humorous detachment, but Barrett felt the need to preserve a serious tone.

In the business with the recorders, Barrett's Hamlet was at his most suave, restraining his impatience in order to "quietly rebuke" Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with the pipe, which, The Times remarked, some tragedians were "accustomed to snap in two in an uncontrollable fury". Booth and Irving both took the pipe, snapped it, and flung the pieces from them. Barrett, when summoned to speak with Gertrude, left the stage cautiously, looking around him in the shadows, and then, in the porch through which he must pass, whipping out his sword and stabbing at the darkness.

The third scene of the act began with Claudius's brief instructions to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and Polonius's news that Hamlet is going to his mother's closet, and will be overheard. Rosencrantz's lecture on politics ("The single and peculiar life is bound...") was omitted, but the scene was much longer than that given by Irving, who had cut Polonius's appearance, Hamlet's arrival during Claudius's prayer, and a good part of the King's speech.[28] At the Princess's, Polonius's departure was followed by Claudius drawing aside a curtain to reveal a small altar (prompt-copy). Punch mocked "a brilliant coverlet and a gaudily painted cross" in this oratory - evidently a further example of Godwin's policy of using brightly coloured properties and hangings against a dark background. Willard, given a chance to develop Claudius's character usually denied the actor, spoke his soliloquy "admirably" - as Scott described it. Godwin's rehearsal notes include "Speech by kneeling king too passionate and too jerky".

The scene now changed to Gertrude's chamber - "Gas down", as the prompt-copy reminds us. Barrett used III.4, followed without change of location by IV.1 and 3. He omitted IV.2 and 4. Irving had omitted IV.1 - Claudius and Gertrude - and everything before IV.5, which began his fourth act.

The set for the scene was, Godwin claimed, "very simple", with a painted tapestry hung between the pillars of two arches, and an ivory diptych to hold the portrait of Claudius. The Captious Critic complained that Gertrude enjoyed

> the royal prerogative of going to bed by the light of red lamps, which lend to the royal chamber something of the aspect of a railway station in miniature.

Punch objected that Barrett played the scene too far upstage, "so as to be out of the way of the Ghost", and found the management of the sequence "ineffective". Scott described Hamlet, his father's portrait in miniature ready on its cord at his neck, entering to find Gertrude, "yet a lovely woman... tiring herself before the approach of her lord". The prompt-copy remarks "Queen very indignant at first", and, according to Scott, Hamlet was fiercely unbraiding his mother for "her partiality for that same hated uncle", when his hand "accidentally" fell upon a portrait of the King" resting on her Prie-Dieu:

> Seizing up the cabinet picture which is at hand he compresses it with the locket and ends by stamping it under his feet in a tempest of rage.

Of the available alternatives at this juncture, Irving had chosen to represent the two portraits as fragments of Hamlet's imagination. Barrett took the material presentation of the pictures to its extreme, and caused serious doubt amongst the critics. The Times felt that the new Hamlet overbore his mother simply "by force of lung", and that the violence of his behaviour deprived the scene of the elusive but much-desired tenderness. A reviewer of Forbes's Hamlet, six years later, remembered Barrett's storming on Claudius's image as "effective but rather cheap trickery" (The Theatre, 1890 (1891) p.25). The Captious Critic noted that the Queen rose to the occasion by sobbing "harshly", and felt that it must be "uncomfortable" for Miss Leighton to "evolve those spasmodic gasps". The Times mentions two maids, who at the beginning of the scene were helping the Queen to change into "a seductive tea-gown", and comments that "nothing could be more natural than the scene as thus contrived". It is not apparent whether they

left as Polonius arrived, or later.

From this scene Barrett cut some sixty-eight lines, whereas Irving's printed version lacked seventy-eight, and his 1878 prompt book eighty-one. The more important cuts were in Hamlet's speeches "Such an act..." (40-51) and "Look here, upon this picture and on this" (53-88), where the changes appear to have been made for reasons of length. But both speeches show signs that the actors did not care for the "sickness" imagery of the play. The first major excision in Barrett's text, 45-52, includes the lines,

> And this solidity and compound mass,
> With heated visage, as against the doom,
> Is thought-sick at the act.
> (49-51)

(Alexander follows the Second Quarto's reading, "Ore this" - Barrett used the First Folio here). These lines were allowed to stand by Irving, but both versions cut 71-81 ("Sense sure you have..."), which ends:

> ...ge without feeling, feeling without sight,
> ...ars without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
> Or but a part of one true sense
> Could not so mope. O shame! where is thy blush?

Lesser cuts of a similar nature were 93-4 ("...low'd in corruption...") and 101-3:

> And do not spread the compost on the weeds
> To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;
> For in the fatness of these pursy times
> Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
> Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

Both passages were absent in Barrett's and Irving's versions, and the more graphic of Hamlet's lines describing the intimate behaviour of Claudius and Gertrude disappeared. Irving found "enseamed" too vivid a description of the couple's bed, and changed it to 'incestuous'. According to the prompt-copy, Barrett rose at this point, and followed Gertrude upstage, whilst ("...V.E."). Both actors retained the lines, which describe the which describe the effects of that flattering unction:

> It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
> Whiles rank corruption, mining all within
> Infects unseen.
> (47-9)

Most of the passages containing similar imagery were discarded,

including, in the first act, the Ghost's description of the unpleasant effects of the poison on his "smooth body" (I.5. 68-73).

It seems clear that Victorian readers and audiences regarded the scene, not as the display of subconscious obsessions and complexes which post-Freudians find in its imagery, but an example of moral earnestness. Frank Marshall emphasized this in his Study of Hamlet (1875):

> Never was a nobler sermon preached than is embodied in these speeches; they are instinct with the truest and purest morality that knows of no compromise with evil.

He admired the uncompromising simplicity of the sentiments, comparable to "those sacred words, 'Go, and sin no more'." (p53). As an example of the lengths to which this stern moral attitude might be taken in performance, Fechter's business may serve:

> When, at the close of their interview, Gertrude outstretched her arm, and would embrace her son, he held up sternly the portrait of his father; the wretched woman recoiled and staggered from the stage, and Hamlet reverentially kissed the picture as he murmured "I must be cruel only to be kind".[29]

Irving had exhibited with Gertrude, as with Ophelia "the presence of an extreme tenderness beneath the veil of all his bitterness and vehemence"[30]. Irving ended the scene - and the act - with Hamlet's "Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind" (179): Barrett added fifteen of the remaining thirty-seven lines (180b-2, 184, 186-8a, 197-9, 213-7). Marshall regarded the end of the scene (from 179) as "anti-climax of the worst sort, so far as the stage is concerned, though containing most interesting matter for the student" (p.56). Barrett's Hamlet returned to bid his mother tell Claudius that he was mad in craft - an important stage in the war of nerves against the usurper. He did not admit that he knew he would be sent to England, or that he had devised a means of having the engineer hoist with his own petard. He did not brutally announce that he would "lug the guts into the neighbour room".

The scene continued with the entry of Claudius, alone.

After learning of Polonius's murder, he summoned Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and sent them to find Hamlet. Thirteen lines were cut from the scene, including 17-23 which refer to "the owner of a foul disease". Five lines were cut from the end of the scene, and the King's speech continued with IV.3.2 (IV.2 being omitted.) From this speech Barrett cut four lines:

> ...to bear all smooth and even,
> This sudden sending him away must seem
> Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown
> By desperate appliance are relieved.
> (7b-10)

The conclusion of the speech became:

> And where 'tis so, th'offender's scourge is weighed
> But nearer the offence
> Or not at all.
> (6-7a,11)

Hamlet's lines concerning the progress of a King through the guts of a beggar were deleted (22-31), but at "seek him i'th' other place yourself", Hamlet answered the King fiercely "as if to provoke him to a quarrel". Claudius's first reaction was to advance on Hamlet, but he evidently thought again, and sensed that it would be more prudent to be quiet (prompt-copy). Millard's acting in this scene made a strong impression on the critics - Scott wrote that he "was a man of flesh and blood, obviously devoted to his helpmate and conceding all through his nervous apprehension of Hamlet". The Times observed that the splendour of the palace setting contrasted tellingly with Hamlet's brooding anger, and Claudius's anxiety. The speed of this sequence, and Barrett's elocution till we to end the act (at 67, "And thou must cure me" - not with the couplet) helped to intensify the impression of "a man of action prompt and decisive" shading at times into what the Captious Critic called a "rash-headed gentleman of audacious disposition and uxorious propensities". Godwin had promised in his interview a "really gorgeous attraction" in Claudius, which would account for Gertrude's hasty re-marriage.

.....

Barrett's fourth act began, like Irving's, with IV.5: both versions redistribute the speeches at the beginning of the scene, Irving replacing "a Gentleman" with Marcellus,

Barrett giving some of the lines to Horatio, some to Gertrude. In Irving's version Marcellus was given an unaccountable prominence in the Danish court, and the scene opened:

> Queen
> I will not speak with her.
>
> Marcellus
> She is importunate, indeed distract,
> Her mood will needs be pitied.
> 'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew
> Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.
> (1-3, 14-5)

The information of the first lines befits Marcellus, but the politic confidential tone of the last two is more appropriate to Horatio. Barrett gave 14-5 to the Queen, but allotted to Horatio most of the description of Ophelia's madness which Irving had omitted ("She speaks much of her father...")

Miss Eastlake made what seemed to the annotator of the prompt-copy a "striking entry" by "suddenly pulling aside" the centre curtains. Her acting appears to have improved as the first night progressed, and the Captious Critic, who so cruelly listed her faults in the scene with Laertes and Polonius, acknowledged a "tender, winning pathos hard to be excelled". By skilful depiction of dementia she managed to "excite throughout a sense of tender pity rather than horror". The Stage remarked favourably upon her "intensity and pathos", and Scott observed that the impression made upon the audience "gave to the actress a very cheering encouragement". From the prompt-copy, one gathers that Miss Eastlake paused when she said "Nay, pray you mark" (28) and shuddered at the words "I' th' cold ground" (68). She shuddered again when she caught sight of Claudius, and shrank from him with the exclamation "It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter", moving to Laertes for protection. "There's a daisy" (179) was a "sudden exclamation as if surprised and glad to see the flower", and during the song "For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy" she scattered flowers upon the floor, subsequently picking them up. None of these details seems incongruous, but the prompt-copy's account of Ophelia's exit suggests a justification for The Entr'acte's complaint that the scene had "that artificial ring which does not belong to nature": Miss Eastlake

backed upstage towards a curtain, suddenly touched against it, started, emitted a hysterical shriek, and fled.

By way of contrast, Laertes was understated. To Punch his "Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia!" seemed a "heartless, unfeeling jest" from a "monotonous, unsympathetic light comedian". The Stage found Frank Cooper's performance "unimpressive and colourless". Millard's acting in the sequence concerning the plot against Hamlet was, to Clement Scott, "of remarkable interest", but he did not describe its felicities in any detail. Barrett again gave Claudius more lines than Irving had done: in the sequence of scenes making up his fourth act (IV.5-7) Barrett cut one hundred and eight lines, Irving two hundred and seventy-five. Barrett used Horatio's scene with the sailors (IV.6, discarded by Irving) and restored most of Claudius's conference with Laertes. Irving's prompt-book shows that he cut a further twenty-four lines in performance. In the abbreviated text the transition from IV.5 to IV.7 was as follows:

(xit Ophelia followed by Queen and Marcellus)

Laertes
Do you see this, O God?

King
Will you be ruled by me?

Laertes
Ay, my lord,
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

(IV.5.197, IV.7.57-60)

This omits the greater part of Claudius's explanation to Laertes: the young man's readiness to accept Claudius's suggestions seems somewhat ridiculous. In the printed text the sequence was more intelligible. Claudius offered some explanation for his conduct (or, at least, his panic) and mentioned Hamlet's letter - a fact obscured by the revision. The printed version ran:

(Exit Ophelia followed by Queen and Marcellus)

Laertes
Do you see this, O God?

King
Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touched, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction.
(IV.5.197-205)

Then followed the arrival of the messenger (IV.7.36) and all but four lines of the dialogue explaining them, concluding with "will you be ruled by me?" (36-7, 41b-57a, 59 etc.). Irving's stage-practice appears to have involved the omission not only of information vital to the understanding of Claudius's relationship with Laertes, but of the news of Hamlet's return. It is an extraordinary mistake, but its presence in more than one prompt-book of the Lyceum production suggests that it was found acceptable[30]. Barrett restored the whole of IV.6, and a good deal of the next scene. Claudius explained his dependence upon Gertrude ("She is so conjunctive to my life and soul ..."), and the messenger arrived with the letters. Most of the description of Lamond was omitted, but the essentials of Laertes's agreement to co-operate remained. Irving cut ten lines from the description of Ophelia's death, and omitted Laertes's immediate reaction. Barrett still baulked at the alternative names for long purples, but cut only four lines in all, and allowed Laertes his feelings. Both versions discarded the simple, and perhaps deliberately anti-climactic, exit-lines of Claudius.

.....

Barrett made no cuts in the opening dialogue of Act Five (the discussion of Ophelia's status as a suicide), except to substitute "the Tavern" for "Yaughan". Punch observed that the second grave-digger, not being given any money, did not return with the liquor. The first grave-digger was, according to the prompt-copy, very old, with a bald grey wig, dirty fleshings, and a chocolate-coloured jerkin and hood. Among Godwin's designs, in the Anthoven Collection, are a pick-axe,

spade and ladder, evidently for use in this scene. George Barrett, as first gravedigger, won considerable praise - typical of the critics' response is Scott's comment that he gave "a true bit of humorous acting divested of all traditional nonsense and time-worn gag". The prompt-copy lists a number of realistic details, none of them outstandingly inventive, but evidence of a well-judged performance. At "fetch me a stoop of liquor" he got into the grave, spat on his hands, and began to dig; during the first verse of his song he used a pick-axe, during the second a spade. In the second verse he paused after "But age, with his stealing steps", unearthed a skull at "Hath caught me in his clutch"; then he brought it down-stage (how far is not specified) and hit it with the spade. The business was repeated in the third verse. with the words "a spade, a spade", the gravedigger grunted as he dug. His answer to Hamlet's query - "mine,sir" - was given "snappishly as if annoyed to be interrupted", and Yorick's skull was taken up "professionally and appreciatively". George Barrett seems to have conveyed the man's pleasure in his business.

Hamlet wore a red-lined cloak, and reclined at the foot of a stone, Saxon cross to speak to the gravedigger[31]. Apart from the prompt-copy's note that he seemed almost afraid to take Yorick's skull in his hand, and was annoyed by the smell, little of the business was recorded. The Captious Critic thought that Barrett lectured the skull "like a professor of anatomy". It is interesting that the actor should convey in pantomime Hamlet's disgust at the smell of the skull, although the line "And smelt so? pah!" was omitted(as was Hamlet's declaration that his gorge rises, and the gravedigger's professional reflection on the large number of pocky corpses sent for burial). Other omissions were Hamlet's speculations about the courtier and the great buyer of land (82-7, "Or of a courtier...an we had the trick to see 't", and 101-113, "This fellow...seek out assurance in that"). More important was the omission of the gravedigger's assertion "I have been sexton here man and boy thirty years" (156-8) - a line which caused Furness three pages of footnote on Hamlet's age. Its

removal was essential to Barrett's presentation of a young Hamlet, and caused some controversy as to what liberties might be taken with the text. The accusation was not that of cutting lines (after all, no-one expected to hear the whole play) but of ignoring evidence devised by the playwright to clarify the character's nature and outlook.

More interesting than the display of would-be pedantry on the part of the journalists were Clement Scott's comments on the setting of the graveyard scene. He objected to "fir trees and Scandinavian gloom,... temples, and mausoleums, and scattered crosses", and maintained that Shakespeare had conceived the scene as an English churchyard, picturesquely beautiful and well-planted with flowers:

> No journeys to Denmark, no faithful copies of Danish churches or graveyards, no ugly reproductions of what is foreign to the mind or understanding will ever take the imagination away from the scene that Shakespeare loved and so faithfully painted.

Scott did not reveal his warrant for the assumption that Shakespeare "painted" any such scene: the graveyard is at no point described, and the only flowers mentioned in the text are the violets that Laertes hopes will spring from Ophelia's "fair and unpolluted flesh". The form taken by Scott's distaste for Godwin's efforts - a bland, sentimental xenophobia - anticipates that of his attacks upon Ibsen, whose Ghosts "might have been a tragedy had it been treated by a genius" as opposed to the Scandinavian "egotist and...bungler" (The Daily Telegraph, 14 March 1891)[32]. Scott, together with a number of other reviewers, gave the impression that the production's precision of detail was an affront to a traditional and romantic vagueness. In the notice which appeared in The Morning Post it was asserted that "a certain air of realism" distinguished the production, and that the "general rendering" was "striking and impressive rather than poetical". This kind of criticism is often met with in notices of major Shakespearean productions during the eighteen-eighties, and it might seem to be related to the Aesthetic rejection of detail and "finish" in painting. Its true parent, however, is surely the conservative reaction against Pre-Raphaelitism that

was current in the years of the Brotherhood. Scott and the other critics who objected to the work of Godwin and Wingfield conceived of Shakespeare's plays in terms of a grand, idealised manner, sweeping and romantic in its pictorial effects. Scott, as was noted in the preceding chapter, admired Irving's Faust for the approximation of its scenes to Dore's "weird fancy" and John Martin's "splendid daring and invention". Irving's stage effects and his characterisations were often gloomy and melancholic, but Barrett had set the play in specific and detailed surroundings, and played the part in a briskly intelligent manner. Scott's disapproval of the graveyard set appears, by its extreme reaction, to carry the weight of his romantic prejudices.

There were few alterations to the text in the latter part of the scene, and little business of any note. Hamlet did not invite Laertes to match him in fasting, drinking eisel, or eating a crocodile. "Crants" - the Quarto reading at 226 - was replaced by the Folio's "rites", "wiseness" became "wisdom" (257), and "Swounds" (268) "come". The prompt-copy notes that, as Ophelia's body was dropped into the grave, the covering was pulled off, revealing her figure. Laertes leapt from the grave to clutch Hamlet by the throat, rather than fight in the grave itself. Scott, in the course of his objections to the setting, mentions that Laertes raised "an unwelcome laugh" at one point, which might be blamed on the scenery. Unfortunately he does not indicate when or how the laughter came. The scene changed immediately to "another view near the castle" - presumably a front cloth - and began at V.2.75, "I am very sorry, good Horatio, That to Laertes I forgot myself". Hamlet's intention to "court his favours", and the admission that "the bravery of his grief" put him into "a towering passion" (78-80) were cut, and a number of unimportant alterations were made in the dialogue with Osric. Amongst these were a number of reflections on the drossy age (177-200), which might have contributed to the play's sense of a "general gloom". The major omission at the beginning of the scene was, of course, the description of Hamlet's trick against Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Like the play-scene, the final scene of the Princess's production took place in the grounds of the castle. It moved quickly to its climax, cutting by half the exchange between Hamlet and Laertes, and losing in the process Laertes's canny reminder that their present reconciliation is only a temporary truce (238-242). Hamlet tried his foil anxiously at "Your Grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side" (prompt-copy). The Daily News admired the "singular spirit" of the fencing, and the "ingenious dexterity" of the momentary disarming of Laertes, which resulted in the exchange of weapons. Other reviewers were not so well satisfied, among them The Entr'acte and Punch. The latter gave a facetious account of the sequence:

> The stabbing the King was absurd, as the unhappy prisoner waited for Hamlet to come and kill him, and then, though Hamlet only passed his sword palpably outside his body, where the rapier showed in strong relief against the white robe, so great was the abject usurper's fright, that he gave one last and ghastly grin, squinted horribly, and rolled down the steps onto the stage, dead. A bad finish for a bad man.

Hamlet died, not on a chair, which was offered to him, but on the floor. The prompt-book observes:

> Hor. takes medallion from Hamlet's bosom, puts it before his lips to see if he is dead. Hamlet revives. Sees it. Kisses it.

Of Forbes-Robertson's business at this point, where Hamlet died sitting upright in a chair "peacefully", with a gentle smile on his face, his hands resting on the arms", Percy Fitzgerald wrote in 1908:

> Now all this was well-intentioned and conscientious, but there was a most unheroic air about the business - a kind of homely domesticity.[33]

Barrett achieved a similar, if more simply sentimental, effect, but, unlike Forbes Robertson, he did not go so far as to restore the play's conclusion: at the words "the rest is silence" the curtain descended, without any mention of Fortinbras, or of Hamlet's dying voice in his favour.

.....

When Barrett was called for at the end of the performance, he made a short speech:

> Ladies and Gentlemen, - I would much rather have made no speech to-night, for my heart is a little too full. I will tell you a little story, though, which may perhaps do as well.
> (The Daily News)

He went on to describe how, as a boy, he had spent his last sixpence by going to the gallery of the old Princess's Theatre to see Charles Kean play Hamlet. On coming out, he had sworn that the time should come when he would be manager of the theatre, and would play Hamlet upon its stage. Thanks to the sympathetic support of his audiences, he had now fulfilled that oath.

It need not have surprised Barrett that some critics seized on his speech and made fun of it. The professionally facetious papers, particularly Punch and The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, were cruel in their mockery, and two burlesques used the story. Yardley's Very Little Hamlet opened with a scene in which Nellie Farren as the young Barrett, was thrown out of the old Princess's, and A Fireside Hamlet, by Comyns Carr, dealt with the problems of Dick, a baker whose taste for playgoing had generated an ambition to introduce tragedy into real life. Mary, his prospective fiancée, remonstrated with him, pointing out that "it's all very well for Mr Barrett to be melancholy", but there is nothing in common between them. "Not so 'asty", replied Dick,

> Twenty-five years ago what was he? Why, a boy, and what is he now? Why, Hamlet, and mark his career. He liked melodrama once and enjoyed himself in a low vulgar way just as I did, but he ain't going to play no more melodramas. He's taken to tragedy, and so 'ave I.[34]

Dick claimed to have "a antic disposition on", and when offered breakfast replied:

> Go thy ways. Bacon delights me not, no, nor eggs neither for the matter o'that.

His idea of tragedy extended little further than a plan to abolish the House of Lords.

It was generally agreed that Barrett's greatest virtue as a performer of the role was his lack of affectation. Dale, in The Illustrated London News, found him "in the highest degree natural, intelligent, and artistic", but admitted that

he had "left the spiritual side of the part pretty much where he had found it". The Athenaeum, as has already been noted, missed the "doubt and speculation" of the character: it concluded that the "fault of the entire performance" was modernity. These reviewers, and most of their colleagues, appear to be condemning Barrett's interpretation on the basis of a fairly crude equation of "spirituality" with melancholy, and "poetry" with dreamy gloom. In The World William Archer offered an analysis which, without considering the performance point by point, seems to do it justice:

> Of Mr Wilson Barrett's Hamlet what can be said except that it is eminently respectable? He has weighed every word, gesture and inflexion of the part.

Although others accused Barrett of melodramatic excesses - The Entr'acte claimed that he mouthed and ranted "like the most accomplished type of East-End and transpontine heavy villain" - Archer found no such lapses. Despite a "manly" bearing and "self-restrained" manner, it could not be denied that the performance lacked a quality essential to success in the role. The restraint that had given such freshness and authority to Barrett's acting in such plays as The Silver King, here resulted in dullness:

> His voice is colourless, his expression colourless. He does not murder his lines, which is so much to be grateful for, but neither does he extract from them their musical quality. His carriage is not absolutely defective, but he has moments of exceptional grace such as remain photographed upon the memory. His Hamlet is the product of patient intelligence, conditioned by a commonplace personality.

Returning to Sala's notice, we find the production credited with making Hamlet " a most picturesque and animated melodramatic play, quite coherent and sequential, and full of the liveliest human interest".

The Princess's Theatre production, and the performance of the actor-manager, had brought to the play those qualities of staging and interpretation which elevated the "inferior melodrama". The hero's outstanding qualities were displayed only at the appropriate crises, and the villain had a certain shrewdness that prevented him from adding a show of evil intent-

ions to all and sundry. The play was made plausible, and its characters were recognisably human. The design of the production shared this quality of reason: instead of being a gloomy and indeterminate kingdom, Denmark was located unequivocally in time and place. Whereas Irving had made alterations in the text which rendered certain issues and events unclear, Barrett had made the play's continuity secure, and had retained the balance of character against character. He ensured that Hamlet should have a worthy opponent in Claudius, and that the usurper should be understood as a sensitive and attractive, if villainous man. Ophelia's account of Hamlet's visit, in II,1., and Claudius's persuasion of Laertes, in IV.5. and 7., reveal important aspects of the characters involved: Barrett, in his concern that the play be well-made, retained them, whilst Irving, whose concerns were predominantly with the vivid presentation of Hamlet, found himself able to dispense with them. Irving's Hamlet was a falling angel, his "troubled weary face, displaying the first effects of moral poison": a moral being, tainted by his betrayal, where Barrett's Prince was merely outwitted by evil.[35]

Barrett revived the production on a number of occasions, including an American tour, but he remained convinced that he was being denied due acknowledgement. In 1884 he wrote to Moy Thomas expressing his dismay at the "utter ignorance" of those who attacked his presentation of Hamlet as a young man.[36] In 1887 he was still unable to comprehend the accusation that his interpretation lacked poetry, and in time his resentment at this slight was subsumed into his conviction that he was being persecuted by an alliance of managers and critics. A letter to Mrs Clement Scott, dated only "Aug. 30" and sent from the Grand Hotel, Douglas, announces Barrett's intention to ask "Clem" to stop the "misrepresentations" of his Hamlet:

> The "Hamlet" have never left me since I produced the play. I have played the character more often than any living actor - to larger receipts. It is not a financial failure...Only a wish to hit back at the paid clique which like an Octopus reaches out in every direction to collar me if possible and down me.[37]

The performance was, perhaps, treated unfairly by critics who expected the Lyceum qualities to be reproduced, but Barrett

lacked the personal magnetism of Irving, and he was probably unrealistic in demanding that the Princess's Hamlet be accepted as a personal triumph. After this venture, he did not return to Shakespeare until 1897, when he produced Othello. Shaw observed that the actor was not "built to fit Othello" but that he produced the play "as usual, very well":

> At the Lyceum, everyone is bored to madness the moment Sir Henry Irving and Miss Terry leave the stage: at the Lyric, as aforetime at the Princess's, the play goes briskly from beginning to end, and there are always three or four successes in smaller parts sparkling round Mr Barrett's big part.[38]

Archer repeated his former criticism of Barrett's qualifications as a Shakespearean actor, but admitted that the revival possessed "life and movement"[39].

With Godwin's help, Barrett had given Hamlet with a kind of integrity that was lacking in Irving's productions of Shakespeare, and with pictorial values different from those of the Lyceum. It was, however, a pictorial production, and only its being organized with a view to "illustrating" the whole play, rather than one man, distinguished its theoretical basis from that of Irving's staging. The same season saw another challenge to Irving's supremacy as a producer in Mary Anderson's Romeo and Juliet. Miss Anderson, however, upheld the values of another kind of theatre, and accordingly she offered a different mixture of familiar ingredients.

Chapter Four.

WINGFIELD AND MARY ANDERSON : ROMEO AND JULIET, 1884.

Henry James, reporting on the state of London theatres in the January, 1881 issue of Scribner's Magazine, apologized for an unavoidable "want of gallantry". He was obliged to admit that none of the English actresses satisfied his artistic criteria:

> It takes more to make an accomplished actress than the usual Englishwoman who embraces the profession can easily lay her hands upon; a want of frankness, of brightness, of elegance, of art, is commonly, before the footlights, this lady's principal impediment.[1]

After a survey of major actresses, James concluded that "the most interesting actress in London" who came nearer than any other to being "mistress of her art", was Genevieve Ward, an American who had trained on the continent as an opera-singer and actress. James conceded that Ellen Terry possessed "remarkable charm", but she impressed more by the influence of this natural gift, than by any artistic technique. Like Arnold, James admired the accomplishments of French actors, and considered the majority of British performers successful more by accident than artifice. The Lyceum performances were, in a sense, inartistic - Miss Terry was simply herself, displayed in a series of striking dresses and situations. Reviewers who disagreed with such an analysis, and who held her to be possessor of great vocal skill, were nonetheless at pains to remind readers of her pictorial beauty. Thus a critic "of the gentler sex" wrote of Miss Terry's Viola[2]:

> Clad in cream and gold draperies, the little sapphire-blue cap being her one touch of colour, she looked - to use a hackneyed phrase - just as if she had stepped out of an old picture, and a picture such as Leighton might paint or Morris write verses upon.
>
> (The Theatre, ns. IV (August 1884) 162-4; p.163)

The reviewer suggested that "did the new Viola appeal to no other sense but that of sight she would still be a success", but less sympathetic voices claimed that there was no other appeal, and that Miss Terry was, for all her professional experience, an amiable amateur in the interpretation of Shakespeare, lacking range and subtlety.

To fill the vacant position - assuming its vacancy - of leading actress, a candidate would have to be mistress of charm, beauty and, to please those uncaptivated by Ellen Terry, exceptional technical skill.

.....

i. Mary Anderson

When Mary Anderson arrived in London, in the summer of 1883, she was twenty-four years old : Ellen Terry had been thirty-three when, in the previous season, she appeared as Juliet at the Lyceum. Miss Anderson's stage debut had taken place only eight years previously, when she played Juliet at Macauley's [sic] Theatre in Louisville, Kentucky - she had known Shakespeare's plays since the age of twelve and, like Helen Faucit, had felt simultaneously the passion of identification with Shakespeare's heroines and the desire to represent them in public. The "old red volume" had become "like a casket filled with jewels", whose "flames andflashes" might "glorify a life": the interpretation of the characters appeared to be a public act of piety and a fulfilment of the actress's emotions[3].

Charlotte Cushman had given the young aspirant the unusual advice that she should start at the top, and this she contrived to do, moving quickly from the indulgence of home-town audiences to the patronage of eminent actors. Considerable beauty and a charming manner appeared to outweigh a lack of experience and technique. The naivety of Miss Anderson's emotional relationship to her rôles did not forsake her, and is evident in the autobiographical volumes which she published in later years.

The first professional consequence of this emotionalism was her choice of plays and characters - noble, high- indeed works, displaying the virtues of ideal women in a dignified and poignant manner. In A Few Memories, published in 1896, seven years after her withdrawal from the stage, the actress described her feelings as she approached England in 1883:

> The chief good my work had accomplished, I felt, was the assurance, verbally and by letter, from many young men and women that the examples of

> such characters as Parthenia, Ion, and Evadne, in particular, had helped them in their daily lives, and strengthened them in moments of despondency and temptations. (p.128)

This educational - indeed, inspirational - aim was accompanied by a mistrust of the theatre as an artistic medium:

> The disappointments connected with the art itself - the painting one's pictures with one's own person, in the full gaze of the public, the dependence upon inartistic people (often compelled to use the theatre as a trade) for carrying out the most cherished conceptions, and the constant crumbling of ideals - made me, young as I was, long to leave the stage for the peace and privacy of a domestic life. (p.129)

The sentiments are a combination of the by now traditional poets' suspicion of the stage, and unashamed social snobbery. The concluding lines suggest that the audience is of little help in the cultivation of Mary Anderson's poetic soul, and would be better dispensed with. Later the actress achieved this goal, making a good marriage and retiring to live in sentimental state in the Cotswolds. At her house in Broadway she held distinguished house-parties and, being Roman Catholic, furnished herself an elegant chapel, with vestments fashioned from the gowns she had worn as Juliet[4]. Her cast of mind may be gathered from a letter to William Winter, sent from Braemar in July, 1907, in which she described her reading habits. She was fond of Shakespeare and Pope, especially favouring the latter's Eloise and Abelard:

> but much of my time is given & regularly given to perusing some of the great mystic writers - and this kind of work engrosses - and makes much of the merely natural work seem tame & without any real end. No doubt you know those early 13th - 14th - 15th century writers whose work lives today - as vital & full of colour as the work of Angelico, as the music of Palestrina & Gregory. That is the sort of reading my spirit & mind has sic always yearned for - to have found it is to have found my oasis.[5]

This is the temperament which the autobiographical volumes constantly impress upon the reader, but it must be said that the unpublished letters, dealing perforce with practicalities of the theatre and social life, do not maintain the naive disdain for all that is not high-minded. The correspondence

of the early 'eighties often shows a frankness and charm which compensate for the efforts at self-perfection. In 1883 she wrote to tell Winter of the play she had been sent by Oscar Wilde, The Duchess of Padua. The play must be declined, on the grounds that "crime is its sole aspect":

> and I cannot deal with crime even in an artistic way, at least not yet.[6]

In the published writing, such an admission would have been made as a claim that crime was beneath Miss Anerson's dignity, rather than out of her range.

After her arrival in Liverpool, Mary Anderson had made a pilgrimage to Stratford. In London she made preparations for the coming season, and decided to open with Parthenia, in Mrs. Lovell's Ingomar the Barbarian - it was a simple part, and in it she "could not challenge comparison with any English favourites" (A Few Memories, p.137). On August 29 she wrote to Winter that despite "struggles" she had brought her "artistic associates" round to her "way of thinking":

> They have given up pestering me about being patronized by some great lord or lady - etc. - etc. - I have absolutely refused all invitations - and when asked why I do so I say I have not come to London for social success but hope forthat some years hence when I have deserved it - the people that I have met are charming - as everywhere there are some scandelizers who have no respect even for the dead but these poor wretches are easily avoided.[7]

Among the "artistic associates" was Lewis Strange Wingfield. In September 1883 Mary Anderson took up residence in Maida Vale, where the designer had lived since his return from Paris in 1871[8]. In a letter received by William Winter on September 21 she wrote:

> ...as for Lewis Wingfield you told me nothing of him, and he has been engaged - and in fact was in our drawing room talking over the Ingomar dresses (which are beautiful) when your letter warning me against him came - you know I have always taken your advice on all subjects - for there is no one who is so true and good as you ...

It is not apparent whether Winter had warned Miss Anderson against Wingfield's character or his artistic competence[9].

Ingomar had opened by the time Winter received this

letter, to a kindly but only mildly enthusiastic reception. The play, translated in 1851 from a German original, showed how a barbaric warrior was reduced to decency by a young, graceful and pious wife: it was, said The Illustrated London News, "highly moral but extremely wearisome, artless and nonsensical" (8 September 1883), and it had long been absent from the English repertoire. Miss Anderson's acting was appropriate to the part of Parthenia, which The Times described as "easily within the range" of an actress who happened to be "gifted with pretty and engaging ways" and who could wear Greek costume" in such a manner as not to suggest a night dress". Although the newcomer possessed "natural gifts of rare excellence, gifts of face and form and action", there were shortcomings in her technique:

> The elegant artificiality of the American school, a tendency to pose and self-conscious (sic), to smirk even, if the work may be permitted, especially when advancing to the footlights to receive a full measure of applause, were fatal to such efforts of sentiment as even so stilted a play could be made to yield.
>
> (The Times, 3 September)

Miss Anderson appeared "more concerned with the fall of her drapery than with the effects of her speeches" and showed a "diligent and painstaking art" which had not yet learnt to conceal itself. Punch (10 October) described more "transatlantic" idiosyncrasies, including long pauses and a self-conscious drop of the eyelid, which gave the performance a "leariness" which was quite out of keeping with any serious situation, and utterly incompatible with the outward semblance of classical dignity". Miss Anderson excelled in the "graceful and pathetic portions" of the play, but the "note of tragedy" did not seem "within her compass". The review amounts to an accusation of self-conscious and insipid narcissism - the state of mind prevalent amont the Aesthetes of Du Maurier's cartoons. Another school of thought found these faults to be virtues in Miss Anderson's acting: the notices of her first appearances which were published in The Pall Mall Gazette and The World were almost unreservedly favourable - thus the anonymous critic of the former found

evidence in Ingomar (a play he admired greatly) of Miss Anderson's exceptional range, and the latter printed a review by "D.C.", of embarrassing kindness (PMG 3 September, _ 5 September).

The first of the new-comer's productions had been as old-fashioned as any of Irving's plays, but The Lady of Lyons, which followed, was even older. When it was first produced, in 1838, Bulwer's play had been recognised as a strong acting piece with faults. Richard Hengist Horne, a well-disposed critic, had praised in 1844 the sentimental and moral truth of the story, the "easy flow of the dialogue", and the manner in which the whole was "just sufficiently clothed in an atmosphere of poetry to take it out of the mere prose of existence, without calling upon the imagination for any effort to comprehend it". But he reluctantly allowed that the plot "would not bear examination by any high standard"[10]. By the 'eighties, the play's "poetry" had lost its appeal - Archer, in English Dramatists of Today disparaged "the pinchbeck sorrows of Pauline", and even The Pall Mall Gazette, whose reviewer so enjoyed Ingomar, was able to offer only the poor excuse of its being a good acting play as a palliative for its "mock sentiment,...tinsel philosophy, and...sham poetry"[11]. To a decade which was no longer satisfied with Robertson, Bulwer's affectations were scarcely tolerable, but the play remained in provincial repertoires, and was seen occasionally in London.[12] When Barnett produced it at a matinée in 1881, The Academy complained of "the very second-rate quality of the poetry" and the "want of verisimilitude" in some of the characters, but admitted that, well-played, the piece retained a certain vitality. The correspondent of The Theatre decided that the warmth and emotion of the part were missed and that the playing, though "correct", did not carry any conviction:

> Charming as the lady may be, both in look and gesture, she is certainly wanting in that inexplicable impulsiveness, that absolute abandonment of consciousness and self-possession, without which all acting must appear false and untrue. (n.s.11 (December, 1883) 321-4: 321).

The Athenaeum suggested that Miss Anderson had not so far shown any sign of a capability to play tragic parts:

> Though destitute neither of earnestness nor of passion her Pauline moves the admiration rather than stirs the heart...Even in the supreme moment of the third act, in which the bride learns how foully she has been wronged, her moods of mortification and anger are evanescent, and her voice subsides into a murmur which is almost a caress. The art to conceal art is not mastered, and that a sense of want of spontaneity is conveyed, must also be conceded...
>
> (3 November 1883)

An anonymous reviewer in The Dramatic Review (11 April 1885) summarized his dissatisfaction with the actress' interpretations by claiming that she appealed more in repose than in scenes of passion, and that he would rather "contemplate her as the statue, in the first act of Galatea, than listen to her finest outburst as Juliet". Gilbert's play, produced when The Lady of Lyons had been established in Miss Anderson's repertoire, offered her first direct challenge to a contemporary actress.

In the letter to Winter which described her first dealings with Lewis Wingfield, Mary Anderson also mentioned Gilbert: reports that he had forbidden her to perform Pygmalion and Galatea were "without foundation" - he was "a charming man", and in some nine weeks she would stage the older piece, and a new, brief, drama called Comedy and Tragedy (referred to in the letter as "his new play"). It would be "a great pleasure to create a part by so thorough an artist" - this was in early September. A further letter, received by Winter on October 5, mentioned a meeting with Gilbert who was evidently concerned about the production and interpretation of his work: "I suppose he thinks I want to introduce songs and dances etc. in it"[13]. The Lady of Lyons did good business - a letter postmarked October 27 informed Winter that the previous night's house amounted to three hundred and fifty three pounds, and that all the best seats were taken for four weeks ahead. The fourth week of the run opened auspiciously with a house worth three hundred and forty-six pounds, and in another, undated, letter Winter was informed that, with takings averaging between three hundred and fifty and three hundred and seventy pounds, it appeared that the

Lady of Lyons would be retained until Christmas.[14]

By mid-November Pygmalion and Galatea was in rehearsal: Winter was told that Gilbert and the actress worked together "well enough", save for a disagreement over the moment in the second act when Pygmalion was struck blind. Miss Anderson wanted a "dark effect", but Gilbert, evidently wishing to maintain the play's naturalistic atmosphere as a foil to the fantasy of its situation, refused to allow "some sign from heaven"[15]. The original interpreter of Galatea had been Mrs Kendal, who played the statue as a warm and tender young woman - Robert Buchanan described the performance's "delicate and dreamy beauty" as noticeable "even in her slow, 'stammering' movements about the stage, which lifted it into the high region of an Aristophanic creation" (he did not explain his invocation of the Athenian)[16]. Buchanan's capacity for self-contradiction must, as always be allowed for: only a hidden consistency in his thought or an impulsive lack of co-ordination could reconcile this description of Mrs Kendal, written in 1876 and reprinted in 1887, with the claim made in 1889 that the actress's "coarseness and commonness of method" were "worthy of a stage chambermaid". Nevertheless, the earlier passage stands as a representative of contemporary enthusiasm for Mrs Kendal's performance[17]. In A few Memories Mary Anderson remembered a visit to the St. James's Theatre to see Mrs Kendal in Impulse, (by B.C.Stephenson, from a French original):

> when Mrs Kendal came upon the stage, her radiant smile, her beautiful hair simply arranged, and no shadow of 'make-up' or artificiality about her, I thought her one of the most charming women I had ever seen on the boards. (p.134)

Henry James found Mrs. Kendal "the most agreeable actress upon the London stage", and it was with this charm that she endowed Galatea.[18]

Mary Anderson's charm was not of the homely and familiar nature - according to The Times:

> If the heart was not to be touched, as, indeed, in such a play it scarcely ought to be, the eye was enabled to repose upon the finest tableau vivant

> that the stage has ever seen.
> (10 December 1883)

To this reviewer the sentimentality of the original interpretation had been an obstruction of the play's true meaning, and Miss Anderson's playing, although "unimaginative and stony" had been more appropriate. Gilbert was less satisfied, as Mary Anderson admitted in her autobiography:

> Mr. Gilbert did not agree with my conception of the classic meaning of Galatea's character - which seemed to me its strongest and most effective side - saying that the play was a nineteenth century comedy, dressed in Greek costume, "which," he added, "is the only classic thing about it".
> (A few Memories, p.149)

No serious breach appears to have resulted from this disagreement, for Miss Anderson was pondering the production of another of the author's plays, and relations remained sufficiently cordial for her to attend a rehearsal of Princess Ida in January[19].

In March the Lyceum season ended. Mary Anderson took a vacation whilst Lawrence Barrett, the American actor, put on a season of his best-known performances. The agreement for this sub-letting had been made by Abbey, Miss Anderson's manager, some time before, and although the actress wished to take the theatre for a continuation of her own season, Barrett could not be persuaded to change his plans. He failed miserably, "playing under his own management to from £17 to £28 a night". Miss Anderson wrote to Winter, describing a performance of Richelieu, another of Lytton's out-dated plays, which had opened on March 28:

> The theatre is filled with the lower classes. A letter from London tells me that a few nights ago a party of commonest people were sitting in the royal box eating oranges & opening beer bottles during Richelieu.

The actress was meanwhile playing in Edinburgh to good houses[20]. In November she had been contemplating a season at the Princess's Theatre in May, June and July, followed by a holiday and, in October, a tour. Now Mary Anderson's plans were settling on the production of Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum in the first part of the 1884-5 season, preceded

by a revival of Pygmalion and Galatea and Comedy and Tragedy, should the Shakespeare play take longer to prepare."[1] In the summer she took a preliminary trip to Verona, where she and her party were lucky enough to find an "excellent Neapolitan artist" who accompanied them and sketched the locations chosen for the forthcoming production (A Few Memories, p. 171).

ii. Preparations for Romeo and Juliet.

Irving's production of the play, in 1882, had set a high standard for any subsequent producers. Although by no means a triumph for the actor, it had been one of the manager's greatest artistic successes. Typical of its reception was the judgement of The Athenaeum, that whereas the acting was hardly ensemble, the staging would "work an era in stage-decoration and mise-en-scene" (11 March 1882). Punch thought that Irving's scheme appeared to be motivated not by adolescent love but "some other strong emotion of a more mature spirit", which might be 'the perturbation of Hamlet, or the wild ecstasy of Macbeth": the same "comparative absence of feeling" seemed to permeate Ellen Terry's Juliet. The staging, on the other hand, could not be praised too highly:

> Magnificent it is. As a series of large pictures it is unprecedented, and can scarcely be surpassed. Some of the scenes - notably Capulet's garden and Juliet's chamber - might be transferred to canvas without little alteration, and recollected as striking and satisfactory works of art, having a grace of composition worthy a Hicksson or of Frederick Walker, and a charm of colour suggestive of Burne-Jones or of Holman Hunt.
>
> (11 March 1882)

The next sentence qualifies admiration with the terms which were frequently applied to Irving's acting, and would soon be used in notices of Mary Anderson's:

> And if the presence of the pictures makes that charm could compensate for the absence of the passion that moves, this revival will take and deserve a distinguished and unqualified success.

In [illegible] other praises Irving's intelligence, his liberal use of extra dancers and - unusually for the Lyceum

- the ensemble of the company; but he felt that too much had been left to the scenery, for all the manager's bringing "culture and intelligent taste" to bear upon "matters from which a dozen years ago culture and taste were generally divorced" (16 March 1882). Shaw, writing some years later, took Irving's Romeo as an example of ingenious staging combined with "absurdity", and of Irving's inability to adapt himself to an author's creation.[22]

This set Mary Anderson a considerable task, for she was obliged to emulate Irving's methods, not in general terms, but with reference to a specific production. At the same time she had to make the most of the comparison with Ellen Terry, in a part where the older actress's "maturity" had been acknowledged in the press as a disadvantage. Wingfield's assistance was of some importance to her, if the first of these challenges was to be met: she had rejected Irving's offer of his Romeo and Juliet sets (which were not required for his American tour) when she arrived in the preceding summer[23].

Wingfield was not dispatched to Verona, as Godwin had been sent by Wilson Barrett to work on Hamlet in Denmark. Instead, he remained in London, working on costumes and properties whilst Miss Anderson looked for suitable corners of Verona, aided by the Neapolitan artist. In an interview given to The Pall Mall Gazette on 24 October, Wingfield claimed that he had begun work on the production four months before. His duties had included the drilling of the supers - a task which took six weeks:

> ...as our complement is 180, and every group, every action, every bit of pantomime, every step has to be carefully taught, it may be imagined the task was not easy.

The supers were drilled in batches of six, and in addition to their supervision Wingfield was obliged to take charge of carpenters, costumiers, scene-painters, dance rehearsals, fencing lessons, and "general" rehearsals. These claims suggest a far greater burden of responsibility than can be confidently assigned to Godwin, in the productions he "supervised". Wingfield also arranged the text, based

(according to the interview) on the 1599 Quarto: many traditional "points" and deviations from the original would be eschewed. This ambition for textual purity seems a fashionable reflection of the new, "scientific" criticism, and, at the same time, an insinuation that Irving's text was not purged of corruptions. Wingfield shared the pretension with Wilson Barrett, and it was gladly seized upon by the more cynical reviewers as a further product of the rage for authenticity.

Wingfield vouchsafed a few other hints at scientifically correct splendour: the dresses were bases upon Carpaccio's St. Ursula sequence "limned nearly 600 years ago by...the ecclesiastical Hogarth of his period" (the infelicitous phrasing is probably that of the journalist). Even the gardens shown on stage had been copied from original Italian ones, and the truthfulness of the scenes was aided by the employment of John O'Connor, who had recently executed views of Verona on a commission from the Duke of Westminster. Seven actors had been tried, before the appropriate Paris was found, and something in the region of six thousand pounds had been spent so far on the production.

The interview suggests that Wingfield was given complete control over all aspects of the production, although his part in Ingomar had been limited to the costumes, and he was not involved in The Lady of Lyons (the dresses for which were credited solely to the costumier, Auguste & Cie.). At an early stage in preparations he had disagreement with Abbey, the manager, but he was upheld by Miss Anderson. In a letter dated "Paris June 15 1884" she wrote:

> I am indeed distressed that Mr Abbey should write you a curt note but you will overlook it I hope when I tell you that he is almost distraught with his recent losses.
>
> You have done so much that his interest in your work should have made him act differently. However there is no accounting for some people's doings.
>
> Will you tell me your terms and how it would best please you to do things - then I will at once arrange all with him & that will prevent you coming in contact with him...[24]

The reason for Abbey's curt note is not evident: it may have been that he challenged Wingfield's authority, or that he did not give him the proper payment (his "terms"?). The letter does indicate some tension between professional staff and adviser: if Wingfield's word was as absolute as his interview suggested, the scene-painters and technicians must have been unusually docile. It appears, moreover, that the design policy of the company had failed badly in the dressing of Pygmalion and Galatea. Alma-Tadema gave an interview to The Pall Mall Gazette in which he denied responsibility for the costumes, and made it clear that he had not been employed on an official basis, or attended any "stage-rehearsals". Miss Anderson, he pointed our, was dressed according to a design by an American artist, Frank D. Millet. On the opening night the actress's first act dress did not look right: Tadema went behind and, in the green-room, "pulled the drapery more fully round the upper arm, besides making one or two other little changes" (10 December 1883). After the second act he went behind again and "pinned up the dress in front so that, instead of catching between her feet and bulging out, it hung free in a straight line". But Miss Anderson had only taken his advice in a casual way, and his suggestion during the rehearsal period that a certain kind of coiffure be adopted was overruled. Tadema gave the interviewer his pessimistic view of the movement towards stage authenticity:

> the purity and simplicity of taste which reigned in antique costume are foreign to the very principles of the modern stage, with its glitter and show, its craving for unlucky ornament and crude masses of colour.

Like many of the reviewers, he found the costumes of the other members of the cast gaudy and inaccurate, and he was swift to dissociate himself from them.

Whilst in Tadema's relationship with the production of Gilbert's play one can discern the symptoms of the traditional mutual distrust of "experts" and technicians, in Romeo and Juliet the movement towards the establishment of the artistic director was fully endorsed. Wingfield went so far as to impugn the archeological accuracy of Irving's production, claiming that "his dresses were imaginary, and belonged to no

period at all" and that the scenery, however impressive, did not represent Verona. This elicited a refutation on the part of Alfred Thompson, who had designed the costumes. Thompson was in New York, and read an account of Wingfield's interview in The New York Herald: his reaction was published, somewhat belatedly, on November 29, in the London theatre magazine Under the Clock. Irving's costumes were perfectly accurate, with a few minor exceptions, and Thompson, who had made a reputation as a designer of accurate costumes on one side of the Atlantic, made it clear that he did not wish to be hampered in the establishment of a similar reknown in America[25]. Wingfield may have found good and accurate patterns in the course of his researches, but there was no reason to believe that he had found the only appropriate costumes.

The attack on Irving's designer - whom he did not name in the interview - was tactless, but Wingfield could reasonably claim a status in Miss Anderson's company that none of Irving's employees could enjoy. He had delivered a lecture on dress at the 1884 Health Exhibition, and had designed the costumes displayed there[26]. He had already become known for his theatrical work - especially in connection with John S. Clarke's staging of The Comedy of Errors in the preceding year. His name was valuable to Miss Anderson in her attempt to emulate Irving as a producer in his own theatre.

.....

iii. The Performance.

The major sources of information concerning Mary Anderson's Romeo and Juliet are the newspaper and magazine reviews[27]. In addition to these, two valuable accounts appeared in journals: an article by Lord Lytton ("Owen Meredith") in The Nineteenth Century for December 1884, and a less sympathetic notice by G.B. Humphreys in The National Review (February 1885). Lytton had marked partiality for Miss Anderson - he had prepared a translation of L'Aiglon for her use, and subsequently helped her arrange an acting edition of The Winter's Tale.[28] His article began with the explanation

that he had visited the Lyceum with some friends, after reading some very unfavourable reviews, and, finding his impressions so at variance with the opinions of the critics, had been moved to write in the actress's defence. Humphrey's article has the subtitle "Voice and Emotion: With Reference to the Juliet of Miss Mary Anderson", and seeks to interpret the performance in terms of a theory of acting. Noting that an actor may be said to have expressed a passion when the audience shows signs of feeling it, he remarks on the existence of two reactions to Miss Anderson's acting. This division in the estimates of the performance suggest to him that too little attention has been paid to "the power of the voice as an evoker of emotion". (His description of the voice relates it to current theories of musical expression:). He eventually arrives at the criteria he would apply to acting. Presupposing an attentive and "feeling" audience, there are three conditions essential to artistic success:

> 1st The situations in the play must be natural.
>
> 2nd The gestures and movements, commonly called "the acting", must be appropriate on the part of the actor.
>
> 3rd The pitch and timbre of the actor's voice must be such as we are compelled to associate with the presence and expression of the emotions portrayed.[29]

The author stresses that gesture alone is inadequate as a means of conveying emotion. However limited these criteria may seem, and however naive in their expression, they are at least an attempt - rare in Victorian dramatic criticism - to establish the terms by which a performance is to be discussed, and they lend Humphrey's account of the production a certain weight.

In November 1885 Miss Anderson presented Romeo and Juliet at the Star Theatre, New York, with the original scenery and cast: a prompt-copy, evidently made for this season and the subsequent tour, is in the theatre collection of New York Public Library at the Lincoln Center (*NCB 188-/*NCP 191757 - Shattuck Romeo and Juliet 49). The text was revised for this revival, and the book gives many new cuts on the acting edition, together with a few restorations. These textual revisions have

not been taken into account in the following discussion of the London production: they may only have been arrived at towards the end of the run, or during the preparations for the tour. The management had made much of the textual "purity" of the production, and it seems reasonable to assume that the published acting edition (1884) bears a close relationship to what was spoken on stage, at least in the late stages of rehearsal and during the early weeks of the one hundred and seven performances. Similarly, comparisons with Irving's text have been confined to his published edition (1882), despite the discrepancies in prompt-copies. Irving's preparation copy (Folger Rom,12 - Shattuck 44) offers some indications of his work on the text before the Chiswick Press page proofs of his own edition were available for use in rehearsal, and divergences of this text from that made public have been noted. Irving frankly admitted in his preface that he had endeavoured "to retain all that was compatible with the presentation of the play within a reasonable limit of time", and he acknowledged the usefulness of Furness's new Variorum edition of the play, which had appeared in 1871. The Folger preparation copy differs from the 1882 Irving acting edition in ninety-six instances (forty-five where it omits passages or lines used in 1882, and fifty-one where it uses material omitted in the edition). This acting edition, in turn, differs from the play as given, with suggested cuts, in the Henry Irving Shakespeare (Volume I,1888, pp.177-255: edited by Frank Marshall) in one hundred and fifteen instances. The acting edition omits ninety-seven passages not marked for omission in the 1888 text, and uses eighteen - mostly single lines - accepted there. To complicate matters further, the markings in Ellen Terry's copy in the Harvard Theatre Collection (TS.2588.30 - Shattuck 47) differ in some instances from all three of these versions. Thus the Nurse's lines at I.V.114-5

> I tell you, he that can lay hold of her,
> Shall have the chinks.

are absent from the preparation copy made by Irving, and from his edition, but are added in Ellen Terry's copy and are accepted into the Henry Irving Shakespeare. The complete Shakespeare published under his aegis was not intended to be an accurate representation of Irving's stage versions, as

Marshall admitted in his general introduction: it did, nevertheless, mark passages suitable for omission in public reading and performance "as suggested by Mr. Irving" (Volume I,p.vi), and might be said to offer a further, ideal stage in Irving's approach to the cutting of the plays. Rather than attempt to resolve the conflicts between these versions, it seems prudent to accept the 1882 edition as a basis for comparison with Mary Anderson's text.

.....

Irving's Romeo and Juliet had begun with the Chorus, spoken by an actor dressed as Dante, but in 1884 the lines were discarded, and the curtain rose on the market place of Verona, painted by John O'Connor. The dialogue between Gregory and Sampson was brief and cleanly (by the loss of some twenty lines, 12b-30). The fighting which followed was "more turbulent and noisy than the last", Clement Scott admitted, but it was so arranged that identification of the characters became difficult (The Daily Telegraph, 3 November 1884). The Athenaeum gave a fuller description of the fight:

> At the cliquetis of swords the burghers and artisans run to or from the combat, and the women cower where they can see the fight. Very far from bloodless is, moreover, the contest. A matron recognizes with a shriek her husband in one of the victims. This is well conceived and historically accurate. Loss of life generally attended the faction fights of the epoch. It is probably due to an imperfect carrying out of Mr. Wingfield's idea that there are no signs of wounds that are not fatal. That this kind of treatment is indispensable will not be maintained. It adds, however, to the popularity of the play.
>
> (8 November 1884)

Sampson bade Gregory remember his "washing blow" (c1) - although the much-vaunted second quarto reads "washing" - and Miss Anderson's text offers the direction:

> Enter partizans of both houses, who join in the fray; then enter citizens with clubs.

Irving, understanding "partizan" to denote a pike or halbert, gave:

> Enter several persons of both houses, who join

> the fray. Enter three or four citizens and peace officers with clubs or partisans.

The latter of the two sentences in Irving's direction is the stage direction of the second quarto, and the meaning of "partizan" might have been found in the New Variorum, but Miss Anderson (or Wingfield) appears to have disregarded the direction and the meaning. Both Irving and Mary Anderson gave Capulet and Montague an un-Shakespearean but theatrically traditional dignity by omitting the hectoring of their wives, and, in Capulet's case, the night-attire. The Prince's speech lost ten of its more fanciful lines (81b-83 and 87-93) and the reference to "Old Free-Town" was removed.

Montague and his wife remain behind to discuss Romeo with Benvolio. In this sequence Irving cut twenty six lines in his published text (108-110,124-8,132-8)and 143-153), although the preparation copy omitted only five (124-8). Mary Anderson's cutting was more drastic, dispensing with three lines at 108-110, and everything between 124 and 153 - a total of thirty-three lines. Romeo was played by William Terriss, whose nickname in the Irving company was "Breezy Bill" - according to Lytton, his entry was striking but by no means breezy: he "looked handsome, well-dressed, and sufficiently young" but he was "as heavily dolourous in his demeanour as if he were what Hamlet might have been had he lived to the age of forty". The actor should, Lytton believed, convey Romeo's youthfulness in this entrance and in the discussion of Rosaline, during which the mild depression should appear "only the low spirits of an impressionable boy", and Romeo should reveal himlelf to be "lively and impulsive, not serious and solemn". Irving had, as an innovation, included the passion for Rosaline "as a palpable evidence of the subjective nature of the man and his passion"(Preface to the 1882 acting edition). Between Romeo's arrival and the end of the scene Irving cut eighteen lines, Miss Anderson twice that number. Both versions proceeded without interruption or change of location to Capulet's conversation with Paris, and Romeo's interception of the letter listing Capulet's guests. Miss Anderson's version, without reverting to the

old omission of Rosaline, cut down Romeo's part and the discussion of his nature. Irving let Juliet's age stand at fourteen (1.2.9), but omitted the line in his preparation copy: Miss Anderson altered the number to eighteen, an age nearer her own[30].

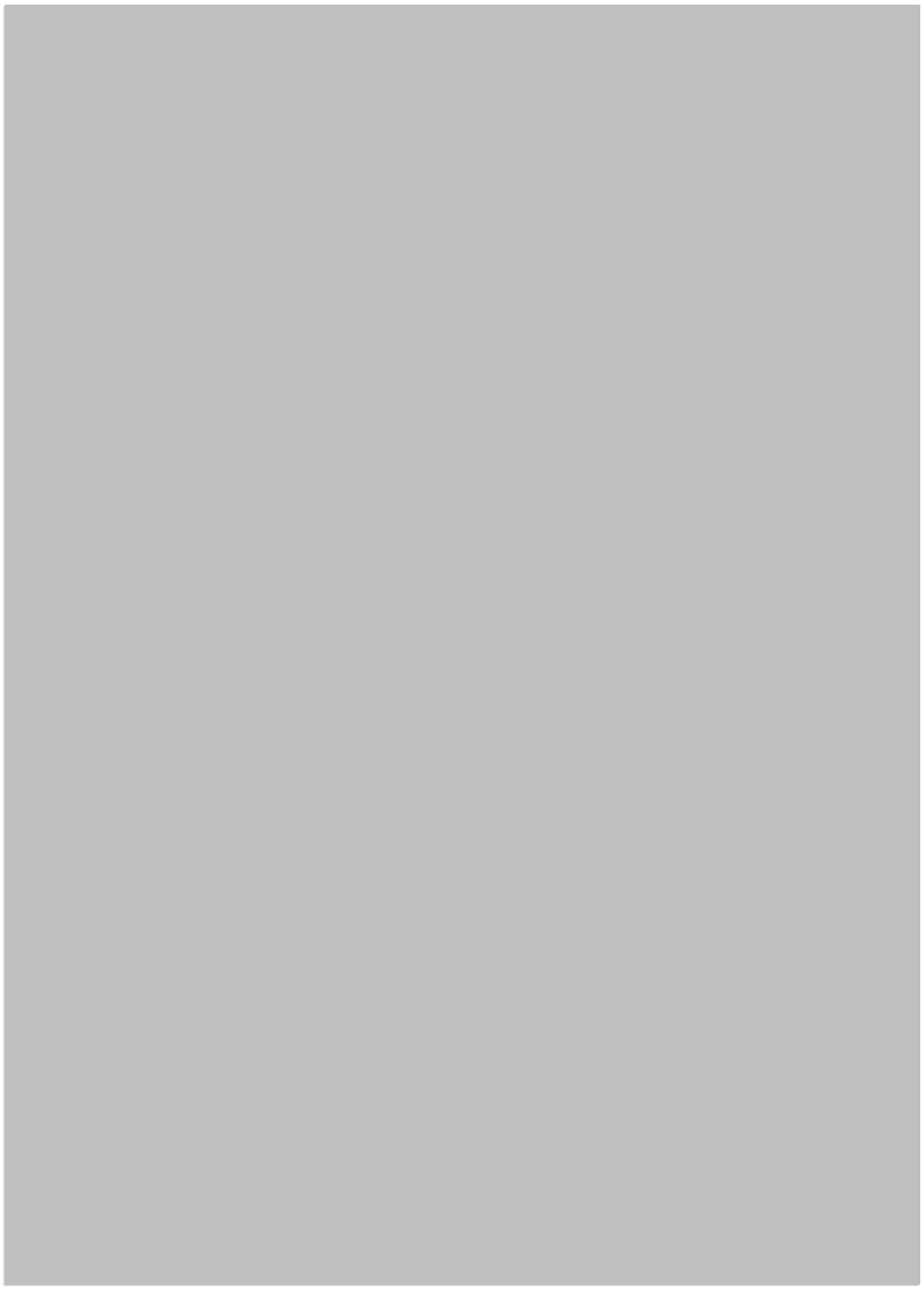
Juliet's first appearance came with the second scene - the third of the full text - which represented the loggia of Capulet's house. A loggia had been used in Irving's production for the fifth act of act two, and was considered by The Athenaeum (11 March 1882) to be among the details by which "the open-air life characteristic of the South" was shown. Lytton found the actress's entrance entirely satisfactory:

> Her sudden impulsive entrance at the call of the Nurse, who is looking for her in another direction, followed by the shy girlish pause between the curtains, at the words "Madam, I am here", when she perceives the presence of her mother...the sort of innocent careless vacancy which pervades the whole expression of the face, and every attitude and gesture of the figure, throughout this scene, are exactly what they should be.

The Era (8 November) found the actress "fresh...pretty,..and ...enchanting", but added that she could do little more than be charming. A number of others found her demeanour in the early scenes unconvincing and shallow - The Stage (7 November) considered Juliet's "tripping" downstairs in answer to her mother's call "an obtrusive show of juvenility", executed "in the same manner that a schoolgirl might run to meet a favourite teacher". Lytton was uncertain about the legitimacy of one particularly effective piece of business at the end of the scene, when dance music was faintly audible as the servant announced the arrival of the guests:

> Catching the sound of this music, Juliet (who has been more or less inattentive to the talk between her mother and the nurse, or who, at least, has listened with an obvious indifference to the subject of it), makes a little dance movement with her feet as she follows her mother to the dance.

he took this to be a sign of Juliet's impulsiveness: her excitement at the prospect of the ball would be "confined, like a child's, to the excitement of the dancing, and not



. Illust ation 10 Following p.204

Mary Anderson as Juliet, 1884

derived from any sentimental interest in the dancers:

> At the first sound of the music she pauses for a moment, as if awakened by it out of her previous indifference. Her eyes kindle gradually. Her face and figure assume animation.

His doubts took the form of a feeling that "it rather disturbed the pleasing effect of a figure formed rather for the graces of repose than for those of movement". The movement itself seemed a little incongruous in one so tall and statuesque as Miss Anderson, but it was admittedly one which none but a sensitive and intelligent actress would have conceived.

Mrs Calvert performed Lady Capulet in a manner which was admitted to be "conventionally correct", but The London Figaro suggested that the character might be made "less repellent" (7 November 1884). Lytton described her as a "most alarming looking dame with a terribly forbidding countenance". Laura Payne, the Lady Capulet in 1882, had played the part in a fashion which Vanity Fair (18 March) considered "uselessly harsh and sour". The tradition of Lady Capulet as grande dame seems to have been quite firmly established, her social position fixed by unwavering adoption of "Lady" rather than "Wife" and "Old La.", the alternatives given in the second Quarto. Mrs Jameson had described Lady Capulet, without warrant from the text, as "sweeping by with her train of velvet, her black hood, her fan, and her rosary - the very beau idéal of a proud Italian matron of the fifteenth century"[31]. The nurse was played by Mrs Stirling, who distinguished herself in the same part in 1882, when she had taken it for the first time. Now The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News praised her for "bringing out its homely humours" without, as Mrs Calvert had done with Lady Capulet, "modernising" it. The new version gave Mrs Stirling, who was seventy-one years old, some new lines to learn, but it omitted, as usual, most of the earthiness of the character. There was no allusion to the suckling of Juliet, or the development of the husband's joke ("Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age"). In Irving's version even the chaster beginning of this sally was omitted.

The first misfortune of the evening came in the next scene (one of O'Connor's streets in Verona). In 1882 William Terriss had made an acceptable Mercutio, and although a little too animated, "over-boisterous, and distinguished by restlessness and an excess of action", he had won "vociferous applause" (The Theatre, ns.V (April 1882) 231-242;p.241). Wedmore, in The Academy, had noted that the actor delivered the Queen Mab speech "with only too much zeal to the audience, instead of to the stage" (18 March 1882). It was difficult for a modern actor to find the right tone for the speech, and the right rapport with the audience.

Herbert Standing, the new Mercutio, went even further across the footlights than Terriss had done. Each point in the speech was accompanied by pantomime, a proceeding which The Daily Telegraph dignified with the name of "heresy". The New York prompt-copy gives at least a part of the business employed here - it seems that Standing, chastened by his experience on the first night, modified his interpretation before the end of the season. The "whip, of cricket's bone" was represented by a handkerchief; Mercutio tickled his nose with the feather of his cap at "Tickling a parson's nose"; at the soldier's dream of cutting foreign throats, the prompt-copy notes:

> Draws dagger not sword (Fairies' size).

Finally, the line "Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes" is accompanied by the direction, "Sound of drums by voice". An account of what went wrong was given by The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News: Standing

> wanted to make Mercutio speak his thoughts as they occurred to him instead of as a recitation, and there he was right enough, according to the modern views of stage soliloquy, and so forth. But he made the mistake of beginning too casually and in too coarse a tone; andthen when sounds of disapproval were heard, he seemed to grow nervous, and, like many another nervous man, became almost vulgarlyfamiliar.
>
> (8 November)

This was another example of "modernising" - an actor, unused to any but modern comic parts, unable to cope with the deli -

abethan idiom. Standing had some experience in Shakespeare, having appeared as Hal to Mark Lemon's Falstaff, but his best work had been done in modern comedy - notably, in 1877, Albery's Pink Dominoes. The Stage found his Mercutio "a bluff, good-natured, easy-going, rubicund gentleman", and Lytton thought him based, perhaps, upon "some prosperous proprietor of a society Journal", who was "the heavy wag of a not very refined coterie". The London Figaro felt that something was to be said for the reading, but that it had "too much swagger about it" and was too reminiscent of Criterion comedy. The Morning Post returned to the perennial lament that few actors knew how to handle the language of Shakespeare, and observed that Standing was "by no means the only actor in the troupe who would do well to remember that the language of Shakespeare cannot fitly be spoken like the dialogue of every day modern life" (3 November).

The 1884 version cut some thirty-seven lines from the scene: Irving, in his preparation copy and in his printed acting edition, made a different selection amounting to thirty-six deleted lines. Both theatrical texts rejected the conjecture by which lines 67-9 of the Queen Mab speech were transposed from their original position to follow line 58 (in order that the mention of the "chariot" might precede the itemising of its components)[32]. Mary Anderson retained line 69 ("That plaits the manes of horses in the night") and "this is she", where Mercutio seems about to continue, but, like Irving, she omitted lines 70-94, which include Mab's treatment of maids when they lie on their backs.

The fourth scene began with line 1[illegible] of I.v, the servants' dialogue being omitted. It was set in a "noble hall" with moonlit gardens visible through "richly sculptured arches and Corinthian columns" (The Daily News, 3 November). The arrangement may have owed something to Irving's set, which stretched "backwards into the open garden" (The Athenæum, 11 March 1882). An illustration in the Pall Mall Gazette (3 November) shows the "Corinthian columns" as two sets of at least eight pillars each supporting loggias (or possibly simple entablatures) at either side of the stage, joining at

the back a row of three rounded arches, through which the garden was seen. The ceiling of the set (if there was one) is not apparent, and the downstage area seems to have been completely free of furniture or pillars, as if for a ballet. This arrangement may have been reflected in the blocking of the scene, for The Saterday Review complained that its "only weakness" was "the manner in which the guests and maskers go apart and turn their backs that their host's daughter and the pilgrim may be undisturbed" (8 November). Clement Scott, in The Daily Telegraph, felt that the scene had been over-produced:

> The entrance of Romeo, his moody dejection and depression, his unsatisfied love for Rosaline, the banter of Mercutio and his friends, his first introduction to Juliet, the instant sympathy of two hitherto isolated hearts - the very points that start the interest of the play are lost in a maze of dancers, and maskers and torches; of restlessness, fever, and distracting movement until we come to the absolute close of the first act, which is as beautiful in idea as in execution.

Other reviewers disliked the costumes (The Stage) or the music (The London Figaro), but most admitted that the scene was well-managed. The choreography had been arranged by John D'Auban, ballet-master of the Alhambra, and, as Ingfield admitted in his interview, a professional dancer had been engaged to partner Juliet. Irving's dance had been a "quaint gavotte movement" (Vanity Fair), but Ingfield announced a more appropriate measure.

A number of complaints were made concerning Miss Anderson's demeanour in the scene. Scott found her "self-conscious":

> ...assertive in her steps and demonstrative in her attitudes, not the lively maiden wandering through the masses of the dance, unconsciously attractive and undemonstratively beautiful, but an actress pirouetting on the stage.

The Daily News accused her of being "piquant and unsubtle". The business of the lovers' kissing was problematic. Humphreys liked "the half-arch, half-astonished way" in which she received the first kiss, and then, "as it were coming to herself" refused to let Romeo trespass again. Lytton was

less satisfied, but the kissing had been "still more unpleasant" in Irving's version. Could any compromise be found?

> I cannot but wish that Miss Anderson had been advised to arrange the whole stage business of this scene differently. The business, as now arranged, concentrates attention upon an action to which only the most skilful management...and the most delicate acting on the part of Romeo, could possibly reconcile the taste of a modern audience.

Humphreys perceived that change in social conventions made the passage difficult - like the soliloquy and the tirade, displays of affectation on stage were now associated with farce or poetic extravagance, and offended against his criterion of naturalism:

> ...those tender passages between lovers which in real life the presence of a third person invariably checks, which in the drawing room comedy are generally laughed at for the travesties they are, have in this play to be made public, with extreme fulness of detail.

Priorities had been re-arranged since Shakespeare's time:

> It is, at all events, now difficult for us to be at home in a drama where all the interests of life are so completely subordinated to the progress of a master passion so sudden in its inception, so tragical iniits outcome, as the love between Romeo and Juliet. Besides, to the Englishman, romance, though he does keenly feel its fascination, is rather by way of being a bye-one. it is to him as much a matter of recreation as a pleasure excursion; there is no reality in it.

In addition, then, to the change in social and theatrical convention, the director of the first interview of Romeo and Juliet was obliged to assault the phenomenal sexual philistinism of the Englishman.

One of the consequences of this attitude was that, when a mature actress played the part of Juliet, the "love-passages" - as The Saturday Review pointed out - "degenerate[] into an intrigue", and the young girl became a Marguerite Gautier. Truth noted that Juliet was "hardly a young girl whom mothers would recommend as a model to their daughters", and that it was necessary to magnify the passion of the play, so as to "forgive" her forward behaviour (6 November). A.C. Sprague

notes that "there seems little doubt that for a long time Juliet was not kissed on the lips"[33], and Helen Faucit's description of the scene, in her second letter on the character, omits any mention of lips: Juliet is kissed on the hand:

> The touch is gentle, the words are few; but that touch of "palm to palm", those few words, have an eloquence more persuasive than volumes of passionate phrases. The beseeching eyes, the tremulous voice full of adoration and humility - have not these spoken? The heart's deepest meanings rarely find utterance in words.[34]

The actress's prompt-copy, from the mid-forties, reflects this chaste reticence by omission of Romeo's reference to his lips (93-4) and the deletion of everything between 103 and 108: Romeo has barely suggested the possibility of a kiss -

> O, then dear saint, let lips do what hands do!
> They pray: grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

- when the Nurse breaks in, and informs Juliet that her mother wishes to speak with her (Folger Rom,9 - Shattuck 20). Irving and Mary Anderson gave the sequence without cuts, though Romeo only kissed Juliet once - in 1882 after, "Then move not while my prayer's effect I take (where Ellen Terry noted a "tremor" in the Harvard copy - Juliet has been outwitted by Romeo, as well as by her own emotions), and in 1884 after the line following.

The scene ended in 1884 with a "point" which pleased Lytton very much, as an example of eloquent silence:

> Juliet, having discovered who the pilgrim is, stands dreamily gazing after him as if entranced. The Nurse takes bother her hands to draw her away. Then the girl's attitude and action reveal the first symptom of childhood passing into womanhood. The effortless submission she has hitherto yielded to those who have charge of her has been shaken; the inclination to assert her own character and will is wakened; and you begin to feel that in the new world she is entering she will have to act for herself and by herself, because it is a world that lies entirely beyond the comprehension and sympathy of all around her.

Scott found the passage "as beautiful in idea as in execution", and ascribed the effectiveness to the setting as much as to the acting:

> The parting of Romeo and Juliet at the close

> of the ball at the end of the dark cypress-avenue, and in that pale blue light which softens and saddens nature between darkness and dawn, is the tardy commencement of the poem at the Lyceum.

This gives another insight into Scott's concept of the "poetic" in theatrical effect. The New York prompt-copy gives the following business for the end of the scene:

> L.Cap Juliet.
> Juliet on Stairs with Nurse.
> L.Cap on top of stairs.
> Boys put out lights.

It may be that the setting and the directions were altered to allow for shallower stages than that of the Lyceum - both scene-endings strike the same note of wistfulness, and the last line is the Nurse's "Come, let's away. The strangers are all gone".

.....

The act-endings of the production were marked by the use of tableau-curtains, but scene-changes were accomplished during black-outs. The scenery was built on moveable units and could be struck and set with reasonable speed (and presumably, orchestral accompaniment) without lowering a curtain. Ben Greet, who played the Apothecary, remembered this as an American innovation - "They could do it over there, where they had electric light in theatres years before we did here"[35]. It is not clear how well this method of stage-management was adapted to the Lyceum, which, in accordance with Irving's preference for gas, was not lit electrically - working lights may have been installed, but gas battens could not be dimmed fully down without extinguishing the flame altogether. Irving's preference for dark scenes must have required many near-blackours, but a fully dark stage can hardly have been possible[36].

.....

Both Irving and Mary Anderson omitted the Chorus before the second act, and both made substantially the same cuts in the short first scene. Romeo, and his first two lines, are

absent in both. From the balcony scene Mary Anderson cut only five lines, and made the customary transposition of lines 186-9 to the beginning of the scene following. Irving made the same transposition and cut twenty-three lines. In 1884 Romeo lost two lines "be not her maid..."(7-8) with their explicit sexual reference, and the end of his final speech, which stopped at line 188. Irving retained the concluding couplet.

Accounts of this balcony scene display more of the general dissatisfaction provoked by Miss Anderson's performance. The Saturday Review complained that, instead of conveying Juliet's awe, fears, and passionate grace of demeanour, the actress was "very girlish and arch", with a "pretty playfulness" in her words and the manner of a "young lady who has set out a dance with a favoured partner". The Pall Mall Gazette found her "am sing, not passionate", and Scott was once again deprived of the "poetry" which he so strongly desired:

> We do not feel the full glorious beauty, the excess of the innocent love of a wholly ideal creature, but a clever actress, assuming a tone which is evidently foreign to her nature.

Lytton complained that Terriss spoiled many lines, partly by misquotation, partly by commonplace diction, turning it into "the baldest prose". He added words and dropped syllables, and evidently failed to deliver his final lines,

> Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!
> Would I were asleep and peace, so sweet to rest!

with the "long-drawn tone of sighing, lingering, listlessness" which the critic expected. On the contrary, he seemed to "jerk them out in a series of unmusical ejaculations". He had, said The London Figaro, adopted at first the "colloquial style" which suited his Juliet but did not suit him, and would do well to return to "the ringing voice with which Nature had endowed him". Lytton suggested that the scene should be played "lyrically rather than dramatically".

The scene began, according to the new stage-copy, in the dark. Romeo came over the wall, as voices were heard and torch-light seen passing on the other side of it. As Romeo crouched by the wall, the moon came out. Juliet's first

appearance on the balcony was described by Humphreys: the words "O Romeo, Romeo!" were uttered "in a low tone with face upturned to the moon, with hands crossed, vaguely murmuring against fate" and in a "tearless sob, the true sob of unreasonable engrossing passion". The Stage thought Juliet too glad to see Romeo, and Lytton suggested that she "seemed to take the whole situation too much as a matter of course - as if it were exceedingly pleasant, rather wrong, a little risky, but not at all astounding or overwhelming". Ellen Terry's notes in the Harvard prompt-book suggest an attempt at "real terror" and "shrinking back" when Romeo presented himself - Punch found her "deliberately and almost monotonously 'intense'", and lacking in "radiant" feeling. Miss Anderson leaned out from the balcony until she almost fell down into the garden and, The Era noted, introduced a "beautifully effective piece of business" by "pulling to pieces the rose she had been wearing, and casting its fragrant leaves at her ardent lover's feet". At the line "And I am proof against their enmity", the New York prompt-copy indicates that a cloud passed across the moon. Lytton describes Juliet's attitude at 182-3,

> Sweet, so would I
> Yet should I kill thee with much cherishing,

spoken with "passionate but tender yearning" which was conveyed by "her hair falling loose over her neck, and her arms folded as already clasping the dear prize to her bosom". Humphreys noticed a touch of "roguishness" at "I have forgot why I did call thee back" (174).

Humphreys thought this scene a convincing demonstration of the inadequacies of Miss Anderson's voice, and its lack of emotional depth:

> A dream of love is being rehearsed to us, so beautifully presented that, surely, had Miss Anderson's acting been mere dumb-show, accompanied by the Scene d'Amour from Berlioz' Symphony we must have felt love in its reality. But, as it is, we watch only half-sympathetically, looking upon its beauty from the outside, and do not dream ourselves.

The low key of the scene, with Romeo by no means distinguishing himself, was in its favour, for "upon some people Romeo jars a

good deal". The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News found Terriss almost completely lacking in "self-abandonment, and Miss Anderson deficient in sincerity or feeling:

> she cannot throw her whole heart into her words - perhaps because she has no heart to throw.

It concluded that the scene was altogether without sympathetic interest, merely a display of lighting technique and "elegant clothes". Thus, inauspiciously, ended the second act of the performance.

.....

The third act of the new arrangement began with 11.3: Irving's Act Three, Scene One had been that of the original text. In Miss Anderson's production Edward Stirling made the Friar "just the kind, genial sort of priest in whom the lovers would confide...instead of the pedantic, uncomfortable personage so often given upon the stage". To this praise in The Stage may be added Scott's commendation:

> The lines of Shakespeare have seldom been more beautifully and correctly spoken.

Stirling was a veteran, the husband of Mrs Stirling and evidently possessed of the elocutionary powers for lack of which younger actors were frequently chastised in the press. In the following scene his wife's performance offered another example of mature technique - Mary Anderson described to Percy Allen her business as she pretended to refuse Romeo's bribe:

> "No, truly sir, not a penny!" standing with her hands behind her back. Then, when she had taken the money, she would cross the stage, chinking the coins as she went, with her hands under her chin, until Peter was within reach of her stick. Then it was thwack! thwack! thwack!: - chink, chink, chink - quite legitimate business, that every night would set the house in a roar.[36]

Most of the banter was cut from this scene, and Mercutio's part consequently trimmed, but Stirling had revived somewhat and "won applause". As he left the stage he mimicked the Nurse's "Give me my fan, Peter" - this was a "gag" dating from Garrick's version.[37] Peter, played by Henry Kemble, was "quaint" and "unexaggerated", according to Scott, and The London Figaro went so far as to call his performance

"faultless".

The next scene (II.5 - Miss Anderson's III.3) was Capulet's Garden, overlooking Verona, painted by Hawes Craven - the New York prompt-copy shows in ground-plan a scene set to approximately a third of the stage's depth, with a fountain stage right, a tree with a bench down centre and a sundial, with another bench upstage on the prompt side. A flight of steps is indicated at the back, to the (stage) left of the tree. Lytton considered the by-play of Juliet and the Nurse "good in all particulars", but did not give any specific points, contenting himself with the observation that Mrs Stirling "varied nearly all the details of the part as last performed by her with Miss Terry". The New York book indicates one piece of business for the Nurse: with "Lord, how my head aches!" (46 etc.) she dipped her handkerchief in the fountain. The same source has Juliet pause, and "cry & hide face" when the old woman tells her "There stays a husband to make you a wife" (65). Humphreys noted that the final line - "Hie to high fortune! Honest Nurse, farewell" - was spoken by Juliet "dancing off crying shrilly and cheerfully with her last touch of girlish impulsiveness", another New York prompt-copy indicates that she ran through the garden gate - downstage on the prompt side in the ground plan - and paused to "kiss to mouth gate". The Stage found the gaiety of Juliet affected, and Scott was also dissatisfied:

> ...the scenes with the Nurse, with all their light-hearted, girlish tricks, her petting, her pouting, and her comedy...we find here an actress imitating what a girl in such a situation might do, not doing what a girl undoubtedly does.

This is hardly an illuminating comment - upon what evidence does Scott presume to distinguish between the possibilities and actualities of girlish behaviour? Ellenberry's acting of the scene had shown "no little art" (Theatre), and had been "animated and graceful" (Punch) and "arch and witching" (Vanity Fair). Critics of Miss Anderson noted a certain insincerity in this part of her performance - few found her "coyness" to be as "irresistible" as The London Figaro claimed,

and one observer used "arch" as a term of approval whilst others made it one of dissatisfaction.

The act ended with II.6., set in a chapel "adjacent to the monastery" (by James Craven). As the scene drew to its close, Romeo and Juliet began their marriage-service - an innovation of which The Times (3 November) approves:

> Instead of retiring to the wings and leaving the performance of the nuptial ceremony to the imagination, the parties repair to the altar and silently take up their position before it as the act-drop falls. There can be no objection to this. It impresses on the public a fact they might overlook.

The reviewer perhaps underestimates the intelligence of the Lyceum audience, but the dumb-show was a respectable visual emphasis. It also provided a tableau for the act-ending, here Shakespeare had simply cleared his stage for the entry of Mercutio and Benvolio in the next scene.

.....

Act Four opened on O'Connor's set of the Friar's Cell at Verona, and the scene (III.1) ended with "O I am fortune's fool" (133), omitting the arrival of the Citizens and the Prince. This had been Irving's policy. Standing redeemed himself a little in this scene, giving an "effective" account of Mercutio's death, in which Scott discerned "signs of pathetic effect dimly and hazily suggested". Terriss, despite an earlier tendency to tameness and under-acting, avenged Mercutio "with adequate spirit and rapidity" (The London Figaro) - an outburst which, Scott remarked, "roused the audience to enthusiasm". The lines beginning 'Alive! in triumph! and Mercutio slain!" were, according to The Era, filled with "electrical force", and The Athenæum felt it likely that he had hitherto restrained "an old tendency...to deliver tender passages as if he were uttering threats or violence", and now let himself go. Punch, in a second notice - amounting to an essay on the play, rather than its production - had described Irving as possessing a "virginish fury" in his attack on Tybalt (April 19 1882). Notes in the Harvard Ellen Terry prompt-copy describe him as "quite tremendous", and Hiatt Baker observed that Irving could kill

a man on the stage with startling fury", but not "make love to a woman". Terriss seems to have possessed similar limitations.

The next scene (IV.2) was Juliet's reception of the news that Romeo has killed Tybalt and been banished. The Pall Mall Gazette, allowing that this was "one of the most difficult and trying passages in the whole range of the drama", added regretfully that Miss Anderson "became loud too early and and remained loud too long". Less indulgent was the notice in The Stage, which claimed that, for all the fame of Miss Anderson's "graceful attitudes", the "most ardent of her admirers could scarcely contend that she is graceful for two consecutive minutes in this scene":

> She starts wildly from place to place, beats her arms against her sides, and generally behaves in a most frantic manner.

Lytton, as a rule an "ardent admirer", found little pleasing in the scene. The soliloquy, "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds", lacked the "dreamy quality" which he felt appropriate:

> Of course there is a note of exultant impatience throughout these lines, But it is an impatience subdued to ecstasy, and felt in trance ...the influences of sunset and twilight hover about them.

She would have achieved much by being "more restful".

When the Nurse exclaimed "Shame come to Romeo!" (9c), Juliet's retort, "Blistered be thy tongue", was given in an attitude "full of dignity and power". Lytton felt this to be a marked contrast to the theatricality of some earlier moments ("What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?", for example). At this point he was distinctly conscious of "the development in Juliet's character", which he explained as "the strengthening and deepening of it under the influence of passion and sorrow". At some unspecified point Juliet took up the cause of the ladder, and, said Humphreys, "buried her face in them with the natural expression of broken-hearted helplessness": the critic found this "an affecting tenderness", but some in the audience laughed. The Saturday Review, after censuring a want of "temperance" in the acting, noted another mistaken piece of business:

> ...hen Juliet is picked u by the hurse fro
> the g[illegible] whereon she has thrown herself, the
> stiff c[illegible]e of the he d in order that the
> full face may be [illegible]esented t[illegible] the [illegible]udience [illegible]o the
> of sever l [illegible]s [illegible]tion into which she is betrayed.

The betraying instinct was that of the picturesque - [illegible] chara[illegible]terised the [illegible]lts of the [illegible]rformance in these t[illegible]s, observing that "after each speech or sentence, she st[illegible]s i[illegible] a[illegible]t is this [illegible]t she [illegible] being [illegible]otur[illegible]". The best that could be said was that the scene was [illegible]thing of a trial for the best of actresses, but that it, in the [illegible]ress of The Pall Mall [illegible]ette, she had not come "unscathed out of the ordeal".

Even the indulgent Clement Scott had been unable to commend Ellen Terry's performance in this part of the play. The earlier scenes, especially those with the nurse, had been highly successful, but the news of Romeo's banishment made little impression. After nothing some of the impassioned lines, Scott continued:

> Now, it may be asked, is it possible to conceive
> these [illegible] to passages in any [illegible] subdued
> and minor key? It is [illegible]re t[illegible]ting scene, and
> was meant for nothing else. It cannot be read
> without animation by the reader, even in [illegible]e-[illegible]e. It
> It is the first wild note of the tempest coming
> on. But the [illegible]re surface of [illegible] is [illegible]over [illegible]thread;
> and the tempest [illegible]ve [illegible]s.

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

- o don't try". Redmore's pictorial analogy points to a distinction between the two actresses' picturesque techniques: the "poses" of Mary Anderson were placed as emphases at moments of psychological crisis - or of preternatural serenity. Ellen Terry's seem to have been inextricable parts of a continuous, moving picture, with a consequent loss of power when strong emotions called for it. Redmore, in a review of Masks and Faces, had observed this quality in 1875:

> her attitudes become more and more what they always inclined to be - studies for pictures: but always without any of the unreality of the posed model, and with far more than any model's expressiveness.
>
> (The Academy, 13 November 1875)

The movements were not so much a series, an "ordered yet seemingly spontaneous flow" - in Romeo and Juliet the order and evenness of this flow was inadequate. Miss Anderson might find some comfort in the failure of her rival's technique to give this scene in a satisfactory manner.

The following scene confronts the actor playing Romeo with a similar problem - he must be passionate without being ridiculous, and at the same time avoid the temptation to understate the lines. Scott considered Terriss to have succeeded:

> The lover was not maudlin, nor the weeping hysterical. He took the "measure of an unmade grave" without making a mouth being laugh...

Irving had cut thirty-three lines in the scene, to Miss Anderson's seventy - the cuts make Romeo more reasonable, and remove his most involved and quibsical utterances ("Flies may do this, but I from this must fly", and the envy of cats, dogs and mice being particularly frustrated upon).

Lytton considered the second balcony scene, which, by omission of the scene between Paris and Juliet's parents, the conclusion of III.3, to be the point at which Miss Anderson reached "the purest poetry of tenderness and passion":

> Here every tone, every look, every gesture, seemed to me exactly what they should be, and invested with a poetic depth of feeling which I have never before seen given them

in this scene.

In case former evidence of Juliet's maturity were called for, it was offered in this scene. Miss Anderson's arms were about Terriss' neck when the curtain rose, and he was half-way over the edge of the balcony. Lytton felt the embrace to be "that of a wife, a passionate, tender, devoted woman", and not that of a child. The "poetry" of the scene lay, for Lytton, in its combining pathos with delicate sensuality - he admired "the passionate terror depicted in the woman's face" as she pushed Romeo from her with the words "Hie thee, begone!" (a mis-quotation of his own invention). Although others had accused the actress of over-playing the passage, Lytton could only admire its execution:

> The revulsion of feeling in the tone of the words
>
> "Art thou gone so, my love, my lord, my friend!"
>
> when she turns and misses him, the passionate tenacity of the embrace with which she clings to him when he re-appears, the sense of dissolution expressed in the words
>
> "I shall be much in years
> Ere I again behold my Romeo,"
>
> the infinite tenderness with which she takes his head between her hands, crosses it to her, and looks into his face as she exclaims,
>
> "O think'st thou we shall ever meet again?"
>
> the yearning expression of doubt which precedes the words
>
> "O God! I have an ill-divining soul",
>
> followed by the wistful sadness with which she puts her arms round him as if to assure herself that he is still there...

The first two instances are nuances of tone, but the last are visual effects.

Humphreys, having proposed that the first balcony scene be performed in dumb show to the strains of Berlioz, suggested extracts from Tristan und Isolde as appropriate to this less auspicious setting. He found one important mistake in the business, namely that the lines "Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,/ As one dead in the bottom of a tomb" (p.-) were spoken "face to face, with Juliet's eye behind Romeo's".

The customary business, which the lines would seem to demand, was that Romeo should already have begun his descent. The Stage observed that Romeo laid his head on Juliet's lap at this point, which makes better sense, and the conflict of this with Humphreys's remarks may be the consequence of alterations in the business during the course of the run. The physical intimacies of the scene were not lost on the Punch critic, who found them reminiscent of "an advertisement for Pear's Soap and Argosy Braces". Current advertisement for the latter showed two youths wrestling,, cumberland-fashion, with a caption reminding readers that "the youth of ancient and modern countries find the Argosy Brace indispensible in athletic exercises"; Pear's Soap proclaimed itself with a series of engravings depicting the innocent intimacies of bathing infants. The irrelevant associations were, Punch found, a consequence of "Advertisement Art" in the action of Terriss and Miss Anderson, "hugging, too lissome and clinging". The Pall Mall Gazette was similarly unmoved, and "missed the true lyric fervour" of the farewells.

At line 64 - Lady Capulet's call, "Ho, daughter! are you up?" - the set swung round, transforming itself into a view of the audience into the interior of Juliet's bedroom. Lytton found this effect pleasing:

> When Romeo at last departs, Juliet sinks down as if her life had left her with his presence. This is a perfectly natural action. It is also very effective. But it has been ridiculed by the newspaper critics, because, instead of picking herself up and deliberately walking out of the balcony (which would have ruined the effect of it), she is instantly withdrawn from sight by an ingenious revolution of the scenery.

This was "a commendable stage arrangement", and one in which the "ingenuity of the stage mechanist" was "legitimately employed". The Era, which did not approve of the innovation, felt it an interruption to the action and a "clumsy contrivance" of the carpenter, whereas Lytton claimed that it left upon the mind of the spectator "an affecting image...not abruptly and horribly disturbed by the entry of Lady Capulet, and the hurried return of Juliet to her chamber". It was, in effect, an equivalent of the cinematic dissolve, and, like the

"picture" formed as the act-drop fell, a strategy foreign to the mobility of the author's script. But to Victorian critics - whose admiration of Shakespeare as a technician was, at very best, qualified - it was not so much the interruption as the effectiveness of the picture which was to be disputed. There was precedent for the action, and Adelaide Neilson had made a notable point of the collapse, but many reviewers felt Miss Anderson's prostration excessively violent. Westland Marston described, in1888, the business used by Miss Neilson in 1876:

> As Romeo disappeared, her extended arms followed him a while, with a desperate effort, as if her soul still pursued him; then the arms relaxed and hung supine, she turned mechanically, and lay unconscious; life had fled with him.

Ellen Terry's copy does not indicate any collaple for Juliet until Lady Capulet asks "Why, how now, Juliet?", at which is the note "break down". The text justifies weeping, but a complete physical collapse was perhaps bad policy, in so far as Juliet would be obliged to execute a similar action after taking the poison.

Lytton considered the ensuing confrontation with Lady Capulet very fine - better than anything he had seen since the retirement of Helen Faucit. Juliet opens the door to her mother with a "weary habitude of...expression and attitude" and "indescribable dejection":

> As Lady Capulet enters, she stands half behind the door as if desperately awaiting some painful infliction which she knows to be inevitable, and yet with an irresistible shrinking from the scrutiny of the unsympathising eyes she is now to meet,

"Madam, I am not well" was spoken with a "touching simplicity", after which she sank onto the bed "in an attitude of profound despondency". Juliet reported Lady Capulet's "villain",

> with a strange reflective tenderness, as if the harshest epithet, when coupled with the beloved name, became to her a term of endearment.

Here, Lytton felt, "a commonplace actress would have echoed the insulting word in tones of indignation". Miss Anderson's Juliet sank deeper into self-absorbed isolation with the utterance "Good prophet! I do with all my heart", and

nearly betrayed her real feelings for Romeo by a "wild striking out of the arms" at "Ay, maiden, from the reach of these my hands", and the "pitying and pitiable tone" with which she uttered "would none but I might venge my cousin's death". More signs of awakening maturity were seen in her reaction to the news of Paris' prospects as a suitor:

> The listless broken-hearted Juliet is replaced by a woman full of resolution and courage, every inch of her noble. The drooping, cowering figure straightens itself up to its full height; the countenance is suffused with heroic animation; there is a beautiful scorn in the curl of the closing lip and the flash of the steady eyes. The long white sleeves are drawn and tightened with the gesture of a woman who is gathering together all her strength. At last she stands, - an image hewn in Parian marble, stately, motionless, sublime.

At the same time the workings of the facial muscles revealed the intense emotional distress which Juliet was endeavouring to conceal, and "slight convulsive clutchings of the hands upon the dress" betrayed the struggle. The voice deepened into "a low strong tone of inward intensity" at "No. by St. Peter's Church" (110 - the rest of the line, "and Peter to ", was cut), and the speech was delivered "without any outburst of passion", but "with the utmost passionate intensity". Lytton regarded this as an example of the actress's commendable moderation:

> The figure remained statuesque, and every word is uttered in a low penetrative tone, with a calmness infinitely more affecting than any gesticulation could possibly be.

But Capulet's behaviour was so violent - he threw Juliet to the ground - that her restraint gave place to "a countenance full of pathetic bewilderment, as if stunned and tottering amongst the incomprehensible surprises of some horrible dream". After the "beseeching tones" of "O my sweet mother! cast me not away!, and the exit of the obdurate Capulets, Juliet flung herself into the Nurse's arms. This was, thought Lytton, a telling reversal of the play's maturing process - "for one exquisite moment" Juliet was again a child, and she "nestled her cheek against the old woman's bosom".

The gesture made Juliet's ensuing disgust at the Nurse's

advocacy of submission all the more shocking, and the rejection of the advice was done "not vehemently, but gently and softly, with a pathetic reproachfulness". The end of the scene seemed particularly admirable:

> Left alone, she stands silent, the image of misery; and not till the door closes behind the Nurse, does her pent-up passion burst forth in the cry
>
> "Ancient damnation!
> O most wicked friend!"
>
> The effect is piercing. All the feelings which have been working within her throughout this admirable scene seem to find utterance in that scorn and anguish of that cry.

Left alone on stage, she hastily flung on a dark blue cloak, and, turning to open the door, presented her back alone to the audience: but the "agitation of her feelings" was visible in "the tremulous movement" with which Juliet clutched at the door handle, and "impressively audible" in the tone of "concentrated passion" with which she uttered the words, "If all else fail, myself have power to die". This, claimed Lytton, "showed a capacity to "express strong feeling without moving a limb", and the power "of standing still with perfect grace", as wellas being proof of Miss Anderson's "intellectual capacity to throw herself completely into the part she is acting".

This enthusiasm was not universal. The reviewer of The Daily News suggested that "no great depth of tragic pathos" was within Miss Anderson's range and The London Figaro remarked that these later scenes of the play showed plenty of passion but were "unquestionably deficient in tenderness". The Times felt that the new interpretation developed the idea of "the strong-minded woman" at the expense of the "devoted mistress", and complained:

> A favourite device of Miss Anderson's to express deep grief is to sink upon her knees and bow her head to the ground. It is a device of Madame Ristori's.

The Saturday Review grudgingly admitted that there was "some approach to feeling in Juliet's dazed misery", but would go no further, and Humphreys found that the character's loneliness was given the unusual emphasis of a fear of

loneliness" expressed by a stiffening of the limbs and a ghastly pallor in the face: Helen Faucit describes her own feelings whilst listening to the Nurse's praise of Paris in precisely these terms,

> All my blood seemed to be forced back upon my heart as I listened to these words. I grew as stone...

In her reading of the part, Juliet's absolute womanhood has come - "she is transfigured intothe heroic woman", and the change is reflected in her treatment of the Nurse and, in the next scene, of Paris.[39]

The new Paris, unfortunately, was "remarkably feeble", but the most important element in the scene proved to be Juliet's calm determination. According to The Dramatic Gazette, Miss Anderson was "admirable" because she relied upon "what is in reality her peculiar gift - to wit, her matchless manipulation of her draperies". The play moved directly from IV.1 (the new IV.o) to IV.3, dropping the short scene of Juliet's apparent submission to Capulet.

Irving's fourth act consisted of Juliet's visit to the Friar (IV.1), the potion scene (IV.3), and the Nurse's discovery of the "body" (IV.5). Miss Anderson's fourth act was in its sixth scene by the time Juliet went to the cell, and its seventh and concluding scene was that in which Juliet takes the draught. The act ended with the words "Romeo, I come. This do I drink to thee!" (a first quarto reading, also used by Irving), and Act Five began, or was to have begun, with Juliet's funeral, followed by the tomb scene.

The acting of the potion scene "aroused the spectators to an enthusiastic demonstration" - The Daily News gave a commendatory description of the business:

> There are still many playgoers who can well remember when Juliet's prolonged spasm of terror was here for the first time introduced. It has been objected to in vain, while it has ever become more skilful and more prolonged. Audiences unquestionably expect it; nor does they in any way baulked of a salutary exhibition of their now-established right. Miss Anderson's marvellous white petticoat fancies [illegible] completed almost a thrill of horror to the spectators. Her final fall upon the bed behind [illegible]

> to arms the spectators and her [illegible] tresses hanging to the ground, partook perhaps rather more of the nature of an acrobatic feat than was intended. Her previous drinking of the draught, however, was accompanied with the appropriate calmness of determination. Throughout the scene her demeanour and attitudes were strikingly picturesque and truthful.

Lytton, although he admired the handling of the earlier part of the sequence, found the later passages unsatisfactory. He found "most pathetic" the "look and gesture of mute appeal when the mother is about to leave the daughter without kissing her". The preoccupation of Juliet as the Nurse stayed behind for a moment to "kiss and fondle" her hand was also effective:

> Juliet stands off from her, as if unconscious of her presence, and gazing wistfully at the spot where her mother stood.

She shuddered when the door shut behind the Nurse, then rushed to it, as though to call them back, subsiding at last with a despondent gesture".

Juliet soliloquy "What should she do here?" with quiet naturalness - the acting of the next passage is described in some detail by Lytton:

> here, as the hand is raised to be drenched and then pushed back, nothing could be more impressive than the shuddering half-involuntary action of the face. She crosses the stage to draw the curtain over the [illegible]...pauses there with her hand on the curtain, half inclined to recall her nurse for shelter, and returns back into the vacant chamber as though its solitude were becoming with horrible suggestions. You see, step by step, in the progress of her terror, the growth of a ghastly doubt, "Not if the nurse is not come at all." and the gladness which follows at the danger is soundly justified. So are all the gestures full of life. She lays down the dagger, takes up the vial, sits down, lifts the phial to her lips, and sets it down with a little shiver, as some hideous thought after another presents itself to her mind. So, too, are the whispered, half-struck tones of voice.

At this point, things begin to go wrong:

> She rises, rushes about the stage, wrings her hands, loses all dignity, all poise, becomes theatrical, conventionally tragic, and by instinctive pains the sentiment of the scene by a spasmodic reference to the tyranny of the worst traditions of the English stage.

The Saturday Review objected to Miss Anderson's "madly playing with her forefathers' joints" as she imagined her awakening in the vault, and Truth thought her transformed into "a ranting virago, who seems prepared to fight it out with her ancestors' ghosts". Scott, on the other hand, considered the scene a piece of virtuosity, but reflected that the actress "alarmed", and did not touch her audience: her boldness was commendable, but misplaced. The Times found here the "lack of poetry more or less observable throughout the performance" - the idea of Tybalt's ghost caused Juliet to shriek and hide under the table, and after so "loud and melodramatic" a preparation, her drinking the Friar's drug seemed an "anti-climax".

In his notice the Times reviewer cited Coleridge's opinion as authority for Juliet's "fit of fright", but set against it the suggestion of Morley, that Juliet "ought to exercise the speech in a whisper with abhorrent voice and hands" and collapse serenely, "her wandering eyes catching sight of the marriage-bed". Morley had expressed as much in his review of a performance by Stella Colas, at the Princess's theatre in 1864. Mlle. Colas had played Juliet too self-consciously, with the air of a coquette - her business in this scene anticipated Mary Anderson's:

> When Mlle. Colas makes a great scream at the ghost of Tybalt, and flies and crouches as if she would take refuge under the bed, then huddles anyhow over the last line, takes the poison, and gets into bed as best she can, she may bring great applause from an audience at the Princess's but she is not acting Shakespeare.[40]

Adelaide Neilson's "hushed and growing terror" in this phase had reached climax, Rotherham thought, when she began to explore the interior of the tomb. She made a "study of the freezing horror" with which "she stung around, as on a pivot, hands screening her eyes, as if recoiling from the sight, which yet fascinated her, of Tybalt's image behind her"[41]. Ellen Terry's book marks the line "As with a club dash out my desperate brains" (54) as the climax of the speech, and the last four lines are marked "Expression of agonized

here (not before)". The Daily News (9 March 1884) described the calm at the end of the scene, with Juliet "sinking upon the bed, kissing the ring, which is the cherished token of her union, while the dawn is seen through the great latticed casement, gathering strength in the horizon". Vanity Fair thought that Miss Terry had taken the whole scene too slowly, and that her movements were "too evidently studied": again, Mary Anderson took risks with a passage that her predecessor had underplayed.

.....

The fifth act of the 1884 version was to have begun with a representation of Juliet's funeral procession, described by Bingfield in his interview:

> Here the body of Juliet, robed in a dress of silver tissue, will be carried on a purple canopied bier followed by a great crowd, weeping and throwing flowers over the corpse.

Such a procession had been a feature of Garrick's production, and had aroused some argument as to the legitimacy of spectacular interpolations in Shakespeare's plays. A prompt-copy from 1768, now in New York Public Library, lists thirty-two mourners, plus the "chorus" in the theatre and "a bier to lie for Juliet", and sets the whole business in a "hall"[42]. A German visitor, Christlob Mylius, on seeing Garrick's rival version at Covent Garden in 1754 found it "stupid and ridiculous": had Bingfield's plan been carried out, similar aspersions would no doubt have been cast upon it.[43] In the event, it was decided, possibly at the dress-rehearsal, that the episode would have taken too long in a production which was already running well over its scheduled time, and the funeral was omitted. Irving, who had retained some of the discovery of Juliet's body (but not, of course, the musicians), ended the act with a more economical tableau, and "the procession of priests filing into the place of the corpse".[44] Miss Anderson's procession would have been doubly obstructing for being placed after, rather than before, the interval, during which the orchestra, with the happy disregard of dramatic propieties so common in Victorian theatre music,

played Lauder's "Summer Night in Norway" (the other music on the programme includes the overture to Rosamunde, Weber's incidental music from Preciosa, selections from Rigoletto, and a new waltz, "La Veronese", by the musical director Andrew Levey).

The final act moved briskly through the Apothecary scene - in which Ben Greet made his appearance - and the scene in Friar Laurence's cell, to the final sequence of accidents in the Church-yard. Irving had used a scene-change at line 83 ("I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave"). The final tableau had been a vault, with a steep staircase leading up to the churchyard - according to Scott (in The Theatre, April 18..) tableau curtains fell at the words "there is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die" (169), and opened again after a few moments, to discover the steps and gallery above filled by a crowd bearing torches, whilst the Prince, standing in the centre of the stage behind the bier, joined the hands of the opposing fathers and spoke the concluding lines:

> A glooming peace this morning with it brings.
> The sun for sorro will not show his head.
> For never was a story of more woe
> Than this of juliet and her Romeo.

However dismembered the text, this was an attempt to convey some of the dramatist's intention in his final scene: Miss Anderson simply brought down the curtain on Juliet's death and what The Morning Post considered the "only fine touch" of the play's later acts. As she lost consciousness Juliet made a "pathetic effort to place round her neck the lifeless arm of her husband, on whose breast she has thrown herself to die". The London Figaro thought that she entered "with infinite elegance".

Lytton, as usual, gives the fullest and most sympathetic account of the actress's business. The final touches were "supremely good", and furthered the "constantly developing ratios" and maturity of the character - at first she presented an impulsive and near-hysterical reaction to Juliet's predicament:

> ithout departing from the text, all the dramatic effect which could possibly be obtained from any such irreverent divise as the insertion of

> dialogue for Romeo and the revived Juliet] is produced by the little, silent, unobserved, awakening gestures which Miss Anderson gives to her Juliet just before Romeo drinks the poison The gesture itself is also very pretty and natural. But her master-touches of feeling begin with the discovery of her husband's dead body. The wild impulse with which she rushes to it, kneels above it, takes the dead head in both hands, and gazes into the dead face as if the intensity of that gaze could win back to life the spirit so freshly fled; then the hopeless cry with which she throws herself upon the body, the agonised fidelity with which she addresses her dead lord, the start when she hears the watch, the stab, the fall - in this succession of passionate strokes there is a constantly deepening pathos.

Juliet's dying moments were, by contrast, expressive of the loving dependence on Romeo which Lytton conceived to be a sign of emotional maturity:

> The climax is reached when, having fallen at a little distance from Romeo, she raises her head faintly, searches with a look, as of eyes that are fast growing dim, for his dead body; creeps softly close to it, tenderly lifts the dead man's arm, and places it around her neck, nestling her head into the fold of it; then, with a satisfied sigh of infinite tenderness, expires.

The death-scene was well received: Archer, who had serious reservations on most of Miss Anderson's performance, felt that "her rare grace of gesture" came to her aid in this passage (The World, 5 November 1884); the Pall Mall Gazette describe her acting as "excellent in conception and good in execution".

.....

A review of the production politely refrained from judging Mary Anderson as a rival of Ellen Terry, although comparison was often implied. The staging was more openly set against that of Henry Irving's revival, and it was generally agreed that, in the words of The Stage, Irving had succeeded in retaining "the full significance of Romeo and Juliet, its poetry, its passion, its tragic intensity", and that Miss Anderson had missed the mark. Notable among those who took issue against the ideal of "authenticity" was William Archer, whose World review claimed that "anything that is beautiful

and not glaringly unmedieval is in its place in the magic atmosphere of Romeo and Juliet". Carpaccio's St. Ursula series, far from representing the fashions of the early thirteen-hundreds, was pinted between 1490 and 1495, and Winfield's pretensions were, Archer suggested, ill-founded and irrelevant. This contention is taken even further in an article in The Gentleman's Magazine for November, 1884 (446-5). Here Archer claims the geographical and temporal independence of the play:

> What Shakespeare designed to paint, in vivid but perfectly general hues, was an ideal land of love, a land of moonlight and nightingales, a land to which he had certainly travel ed, perhaps before leaving the banks of the Avon.

Had the dramatist attempted to offer an accurate picture of Renaissance Italy in the production of his play, it is extremely unlikely that his audience would have understood or enjoyed the result - the nineteenth century is more apt to find local colour inthe play than the author himself would have been, and for "a masterpiece of strictly Italian colouring" the reader must turn to Alfred de Musset's Lorenaccio.

The arguments put forward by Archer are not foreign to the spirit of Mary Anderson's remark in Her Memories:

> My ambition was to have the stage in such good taste and balance with the play and epoch as to attract no particular notice to itself; like a well-dressed woman, whose clothes never catch the eye. (p.173)

She claimed that, against her will, Winfield drew her into the responsibilities of a lavish production, arrangements for which took up so much time as to prevent her giving the part of Juliet adequate study. This probably does Winfield an injustice, and Miss Anderson's hindsight is excessively kind to her own reputation. The least gentle of her critics were also those who least admired the elaboration of the staging. Scott's Daily Telegraph was diplomatic in its account of the actress's playing, but less so in its attack on the production. It began:

> The manager and the dramatic poet with the merry-makers at their elbows are just as much at loggerheads today as they were in the prologue to Goethe's Faust. The public has to be

amused.

The merry-andrew" - Goethe's "Lustige Person" - appears to be Bingfield, although Scott's description of Poet, Manager and Clown as "at loggerheads" is not quite correct. However, the restraint of The Daily Telegraph was discarded in a brief notice appearing anonymously in The Theatre (December 1884) in the general editorial section, "Our Omnibus-box". Although unsigned, this appears to be by Scott, presenting in a more direct manner the criticisms of his first-night review:

> The question is no longer how this or that character is Shakespeare ought to be played, but how much money can be spent onthis or that scene...Juliet may smirk when she should be natural; Romeo be sulky where found pathetic; but all these are nothing in these days, when a play by Shakespeare is reduced to the level of an ordinary stage play or melodrama.

The acting was of the poorest, andthe critic had never seen the play "rendered in such a listless and unimaginative fashion". The leading lady, her faults listed ruthlessly, is described as "an ambitious, popular, beautiful and self-confident lady, but as far from Juliet as darkness from dawn" - in The Daily Telegraph, Miss Anderson was maintained to be "the most faultless in repose, the most fidgety and faulty in movement" of all modern actresses, and "anything but Juliet in appearance, and expression, or in nature". In both reviews it was suggested that Irving's production had done all that was desirable for the play, and, allowing for the undeniable beauty of Bingfield's and O'Connor's designs, the new costumes, sets and action were a substitute for acting - "a panorama, not a play".

If Scott did not write the notice in The Theatre, he certainly countenanced its appearance in an editorial column. Miss Anderson had, as did Barrett and Mansfield, the conviction that the critic was suborned by Irving into writing down the efforts of rivals. In January 1884 she had written to Winter:

> Clement Scott has treated me shamefully from the first. I don't know him nor do I wish to - he was accused of being <u>drunk</u> to give me my deserts in a club room a few evenings ago...

Scott had been unable to answer, and it was rumoured "all over town" that he had taken a large bribe from a certain English actor", and was being "forced" to do what he had done. Winter's son Jefferson, in a note added to the manuscript of the letter, suggested that the actor in question was thought to be Irving, and that this was untrue, "tho' Scott was a 'rotter'"[44]. But, to be fair to Scott, it must be admitted that his reviews were not unique in their dissatisfaction: there was, said The Saturday Review, "no reason to suppose that Miss Anderson could play Juliet", and most contemporaries agreed that she had failed, and that the pictorial appeal of the staging, like that of her acting, was no adequate substitute for the other, more fundamental performance values. Miss Anderson's subsequent statements, in A Few Memories, that the production had grown unwieldy, that its organisation had taken up too much time, andthat the long final run-through, which lasted from seven in the evening until five on the morning of the première, had taken away the energy which her performance lacked, seem disingenuous excuses.

Barrett had given passages in his Hamlet which Irving missed out, and had succeeded in "imparting life, colour, and movement" to a play attended too often by funereal gloom. Miss Anderson had cut more lines than Irving from Romeo and Juliet, and had managed, in spite of this, to prolong it until a quarter after midnight. Whilst there were many who disagreed with Barrett's interpretation of the leading character, his technical competence and intelligence were never in doubt, and he was not accused, as was Miss Anderson, of a fundamental inability to feel and portray emotions. Mary Anderson's repertoire was old-fashioned, dignified and, with exception of Gilbert's pieces, predominantly dull: Irving's was conservative, Barrett's innovatory, and both were exciting. In Romeo and Juliet the American actress had sought to emulate Ellen Terry in a part where the elder actress had been accused of relying too much upon pictorial effect: Miss Anderson had not offered much that had been lacking in Ellen Terry's performance.

There were many kinds of acting, and, for all its short-

comings, the new Romeo and Juliet succeede in terms of at least one: It ran until Miss Anderson's season ended, on 21 February 1885. Meanwhile Winfield was working on another attempt to take the monopoly of classical drama away from the Lyceum - a production of As You Like It at the St. James's Theatre.

Chapter Five:

WINGFIELD AND *AS YOU LIKE IT* : THE ST. JAMES'S THEATRE, 1885.

On January 4, 1884 The Times had published its annual account of "The Drama". James Ferguson Nisbet, the paper's chief dramatic correspondent, expressed the opinion that the "renaissance" of the drama, now alleged to be under way, could more properly be attributed to "the close connection now established between art and the stage, the growth of an educated taste, and the diffusion among all classes of a keen interest in the drama and its professors", than to any improvement in the quality of plays. On the other hand, he had to concede that "spectacular sensationalism" had fallen into disrepute, and that "artistic taste" was now employed to an extent unknown before in the mounting of plays. Claudian, at the Princess's, was a good example of this praiseworthy tendency: likewise The Haymarket, St. James's and Court Theatres had distinguished themselves "for the completeness, beauty, and correctness of their interiors, and the exact costuming of their dramatis personae".

In 1885 Nisbet's summary of dramatic events showed that this enthusiasm had abated:

> If the year just closed is to enjoy any distinction in the annals of the stage, it will be noted for the prodigality of its scenic display, and the degree of perfection to which the art of the mise-en-scène has been carried. There is little else to be placed to its credit.
> (Times, 7 January 1885)

Two major productions of Shakespearean drama had been staged at West End theatres, "where the merits of the acting alone could hardly be trusted to ensure their success". Barrett's performance of Hamlet had been energetic and intelligent but wrote Nisbet, woefully eccentric, whilst Mary Anderson's Juliet was "of still smaller account artistically". Irving had presented Twelfth Night during the year, but his Malvolio had been "quaint and curious, without being great", and the habitual beauties of the stage-management had not sustained a play which Nisbet found "light and sketchy". Apart from a revival, earlier in the year, of the Lyceum Much Ado About Nothing (first seen in October, 1882) there had been little to encourage optimism for the future of Shakespearean acting. Salvini and Sarah Bernhardt had appeared in short seasons of classical and contemporary plays, but their efforts were hardly signs of the

British dramatic renaissance. To William Archer it seemed that Shakespeare had been, ever since Irving's Hamlet, "the mediator, as it were, between society and the stage", and that the current vogue for Shakespearean production, although "unreasoning", had at least "induced in the world of letters, art and fashion, the habit of theatre-going". The Lyceum and the Princess's were now as much topics of conversation "at every well-regulated aesthetic tea" as the Grosvenor Gallery and the "popular concerts". But there was still a lack of trained actors, able to speak Shakespeare's verse, and the writers who might revive the drama were yet to be found.[2]

.....

i. The St. James's and the Dramatic Renaissance.

The management of John Hare and W.H.Kendal at the St. James's Theatre was looked to for a contribution to the improvement of the drama. Like the Bancrofts, the Kendals found themselves short of new material after Robertson's death, and turned to adaptations of Sardou, revivals of Robertson and occasional forays into literary drama. Four of Pinero's early plays were produced: The Money Spinner (8 January 1881), The Squire (29 December 1881), Mayfair (after Sardou's Maison Neuve, 31 October 1885) and The Hobby-Horse (25 October 1886).

The presentation of such works entailed the maintainance of Robertsonian standards of setting and direction. When the Meiningen company visited London in 1881, Irving had benefited by the comparison of his mise-en-scène with theirs - similarly, Hare and Kendal were complimented as equalling the Dutch company in their own, more intimate kind of production. An Athenaeum notice of Pinero's The Squire praised the St. James's company for attaining "the vitality, finish, and ensemble which characterised the performance of the Dutch comedians recently in London" (7 January 1882). Unfortunately it was beginning to be asked whether the methods appropriate to Robertson could be applied to "poetic" drama, and productions of plays from the period before the eighteen-fifties - notably the Bancrofts' version of Black-ey'd Susan - had not been successful. The renewal of the fashionable and intellectual interest in the theatre seemed encouraging - in 1881 The Academy welcomed the

proposal to present Browning's In a Balcony at the St. James's, assured that there was "no sufficient reason" to assume that the "only literary pabulum" it was "safe to administer" could be that acceptable fifteen years previously (17 December 1881). But the production of Tennyson's The Falcon showed that the poet could only offer a tableau vivant with dialogue as suitable material for the company and their style. It seemed that the Kendals could depict only one kind of character in action: the domestic.

This view of the limitations of the Robertsonian style was adopted by Henry Arthur Jones, in two articles on "The Dramatic Outlook" published in January and February, 1885, in The English Illustrated Magazine. Robertsonian technique required the suppression of poetry and emotion:

> ...it never occupied itself with any greater theme than a contrast of manners between a vulgar, usurping, middle class, and a decaying aristocracy.

The playgoer must be thankful for some values of the school, notably the cultivation of scenic consistency and accuracy, but,

> ...unless it is touched with the sense of eternity, wrapped round with the splendour of heroism, and imbedded in what is primary and of everlasting import, the mere reproduction on the stage of the commonplace details of every-day life must always be barren, worthless, and evanescent.
>
> (EIM II (January 1885) 287, 288)

Jones's articles echo a complaint common at the time, but after the two major Shakespearean productions of the autumn of 1884, there was a particular immediacy about the reminder in the magazine's February issue that "so long as an audience is interested or excited, or imposed upon by scenery or dresses or stage-effect, it is very careless of the actual words that that are spoken" (p.346). Unless it could bring an undeniable clarity and effectiveness to its treatment of the text, a sumptuous revival of a Shakespearean play early in 1885 would find itself the focus of the reviewers' growing antagonism towards such an enterprise.

Other circumstances combined to make the timing of the St. James's As You Like It inauspicious. The much-discussed

"renaissance" included as one of its major elements a rise in the social status of the performers, and Irving and Terry felt, not without justification, that they had played a considerable part in this improvement. In some quarters, however, the efforts of actors - particularly those of Irving - to uphold the dignity of their profession were greeted with facetious abuse. Punch, ever prepared to mock the pretentious for the entertainment of the self-satisfied, attacked Irving for making public speeches in which he acknowledged his financial successes. Thus, at Puffinburgh, N.B., Mr Irving was made to announce "in no mercenary spirit" a house of £4,346:

> ...whereas in Crummlestown, the same number of performances only reached the sum of £4,200, - thus showing the intellectual standard of this city to be £146 above that registered by any other town in the United Kingdom.
>
> ("Mr Irving on Dramatic Art", 3 December 1881)

From this and similar satires the message was plain: actors, however eminent, were tradesmen - barely artists and by no means to be considered as gentlemen. Irving habitually made curtain-speeches on first nights and on special occasions, and he lectured and read at schools and universities in Britain and America, arguing for the artistic validity and social respectability of his calling. Against the actor was arrayed, not so much fashionable society or bohemia, as the army of humorous journalists, defenders - in Punch, Fun and The London Figaro - of worldly philistinism and a sense of order that would no sooner allow an actor than a jockey to move in exalted circles. From the journalism and memoirs of men like Burnand, Sala, Yates and Clement Scott can be divined a sense of the authors' respectful intimacy with the nobility and gentry, and their anxiety to protect their social superiors from the intrusions of the lower orders. The interest taken by fashionable society in the theatre threatened such an intrusion, and the cartoonists were as scathing about the craze for amateur theatricals, and the attempts of some titled person to become actors, as they were on the subject of actors' aspirations. A representative piece is the month of April in Punch's "Thumb-nail Summary

for 1884" (5 January 1884):

> Return of theatrical stars from America.
>
> Mr Irving welcomed by the entire channel squadron off Bantry Bay, received with a salute of one hundred and four guns at several stations on his way to town, and made a Duke on his arrival at Euston Square.
>
> An indignant meeting of actors, held the next morning in Hyde Park, condemns the limited character of the honour as an insult to the Profession.
>
> The Premier, after taking the advice of a distinguished artistic judicial authority, counsels Her Majesty to create one hundred and thirty-six Theatrical Peers.
>
> Simultaneous production of twenty-two original five-act pieces by Cabinet Ministers, at leading West-End theatres.
>
> Great Reaction in public feeling. Three dowager duchesses playing the three witches in Macbeth at Newhaven Theatre, are hooted off the stage amid a shower of oyster-shells.

Most of Punch's jokes about actors, actresses and authors followed this pattern, with the occasional avuncular rebuke for good measure. Thus Henry Arthur Jones was told sharply to abandon his pretensions, and to recognise that dramatists wrote for money, "which compels the humble playwright to do what he can get to do, and not what he would prefer doing":

> Of course, would we were all JONESES the Virtuous and Highly Artistic, but as we can't be that, let some of us thank Heaven we are ordinary SMITHS and BROWNS, and do our work "in that station of life to which it hath pleased," &c., &c., for which overhaul your catechism, and when found, make a note of.
>
> ("Utopian Jones", 10 January 1885)

No-one more pretentious, or less worldly, than Francis Cowley Burnand, self-appointed scourge of Aesthetes, could hope for any better treatment from Punch.

It was Mrs Kendal's misfortune to have recently fallen foul of such criticism. In September 1884 she read a paper, "The Drama", before the congress of the National Association of Social Science at Birmingham. The discourse covers most of the usual topics in a plea for the recognition of the stage as

a force for social good. Scenery is improving, and contributes to the general education of the audience; theatres nowadays are more comfortable and salubrious before and behind the curtain; playwrights are being given the literary and social recognition that is their due, and "the improved condition of the theatre has made the most famous literary men of the day anxious to identify their names with it"[3]. Mrs Kendal's assertions that the theatre has an educative power may, in the light of Aestheticism, have seemed a little old-fashioned, but to the National Association of Social Science - a body concerned as much with prescriptive as descriptive sociology - they would have seemed reasonable and just:

> Those who go to the theatre with the capability of weeping over scenes in which honest self-sacrifice is depicted; of being aroused to enthusiasm over the success of manly effort or womanly devotion; or of feeling genuine contempt for the portrayal of meanness, treachery, and snobbery, will come away from a good play, well acted, having learnt a lesson and gained an experience that will probably be remembered with advantage throughout the remainder of their lives.[4]

Such opinions were unexceptionable, but in her diagnosis of the drama's shortcomings, Mrs Kendal gave offence to a number of commentators. She objected to the excessive quotation of newspaper reviews in theatre advertising, and had reservations about the quality of much journalism:

> ...nowadays the writing of a picturesque article, replete with eulogy or the reverse, seems to be the aim of the theatrical reviewer.

Most criticism was ineffective, and had no influence over the public:

> Too many notices are, it is to be feared, written "to order", and the writer who has declined to praise an unsuccessful actor has been known to lose his post; but let us hope that this unjust state of affairs, together with the "chicken and champagne" of which we have heard so much, is a thing of the past.[5]

"Chicken and champagne" was a reference to the controversy aroused by Sowbray Morris's book, in 1882.

It was not to be expected that this speech, widely reported at the time, and soon reprinted by the body before whom it was delivered, should arouse adverse comment. Punch, in an article entitled "The Stage by Kendal-Light" (first of a series of similar puns) attacked the actress on its favourite ground of social and artistic snobbery - a barrister and a doctor underwent a training which would fit them "for the society of educated, if not of highly cultured gentlemen", and the actor did not. Nor was social respectability any guarantee of histrionic talent - perhaps, the magazine suggested, the two were in essence inimical, and an actor might be inhibited in his art by excessive consciousness of social proprieties (4 October 1884). The dispute's ramifications were tedious and prolonged and attempts by Mrs Kendal to clarify her objections to some forms of theatrical journalism met with little success. In January the wounds were still fresh, so that The Referee, in its second notice of As You Like It, could refer to her sarcastically as "the mother of the English stage" (February 1, 1885), and a cartoon published with the review in The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News showed Rosalind, perplexed, musing "I wish I had never read that paper at the Social Science Congress" (7 February).

Mrs Kendal was a popular actress, and the company formed by her husband and John Hare was successful. Despite the hostility aroused by the speech, the production of As You Like It had a number of factors in its favour: the play had always been popular, and since Godwin's open-air production at Coombe, it had a certain cachet as a work attractive to the aesthetic taste for pastoral. Moreover, it was not difficult to arrange the text in a series of elaborate set scenes, whilst it was possible to retain some, at least, of Shakespeare's pace and fluidity of action. It was a play in which lightness of touch, in design and acting, would be appropriate, and which might seem suited to Mrs Kendal's intelligent art.

In the event, hopes which might have been entertained for the success of the venture were confounded, and the forces mustered against the company prevailed. ingfield's designs

brought accusations of pandering to the mistaken taste for spectacle, and the acting was attacked as inadequate and "modern". In The Daily Telegraph Scott wrote:

> Never before in the memory of the oldest playgoer has As You Like It been performed with greater care or less charm.
> (26 January 1885)

In The Dramatic Review, Harry Quilter, sometime art-critic of The Times, complained that Wingfield had stifled the play's light-heartedness with "the introduction of archaeology and realism" (1 February 1885), and the Captious Critic of The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News found those costumes which were archaeologically correct to be "irritatingly ugly", whilst other, more attractive dresses were "more pleasing to the eye, but less satisfactory to the purist" (7 February 1885). The costume-designer's intentions were published in The Pall Mall Gazette on the morning of the first performance: the play was set in the reign of Charles VII of France and was presented "on that magnificent scale and with that sumptious elaboration which modern playgoers demand". An "attendant" of the French King was alleged to have devised the customary designs for King, Queen and Knave on playing cards, and the court would be dressed accordingly. The scenery was vaunted as attaining new heights of realism - in the first act:

> The Duke's palace becomes a feudal castle after the Chateau d'Amboise...Orlando and Le Beau [sic] wrestle between lists. The scene becomes a great pageant, a Court spectacle, with all the pomp of heralds and flourishing trumpets, and ceases to be a commonplace wrestling match with a paltry bit of garden for the field of combat.

The forest set was "sure to be a triumph of art",

> with real vegetation, and sunlight effects produced by electricity from above. Stage grass is not generally artistic. Mr Wingfield who walks not in trodden paths, has had his grass manufactured from feathers dyed and then sewed into mats in the ordinary way, the whole giving a most realistic effect.

A real brook would run on stage, the guard of the usurping duke would be impersonated by "real guardsmen", and new settings by Alfred Cellier would replace the traditional music of Arne and Bishop.

None of this was of avail: reviewers seized on inconsistencies in the staging, where they did not simply deny its appropriateness altogether, and Wingfield seems to have made a number of elementary mistakes. Perhaps he did not have the authority suggested by The Pall Mall Gazette article, and too much was left to Cathcart, the stage manager: in the programme Wingfield was credited only with the design of the costumes. Whoever was responsible, the mistakes were startling - according to The Referee the running water had to be turned off during dialogue so that the speakers might be heard, and Rosalind's mimed attempts to locate the cuckoo in the trees on stage was belied by the bird's voice emanating very obviously from a clarinet in the orchestra pit. One mistake for which Wingfield accepted responsibility, and for which he attempted to account, was the sumptious dress of the banished court: he explained their silks, satins and furs as the consequence of sumptuary laws, by which noblemen were obliged to adopt costume befitting their rank, and dropped hints to the effect that he wished to avoid giving them the appearance of "Free Foresters" - a para-military organisation who dressed in green and held massed meetings at the Crystal Palace.

Wingfield appears in this to have been refuting the precedent set by Godwin, whose courtiers at Coombe had worn greens and browns, with boots and leggings of leather, as being suitable to the life of outlaws. In an article in the series "Archaeology on the Stage", in The Dramatic Review for 7 March 1885 Godwin described some of the inconsistencies in the St. James's designs, although he proposed that the management "deserved every kind of encouragement" for their enterprise. The complaints of the article reproduce some of those written by Godwin on his copy of the programme. Why was Jaques du Bois, newly alighted from his horse, not dressed for riding? Why, if Orlando was kept "rustically at home", was he dressed "like a Duke"? Godwin overheard a playgoer in the stalls commenting that it was "very mean of Orlando" to take Adam's life savings before he had "pawned his own drapery". If the sumptuary laws - supposing them applicable to outlaws - constrained the banished court to dress in an impractical fashion, why did they

allow Orlando to outshine the usurper, who might be expected to take an interest in such matters?[6] In addition to these queries, Godwin offered the opinion that the forest set was too cumbersome, the stage being too much occupied by "building out", with a resulting reduction in the size of the acting area, "rendering some of the movements extremely ackward".

In a later article Godwin drew attention to the revival as symptomatic of a failing in contemporary theatre more serious than the carelessness shown in details of production:

> The fact is, the supply of actors, though plentiful enough, is bad, and the more scholarly and artistic your scenery and surroundings, the more evident does this unwelcome fact become - that there is no school of acting in England.
> (5 September 1885)

Reviewers of the first performance were as pessimistic, and Shaw, in a letter to William Archer, said that he hoped never to see again "such all round abject, abysmal, bottomless incompetence"[7]. The failure could not be attributed simply to the designer, or to a current tendency to suspect lavishness in staging, but to serious shortcomings in the company.

.....

ii. The Performance

The evidence upon which an account of the 1885 As You Like It can be based is limited to the newspaper and magazine notices, and the published acting edition: no prompt copy has come to light. Wingfield in his briefing of The Pall Mall Gazette correspondent, claimed that the text would be that of acready, "with such emendations and alterations as were thought most effective", but this gesture towards tradition does not seem much to the point, for the treatment of the play is no more or less ruthless than that of Miss Litton's 1880 production at the Imperial Theatre - the most recent metropolitan production of any importance. The Kendals' text gives the play in five acts, with some transpositions and the omission of one complete scene - II,2, in which the usurping Duke learns of Rosalind's defection and probable whereabouts. The acting edition gives

few stage-directions, and some cues for music.

.....

After the short conversation between Adam and Orlando, which, in the words of The Morning Post (26 January) "did not at once arrest attention", the opening of the second scene displayed the first fully-set stage-picture, "a mediaeval castle, overlooking a wide expanse of park, and with a spacious courtyard, wherein the wrestling forms an attractive item in a holiday pageant". A number of critics testified to the impression of solidity given by the castle set, although The Pall Mall Gazette found it "a little stiff in effect" (26 January). In The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News the Captious Critic lived up to his sobriquet:

> The Duke's Palace, erected by Mr Perkins, is an unmistakeable French chateau, though I fancy of date posterior to that of Charles the Victorious. But in the matter of that statue of young Dan Cupid and its pedestal. Is it to be accepted as a classic relic preserved with unwonted care from the hands of pious iconoclasts? Surely, no mediaeval chisel could have fashioned it.
> (7 February)

The Times noted with approval the presence of a "large, quaintly-dressed mob of rustics" at the wrestling match, but gave no indication as to the form taken by the "lists", or in what way they differed from the usual boxing-ring. Illustrations in The Illustrated London News and elsewhere show Charles and Orlando wrestling, but do not show their surroundings with any precision. The Captious Critic, remembering his paper's title, discussed the match in sporting terms, comparing Orlando's miraculous win to the occasion upon which little Nicherby of Carlisle had cross-buttocked "the giant Tom Pooley" high into the air some twelve years ago at the Agricultural Hall. Unfortunately the inequality in physique between Kendal and Vernon robbed Orlando's success of any verisimilitude, and the winner made so many elementary errors early in the bout that reviewers, sporting or otherwise, were unconvinced. The Morning Post found the match entirely credible, but was alone in its opinion.

The most important business of the act was Rosalind's

appearance on stage, and the signs of her nascent love for Orlando. Truth found Mrs Kendal "forced and stagey" from the beginning, (29 January) and The Referee took exception to her self-conscious delivery of "Sir, you have wrestled well...", spoken "using one eye for Orlando and the other for the audience" (1 February). The Morning Post was unusual in finding attractive Mrs Kendal's depiction of the sudden emotion, and praised "the faltering voice and trembling hands" - "tell-tale evidences of love", as she placed the chain around Orlando's neck. Later in the extended scene came a point at which Helen Faucit claimed that "gentleness gives place to righteous remonstrance"[8]. Accordingly she accented sarcastically the heroine's defiance of the usurping Duke:

> What's that to me? My father was no traitor."
> (I.3.59)

According to The Era, Mrs Kendal chose to deliver the line "with a whimper" (31 January), and the Captious Critic described her behaviour towards the tyrant as "too lachrymose". The Pall Mall Gazette objected to Mrs Kendal's accentuation of another line:

> And - in my heart
> Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will-
> We'll have a swashing and a martial outside.
> (I.3.114-6)

It appeared that "both manner and the sense" would be improved by removing the stress from "there", but, the reviewer conceded:

> ...in this case, as in most all others, Mrs Kendal could, no doubt, defend her question-ble readings, which are, at worst, trifles.

It was admitted that in most respects of technique the actress could not be denied skill and intelligence - her verse speaking was almost faultless. The reservations of most reviewers were concerned with the question of Mrs Kendal's being suited by age and temperament for Rosalind. These doubts were to become more and more acute as the evening progressed.

Of the other characters in the act, Hare's Touchstone elicited most comment. Archer, in The World, objected to his "skipping about" (28 January), and Punch likened his movements

to "Mr David James's chick-a-leary step after singing "The Ugly Donkey Cart" in a Strand burlesque" (7 February). Strutting gait notwithstanding, The Times thought Hare's fool a "very scholarly and accomplished person", and Quilter, in The Dramatic Review, gave a description of the actor's manner:

> Could we conceive of Touchstone as a retired cavalry major, living, say, at Bath, and given to caustic remarks upon his partner's bad play at whist, this would be the figure that would present itself. Its main feature is an abrupt militarism. Touchstone here sits, or stands and frowns severely at the audience, threatening any character he is talking to with his forefinger, he shoots out his jokes at him like bullets, and then closes his mouth and frowns again. Here and there, a kind of surprised comicality appears in his face, as if he was astonished to find himself, at his age, playing the fool in this fashion.

Hare had evidently based his interpretation on observation of a contemporary type, and to the majority of critics this was a reprehensible "modernity", as out of place as Standing's comparable mistake in the recent Romeo and Juliet. The Saturday Review found him too sententious, and disliked the "thinness" and "dryness" of the portrayal (31 January). The Referee accused him of walking through his part "in the most dismal fashion, without so much as a gleam of humour or brightness" (first notice, 25 January), and The Weekly Dispatch remarked that Touchstone uttered his wise sayings "as if he were inoculated with nineteenth century pessimism" (1 February). Archer, who found Hare lacking in "unction", suggested in his review that Touchstone was "the most loftily sententious of Shakespeare's clowns", and this view throws some light on the expectations that the actor thwarted: Touchstone's manner should, it seems, be sententious, but in a manner remote from that to be encountered in the nineteenth century. He was expected to be remote and graceful, not trenchant in the manner of Carlyle. Dowden's Primer described him as "the daintiest fool of the comedies", and Helen Faucit believed "courtly demeanour" as essential to the part as an ability to bring out "the dry, quaint, sententious humour"[9]. The Era, in an editorial published in the same issue as the notice of the St. James's revival,

suggested that the delicacy of Rosalind should influence the humour of Touchstone:

> The philosophy of Jaques, the sentiment of Orlando, the wit and hmour of Touchstone, even appear to be tinged with the tender satire, the playful wisdom of the daughter of the banished duke.

Hare's performance appears not to have pleased by its lack of this tenderness.

The second scene of Mrs Kendal's first act ran continuously through the second and third scenes of the original: after Orlando's conference with Le Beau, he left the stage and Rosalind entered with Celia. The omissions - some thirty lines of prose and verse - were unremarkable, save for the prudishness of "side" for "thigh" in "A galant curtle-axe upon my thigh", and the well-established re-arrangement, "No, some of it is for my father's child", where the Folio prints "child's father" (I.3.11-12). As was commonly the case in Victorian acting editions, references not only to bodily functions, but to any form of physical unpleasantness were excised: thus the exchange between Touchstone and Rosalind:

> - May if I keep not my rank -
> - Thou losest thy old smell.
> (I.2.95-6)

was not acceptable. Rosalind's height was diminished, inaccordance with Spedding's emendation, by substitution of "lesser" for "taller" in the line "But yet indeed the taller is his daughter". It appears from The Saturday Review (but not from the published text) that Rosalind deprived Celia of the act's concluding couplet,

> Now go we in content
> To liberty, and not to banishment.

The new version, however, did not end with this, but with the transposed II.3, in which Adam and Orlando leave their "lodging". The scene was not cut in any way, and gave John Maclean, as Adam, a further opportunity to impress the critics. Quilter may stand for the majority of his colleagues in the opinion that Maclean's was "a thoroughly good performance". The Pall Mall Gazette suggested that he improve upon it by adopting a piece of business used by Chippendale, a veteran of Buckstone's Haymarket company, and "the Adam of Adams". At the words

"Master, go on, and I will follow thee", Chippendale "used to return to the house for a moment to fetch his cap, wallet and staff, before delivering his pathetic words of farewell" - an effective, if somewhat obvious, false exit.

.....

The curtain rose at the beginning of the second act to disclose the lush and lavishly "built out" forest promised in Wingfield's interview. To its effectiveness the reviewer in The Pall Mall Gazette gave enthusiastic testimony:

> As for the scenery, it must be admitted that the glade in the Forest of Arden, in which so much of the action passes, forms as beautiful a sylvan landscape as ever was put on the stage. A dam has been built across a little brook flowing through "the green gloom of the wood", and from the lillied pool thus formed a little cascade comes purling forth, to lose itself behind a grassy, flower-gemmed bank, sloping down to the bottom of the hollow.

Godwin wrote on his programme:

> Flowers under trees artificial - bazaar-like - don't grow in nature.

With an art-critic's eye for the value of genre-painting, Quliter observed a lack of joie de vivre in the figures displayed in this landscape:

> Soberly speaking, these scenes are execrably dull; there is a heavy propriety about them, they weary where they should interest, for there is an absence from them of that very spirit of insouciance, and that air of imprévu on which all their charm should depend.

The stage-picture looked more like a garden than a woodland, and The Referee took the interruptions of the brook's "purling" as a sign that Hare and Kendal could "control nature as well as Art".

At the beginning of the act, the banished Duke and his handsomely-clad court sat and listened to Amiens's rendering of "Under the Greenwood Tree". The Duke (J.F. Young) delivered not only his first speech but the first half-line of Amiens's reply, "I would not change it", and presently the First Lord (played by Brandon Thomas) described Jaques's meditations on the wounded stag. The company left to seek out their melancholy

friend, and the action continued with Rosalind's arrival in Arden (II.2).

Most of the reviewers were disarmed by the costume which Mrs Kendal adopted as a modest substitute for doublet and hose. Wingfield had described the dress in The Pall Mall Gazette:

> Rosalind...wears a skirt of rich green brocade which reaches down to the knees, long boots of grey leather, a leather jerkin as a bodice, rhubarb coloured sleeves, and a hat of grey.

This somewhat ungainly costume - its long boots reminiscent of a bishop's gaiters - served only to remind Quiller of the actress's age:

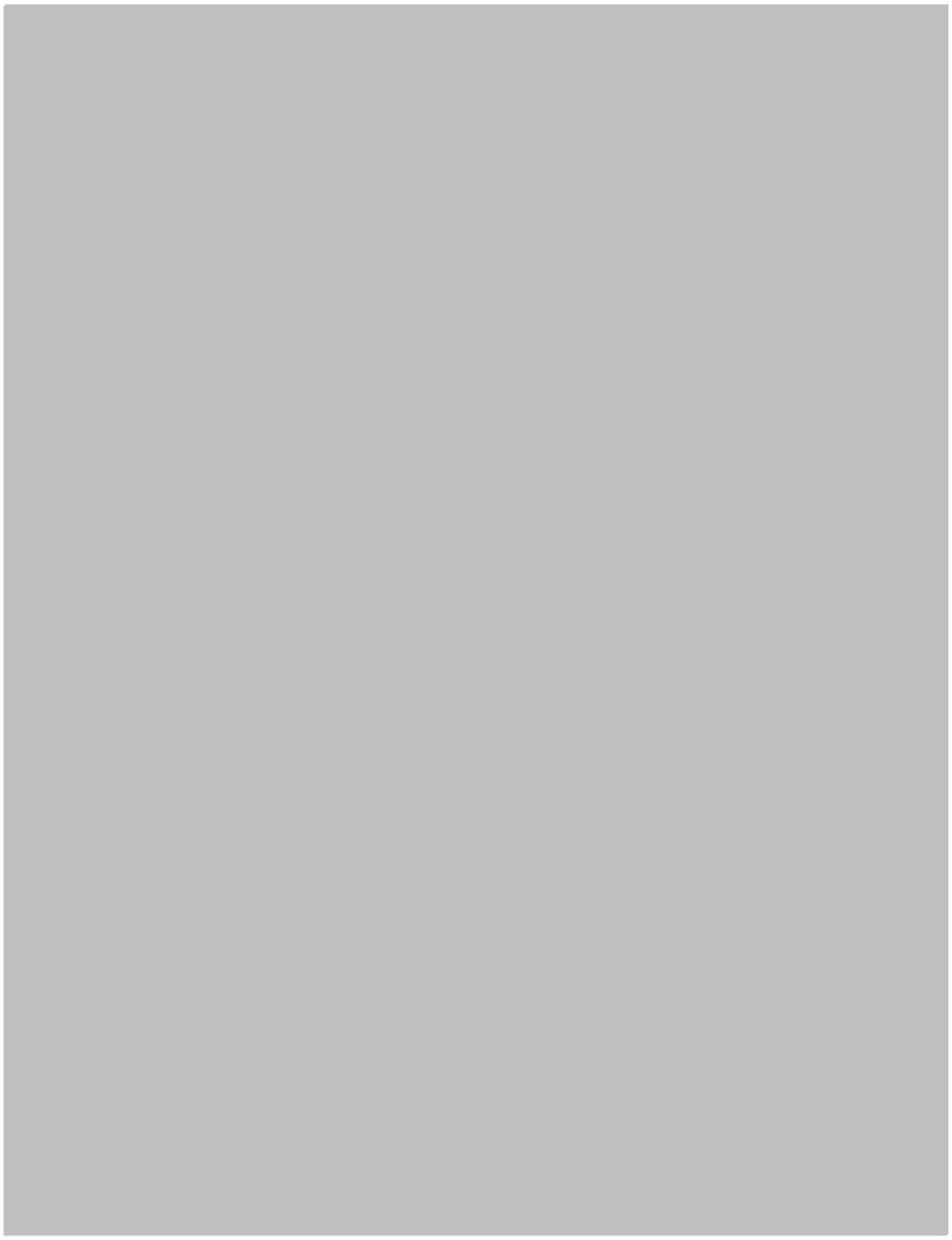
> Despite all Mrs Kendal's ability - and it is in some ways very great - despite the quiet reticence of her man's costume, and the absence of anything very young and fair to contrast her with when she is in her man's attire, one feels - one cannot help feeling - throughout the play, that the time has gone by for this sort of fooling.

The Captious Critic thought the gaiters a much more sensible mode of dress for the forest than the outlaws' finery, but brought forward another, no less practical, reason against the actress's adoption of short skirts:

> In doublet and hose she figures disadvantageously, owing to another trick she has, of bending her knees inwards when she seeks to express emotion, becoming apparent in the absence of petticoats.

The same critic found the "electro-silvered tomahawk" at Mrs Kendal's belt a poor substitute for a curtle-axe, which every reader of annotated editions knew to be a species of short sword. Walsh, in an inimitably bad pun, proposed that the St. James's be renamed as "The Gaiter Theatre" (see Illustrations 9 and 10).

Led by Corin, Rosalind and her companions left in search of the vacant cottage, to be succeeded on stage by Orlando and Adam. No scene-change took place, though the use of electric lighting for "sunlight effects" may have included the turning of the upstage area during their short sequence (II.6): the published text gives cues for music at the beginning and end of the scene. There followed the transposed IV.2, in which Jaques asked Amiens (who replaces the "Lord" of the original) "Which is he that killed the deer?". The scene had often end-



. Illustration 11 Following p.251

Mrs Kendal as Rosalind, 1885

ured displacement - Miss Litton's 1880 version used it at the end of the third act - and here it served as an introduction to Jaques's description of Touchstone. It seems that he did not leave the stage, but was discovered by the Duke. By omission of four lines, Mrs Kendal provided a transition as follows:

> (Enter Duke)
>
> Duke: I think he be transformed into a beast,
> For I can nowhere find him like a man.
> Go seek him, tell him I would speak with him.
>
> Amiens: He saves my labour by his own approach.
> (II.7.1-2,7-8)

Jaques's speech ended with "A worthy fool: motley's the only wear!" (34), and in absence of any directions, it must be assumed that preparations for the feast - in keeping with the luxury of the banished Court - were made whilst he was speaking. The next line in the new text is "Forbear, and eat no more" (88, a cut of fifty-three lines).

The controversial incongruity of the costumes in this scene has been mentioned: The Daily News and Dramatic Notes observed that Orlando's wonder, "I thought that all things had been savage here" lost its force. Quilter found the resulting picture unattractive and unconvincing:

> ...we have a little stiff lot of courtiers instead of the old merry companions. Pages in silk stockings set out a repast which, as one critic very truly remarked, was rather a "picnic a la Bignon" than a rough forest's meal; and the courtiers stand and sit around in immoveable picturesque attitudes. With the exception of one super, who snapped his fingers gaily, and thereby imparted some festivity to the scene, I don't think there was any appearance of reckless revelry.

Vezin's Jaques added a degree of distinction to an otherwise unremarkable scene. He delivered the "seven ages" speech seated, and made of it "a thoroughly sound piece of acting, skilful in its elocution and subtle in its grasp of contemplative character" (The Times). Wedmore admitted certain limitations in Vezin's stage personality, but praised his Jaques:

> Mr Vezin is a little dry, emotion is somewhat foreign to him, and so is hearty overflowing comedy. But such a part as that of Jaques he can perform to perfection; for his bearing has at need a simple courtliness; his air, if

> not enthusiastic, is often kindly, and he is a skilled master of elocution...

The notice describes a piece of business attending Adam's arrival at the feast, which Wedmore could not recall from any previous performance: was it a new idea, "that the aged Adam in his moments of decay and helplessness shall be assisted chiefly by the professed cynic?". Archer felt that Vezin's performance improved the more often he played the part, but that its one defect, a "general lightness of calibre", would not be avoided until the actor could "add some three or four inches to his stature".

The ending of the scene was transformed into a tableau by transposition of some lines. After Adam's "I scarce can speak to thank you for myself", the Duke addressed Orlando:

> If thatyou were the good Sir Rowland's son,
> As you have whispered faithfully you were,
> And as mine eyes doth his effigies witness
> Most truly limn'd and living in your face,
> Be truly welcome hither. The residue of your fortune,
> Go to my cave and tell me. Good old man,
> Thou art as welcome as thy master is.-
> Kell to; ive us some music, and, good cousin, sing.
> (II.7.191-8, 171a, 173b)

This is in answer to Orlando's "conversing with the Duke" indicated by a stage-direction at 169 ("I thank you most for him"), and only the line-and-a-half of Adam's interjections is allowed for Orlando to impart his identity to the Duke - Shakespeare's arrangement allows him to do this during the singing of the song. Kendal's text is contrived so as to bring the act-drop down on a tableau, as the courtiers listen to Cellier's "Blow, blow, thou winter wind".

.....

The third act began with a moonlight effect, intended as a demonstration of the new electric lighting. Archer bore witness to the difficulties of using the new techniques:

> Some meteorological phenomena which opened the third act were startling and uncalled for, the sun and moon getting so mixed up that Orlando addressed the former as the "thrice-crowned queen of the night"; but luckily the spheres got into tune again before any serious harm ensued.

It is not clear how Kendal and Hare dealt with the time-scheme of this act, which appears to begin at night and end in the afternoon, but which makes no dramatic use of the

time of day after Orlando's invocation of the moon. Some producers arranged for a sun-rise effect as soon as possible - thus, in a prompt-copy of Modjeska's production the lighting cue for the beginning of the act reads:

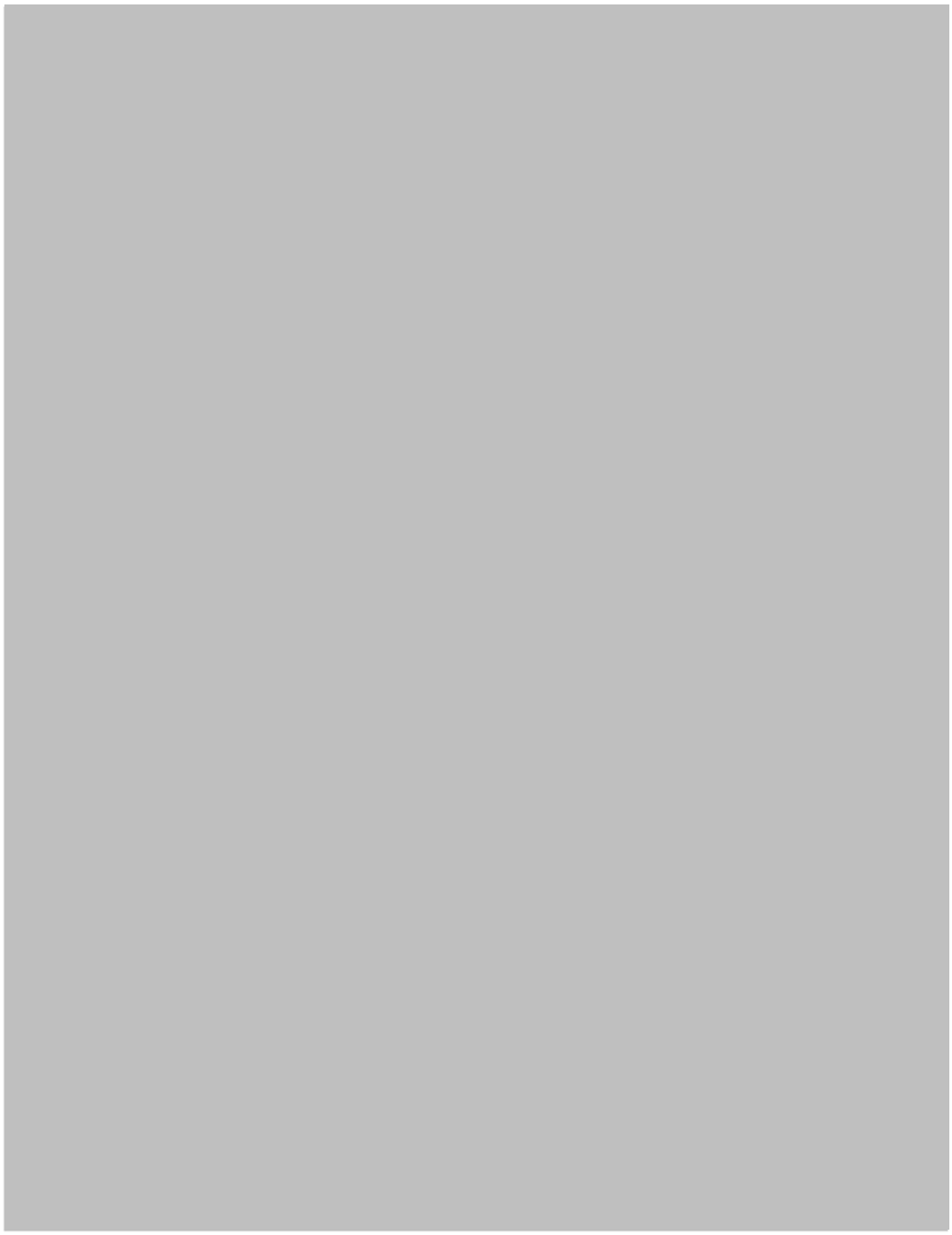
> Blue Calcium for moon at rise of curtain.
> As gas goes up gradually take it off.

This was a simplification of an earlier direction, which took no account of the moon - Modjeska's sunrise was modified from an effect using red and yellow calcium lights, to the simple fading of a blue one[10]. At the St. James's an electric dawn must have been contrived.

After Orlando's exit, Touchstone and Corin entered, and there followed a heavily-altered version of the dialogue concerning the pastoral and courtly pursuits, from which all references to physically unpleasant rural duties were removed. Some twenty-five lines of prose were cut, and Touchstone's "Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd" was followed by Corin's answer "Not a whit, Touchstone. I am a true labourer..." - a combination of 40a and 65. In addition, Touchstone lost his elaboration on the bringing together of ewes and lambs. The next sequence was an expurgated version of Rosalind's scene with Touchstone and Celia (the reading of the verses) and subsequently with Celia and Jaques. Rosalind's confrontation, "like a saucy lackey", with Orlando, was followed by the entry of Touchstone, Audrey and Jaques (III.3) and the partially-reinstated quartext. The act ended with the orginal V.3. This was another <u>tableau</u>, achieved by the omission of the dialogue which follows "It was a lover and his lass".

The act brought Orlando and Rosalind together for the first time, and the reading of Orlando's verses gave the actress her first opportunity to show the effect upon Rosalind of discovering that she is loved. Helen Faucit's letter on the character described, with her customary mixture of sentiment and shrewd, theatrical perception, Rosalind's emotions upon finding the verses and divining their authorship:

> Think of the throb at her heart, as she reads her own name running through every couplet; still there are many Rosalinds in the world; and how should he, of whom she has been dreaming, even know her name - or how should he, of all men, be there in Arden? No, no, it must be some



. Illustration 12

Following p.254

Mr and Mrs Kendal as Orlando
and Rosalind,1885.

> coincidence; and yet the pulse is quickened, the heart-throb is felt... O happiness beyond belief, oh rapture irrepressible! The tears at this point always welled up to my eyes, and my whole body trembled..."[11]

Mrs Kendal does not seem to have risen to the moment. Dramatic Notes observed that instead of "suppressing a joyous surprise", she "read the lines with a dramatic intensity quite out of place". The same mistake accompanied the line "What shall I do with my doublet and hose", where Quilter found a "self-conscious prudery" which was discernible at a number of points in the performance:

> "Alack the day" (here she puts her hands over her face), then a pause, and a cross to the prompt-side, where Celia is sitting, and, half-whispering in Celia's ear, "What shall I do with my doublet and hose?"

Quilter felt that this was a consequence of the kind of role habitually played by Mrs Kendal. A further refinement of the labouring of the line may be found in Lady's prompt-copy for a production first seen in England at the Lyceum in 1890. Here Rosalind is "at first startled and ashamed at being caught out of her petticoats" - she "lays hold of Celia's skirt and turns her quite round trying to hide her own legs...Then seizing both of Celia's hands and pulling them alternately"[12]. Ada Rehan's crude expressions of modesty and enthusiasm were to some extent made acceptable by her vivacity and youth, and her comely and well- employed legs, but Mrs Kendal's exertions only drew attention to her disqualifications for the part.

Thus had begun, and worse remained behind. When she came to her meeting with Orlando, Mrs Kendal was "winning," but, as The Saturday Review pointed out, "it was not the artless coquetry of a light-hearted damsel". Instead, she suggested "the refined fascination of the mature woman of the world":

> It was The Ladies' Battle transferred to the Forest of Arden: and reminding us in every look, tone and gesture of the wiles of the drawing-room.

The same effect had been observed by The Saturday Review to be a consequence of the playing of Juliet's love-scenes by a mature actress - they "degenerated into intrigue" (8 November 1884). In this instance Mrs Kendal had over-emphasised the pathos, at the risk of appearing affected: Dramatic Notes thought that

she delivered "O ominous! He comes to kill my heart" (231) with "a look of terror and apprehension such as might be fittingly worn on the approach of an assassin, and with a distressing pause between each word". Archer found a "too nervous vivacity, an over-influence in florid imitative gesture" in the passage beginning, "Time travels in divers paces with divers persons". In all this, the actress was not greatly aided by her husband, of whom all that could charitably be said was the verdict of Dramatic Notes, that he was "well-looking but not an interesting representative of Orlando". Archer noticed that he was "rather given to using his throat-voice in the blank-verse passages".

.....

The next act began with Shakespeare's III.4 (Celia and Rosalind) and moved directly to Silvius's pleading with Phebe, by omitting Corin's entrance. Celia's "Who comes here?" heralded the arrival of the rustic lovers, and it would seem, in the absence of stage- directions, that Rosalind and Celia moved up- stage to overhear the dispute. In order to achieve the transition between III.4 and III.5, the version deprived the audience of important evidence of Rosalind's curiosity about love. In the original Rosalind and Celia do not merely overhear a lover's quarrel, they set out deliberately to watch a spectacle:

> The sight of lovers feedeth those in love.
> Bring us to this sight and you shall say
> I'll prove a busy actor in their play. (III.4.53-4)

The new version also reduces our sense of the forest's size, by concentrating the action in one clearing, where the original by its constant adjournments and casual references to other parts of the area, suggest a large wood with many paths.

After III.5, the action continued with Rosalind's return (IV.1). Jaques discovered her gathering flowers, and the conversation between the two was described by The Morning Post as "eloquent of the poetic imagination with which the scene is set forth". Orlando arrived, Jaques departed, and more of Mrs Kendal's ill-judged wooing ensued. After some eighty lines, concluding in 104-7,

> O, that woman that cannot make her fault her husband's occasion. Let her never nurse her child herself, for she will breed it like a fool.

Mrs Kendal, for no good apparent reason, sang the first stanza of the dialogue between Summer and Winter from Love's Labour's Lost. The point of this may have lain in its application to marriage and cuckoldry, a peculiarly indelicate subject for an audience who were at all costs to be spared such gross expressions as "thigh". Or, more likely, it was without any application, and served merely as a spontaneous effusion of the character's exhilaration. According to The Era, Mrs Kendal "ran hither and thither about the stage pretending to hear a real cuckoo and imitating in starts, and grimaces that were altogether out of place". Orlando, who had no doubt appeared suitably gratified by the outburst, simply remarked, "For these two hours adieu, I will leave thee".

Shakespeare at this point uses a simple device to establish the passage of time. Celia's "I'll go to sleep" at the end of IV.1 is followed by a short scene including the song "What shall he have that killed the deer?" Orlando's farewell suggests that IV.1 ends about noon, with Celia and Rosalind about to take a siesta, and IV.3 begins with the line, "How say you? Is it not past two o'clock?". Kendal transposed the song, and removed the indications of time. The new transition ran:

> Rosalind:...I cannot be out of sight of Orlando.
> (Enter Silvius)
>
> Celia: Who comes here?
> (IV.1.194a; IV.3.5)

After a short version of the scene with Silvius, Oliver arrives, to give his account of Orlando's adventure. This gives no suggestion of sufficient time for Orlando to have saved his brother, taken him to the Duke, fainted from loss of blood, revived, and sent Oliver on his errand.

The Morning Post found Rosalind's reception of Oliver's news affecting:

> She strives to conceal her feminine fear and hesitation beneath an assumption of courage that is only too manifestly insufficient to conquer her apprehension of evil.

It was part of a strategy of which this critic, and a few others, approved, whereby "every little outburst of assumed manliness is at once seen to be a struggle after the impossible". Helen Faucit claimed then, when Rosalind faints, "the strain upon her feelings is too much even for her powers of command, great as they are", but Mrs Kendal had done little to suggest such powers[3]. From the notice in The Era it seems that her faint was greeted by a cheer, but The Pall Mall Gazette remarked that a poor exit spoiled the end of the scene. Quilter thought the delivery of the exit-line, "Will you go?" poor - "entirely modern in spirit, with its self-consciousness, its flurry, and it little laugh".

.....

The final act was divided into two scenes, the first comprising V.1 and 2, and concluding with "Glee: 'Foresters sound the Cheerful Horn'". The end of the litany, "Good shepherd, tell this youth what 'tis to love..." was cut by fourteen lines (87-102), and V.3, (the song "It was a lover and his lass", and its accompanying dialogue) had already been used at the end of the third act. The second scene of the final act began at V.4. Rosalind's reiteration of the vows made by the various parties (5-25) was cut out, and Hymen's appearance was replaced by the speech of Jaques du Bois, transposed from the end of the masque. After the Duke had welcomed him, the dialogue ran:

Rosalind, (to Phe):
To you I give myself, for I am yours,
(to Orlando)
To you I give myself, for I am yours.

Duke:
If there be truth in sight you are my daughter.

Orlando:
If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind.

Phebe:
If sight and shape be true,
Why then, my love adieu!

Rosalind: (to Duke):
I'll have no father, if you be not he;
(to Orlando)
I'll have no husband, if you be not he;
(to Phebe)
Nor ne'er wed woman, if you be not she.

Duke:

O my dear niece, welcome thou art to me,
even, daughter, welcome, in no less degree.
First, in this forest, let us do those ends,
That here were well begun and well begot;
And after, every of this happy number
That have endured shrewd days and nights with us,
Shall share the good of our returned fortune,
According to the measure of their states.
Meantime, forget this new-fallen dignity,
And fall into our rustic revelry.

Music. Dance with Chorus,
"Live with me and be my Love".

D'Auban, of the Alhambra, had arranged the dance on which the curtain fell, and after the scene had closed, Mrs Kendal came forward to speak the epilogue. The ending, as given above, consists of lines 110-118, 141-3 and 164-171.

Jaques's bitter parody of the litany, into which the relationships of the other characters have been transmuted, was lost by this curtailment: Miss Litton had retained it. The fundamental disregard for the text, which the final dance and chorus showed, was evident even to the less radical commentators. Scott pointed out that the courtly form taken by the dance was out of keeping "with all rustic and rural festivities", and its steps such as peasants would never have learnt. The ending was yet another demonstration of the disjunction between the production's values and those of the text. Moreover, lines were allowed to stand which flatly contradicted the style of the mise-en-scène: a more ruthless director (or adviser) would have cut the Duke's invitation to "rustic revelry".

.....

"The binding was there, but the book was gone", wrote Scott in The Illustrated London News (31 January). An efficient company of much-admired actors had shown themselves "as much at sea with Shakespeare, as if they were engaged on a Sanscrit poem", and the elaborate artifices of stage-setting and costumier were not only useless, but a positive hindrance to the understanding of the text. Scott was not impressed by bird-song, sheep-bells, running water and Le Beau's howl (which misbehaved itself and was eventually replaced by a stuffed specimen). He remembered Adelaide Neilson, Helen Faucit and Marie Litton, in whose interpretations "the sweet spirit of

Shakespeare seemed to have been caught":

> I should have thought, in these days of elocution classes, Shakespearean reading, higher education, and extreme culture, that the first thing that would have been required in a Shakespearean play would be the spirit of Shakespeare, and the intelligent interpretation of the poet's text.

He might, had he been less charitable, have recalled Mrs Kendal's previous attempt at Rosalind, ten years before at the Prince Consort under John Hollingshead's management. Then, as now, Vezin, as Jaques, had been "admirable", Orlando beyond Kendal's range, and Rosalind unbecoming. Joseph Knight felt the lack of "underlying tenderness" (which more "emotional" artists could provide), and had praised Beerbohm's Adam as "less absurdly senile and lachrymose than most of his recent predecessors"[14]. The Referee, less tactful than Scott, compared the present revival unfavourably with that of Miss Litton, which had been "as nearly perfect as possible":

> The mounting was in excellent taste and not overdone, while it must be admitted that Mr Wyrle Bellew and Miss Litton were far more suited to the characters of Orlando and Rosalind than Mr and Mrs Kendal at the present time.
> (25 January)

The critic was bored by the "statuely and mature" lady, whose delivery of the lines, though "remarkably clear", was "somewhat slow", and concluded that:

> The one element of naturalness in painting, and without that there is no charm.

Scott, in The Daily Telegraph, reminded his readers that the Kendals, for all their genius, were incapable of "the ideal, the imaginative, the picturesque and the poetic", and remarked that a play which "under the seediest and shabbiest circumstances was enchanting" had become "formal and dull".

It is evident from the reviews of the St. James's As You Like It that the production had most of the vices by now associated with the pursuit of the decisive-historical aims. It was slowed down by the preparation of elaborate sets which, when revealed, lent the proceedings an uncomfortable feeling of confinement and artifice. In the midst of scenic and sartorial innovation, the inadequacies of the acting seemed to be emph-

asized - although the management was accused of trying to conceal them. Shakespeare was not to be weighed down with such impedimenta: his plays were barely adaptable to the gross medium of the stage, and gained little by the transaction.

These accusations were unjust when levelled against Godwin's share in the Princess's _Hamlet_ - no-one could deny the speed and brilliance of that performance, and argument could legitimately be concerned with the question of what form Denmark had in the poet's imagination, not with the theatrical effectiveness of the revival. It was effective, but was it effective in the right way? Mary Anderson's _Romeo and Juliet_ appears to have been open to the immediate query as to whether, given the mode of production, it had been well done. The new _As You Like It_ was even more suspect on this count. Barrett had successfully presented _Hamlet_ in terms of the values of his theatre, but Mary Anderson and the St. James's company showed that Shakespeare was inappropriate material for their particular kind of acting and staging. It was unfortunate that Wingfield, a lesser talent, had charge of these two productions, for the gap between his ambitions and his achievements did not prevent his pretensions being condemned as fundamentally unsound. Like he shared with Godwin, and the movement towards a theatre in which one man had charge over design and performance, without himself acting or writing, was weakened by bad examples of the theory put into practice.

Scott's assertion that _As You Like It_ could prove enchanting "under the seediest and shabbiest of circumstances" could be taken as an endorsement of _laissez-faire_ in matters of staging, rather than a plea for consistency and harmony. It could also serve as a reminder that the Lyceum way with Shakespeare was the best available to the discerning playgoer. When Irving came back from America in May, he could be sure that little "room" had been lost to rival actors and managers. In 1884, on his return from his first American tour, Scott interpreted the enthusiasm of the Lyceum audience as proof that Irving had "convinced the most sceptical of the value of his artistic method as applied to the production of stage-work in the presence of a nineteenth-century audience" (_The Daily_

Observer, 2 June 1884). In 1885 Wedmore remarked that Irving had returned "with undiminished energy, and with wholly unspoilt art" (The Academy, 9 May), and Archer found that his Hamlet showed "a marked improvement in elocutionary grace and distinctness", whilst lacking none of its former "spirit, energy" and "force of personal attraction" (The World, 6 May). The revival of Hamlet was worthy a reply to Barrett's production - not only a re-affirmation of supremacy, but an opportunity for reviewers to acclaim Irving for some of the virtues (dynamism, distinct speaking) accorded to the younger actor-manager. It remained to be seen whether any further full-scale productions would offer a challenge to Irving's way with Shakespeare. In late May, at Coombe, Godwin's As You Like It was revived, but no major production was mounted in London during the season of 1885-6. Irving meanwhile turned his attention to Faust, producing it on 19 December. No Shakespeare was put on at the Lyceum until the early summer of 1887, and no new production was put in repertoire until Macbeth, in late December, 1888. There was no attempt by any other management to stage Shakespeare on the scale of the Lyceum management until September, 1887, when Mary Anderson returned to London.

Chapter Six:

MARY ANDERSON'S THE WINTER'S TALE - 1887.

Mary Anderson's production of The Winter's Tale opened at the Lyceum on 10 September 1887 and closed on 24 March 1888. On the final night Miss Anderson made a speech:

> Ladies and Gentlemen - Since I first came among you five years ago, you have so loaded me with proofs of your sympathy and kindness that I should indeed be ungrateful if I did not feel deeply my parting from you. That a play so classical should in the nineteenth century have had the longest run since the great master created it three hundred years ago speaks much for the refined taste of the London public. It seems hard to say goodbye, but I hope to be back again in a year or so, with possibly another Shakespearean production. In the meantime, my friends, I thank you a thousand and a thousand times for all your kindness.
>
> (Reported in The Dramatic Review, 31 March 1888)

Miss Anderson did not return to London as a professional actress, nor did she produce another play by Shakespeare: in 1889 she married and retired from the stage. Moreover, there were critics who did not consider the staging of The Winter's Tale a service to the "great master", or its favourable reception a testimony to the "refined taste of the London public". It did not alter the opinions of those who previously had refused to accept Mary Anderson as a major dramatic talent, and it did not advance to any significant degree the art of Shakespearean production.

.....

i. The actress's choice of parts.

In the summer of 1885, before her departure to the United States, Mary Anderson had played Rosalind at the Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The performance added little to her reputation as a Shakespearean actress. In The Daily Telegraph (31 August 1885) Clement Scott complained that "occasional flashes of the true spirit animating Shakespeare's lovely creation" were vitiated by "lapses into heaviness,... slow action, studied poses, and deep-voiced, affected utterance". The Stage supported that, being by nature "the ideal Lady Macbeth", she was not fitted for the part, and that in the first act she "moved "demure without archness and nonchalance

where she should have been supplicating" (4 September). The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News found her "essentially unpoetic" and The Graphic commented that "after her stint" she failed "in her attempt to reach a more serious vein" (ISDrN, 3 September; Gr, 5 September). William Archer compared her unfavourably with Mrs Kendal, whose comedy had been "stronger, more mature", and observed that some Rosalind's out into the part "a tender grace and pathos foreign to Miss Anderson's temperament" (The World, 2 September). She was hardly helped by Forbes Robertson, whose Orlando seemed "curiously prosaic" to Archer, and was described in The Sunday Times as "romantic in bearing, but modern in manner and expression", and "scarcely in sufficient poetical sympathy with the ideal doings in the magic forest of Arden" (30 August). One of the few points on which the actress was complimented was her defiance of the usurper:

> ...delivered exactly as a proud, high-spirited girl, conscious of no wrong-doing would deliver it...
>
> (The Era, 5 September)

Despite its poor press, the production was taken to New York by Miss Anderson, and opened her season at the Star Theatre on October 12[1].

During Miss Anderson's absence a number of rumours as to her marital and artistic intentions circulated: various suitors were named, and the New York magazine The Theatre reported that the actress was contemplating an operatic training, and would no doubt be admirably suited to Norma and other statuesque roles (12 April 1886). In 1887, as yet unmarried and still without operatic instruction, Miss Anderson returned to England. The Era announced on January 8 that she would be taking tenancy of the Lyceum from September to the end of the season, and that her manager would be Charles J. Abud. On Shakespeare's birthday Miss Anderson opened in The Winter's Tale at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham: the production was not that which would be given at the Lyceum, but the sets by local scenic artists (Messrs Henry Potts, Jules Caesus, H. Broom and J. C. McLennan) were lavish and not unworthy of the actress. Reviewers were wary, and expressed the hope that, by the time she came to the Lyceum Miss Anderson would be more

at home in her part. "W. .A." in The Academy (30 April) rote that her playing satisfied the eye, "but not the heart or the intellect", and that her pose as a statue "would have delighted a sculptor"; but he doubted the wisdom of emoising so much of Autolycus's part, and missed "the tears in the voice" of Hermione and "the free gaiety of youth" in Perdita. Nor was he sure that the doubling of these two parts was altogether a good idea. The public, it was suggested, should wait, and hope that in London the actress would achieve "the tenderness and the spontaneity at present lacking".

The decision to play both Hermione and Perdita appeared to be a gratification of Miss Anderson's affection for clas- ical antiquity and, simultaneously, a further attempt to succeed in a part where gaiety and girlish tenderness were called for. Juliet might require the actress to make credible the coincidence of both mature and youthful characteristics in one personality: the doubling of Hermione and Perdita made no such demands. Miss Anderson could endeavour to display her ability at both extremes of her range, without striving to reconcile the one with the other. During the period since her first appearance in London, a number of "classical" roles had been considered - she was at one stage reported to be preparing a production of Cymbeline, designed by Lewis Wingfield with costumes in the appropriate "Graeco-British" manner (Up to the Clock, 29 November 1884), and Tolfourd's Ion, one of her favourite plays, cannot have been far from her mind. But Ion, she recognised, "held the lamp too high for the many", and Cymbeline fell by the wayside[2]. Since 1880 Irving had been planning a revival of Coriolanus, with designs by Alma-Tadema, but a sense of the play's unpopularity prevailed over the attractions its staging might offer, and scuttled the project until 1901[3]. The latter's fate, which had not been seen in London since the visit of the Meiningen company in 1881 and had not received a full-scale native production since 1875, provided the appropriate combination of opportunities for Miss Anderson and commercial viability. Although its construction presented some difficulties to those who preferred an orderly and, by one kind of estimate, more credible drama, it had been pronounced by Hazlitt "one of the best-acting of our author's plays"[4]. Charles Kean's production, in 1856, had

set the precedent for archaeological display.

In preparing her acting edition the actress enjoyed the advice of Lord Lytton, Abbey and Henry Irving. She explained in A Few Memories the spirit in which she approached the task:

> In studying the play, the reason for its non-success appeared to me to be the undue prominence given to several of the less important characters, and the comparitively short and interrupted appearance of the two heroines which breaks the continued interest of the spectator. The first difficulty was to cut these secondary parts without marring the beauty or meaning of the text; and the next, to keep alive the sympathies of the audience with both Hermione and Perdita from beginning to end.
>
> (p.246)

The attempt to lend unity to the play by doubling the roles did not meet with universal approval - a correspondent in The Dramatic Review compared the feat to "the received custom of French melodrama, where the mother appears with her baby in the prologue, and is killed off in the interval between that and the first act, when the child, grown up, is doubled by the same actress..." Miss Anderson's intention "to cut, trim and serve up" Shakespeare, was something "only an American would attempt or think of" (Emilie Sylner Loring, "Hermione and Perdita", 30 April 1887). Truth observed the wisdom of the actress in taking both parts:

> In the first place, people go to the Lyceum to see the beautiful Mary Anderson and no one else; and if she could play possibly mother, daughter, and monthly-nurse, as well as the homeless child of Leontes, her admirers would be well pleased, and let art go hang.
>
> (15 September 1887)

In the second place, by this arrangement there was no danger of the actress being outshone by a subordinate, which many thought to have occurred in [illegible], when Amy Roselle gave a much-admired performance as Cynisca, the sculptor's wife. Any qualms Miss Anderson may have felt as to the artistic validity of this sound managerial policy were allayed by a high authority - Tennyson, consulted as to the wisdom of the innovation, remarked:

> Thank God the time is past for the [illegible] of [illegible] to [illegible] or mar a poem, play or artist! [illegible] original things are well-received

> at first. People must grow accustomed to what is out of the common before adopting it. Your idea, if carried out as you feel it, will be well received generally - and before long.
>
> (A Few Stories, p.245)

To the attraction of her personality and the novelty of the doubling would be added the appeal of "classical" scenery and dresses. Again, the major scenic artists of the day were to be employed - William Telbin, Walter Hann, Perkins and Hawes Craven, but on this occasion there was no "director" or advisor. The programme acknowledged Napier Lothian as "Stage Manager for Miss Anderson", but without the suggestion that this individual had any responsibilities beyond those of the common-or-garden organiser. Neither Ingfield, nor any other "expert" was credited with the production, responsibility for which rested on the actress. This had been the case with As You Like It at Stratford, and it appears that after Romeo and Juliet the employment of a designer-director was no longer felt to exert any influence on the public. No paragraphs heralding the production as a feat of archaeology appeared in the newspapers or on the programmes.

.....

ii. The Performance.

The most important source of information regarding Mary Anderson's staging of The Winter's Tale is a fully-annotated stage-manager's copy, endorsed by Napier Lothian and now in the Folger Shakespeare Library (Hist.- 3: Shattuck, The Winter's Tale 28). In addition to business and settings, the book includes call-lists, timings and a note of the dimensions of the Lyceum stage: the proscenium opening was thirty-three feet, six inches wide and thirty-two feet, ten inches high, and the stage was forty-one feet deep. This depth could be extended by use of a twenty-three foot deep area in the rear scene-dock, and the cellarage allowed an eleven-foot rise. The grid was twenty-eight feet above the downstage boards, and twenty-seven above the upstage.

The prompt-copy is based upon the Chiswick Press edition of Miss Anderson's acting text, which was issued in 1887, and differs from it in some particulars. The text was also published

in a "Souvenir" of the play, with illustrations by Edwin John Ellis and Joseph Anderson and selections from Andrew Levey's music.[5]

.....

The curtain rose on the interior of Leontes' palace, designed by Telbin, "with the blue Sicilian bay in the background, and the rare beauty of classic art suggested in every grouping, costume and accessory". The downstage area was eighteen feet deep, with a flight of three steps, from side to side of the upstage area, leading to a terrace where marble seats looked out towards the sea[6]. Archidamus and Camillo were discovered amidst a small crowd of courtiers, soldiers and slaves - at one point in the mimed business preceding the first lines of the play five runners came "up steps and across" and went off stage-left. It seems from this and other directions that access to the downstage area was by "steps" or "stairs" - Lothian's notes indicate an eighteen-foot stage cloth, and it seems that the terrace took up a substantial part of the remaining twenty-three feet of depth. The prompt-copy indicates that the supernumeries were grouped according to the colour of their costumes - variously, red, mauve, white, yellow and blue - and that Camillo wore a black robe with gold trimming.

The two courtiers came down, stage-left, from a couch where one of them had been reclining, and began their conversation. The version simplified this dialogue by removal of Archidamus's clumsy attempt at elaborate compliment, and of Camillo's description of Polixenes's closeness to Leontes - "they have seemed to be together, though absent". In Shakespeare the circumspection of the air and the duplicity of their language suggest a tension already in the Sicilian court - the ponderous phrases may be puzzling, but Camillo's remark,

> You pay a great deal too dear for what's given freely,

foreshadows the passage a little later, when Leontes attaches an inappropriate value to the courtesies used in persuading Polixenes to remain in Sicily. In Miss Anderson's version Archidamus no longer struggled to find the exact words for for his sense of gratitude: the simpler business of kneeling

information was got through as quickly as possible. At the exclamation "The heavens continue their loves!" Camillus appeared, coming down the steps, stage-right and accompanied by a lady-in-waiting. He ran to Emilia, who kissed his hand, and drew her across to stage-right, bowing to some gentlemen standing nearby. Then he was drawn off stage in a cart by Emilia and two gentlemen. This business was devised as a cue for "You have an unspeakable comfort of your young prince, Camillus" (30-2). At the end of the conversation music was heard, fortis imo, and the monarchs entered with Hermione. Paulina led on Camillus, taking him stage-centre to be kissed by his father. Hermione moved to a couch, stage-left, with Camillus, while Camillo and Archidamus retired up-stage left. The main characters now formed a line across the stage, with Polixenes at the extreme right, Leontes at centre right, and Hermione with Camillus on the left. When invited by Leontes to speak, Hermione came down between the two kings, accompanied by Camillus.

Camillus left the stage with Paulina at line 36 ("But let him swear so and he shall not stay") and re-appeared as Leontes said "I say not verily" (45), when father and child retired up-stage. The reason for this absence is not apparent. The conversation had until now been public - at Polixenes's assent, "Your guest, then, madam", there was a movement of satisfaction from all", but at Hermione's lines,

> Not your gaoler, then,
> But your kind hostess. Come, I'll question you
> Of my lord's tricks and yours when you were boys.
> (59-61)

the stage began to empty of all except an officer, Archidamus, Clomenes, Dion and Frolio, who lingered in the colonnade at the back of the stage. Leontes watched Polixenes and Hermione from an up-stage position, coming down at "Is he won yet?" (86) accompanied by Camillus. Polixenes sat on the couch, stage-left, with Camillus, and gave orders in dumb show to Archidamus, who dismissed those still waiting in the colonnade. Hermione moved to join Polixenes, and the pair went up-stage, leaving Camillus to play with some flowers on the couch. Leontes came down left to watch them:

> So sin'd friendship for is inciting bloods.
> I have tremor cordis on me; my heart dances.
> (108.)

Whilst he was speaking, Mamilius went to offer Hermione a flower, and then returned to Leontes, who held him at arm's length and asked "Art thou my boy?" (120). As he progressed in his jealousy, Leontes nervously held Mamilius first on one knee, then the other, placing him directly before him ("yet they say we are/Almost as like as eggs" - 130) and embraced him ("my collop!"). Disturbed by his behaviour, Polixenes and Hermione came down to ask "What means Sicilia?" and Leontes moved right with Mamilius as the two sat down on the couch. As Leontes exhorted Hermione to give Polixenes a good welcome - "Let what is dear in Sicily be cheap" a chorus was heard pianissimo off-stage at the back. Hermione and Polixenes went down the steps at the back left of the stage, and Leontes followed to watch them.

Mamilius left the stage at the first injunction "Go play" (190), and Leontes summoned Camillo. During their exchange soft music was heard (beginning at 346), and the scene ended with Leontes's exit:

> I will seem friendly, as thou hast advised me
> (350)

Camillo stood in the centre of the stage, lost in thought, as the tableau curtains fell. Clement Scott complained that this was an unnecessary and undesirable alteration:

> The mind refuses to pause before the visit of Polixenes, with all its fatal consequences, are over and done with.
> (The Daily Telegraph, 12 September)

He attributed "half the wearying air that was felt throughout the performance" to the continual use of the tableau-curtain, "the abominable device... which managers vainly imagine does not interfere with the interest of a play". Like the visible transformations of the 1884 Romeo and Juliet, the tableau-curtains used by Miss Anderson were considered a hindrance rather than an aid to illusion. It is not clear what alternative was acceptable to playgoers as a means of dividing one scene from another - apparently the flying in of a front-scene in view of the audience was considered less distracting than the concealment of its setting. Certainly the innovation had still to prove its worth in 1895, when Telbin wrote that tableau-curtains were, in this country, "seldom used, and... not very acceptable to the public": as a notable exception

he mentioned those used in the Irving production of Romeo and Juliet[7]. In 1887 the dialogue between the Bohemian king and Camillo was separated from the preceding lines, in order to create a "carpenters' scene" during which the elaborate set of the first scene might be struck, and that of the Queen's apartment prepared. Reduced to a front-scene of "Gardens before the Palace" (by Hann), the passage must have seemed perfunctory and lacking in force.

The third scene took up thirty feet, six inches of the stage's depth; a series of flown pieces is indicated by Napier Lothian's notes, the first set nine feet back from the curtain line, the next six feet, six inches further back, the next eight feet from the rearmost, and that seven from the backdrop. This episode, with the revelation of the statue-picture at its commencement was, wrote the revie er of the Pall Mall Gazette, the first "which stirred the audience to any expression of pleasure" (12 September). It was a scene combining tenderness with dignity:

> Here we see the stately Hermione, clad in the rather unbecoming red and purple Greek costume, reclining on her couch, her women playing to her, the red tints of the glowing fire relieving the gloom of the surroundings. With a mock-serious smile she invites her little boy, "pray you sit by us,/And tell's a tale," and then follows a delicious scene, which shows Miss Anderson at her very best. As the little fellow begins, "There was a man, dwelt by a church-yard", she shrinks from him in pretended fear, and then covers him with kisses.

From the prompt-book it appears that Emilius accompanied the line, "Yond crickets shall not hear it" by pointing to the fireplace. From the same source there is some indication of the silent business which preceded the first line of the scene:

> Song pp behind
>
> < Emilia comes in back R with scroll> [enters]
> At opening hem. is lying on couch C. reading scroll. Hem. teasing lady who is working L. comes to back of couch knocks scroll from her hand. she resumes reading when he places hands on her eyes. She pushes him away, he runs round in front of couch, kneels, places hand under her chin and when she lets the scroll fall knocks it out of her hand. Then song over lady xes [i.e. crosses] slowly at back with Lyre and off. Leave at back removes cushions and exit L.C.

Hermione then exclaimed, "Take the boy to you: he so troubles me..."

Camilius's story had just begun, in pantomime, when Leontes entered upstage right accompanied by a lord. Evidently a curtain still concealed him from Hermione and her attendants. He burst through the curtains with the words "I know't too well" (55) and Hermione rose to meet him. Leontes seized Camilius, who escaped and clung to his mother. With the lines,

> You, my lords,
> Look on her, mark her well.
> (64f.)

Leontes threw back the curtains and Cleomenes, Antigonus, Dion and a number of noblemen entered. At the end of the scene Leontes stood down-stage, facing Hermione, his back to the audience, and ordered her removal to prison. Antigonus protested - "You are abused my lord, and by some putter-on" (the trans-posed 141) - and was answered by Leontes's "He who shall speak for her is afar off guilty/But that he speaks", upon which the king left the stage. Hermione moved to the back and then came downstage again to the couch. Leontes returned with guards at the line "Shall I be heard?" (115). The Officer advanced, but the other guards stayed outside as Emilia, kneeling, pointed accusingly at Leontes and the women began to weep, one against the wall on the audience's right, the other behind the chair. Music was heard again, _Dennis imo_, and Hermione made a queenly exit:

> ...This action I now go on
> Is for my better grace. Adieu my lord.
> I never wished to see you sorry: now
> I trust I never shall. My women, come, you may leave.
> (101-5)

Leontes made a movement towards Hermione at "This action I now go on...", but she looked at the lords, who bowed their heads as she left the stage and the curtain fell.

This marked the end of the first act, though the prompt-copy indicates that there was no wait between this and the first scene of the second act - Shakespeare's I.2., set in "The Outer Room of a Prison". The timings for the act's three scenes were twenty, four, and ten minutes respectively, giving, with the twenty-two minutes of the second act, a total

of fifty-six minutes. The brief front-scene between Paulina and the Gaoler took three minutes, and was followed by her confrontation of Leontes with the new-born child. This scene was much simplified, and took only ten minutes, using the set of the Queen's apartment from the last scene of Act One. The play then jumped to the sea-coast of Bohemia (Shakespeare's III.3); this scene, shorn of the Clown's humourous description of the shipwreck and Antigonus's death, took only nine minutes. There followed an interval of ten minutes, during which the stage was set for the trial scene.

The economies of time effected by the compression of the first and second acts were diminished by the fact that the trial scene took ten minutes' interval to set, played for fifteen minutes, and needed a fifteen minute interval to be struck. The passages omitted in the early acts were in some instances very important. Leontes's character lost a good deal through the omission of the conclusion to II.1, where after Hermione's exit, he strives at once to justify his actions and to deny the necessity of justification. Similarly his speeches to Camilius in I.2 had been cut down, expurgating the violently bawdy language in which he betrays a vivid sexual imagination. Leontes's agonised exclamation, that he is not to be thought capable of disparaging his honour without cause, was removed by Miss Anderson. The lines in question -

> ...sully
> The purity and whiteness of my sheets -
> Which to preserve is sleep, which being spotted
> Is goads, thorns, nettles, tails of wasps?
> (320-3)

- have the manic fastidiousness associated with Iago and Hamlet. But whereas Barrett had felt the necessity of retaining Hamlet's disgust at the rank sweat of an unseamed bed, Miss Anderson could well do without so intimate a revelation of Leontes's mind. It was enough that Hermione's honour should be called in question for the purposes of her drama - what she was accused of, and how Leontes was capable of the accusation might be left as vague as possible.

However scant her concern with the psychology of Leontes, Miss Anderson was accused by one critic (in The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News) of "going out of her way" to "make

the suspicions of Leontes seem reasonable" by her display of "forwardness rather than friendliness" (17 September). The Saturday Review missed any "distinction" in her manner:

> ...there is none of the gracious womanliness, indefinable in words, and yet unmistakeable, which should lead us to look on the base suspicions of Leontes as an outrage. As it is, we cannot help admitting that the Queen is indiscreet.
> (17 September)

A failure to find the right tone for Hermione's happier moments was not compensated by success with the pathos of the part. In The Times it was suggested that "something of the virago" might be detected in the "deep masculine tones" which the actress produced "from her chest" in pathetic moments. When first accused by her husband, Hermione's denial of adultery provided evidence of "unfortunate diction". The Times quoted the indignant reproof:

> Should the villain say so,
> The most replenished villain in the world,
> He were as much more villain. You, my lord,
> Do but mistake.
> (II.1.78-81)

The reviewer commented:

> The hoarse profound note of the word "mistake" in Miss Anderson's mouth, coupled with the rolling of her eyes, borders upon the grotesque.
> (12 September)

He also observed that she accompanied her leave-taking - "Adieu, my lord" - by shaking her head at Leontes "with the drollest air in the world". The Daily News thought that the indignation lacked "something of the fire and spirit which the occasion demanded" (12 September).

Forbes Robertson's Leontes, though distinguished by trained elocution from most of his fellow-actors, failed to satisfy the press. The Dramatic Review (17 September) found him too tearful, and argued that he showed an inappropriate remorse, early in the play, for the treatment of Hermione. The Times considered him well cast, and felt that Leontes, lacking reasonable and tender feeling, accorded well with "the generally hard and unsympathetic style of this actor" - to this may be compared the suggestion of The London Figaro that Leontes had been made up to appear as unattractive as possible, with bare arms and a beard too heavy for his face.

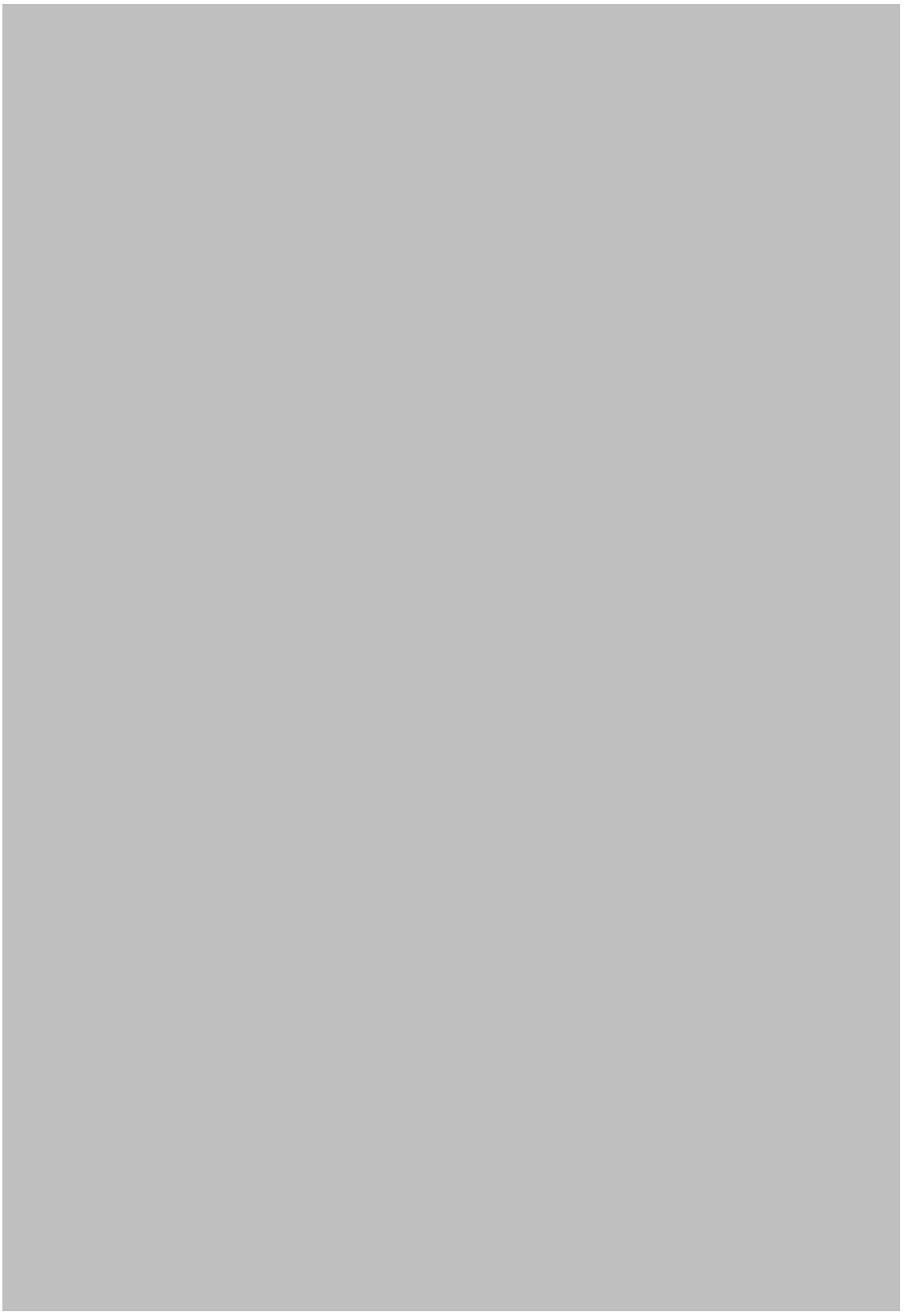
F.H. Macklin, as Polixenes, was better-looking but his acting was "rather heavy and lifeless" (12 September).

The three scenes which made up Miss Anderson's second act did not elicit much comment. The Morning Post noted that "several titters" were raised by "the careless manner in which the eloquent Paulina had disposed of the infant after her emphatic appeals on its behalf to the vindictive father", and that the abandonment of Perdita on the sea coast lost some of its effect by the child's being "too palpably a doll, a morsel of unreality in the midst of elaborate realism". The scene of Paulina's upbraiding was cut by a half of its lines, and in the abbreviated III.3 no bear pursued Antigonus. This omission was generally welcomed, but some expressed doubts concerning the omission of Time, as Chorus. Charles Kean, who was thought to have erred in allowing the bear to chase Antigonus, had made a splendid spectacular tableau out of Time, and Miss Anderson had missed a "legitimate" opportunity for display. The short scene in which Cleomenes and Dion discuss the Oracle (III.1) was omitted.

.....

The omissions which had reduced the preceding scenes to a perfunctory course of factual exposition continued in the trial scene, Shakespeare's III.2. Approximately one hundred and forty-one lines were cut, and Paulina's part suffered particularly badly. Miss Anderson's prudishness caused the removal of the words "in committing adultery" from the charge against Hermione, so that she was accused of "high treason with Polixenes". A fully set stage presented Leontes's throne on a dais at the audience's left, facing an altar on the right, with officers, priests and nobles crowding round them. Music and the murmurs of the crowd were heard as Leontes entered, and further murmurs filled the pause between the summoning of Hermione and her entrance. She sat on a chair in the centre of the stage, between Leontes and the altar. (See illustration 13).

Hermione's first reply to the accusation was given in full, save for her description of history as "devised/and played to take spectators" (34-36). As she sat down, Paulina



Following p.276

. Illust ation 13 The Trial, *The Winter's Tale*, Lyceum 1887.

moved towards her. Her next long speech (58 etc.) was cut, together with the lines following it, up to Leontes's "As you were past all shame -" (82). In Hermione's next speech, confiding her fate to the oracle, Miss Anderson altered three words, much to the annoyance of The Saturday Review: "The bug which you would/fright me with" became "That which you could fright me with"; "first-fruits of my body" became "first-fruits of my marriage"; and "Proclaimed a strumpet" was softened to "Proclaimed a traitor". Hermione's complaint that her pregnancy has been disregarded in summoning her before the court (102-104) was also deleted.

Leontes turned his back on Hermione at her words "Therefore proceed", but turned to face her again - perhaps with a touch of self-doubt - at "but for mine honour" (108). The oracle was brought in, to solemn music, by four priests, accompanied by Cleomenes and Dion. After they had taken their oath at the altar, and returned to Leontes's side of the stage, the oracle was read out. Hermione, amid the acclaim of the crowd, crossed to the altar with the cry "Proceed". At Leontes's first suspicious words - "Hast thou read truth" - the stage began to darken, and at his denial of the oracle's truthfulness there was a crash of thunder. A messenger rushed on with news of Mamillius's death, and a pale blue limelight shone across to Hermione from the downstage opposite prompt bridge. She uttered the astonished question, "How! Gone?" and, as her women rushed to help her and the crowd moved forward, she collapsed. Music was heard as the scene moved swiftly to an end:

> Leontes: How now!
>
> Paulina: This news is mortal to the Queen: look down
> And see what death is doing.
> The Queen, the Queen,
> The sweet'st, dear'st creature's dead!
> And vengeance for't
> Not dropped down yet.
>
> (Horn till curtain)
> (144b, 145, 197-9)

The remorse of Leontes and Paulina's rebukes, with which Shakespeare ended his scene, were omitted: in the published text Leontes's lines 146-154 ("Thine innocence...") were included, but the prompt-copy removes them.

Although opposed to a histrionic method composed of statuesque attitudes linked by explanatory dialogue, the correspondent of The Stage could not withhold admiration for the effect of Hermione's collapse:

> If her acting of Hermione were throughout as instinct with thought and dignity as in this series of poses and pictures, Miss Anderson would be hailed as the greatest tragic actress of her time. That one scene lingers powerfully upon the memory. We see the proud and indignant woman bending down before the storm sent from heaven, the tall white figure clinging to the altar-stone for protection, the horror-stricken mother's face whiter than the white veil that frames it, the dropped curtain over the face of agony, and then the sudden fall of the despairing woman.
>
> (16 September)

The Era saw "self-respecting reserve" in the gesture as the "agonised Queen" silently drew her cloak round her and "fell silently and manly dead". The hostile notice in Truth described the business more clearly:

> By a clever twist Miss Anderson gets her white veil stretched as a covering at the back of her head, and forming a background for a face blanched with terror. The form is half-recumbent here; then, suddenly lifting herself up to her full height, the veil is dropped over the face of agony, and the marble statue falls upon the floor.

The reviewer grudgingly admitted that "if a sculptor could produce in marble anything like that effect he would make a fortune". The business was strikingly effective, but, like the collapse of Juliet after she had taken the poison, it involved the excision of any but the briefest of dialogue following it, so that the audience might contemplate undisturbed the pathetic "statue".

The legitimacy of this coup de théâtre was doubtful - The Dramatic Review felt that "the horror of her anguish" and the "thud of her fall" were "as much tricks of the theatre as the thunderstorm". The delivery of Hermione's speeches in the trial itself was unsatisfactory - to the same reviewer "Miss Anderson seemed to be in a state of mental feebleness, doling out the lines of her defence in a scrappy manner", whilst Archer suggested that she played the scene with the kind of energy more usually associated with "the heroine of a modern domestic drama", The Pall Mall Gazette, which discerned an improvement towards the end of the scene, observed that in

its early speeches the actress "seemed awkward and ill at ease" and mistook "wryness" of countenance for "eloquent expression of grief". The "real Hermione" was completely hidden from the eyes of the Saturday Review critic:

> ...the elaborately modulated utterance of the speeches (especially in the trial scene), with all the long and totally meaningless pauses and artifices, can have no other effect than that of irritating the lover and student of Shakespeare.

The Captious Critic complained of "needless pauses and sermonising delivery" and The Morning Post heard no tears in her "rich-toned voice, with its many essentially American inflections". An unusual dissident was Punch, which considered Miss Anderson's "silvery voice" to have "mellowed".

In addition to their "air of deliberate preparation" suggested by her manner of collapsing, and the misjudgments of the important speeches, some critics found fault with the stage-management of the trial. The Dramatic Review complained that the cries of the crowd were reminiscent of a Lord Mayor's Show, and that they detracted from the dignity of the scene. The intention seems to have been an emulation of the Meiningen way with crowds, but in 1881 the painstaking individualising of gesture and movement had seemed out of date and fussy, and Punch had commented:

> The one idea of these actors in this piece ...is evidently - [illegible] - "When in doubt, strike an attitude. Everything if not classical and strictly correct."
>
> (11 June 1881)

A cartoon showed the crowd in the forum striking classical attitudes around Mark Antony. Miss Anderson's crowd was by no means restrained, but their behaviour was deliberately unconvincing, and to evidently stage-manage. The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News described the effect:

> The clap-in crowd that was privileged to see the trial of Hermione, members of which jostle each other violently, point with their fingers, and say "That's her!" "That's the Queen!" and so on, when Hermione enters, would be alone sufficient to stamp the character of the revival.

Moreover, the neglect of the solidly dominant some critics

including Archer, of note, pans and coal scuttle.

.....

The performance had so far taken eighty-one minutes, ten of them being the interval preceding the trial scene: after another wait of fifteen minutes, the fourth act began. This was composed of a much-shortened scene at the court of Bohemia, (IV.2.), which was despatched in three minutes, Autolycus's appearance and his robbery of the Clown's purse, which took a further eight minutes, and IV.4., whose eight-hundred and forty-nine lines were so curtailed as to produce a scene of twenty-five minutes' duration. No voices were raised over the cuts made in the first of these scenes, but the trimming of Autolycus's part annoyed many commentators - the second, third and fifth stanzas of his song, "When daffodils begin to peer", were removed, together with the description of his "many knavish professions". The Clown's shopping list and his description of preparations for the feast were not allowed to proceed beyond "She hath made me four-and-twenty nosegays for the shearers" (41f), and his slighting reference to the court was lost:

> His vices, you would say, There's no virtue whipped out of the court: they cherish it to make it stay there; and yet it will no more abide.
> (26-8)

Charles Collette, the Autolycus, was in any case "very noisy but otherwise ineffective" (The Times) and "a more boisterous tramp, not the sly and merry rogue of Shakespeare", who "mangled in a coarse manner" such songs as were left to him (The Stage review). The Times complained that he was too "modern":

> He always seems on the point of enlivening the audience with a comic song: but some persons cloaked are most difficult to play nowadays if the time is to be free from both buffoonery and exaggeration.

Although his duets were unfortunate - one comparable to those of Standing's Grumio or Dare' Touchstone - Collette benefited from the fullness of the rest of the play, in the context of which, said The Manchester Guardian Dramatic

News, he appeared "bright and lively".

After Autolycus's exit, the tableau curtains closed again, to open on a set by Hawes Craven which won general admiration:

> ... a forest glade in all the beauty of early summer, shut in on either hand by sloping wooded hills and leading to a blue and placid lake, beyond which in the far distance is seen a line of dim and lofty mountains.
> (The Dramatic Review)

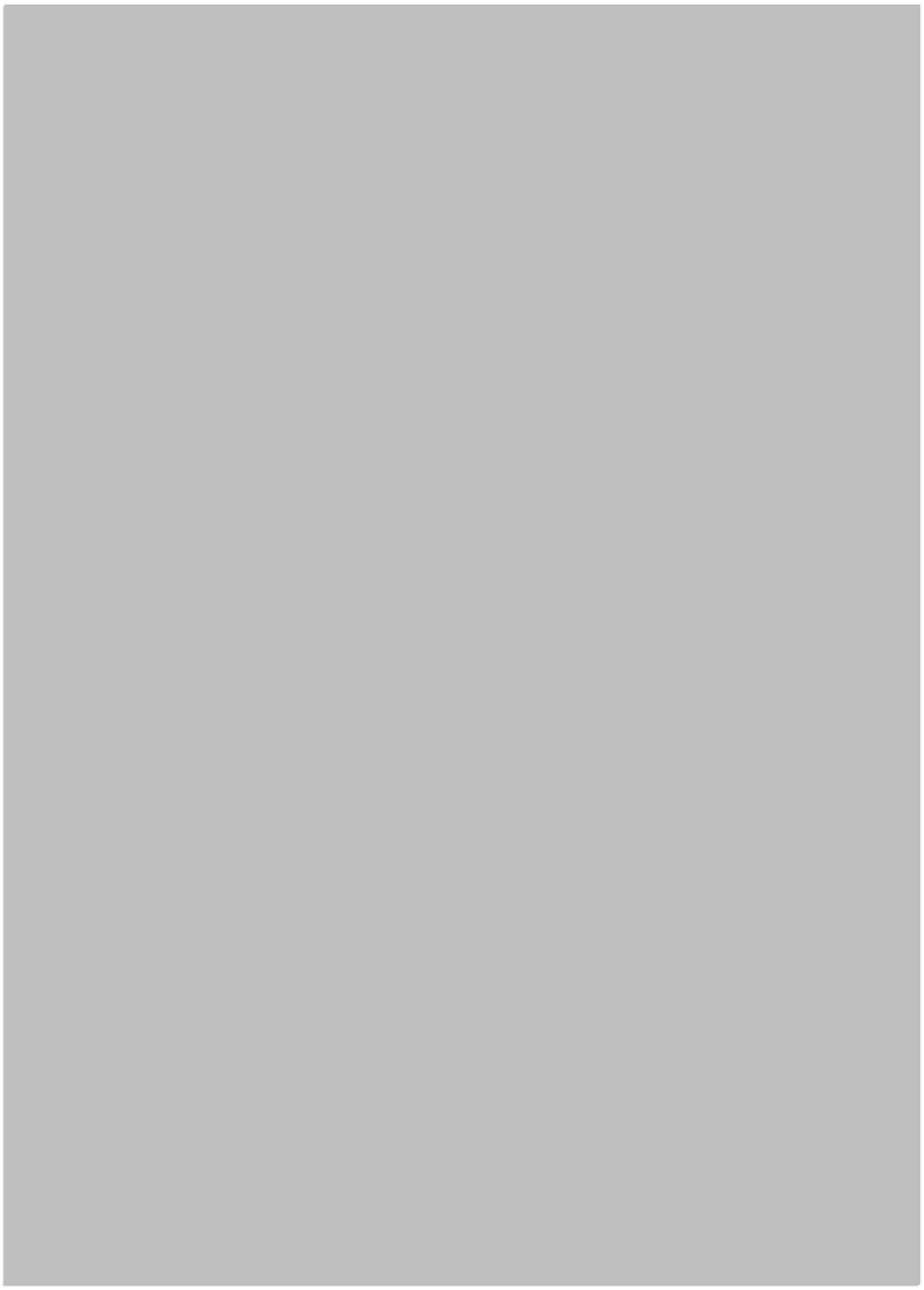
The Daily News admired the "rustic cottages, stone-built, and thatched" and "the overhanging crags and winding paths, with the grey hills in the distance", and Scott, in The Daily Telegraph, praised the scene's Englishness. Although the distant mountains and the lake might be the landscape of an imaginary Bohemian seaboard, the woods and bracken were unmistakeably "old England" and "remembrances of Cobham or Knole or Arundel, but none the less welcome or charming". The Era mentioned Perdita's listening to "the music of the streamlet", but did not disclose whether real water was used on stage, or its sound present only to the imagination.

Florizel was discovered, laying down his hat and cloak on a bank at the audience's left. The prompt-copy indicates "bus. of looking in pool" - to ensure that he was prepared for a meeting with Perdita? Then the stage directions are as follows:

> 3 children on back L run on. & off R.
> Man asleep R on bundle of faggots. 3 children tickling his ear & girls looking out of cottage window - Old shepherd xes. R. to L. at back meeting 2 herdsmen from L. Laugh heard in cottage. 2 girls run over to pool with jar which they fill & go up meeting the 2 herdsmen, they all go off R.

Perdita entered from the second entrance, at prompt-left and crossed to the back right, up-stage of Florizel, walking from him. No stage-directions precede the first words of the scene ("These your unusual weeds...") but it seems likely that she let him know of her presence in some playful manner, perhaps putting her hands over his eyes. The girls obligingly left the pair alone, seated stage-left.

Towards the end of their slightly-abbreviated conversation,



. Illustration 14 Following p.201

Mary Anderson as Perdita

laughter and music were heard from the opposite side of the stage, and the Shepherd and Clown entered from the cottage. Three girls came on at the back of the stage, two children ran across from stage-right to left, and the dozing man near the lovers roused himself and walked off. Florizel, seeing this activity, ran upstage, looked in the direction of the music, and turned to Perdita:

> See you guests approach.
> Address yourself to entertain them sprightly
> And let's be red with mirth.
> (52-4)

More peasants, including Mopsa, Dorcas and an old lady, came on from the prompt side with some of the musicians, who established themselves on a bank at the side of the stage. The Old Shepherd took up a position in the centre, exhorting Perdita to entertain their guests, whilst Polixenes and Camillo entered and stood on the prompt-side bank. Perdita did her father's bidding, and asked Dorcas for the flowers, which the girl threw to her. With "welcome to our shearing" Perdita came down to the front, and Polixenes, still behind her on the prompt-side bank, exclaimed,

> Shepherdess -
> A fair one are you - well you fit our ages
> With flowers of winter.
> (77-9)

Camillo immediately added, from behind a tree (some business may be unrecorded here):

> I should leave grazing, were I of your flock,
> And only live by gazing.
> (103f)

Thus the whole of Perdita's discussion of nature and art was omitted.

Throwing the remaining flowers to the peasants, Perdita came down to the centre and spoke with Florizel, whilst the stage filled with more countryfolk and musicians. When preparations were complete, the dance, choreographed by Mr. Laurence, began:

Dance

3 four arms on shoulders
Kick by couples and turn girl
Pump handle face to face
pass girl ax. and back

Under and over join back and forward
Turn girl - kneel

Girl runs round boy
Thread needle 2 front fours
Ladies chain back four
Girls run up, boys follow and
turn girls who turns [sic] boys
Front four run up and down again
with Perdita and form 2 lines
up & down stage arms on shoulders
Kick, separate in couples, girls
hands to back of head, thread the needle
in 6 and 2 fours, girls run up followed by boys
who bring them all forward & try to kiss them .

This nondescript combination of English and Greek folk dancing and musical comedy production number won three encores on the first night, and afforded Miss Anderson an opportunity of displaying yet another accomplishment. The Era praised Perdita's "delightful naïveté" and "girlish activity and enjoyment of exercise", and The Morning Post saw revealed in the performance "all the bright animation of girlhood". The Pall Mall Gazette was gratified,

> to see this lovely creature clad in white, with her dark hair flowing down to her waist, exchanging loving messages with her Florizel, tossing flowers to her laughing playfellows, dancing as supple and pliant as a reed, and joining the pretty madrigal...

The dance, to the accompaniment of tabor, flute and cymbals, was a distinct success.

The remainder of the scene was given in condensed form, Autolycus being the chief casualty, deprived of his appearance before the Clown and the Shepherd in courtly clothing. Even the servant's vivid description of the pedlar was omitted, together with most of the ensuing dialogue as the rustics crowd around Autolycus. There was no "gallimaufry of symbols", and Florizel's lengthy exchanges with Polixenes and Camillo were made shorter by two thirds. When the time came for Florizel to change clothes with Autolycus, he pushed the vagrant off-stage with "Unbuckle, unbuckle", re-appeared a few lines later in his new apparel, and set off for the sea-side with Perdita and Camillo. The stage had begun to darken as Autolycus entered to deliver the portion allowed him of his soliloquy on the gullibility of peasants, (586-609), which becomes:

> Ha, ha, what a fool honesty is! [586]
> I picked and cut most of their festival purses;
> And had not the old man come in with a hubbub
> against his daughter and the King's son and
> scared my choughs from the chaff, I had not left
> a puse alive in the whole army.
> (604-9)

During this, blue lime-light had begun to suffuse the stage, so that the end of the scene was a moonlit picture of Perdita setting out to voluntary exile. Shakespeare's scene ends with the comic optimism of the Clown and Shepherd, and their touching faith in Autolycus as a providential figure ("He was provided to do us good"): this was the ending retained by Charles Kean's version, but Miss Anderson felt much more strongly the pathos of Perdita's situation.

The second part of the play was given, thought the reviewer from The Morning Post, "with much more spirit than its earlier and stronger passages", and The Dramatic Review, whose critic had disliked the trial scene, allowed that with Perdita's appearance "a delightful change came over the scene". The Stage, on the other hand, found her "essentially modern" and Archer complained of a "clear misreading of the poet's intention" in the "mystic hesitation" with which she addressed Camillo and Polixenes in welcoming them to the feast. Fuller Mellish's Florizel was "ardent" but "handicapped by an unromantic individuality" (The Times). Punch found him "painstaking, picturesque and conscientious" - faint and unpromising praise.

.....

The scene had taken twenty-five minutes, and was followed by twelve minutes' wait whilst its set (which took up thirty-six feet of the stage's depth) was struck and replaced. The first scene of the final act was relatively short. A woman's voice was heard singing, and the curtain rose to reveal a room in Leontes's palace, where Cleomenes, Leontes, Paulina and Emilia were grouped on the stage-right: the singer stood stage-left. The dialogue was much abbreviated, with the loss of Dion's suggestion that Leontes should marry again and Paulina's insistence that he should not (24-49) and, amongst other minor details, of Florizel's pretence that his "wife" is the daughter

of Smalus, King of Lybia (151-177). The scene lasted seven minutes, and was followed by another of the same duration - V.2, cut to half its length. Cleomenes and Dion replaced the First Gentleman and his peer, and, as a gesture towards historical consistency, the sculptor of the statue became an anonymous "rare master". Autolycus's meeting with the two transformed rustics was kept, although the omission of the last one hundred and sixty-nine lines of IV.4 deprived the later scene of its point.

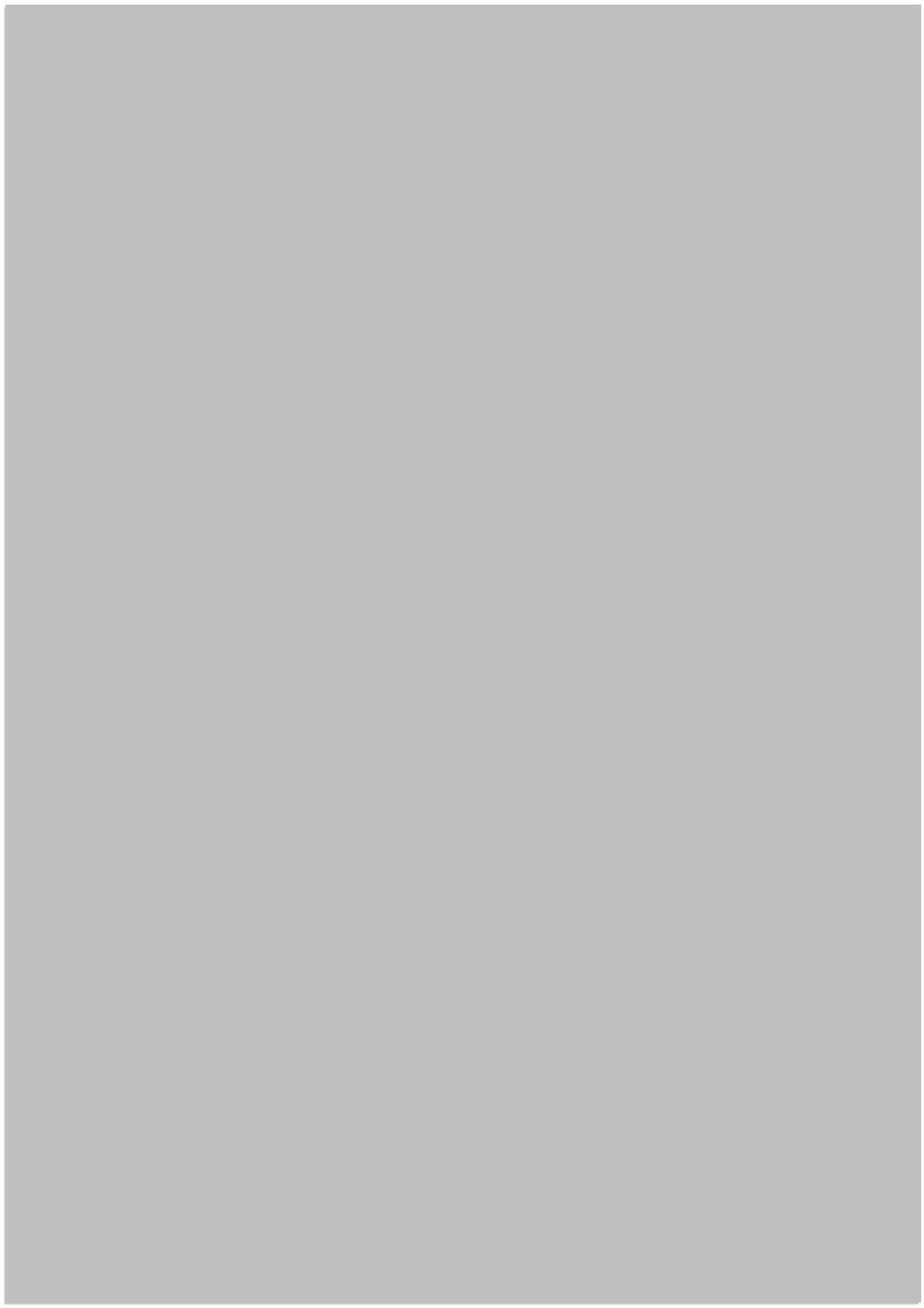
The final scene of the play provided Hermione's statue with an ecclesiastical setting: "A Chapel in Paulina's House". A stage cloth was laid from the curtain line to a depth of twenty feet, and a flight of steps was erected from the rear of this flooring to the back of the scene. At the top of these steps was the statue, and as the curtain rose Paulina was discovered standing on a lower step - a group of musicians with pipes and harps occupied the down-stage corner on the prompt side. The prompt-copy shows little of interest until the statue begins to move. As Hermione descended, the music played fortissimo, falling to a pianissimo as she extended her arms to Leontes. By omission of all between line 129 and the end, Hermione was given the final speech of the play:

> ...For thou Perdita shalt hear that I,
> Knowing by Paulina that the oracle
> Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserved
> Myself to see the issue.
> All yet seems well if ends so meet
> The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.

The concluding couplet was from All's Well That Ends Well (V.3. 326-7)- Miss Anderson omitted a word from the original, which reads "if it ends so meet"). In place of the processional exit indicated in the full text by Leontes' "hastily lead away", the curtain fell on a "picture" of the re-united family as an off-stage chorus sang and the orchestra played, fortissimo.

The scene was shamelessly cut - over eight of its one hundred and fifty-five lines were deleted - but the impact of the performance could hardly be denied. The Era included the final coup in its list of reasons for overlooking Miss Anderson's failings:

> That Miss Anderson did not fail in her self-



Following p.285

—Illustration 15—

Mary Anderson as Hermione

> chosen attempt; that the artificiality of the "double" arrangement inthe last act was not painfully apparent or highly illusionary [sic] is greatly to her credit, and we would easily forgive greater flaws than any which were apparent in her performance for the sake of Hermione's superb reception of the news of the death of her little son...for the delightful naïveté of her Perdita...and for the picture of sublime beauty at the end of the play, when the seemingly sculptured Hermione moves slowly from her pedestal and descends the long flight of steps into the arms of expectant, yet half-hesitating, Leontes.

Even the hostile Dramatic Review conceded that in this scene Miss Anderson, "unimpressive in the character of the moving, breathing, suffering Queen" was "an ideal figure as Hermione, the still and silent statue", Odell, with his habitual enthusiasm for the picturesque, recalled in 1920 how, as the red velvet curtains concealing the statue were drawn aside, "one had an impression of almost illimitable space, white marble steps leading up and up, the vista terminated by the statue":

> And what a statue! Mary Anderson in the prime of her classic beauty, posed as only she could pose! As she slowly came down those steps, she presented a picture given to any generation to behold hardly more than once.[8]

Clement Scott thought the pedestal too high, "diminishing the effect of the picture", and offered an interesting observation on the pose adopted:

> Miss Mary Anderson does not, like Mrs Charles Kean, stand like a bashful maiden, listening to a favoured suitor, to illustrate the lines of Leontes:
>
> Oh! thus she stood,
> Even with such life of majesty,
> When first I wooed her!
>
> But, as she did in Galatea, stands a living, breathing statue, well worthy of the enthusiasm of Polixenes...

The Saturday Review spoke of "the statue of Hermione with the light turned onto it", and other accounts suggest a use of lighting, as well as the vista of steps, to separate the figure of Hermione from the other participants in the scene. No lighting cues are given in the prompt-book, and the only stage direction for the onlookers is "All rise when statue move" sic

at 103 - "You perceive she stirs". In 1857 Charles Kean's directions had included general movements of terror (91) and awe ("all fall on their knees" as Hermione turns her head at 100). When Leontes exclaimed "O she's warm", they all raised their hands and a "Grand burst of music - chorus" was heard. The stage-manager was reminded to "raise flote a little"[9]. Kean had included all but sixteen of the lines following 128a, where Mary Anderson had ended the play, paying more attention than the actress to the denouement's significance for the other characters.

.....

The production was one of the purest examples of tableau-vivant Shakespeare, and as such it enjoyed considerable success. On the opening night some inhabitants of the pit were disruptive in their protests about the further restriction of their area of the auditorium, but no serious mishaps marred the performance, and, at two hours and eight minutes, it did not exceed the usual length of programmes at the Lyceum. Nevertheless, critics were not behindhand in objecting to Miss Anderson's way with the National Poet and his creations. Scott was the most eloquent and authoritative of the reviewers who disliked the actress's interpretative method:

> Hermione is more than a beautiful woman posed for figure on a Wedgewood plaque; Perdita is much more than an artist's model. In seeking change the actress arrived at an even, well-ordered, blameless monotony.

He complained of a lack of intellectual and spiritual depth:

> from her delivery of the text it was not easy to detect if Miss Anderson had studied either woman very much save in externals. It did not matter what their minds were about, so long as they looked well and posed well.

Miss Anderson's way of acting was, like Irving's, predominantly visual: in Irving, the appeal lay in the actor's ability to depict intellectual and emotional workings of the mind, but Miss Anderson's efforts appeared to contribute to an absence of intellectual or emotional power - her characters were reduced to a series of simplified crises. Irving might show the conscience of Mathias in the way in which he untied his shoe, and

in a continuous series of betraying gestures and inflexions, but Miss Anderson's impersonations moved rackwardly from the depiction of one extreme emotion to that of another. It would be tempting to interpret her method, and its critical reception, in terms of contemporary discussion of literary values in painting - by such an analogy, Irving would figure as a skilled narrative painter, Miss Anderson as a histrionic Alma-Tadema, unhappily compromising her art with the theatre's ineluctable demand for narrative progression. This view would be more charitable, and it is one suggested in her autobiography. She left the stage because it could not suit itself to the nature of her gifts or her artistic conceptions - a process of disillusionment which she called "the constant crumbling of one's ideals" (A Few Memories, p.129). By such an estimate Mary Anderson might appear an artist born before her time - to an age not yet ready for the abandonment of narrative, for Maeterlinck or for Reinhardt's The Miracle, and for a theatre using simplified and mystical fables, and settings of symbolist economy or (in Reinhardt's case) total realistic effect.[10]

By another estimate, Miss Anderson might appear to have been born too late. Her ideas of the artist's involvement with his role were those of an earlier school - of Helen Faucit and, in America, of Charlotte Cushman, the actress who had advised her to begin at the top. One of the most striking passages in A Few Memories describes Miss Cushman's performance as Meg Merrilies in an adaption of Guy Mannering: the actress, in order to obtain a thrilling and authentic death-scream, would strike her breast, "which was like a coal of fire with the disease that was fast killing her" (pp.37-8). Miss Anderson conceived of characters in terms of her own emotional range, and of her own technical capabilities and, more or less innocently, dealt with the plays accordingly. The description of Hermione in her memoirs as a woman "incapable of unbridled excitement or violently expressed emotion", is followed by an assertion that the actress did not "give up" her conception "for any stage effect" - a suggestion that all effects but her own are meretricious and distracting. (p.147). But, for all her discussions of the plastique with Ristori, and her consultation of Alma-Tadema, she failed to adapt her

artistic predilections to the theatre.

In its review of The Winter's Tale, The Stage attempted an analysis of the reasons for Miss Anderson's failure. The reviewer suggested in the first place a distinction in uses of the word "Ideal" - it should be applied only to the mental qualities of characters, and should not properly be associated with beauty of physical appearance. The distinction may be elementary, but the word was so freely used that some attempt at a definition was a step in the right direction. The critic then proceeded to the declaration that Miss Anderson's art was "wholly objective" in that it dealt with "the real rather than the ideal". The new term, "objective", is a little confusing, but it does not obstruct the immediate argument of the article: Miss Anderson satisfies the eye rather than the mind. She considers her art to impart spiritual truth by sculptoresque poses, but she would attain that end more effectively by enacting the humanity of Hermione and Perdita, the one so "soulless" and the other so "modern" in her interpretations.

This critic's struggle to account in theoretical terms for the actress's failure to satisfy most of the reviewers is symptomatic of general failing in dramatic criticism of the 'eighties. Convinced of the need to apply a sound theory of dramatic art in the discussion of a number of controversial productions, the critics found themselves at a loss. Few of them - Archer being the most notable - were able to analyse theatrical events in terms of a rational and practical concept of what should and should not happen in theatres, or which plays were good and which bad. The contemporary artistic world offered a challenge to established ideas of purpose and method in painting, but even in the artistic journals and magazines of art there was a confusion of terminology. Productions of Shakespeare which appealed to fashionable tastes might also be judged in the currently fashionable terms of art-criticism, but the new rejection of narrative and didactic terms values in pictorial art conflicted with the theatrical combination of Shakespeare and painting.

As though to add to this confusion, Mary Anderson's acting mainly demanded judgement by some sort of pictorial theory:

she disrespected the narrative construction of plays, subordinated other characters and themes to those bearing directly upon the central character, and set up in competition with a management which had been accepted into the fashionable and artistic world. Yet there was plainly something lacking in Miss Anderson's technique - she appeared wanting in a quality for which the new approach to art had no explanatory term. In discussing Irving's acting or that of Barrett there was by now no questioning the performer's ability to hold the attention of the audience, however erroneous or untrue to "Art" their means of doing so. Like the As You Like It produced by Hare and Kendal, Miss Anderson's Shakespearean ventures disappointed reviewers and at the same time appealed to an element in contemporary taste. It remained uncertain whether this was a consequence of the inadequacy of the performers and managements, or a factor of the artistic sensibility of the age.

Chapter Seven :

THE 1888-9 SEASONS : DALY, MISS ALLIS, TREE, MANSFIELD AND BENSON

Irving's Macbeth, which ran from December 29,1888 until the end of the following June, dominated the 1888-9 season. Despite the reservations of a number of critics concerning the interpretation of the leading parts the effectiveness of the staging was indisputable. The Graphic proudly claimed it as a triumph of national art:

> In scenic art, England may now be fairly said to stand pre-eminent. With the exception of the Meiningers, who now and then, when at home, are worthy rivals, there is nothing to be seen on Continental stages which will compare for mise en scène with the Lyceum production of, say, Much Ado about Nothing, or Lord Tennyson's poetical play of The Cup. The Macbeth does not excel, though it equals these productions; but it may confidently be said that in no previous production under Mr Irving's reign has scenic art, in its highest form, been so faithfully subdued to the purpose of illustrating a poetical play.
>
> (5 January 1889)

Since Mary Anderson's The Winter's Tale there had not been any serious challenge to the ascendancy which Macbeth reaffirmed, but two companies had attempted full-scale productions of Shakespearean plays during 1888, and a few days after the first night of Macbeth the new manager of the Haymarket, Herbert Beerbohm Tree, began a career of Shakespearean production that soon rivalled and eventually superseded that of Irving. During the months that followed, Richard Mansfield emerged as yet another contender for the Lyceum's supremacy.

.....

i. Augustin Daly's Company and The Taming of the Shrew.

The first visit of Daly's company to London, in 1884, had been a considerable success - the manager was praised for the ensemble of his actors and Ada Rehan the leading lady, made a good impression on the critics. A reviewer in The Academy (30 August 1884) commented:

> The company...has shown, in its acting, an amount of ensemble with which some of us have not before been disposed to credit an American troop. Its principal actress, Miss Rehan, is doubtless more

> magnificent than sensitive; but it numbers among its members surely one really able comedian and several persons who at least are not anacquainted with the grammar of their art.

Subsequent visits made Daly's company as familiar to London as the French troupes which appeared annually at the Royalty or the Gaiety after the winter season[1]. The staple of Daly's repertoire was farcical comedy, for the most part adapted by the manager from German sources: from Julius Rosen's Halbe Dichter was created Nancy and Company, given at the Strand Theatre in May 1886, and from Goldfische by Schoenthan and Kadelberg, came The Railroad of Love, first seen in London at the Gaiety in May 1888. Most of Daly's plays, including Dollars and Cents (sometimes called Dollars and Sense), The Countess Gucki, and 7/8; or, Casting the Boomerang, were of such parentage. The other chief component of his programmes was "old comedy" - adapted from eighteenth-century authors or Shakespeare.

It is for his Shakespearean adaptations, and, specifically, for Shaw's attacks on them, that Daly is best remembered. A representative passage is the beginning of the notice of As You Like It which appeared in The Saturday Review on 9 October 1897:

> I never see Miss Ada Rehan act without burning to present Mr Augustin Daly with a delightful villa in St. Helena, and a commission from an influential committee of his admirers to produce at his lesure a complete set of Shakespear's plays, entirely re-written, reformed, rearranged, and brought up to the most advanced requirements of the year 1850.[2]

Shaw goes on to particularize Daly's offences as a producer:

> ...I saw Amiens under the green wood tree, braving winter and rough weather in a pair of crimson and plush breeches, a spectacle to benumb the mind and obscure the passions. There was Orlando with the harmony of his brown boots and tumic torn asunder by piercing discord of dark volcanic green, a walking tribute to Mr Daly's taste in tights. There did I hear slow music stealing up at the well-known recitations of Adam, Jaques and Rosaline, lest we should for a moment forget that we were in a theatre and not in the forest of Arden. There did I look through practicable doors in the walls of sunny

> orchards into an abyss of pitch darkness. There saw I in the attitudes, grace, and deportment of the forest dwellers the plastique of an Arcadian past.

The mistakes are of the kind against which Godwin had struggled in his association with the theatre,- mistakes which Irving would never make, but which some managers like Coleman and some actors and actresses, like Modjeska considered it beneath their artistic dignity to deal with. The extent to which Daly troubled himself with geographical and archaeological matters can be seen in a letter to him from Lafayette W. Seavey, of Seavey's Scenic Studio, New York:

> 31 March 1890
>
> Dear Sir:
> I enclose estimate and plan of scene as I understand it.
> If the forest of Arden is in the Ardennes between France and Belgium, then a somewhat rocky wood scene would be appropriate.
> I shall be most happy to receive your order for all or a portion of the setting.
> The church scene is about finished, we accidentally learned through the newspapers, in time, that we were to represent a scene in Pompei [sic].
>
> very truly,
> L. Seavey.[2]

The letter suggests a lack of concern with archaeological niceties surprising even in Daly, but his capacity to ignore advice, especially when it was based more on common sense than any expert knowledge, is testified to by W. Graham Robertson. Daly engaged Robertson to design costumes for Twelfth Night, produced in London in 1894:

> I had imagined the sailors and the rescued maiden cast ashore on a desolate coast in the dreary dusk of dawn, and had contrived that they should seem wet and storm-tossed. They turned up bright and well-groomed, on a beautiful afternoon at what appeared to be a fashionable watering-place thronged with gaily dressed trippers who sang "Come unto these yellow sands" with a great deal of nice feeling.[3]

"After this absurdity", wrote Shaw, "I was rather disappointed that the sea captain did not strike up Full fathom five thy brother lies, in the course of his conversation with Viola"[4]. It seemed part of Daly's theatrical theory that any song

written by Shakespeare was appropriate to any play written by him.

Among the other chief tenets of the manager's faith was the belief that a play should be split upinto a number of tableaux, to show off a series of imposing stage settings. Marvin Felheim points out that, in the case of The Merchant of Venice (1899), the result was "a curiously static quality" -

> an impressive stateliness in which Portia reigned as a rare and exotic, but hardly human, figure.[5]

This suited not only the lavish and heavy sets, but the talents of Ada Rehan. Shaw admired the actress's power and charm, and his criticism of Daly's productions amounts to a lament that so crude an employment should keep Miss Rehan from higher things - the same contention emerges from his criticism of Irving's productions, by which Ellen Terry was prevented from aiding the cause of the new drama. The magic of the Lyceum had little effect on Shaw:

> I escaped the illusion solely because I was a dramatist, and wanted Ellen Terry for my own plays.[6]

For others the magic of Daly's theatre, no less than that of Irving, was unimpeded by such considerations. William Winter, whose admiration of Ada Rehan knew no bounds, followed a glowing description of Rosalind with the claim that to impersonate such a character, an actress must be possessed of the same fascination:

> ...spiritually pure, intellectually brilliant, physically handsome, lithe, ardent and tender- the incarnation of glowing health, bewitching sensibility, passionate temperament, and captivating personal charm...

The inference follows that Miss Rehan is all these things, and it leads Winter to the assertion that his inability to distinguish between the verse and prose of the part,as played by Miss Rehan, was a glorious achievement of her genius:

> ...they lapsed into one uniform current of melody, so that no listener remembered that the text is composite...[7]

Clement Scott - who was, after all, being paid for services to her manager - wrote to Ada Rehan in 1890 expressing his

delight in her Rosalind:

> There is no success like that of a woman beloved by good women.

Later, addressing her as "Dear and gifted Artist", he wrote:

> We only see an Ada Rehan once in a lifetime and the fresh pure, ware, of you has been very refreshing and sweet to me. A year's playgoing nowadays is a weariness but I can pick up courage when our opinions are strengthened by such an art as yours.

Scott did not find Daly's plays or productions unworthy of this artist, but even those who expressed doubts concerning some of the material whith which she was provided felt the appeal of her playing. Dithmar, reviewing The Golden Widow at Daly's theatre in New York, offered such an opinion:

> She wore her rich robes like a queen and embodied perfectly the ideal of a woman of exalted station endowed with youth, beauty, wit, and imperial will and boundless worldly possessions. That the personage her lot compelled her to portray was really a vain, silly, vapid creature has nothing to do with the case.
>
> (New York Times, 3 October 1889)

Shaw, in a review of The Railroad of Love, referred to her "old feat" of "seizing the author's silly ideas, sillily expressed, of a superlatively fascinating woman, and substituting for it her own sympathetic idea, beautifully expressed": it was the prospect of her abilities being applied to the sensible ideas of a serious author that caused him to ask her to play Lady Cicely in Captain Brassbound's Conversion - a part taken in the event by Janet Achurch and, later, Ellen Terry[10].

.....

The production of The Taming of the Shrew in 1888 was the first sight given to the London critics and their public of the effects on Shakespeare of Daly's methods and Ada Rehan's acting. Lately, the play had not enjoyed a good reputation - Dowden, deciding that the play showed the hand of more than one author, held that "Shakespeare's genius goes in and out with the person of Katharina"[11]. Since Phelps's Sadler's Wells production, in 1855, the play had been given in Garrick's abridgement Katharine and Petruchio and the remarkable stage in at the Haymarket, in 1844 and 1847, when the play was presented

in a supposedly Elizabethan manner, had done little to enhance its standing - the reviewer of The Morning Post had called the original a "long, wearisome and yet unfinished comedy of five acts, with its preliminary induction without a conclusion" and professed his preference for Garrick's "pleasant abridgement" (18 March 1844)[11]. Daly's was the first London production since Phelps to give the Induction and a text approaching that of Shakespeare[12].

The pattern followed by the reception of Daly's subsequent Shakespearean efforts was set in 1888: Miss Rehan and company were impressive, and the staging was, despite its imperfections, a worthy attempt to do justice to the legitimate drama. One of the fullest descriptions of the scenery was that published in The Graphic on May 29: the front-cloth used for the Induction was poor and "more suggestive of the southern States of the Union in these times" than of England in Shakespeare's. With this unpromising beginning, the decorations proved "curiously unequal in merit":

> The second scene, which purports to depict a state bed-chamber in an English nobleman's house in the days of Elizabeth, is simply bewildering in its gaudy vulgarity. On the other hand the interior of Baptista's house is rich and handsome, though the effect is marred by the introduction of a huge fantastic couch with chairs to match, all gilded in the reckless and dazzling style of the Lord Mayor's coach. The finest scene of all, Lucentio's banquet hall, was reserved to the last, and was really a triumph of scenic art.

In The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News the Captious Critic also noticed this "exceptionally gorgeous furniture, all covered with gold, like Cinderella's coach in Mr Singer's pantomime" (23 June 1888) and Odell, whose regard for Daly was surpassed only by his veneration of Irving, recalled the "superb old rug" covering the floor of Baptista's room, and the "set of massive, heavily carved furniture, said to have been brought from an old Italian palace". This furniture, outstandingly hideous in design, is visible in one of the photographs of this production which Odell reproduces. The second of his illustrations shows the banquet scene, one of the finest Odell had ever seen and entirely justifying "the

managerial boast that it suggested a great picture by Paul Veronese": in a setting which looks intolerably cluttered, with as background a landscape evidently inspired by Claude Lorraine, a boys' choir sings "Should he upbraid" - on the spectator's left a lion, escaped from Trafalgar Square, calmly watches the proceedings with its paws crossed (see Illustration 16). The photographs suggest a total lack of taste, but in Odell's opinion "Daly never did anything to equal this supreme achievement"[14]. A similar enthusiasm prompted The Illustrated London News to an unqualified approval of scenery "as artistically beautiful as any modern London manager could devise". Even William Archer, in The World, considered the banquet scene "one of the most beautiful pictures ever put on the stage" and ranked the performance "high among the few really satisfying Shakespearean productions that have occurred in my lifetime" (_, 2 June; _, 6 June). Among the few surviving photographic records of theatrical performances before the eighteen-nineties, those of Daly's The Taming of the Shrew do least to account for the admiration expressed for setting and costuming - perhaps the flatlight of the flash-lamp and the lack of colour makes these scenes so unattractive.

The attraction of the production, surpassing that of its scenery and management, was the personal magnetism of Ada Rehan. Archer had described her performance in Love and Law of Love (a piece of flimsy futility, a second-rate Roberts-ian comedy translated into American") as the elevation of coquetry - "at least of that Anglo-Saxon variety which we call flirtation" - into a "fine art", redeeming it from mere vulgarity "by showing a flame of real feeling underneath" (The World, 9 May 1888). Where other actresses in Shakespearean parts gave an unpleasing air of coquetry to young girls' flirtatiousness, Miss Rehan conferred dignity and humanity on intrigue - in her Katherine she gave a performance of warmth and dignity. Archer noted a transition, from the "restless grace of a caged panther", in the opening scene, to "the mild dignity of the milk-white hind" in the last scene. The other reviewers, although differing in estimation of Daly's production,



Illustration 16 Following p.298

Scene from Daly's *The Taming of the Shrew*, Gaiety 1888.

were in general agreement on Miss Rehan's acting. Its lesson for the English theatre lay in grandeur of conception - the notice in The Illustrated London News observed:

> We have been painting miniatures too long, and it would be well if some of our actors and actresses would take up a larger canvas and a broader brush.

The company returned many times to London, until Daly's death in 1899, and, although its artistic policy was in most respects very conservative, the continuing popularity of its Shakespearean revivals and contemporary repertoire kept Ada Rehan before the public: the troupe combined efficiency and lavish staging with the talents of a forceful actress. At the same time, it counted for little in the debate concerning stage scenery: Shaw complained that Daly conceived of Shakespearean drama "as the most artificial of all forms of stage entertainment"[15], Not only the new criteria of colour-harmony and consistency of scene and costume, but those of common-sense appear from Shaw's review and the evidence of other witnesses to have been ignored by Daly.

.....

ii. Miss Wallis's As You Like It.

On October 20,1888 the new Shaftesbury Theatre, in Shaftesbury Avenue, opened with a revival of As You Like It, in which Rosalind was played by Miss Wallis, wife of Lancaster the lessee of the house. Ellen Wallis had made her debut at the Queen's Theatre, Long Acre, in 1872 and had since been seen as Cleopatra (Drury Lane, 1873) and Hermione (1878). A representative notice of Ellen Wallis's acting is Dutton Cook's account of her performance in The Winter's Tale:

> Possessed of certain qualifications for theatrical success, the lady wearies by her redundant artifices of gesture and attitude, and the dreadful pomposness of her elocution; regard for simplicity and nature seems wholly banished from her method of representation in her hands Hermione loses all matronly grace and dignity, assuming instead the semblance of a tight-laced hysterical schoolgirl.[16]

In 1878, at Drury Lane, she played Imogen, and was given better notices than for any of her previous parts: in The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News she was praised for "a

degree of refinement and intelligence greater than she [had] hitherto exhibited", and The Sunday Times found her "very picturesque throughout"(ILDrN, 7 December 1878; ST, 8 December 1878). In 1883 she repeated the part at a Gaiety matinée with E.S.Willard as Iachimo - her performance "though rather weak and thin in its pathos, was by no means deficient in refinement and grace" (ILDrN, 31 March 1883). In 1881 and 1883, at the Olympic and the Gaiety, she appeared as Rosalind, and was not ill-received, but for a few years, between 1884 and 1888, hername disappeared from the London theatrical papers.

The production of As You Like It in which Miss Wallis made her return was unsuccessful: it lasted from 20 October to 17 November, and was not greeted with any enthusiasm by the critics. The Entr'Acte was blunt in its condemnation - the play was "not well staged and...indifferently acted" and Rosalind was out of Miss Wallis's range, she being "better fitted to play Lady Macbeth":

> Until Saturday, Mr John Hare and the Bancrofts were, according to my judgement, to be credited with about the worst rendering of As You Like It that London has witnessedfor the last ten years; but I am not certain that the performance at the Shaftesbury is not even more commonplace. This is saying a good deal.
>
> (27 October 1888)

The cast included Vezin and Forbes Robertson, but their efforts did little to save the production from failure - nor did Emden's sets and the costumes designed by H.C.Glindoni. Archer, who admired Miss Wallis's Rosalind, found the staging "elaborate, yet inartistic and unpleasing" (The World, 24 October 1888). Scott, in The Illustrated London News, listed the inadequacies of the designs:

> We have foresters who look like court-cards, and peasants the least picturesque we ever presented; and castles of modern design, surrounded by the newest Hampton-Court ribbon-beds; and old Adam issuing from a modern villa that might have been built yesterday at Brixton or Balham.
>
> (27 October 1888)

Of more interest than the ineffective but expensive production

was the consequence to be deducted from it:

> ...e want first the heart and soul - the breathing spirit of the play. In a certain sense this can be supplied by an intelligent director: the poetic weakness of the company can be in a measure concealed by the scene-painter and decorator.

Scott went on to suggest that a Lyceum production, "with Mr. Irving to direct", might be a rewarding venture, and it is clear that he did not use the word "director" with its more recent implication of an independent organiser. In his Daily Telegraph notice, Scott had urged the case in stronger terms, claiming that the "obvious fault" of the revival was its lack of an "imaginative mind to direct it", and that Shakespeare could not succeed "unless the selected plays were directed by those with strong artistic instinct". Charles Kean and Irving possessed this instinct, but Chatterton, whose management of Drury Lane in the eighteen-seventies had produced little of any worth, lacked it (2 October).

Again, Irving was left alone in the field: Daly's success, that of a visiting manager, hardly counted, and the one attempt at a fully-produced commercial Shakespearean revival, had failed to reach the standard of the Lyceum. In his summary of the year's theatrical events, Nisbet referred principally to the new Macbeth when he wrote:

> The distinguishing feature of English drama continues to be its mounting, which for splendour, lavishness, and studied archaeological correctness undoubtedly surpasses the most ambitious efforts of Continental and American managers.

But it was saddening that the increased care with which theatres were protected against fire, and the gradual discarding of gas for stage lighting, were the subjects dominating the new year. Once more it appeared that technical advance was outstripping any increase in the quality of the plays being written or the actors emerging from the companies.[17]

.....

iii. Beerbohm Tree and The Merry Wives of Windsor, 1889.

Herbert Beerbohm Tree was born in 1853, and made his first professional appearance on stage in 1878: his first management was that of the Comedy Theatre, in Panton Street, where he opened with W.Outram Tristram's romantic drama The Red Lamp on April 20,1887. This transferred to the Haymarket in June, when Tree took over the lease of the larger theatre, and in 1892 the company moved to the newly-built Her Majesty's Theatre across the way.[18]

By the late eighteen-eighties Tree's style of acting had acquired its distinctive qualities, which Walbrook, reviewing his Wolsey in 1910, called "that partiality for original and often rather finicking and trivial 'business'" - Wolsey was an exceptionally restrained performance, but his Malvolio and Richard II were distinguished by an overabundance of detail, so that Shaw was able to write that "the only unforgettable passages in his Shakespeare acting" were those "of which Tree and not Shakespeare was the author"[19]. The creditable aspect of this exuberance can be seen in a notice, published in The Illustrated London News, of his performance as Heinrich Borgfeldt in Partners by Robert Buchanan at the Haymarket in January 1888. The reviewer was especially impressed by one aspect of Tree's impersonation of a German-born company director:

> It was neither his make-up, which was careful and characteristic, nor his accent, which was notably and consistently teutonic, nor his adopted mannerisms, which gave evidence ofsome time spent in observing the ways of Borgfeldt's countrymen, But it was the manner in which, in a situation fairly strong, but by no means exceptionally so, and with lines allotted to him of by no means marked force or pathos, he yet managed to concentrate the entire attention of the audience upon himself, to reveal to them as plainly as if he had recited aloud whole pages, the inner workings of the mind of the unfortunate senior partner, to enable them to trace clearly for themselves every detail of the mental struggle waging within him, and to keep them in hushed suspense and expectation till the fall of the curtain without a touch of rant or exaggerated action. This was fine acting.
>
> (21 January 1888)

The faculty for silent and arresting acting was similar to Irving's, and, in a similar manner, it provoked accusations of

egotism; if Tree could engage the audience's attention so easily, might he not up-stage other characters unscrupulously? There was evidently a danger that he might seek plays that gave him a strong and dominating rôle, and that he might adapt existing scripts to the same pattern. Some critics felt that this had already come to pass - the Illustrated London News review of Partners accused him of the fault:

> Whatever character he has to personate, it must be forced, whatever dialogue he has to speak must be lengthened: in whatever scenes he is engaged they must be dragged out until they become wearisome.
>
> (14 January 1888)

Scott, the author of this review, went on to contrast Tree with Irving, whose Digby Grant he alleged to be a good example of virtuously restrained character-acting: a similar notice appeared in The Graphic (14 January).

Tree's taste for elaborate detail in acting had its corollary in his scenic arrangements. A few weeks later he staged The Pompadour, a version by W.G.Wills and Sidney Grundy of ~~Narcisse~~ by Emil Brachvogel. The scenery for this play was cumbersome and complicated, and it was divided into a series of scenes which were so difficult to set and strike that all the necessary action had to take place in the setting of the act, however incongruous the circumstances might become: every character had to be provided with an excuse for visiting the room or gallery in question. The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, although sympathetic to Tree's management, found the resulting awkwardness of the play disturbing:

> It is the price we pay for ponderous and pretentious scenes that, whether they represent a palace or a hovel, everything that does come to pass must either come to pass while the scene is there, or be left out of the play altogether.
>
> (21 April 1888)

The notice in The Illustrated London News connected the scenic artifice with the technical brilliance of Tree's acting, which Scott pronounced "as clever as acting can possibly be that leans wholly on the support of art":

> Mr Beerbohm Tree has always convinced us that he is a remarkably intelligent, observant and studious

> actor; never yet that Nature had endowed him with the magnetic force of a great actor.
>
> (7 April 1888)

Scott was dismissing Tree on the grounds which Irving's critics had based their attacks on the Lyceum manager - the more perceptive critics acknowledged Tree's prowess, but pointed out that he was dealing with a poor play and that the part of Narcisse, the deranged violinist, was not suited to his robust talents. It was also suggested that, having peopled their drama with the celebrities of the Enlightenment - including Grimm and Voltaire - the authors had found themselves incapable of giving these choice intellects anything good enough to say. But the play was a worthy attempt, and its staging was - taken in itself - excellent.

The manager moved in the high artistic world - Lady Tree, who married him in 1882, remembered "beautiful dream-like parties in the great studios of Tadema, Leighton, Millais, Watts, Poynter, Burne-Jones and Alfred Gilbert" where "in grand and mystic setting, one listened to the divine discourse of music, one nestled in the very heart of culture and learning and society"[20]. Max Beerbohm, the actor's half-brother, remembered a "great day" spent with him in March 1882: The lunched at the actor's club:

> Was it the "Arundel" perhaps? The "Savage"? I know not. I cared not. It was Herbert's club, and I lunched in it, and was presented to the great Mr Godwin in it. At first I thought he must be a "conspirator", for he wore a large black cloak and a large soft black hat. But he had the most charming manners, and treated me as an equal, and I quite agreed with the opinion, so often expressed by Herbert in those days, that Godwin was a Master.[21]

In 1901, when he was already the effective successor to Irving as a London manager, Tree recalled the 1874 Merchant of Venice, produced by Bancroft with Godwin's assistance:

> ...I do not remember since to have seen any Shakespearean presentation more satisfying to my judgement...It was the first production in which the modern spirit of stage-management asserted itself, transporting us as it did into the atmosphere of Venice, into the rarified realms of Shakespearean comedy.[22]

Tree also admired Wagner, whose "dramatic genius" had made "the nearest approach to Shakespeare": in this he was at one with Shaw, who claimed in 1889 that "the actual Wagner theatre" at Bayreuth was also "the ideal Shakespeare Theatre"[23]. The gist of Shaw's notices of the productions by Tree is that the actor's exuberant imagination needs the control of a good director - Shaw, for example - but there is no quarrel with the theoretical foundation of the acting or staging. Tree gave the question of illusion in the theatre careful thought, as his published writings testify, and in 1885 - two years before he became a manager - he contributed to The Dramatic Review an essay arguing against the moral indepencence of Restoration drama, and the suggestion that Joseph Surface should be played in a sympathetic manner ("Shakespeare and Macaulay vs.Lamb", 18 April 1885). R.. Lowe replied in the next issue, citing a number of undeniably sympathetic anti-heroes, including Tony Lumpkin: the actor's point was old-fashioned, but it was considered and well-argued.

.....

The new production of The Merry Wives of Windsor was first presented at the Crystal Palace Theatre on 13 September 1888, at a benefit performance for Edward Hastings, but it appeared on the Haymarket bill on 2 January 1889. At first the comedy was played at matinées, with Captain Swift in the evenings - on 9 February it was transferred to the evening bill, where it remainedd until 20 July, the end of the season.

The last notable revival of the play had been one of Samuel Phelps's farewell performances at the Gaiety in 1878, and the last elaborate staging that by Phelps at Sadler's Wells in 1856 - in 1851 Charles Kean had put it on at the Princess's Theatre. Tree's venture was welcomed. The Era remarked that it had been put upon the stage "with a degree of refined taste and scrupulous solicitude for detail that has in all probability never been accorded to it before", and praised the "fine, solid 'set' of Page's House" with its porch and half-timbered wall in the foreground and Windsor castle "towering at the back". In the last act there was "a lovely effect of moonlit boughs and

rushing water" in the forest where Mme Kati Lanner's troupe of child dancers disported themselves. The scenery was "an honour to the Haymarket Management" (The Era, 5 January 1889). In the second of its notices The Saturday Review applauded the manager's lack of pretension:

> The charm of this production is that, although brought out without any flourish of trumpets, or even a precursory pamphlet, it is as artistically mounted, and as elaborately stage-managed, as though it had been arranged for a lengthened run. It will interest and surprise many to see how admirably a company, with only two or three extraneous additions, which has hitherto been associated with modern drama, quietly adapts itself to the requirements of a rollicking Elizabethan comedy.
> (19 January 1889)

In Truth it was observed that, despite the Haymarket's advertising policy, the performance was notable for its ensemble rather than any "star":

> not any very special individual merit, but a harmony of interpretation, an even-ness of tone, a spirit of co-operation that are in themselves extremely creditable.
> (10 January 1889)

The Times enjoyed Sullivan's score and found the revival "one of the most picturesque of its kind" (3 January) and the only reservation expressed with regard to the mise-en-scène in The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News was the suspicion that the final scene was "a little pantomimey" and that some costumes might be improved (26 January).

This general applause for the staging was qualified by some criticism of the manager's own acting: it was a triumph of sorts, but the padding and elaborate facial make-up to which Tree resorted were an evident strain on his energies. He was obliged to assume a "fat" voice, without being able to relax his vocal chords at the appropriate moments, giving his lines an obtrusive tension. The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News suggested that this tension was the cause of his speaking "in one tone of cumbrous gruffness which puts all the rest into the background" - "A performance by effort is not master of itself in the incidentals of detail". In The Academy Wedmore complained that Falstaff's "golden temper" was missing:

> ...he is suave rather than genial, agreeable rather than sunny. And, the sunshine of the character being to some extent missed, it is inevitable that a greater emphasis should seem to be placed on all that is coarse and gross.
>
> (2 February 1889)

The Era, like The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, felt a lack of "unction" in the performance - that quality so difficult to find, it would seem, in late nineteenth-century comic actors.

In contrast to this group of critics was the opinion of The Times, which found Tree "full of rotund geniality and humorous suggestion" and claimed that he looked, walked and talked "as though born to the heritage of corpulency". Truth, in a similar assessment, praised his "jovial selfishness and inoffensive sensuality". It seems that, as the run continued, the actor's ability to play Falstaff increased. In a notice published on 15 February The Stage noted that Tree's "oily chuckle" gave "a better insight into the character of the 'greasy' knight than was before noticeable", and Archer, who in his first notice (9 January) had complained that Falstaff took his knaveries and mishances "too seriously", stated in The World of 13 February:

> Mr Tree's Falstaff seems to ripen and mellow with each performance. He now plays with less effort and far more apparent enjoyment than formerly. It may still be objected, perhaps, that his sensuality is gloating rather than roguish, that his eyes roll instead of twinkling.

In later years the performance became more and more elaborate - the prompt copies of the three-act version used from 1902 onwards are filled with picturesque details, extending in range from interpolated exclamations and farcical tumbling to a touching final curtain, in which Falstaff was left alone, dancing with a small child in a shaft of light[24]. Falstaff acquired that depth and geniality which on first appearance he had lacked - in W.L.Courtney's contribution to the memorial volume which Max Beerbohm edited, he appears as "an all-fatness, oozing out drink and a maudlin sentimentality at every pore", a performance both "ripe" and "unctuous" and "quite irresist-

ible?. Lady Tree wrote that he danced "with the peculiar grace and buoyancy" of fat men, "like a bobbing cork on the water, as distinguished from a straw"[25].

.....

Tree did not return to the play, after its initial run, until the season of 1901 - it subsequently remained in repertoire until 1912. In the meantime he produced Hamlet (1892), the first part of Henry IV (1896), Garrick's version of The Taming of the Shrew (1897), Julius Caesar (1898), King John (1899) and A Midsummer Night's Dream (1900): The Tempest, Henry VIII, Twelfth Night, Much Ado about Nothing and Richard II followed in the new century. Although King John was produced at the Crystal Palace in September 1889, Hamlet was Tree's first fully-staged revival of a Shakespearean play after The Merry Wives, and, although ingenious, it appeared to suggest a lack of maturity - in The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News Tree was said to want "that spontaneity of physical resource which marks the difference between power and nervous violence" (6 February 1892). The tragic part of the character was acted "more or less at a tension". Tree was as yet given only the qualified praise and encouragement accorded to a conscientious and talented beginner - his experiments with the New Drama, notably the first production in London of An Enemy of the People (1893), enjoyed a guarded reception. The revival of The Merry Wives of Windsor, at the beginning of his managerial career, was the beginning of a revitalisation of actor-manager's Shakespeare. It had many of the virtues of the Lyceum, and lacked some of its faults, but it was nevertheless a production by an actor as a frame for his own performance. Shaw, in his contribution to the memorial volume, recalled that Tree could always do something "entertaining in some way or other", but "for better for worse, it was hardly ever what the author meant him to do", a tendency from which Shaw's Pygmalion, as well as the works of Shakespeare, suffered.[26]

.....

iv. Mansfield's Richard III.

Richard Mansfield was born in Berlin, of British parents, in 1854: thus he was Tree's junior by one year, and Irving's by sixteen. His career began in 1876 when he joined Mr. and Mrs Vernon Reed, but his first success was as Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., in H.M.S. Pinafore. Mansfield was too temperamental and inventive to work happily for Gilbert, and after a quarrel, he left the company - he had deviated from the author's prompt-copy in his performances as the Major-General in The Pirates of Penzance, and later claimed to have "written" the music of the patter-song[26]. He joined the company which was performing a version of Offenbach's La Boulangère, with a book by H.B. Farnie, at the Globe in April 1881, and in 1882 he emigrated to America.

In 1888 Mansfield returned to London, having made a considerable reputation in North America with an adaptation of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. He leased the Lyceum Theatre, opening on 2 August with a version of Stevenson's story which had been made for him by T.Russell Sullivan and which the novelist had authorized. The performance was a success, and Mansfield's quick changes, in full view of the audience, from Jekyll to Hyde were acclaimed as a tour de force. The Captious Critic (I.L.N., 18 August 1888) was not unduly impressed with the appearance of Hyde, "a ferocious little creature, with the manners of Quilp and the methods of the demon lobster", but most of the critics praised the actor lavishly. The Graphic was representative of the general opinion:

> Few things have been seen on our stage which have so excited the imagination as this unearthly creature, with his swift, stealthy tiger-like approach, his hissing utterances, his hollow grating tones, his restless movements.
>
> (11 August 1888)

Mansfield contrived the transformation without special make-up, distorting his facial muscles and twisting his body into an aggressive, deformed shape - a feat in which he was much helped by the dimness of the lighting. The adaptation was not a masterpiece, but unobtrusive and, except for the introduction of a woman in love with the unfortunate Jekyll, faithful to the

original. Daniel Bandmann had attempted to stage his own version of the story at the Opéra Comique, and in the ensuing court-case defended himself on the grounds of his not using any of Stevenson's own words. Longman's, Stevenson's publishers, would recognize only the version used by Mansfield (Sunday Times, 12 August 1888). Mansfield wrote to the New York Times theatre critic, Dithmar, that Bandmann had been obliged to fly the country - meanwhile he himself had been elected an honorary member of the Garrick Club, sponsored by Tree, Lewis Wingfield and J.L.Toole, and had been taking the measure of Irving's organization:

> The Lyceum (entre nous) is not a bed of roses. The extravagance of the management has been awful! A hundred stage hands falling over one another & leakage in every department. It was hard work clearing up things a little.[27]

Mansfield was almost paranoiac in his suspicions of Irving and those he thought to be in Irving's pay - particularly Scott - and he was anxious to make a name for himself. In late September he wrote to Dithmar:

> I intend to get heavy guns before I return to America - when I do it shall be with fine plays and fine productions & please God an assured reputation...beyond the reach of small people with long nails.[28]

The plays with which he followed Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde were barely "fine" - Prince Karl, a Puritanical confection by Archibald C. Gunter, and a version of Octave Feuillet's Un Roman Parisien.

On 22 December Mansfield moved to the Globe Theatre, one of the theatres which occupied the land between the Strand and what is now Aldwych[29]. The theatre had not been successful during the years since Mansfield had last worked in it as a member of the Boulevardier company, but in May 1886 a comic drama entitled Bootle's Baby by Hugh Moss had begun a run of one hundred and twenty-one performances which, together with a season earlier in the year by Wilson Barrett's company, had made the house's name familiar once more. Prince Karl, with matinées by another company of Saville Clarke's Alice in Wonderland, tided Mansfield over the Christmas period. In January scratch companies gave performances of She Stoops to Conquer

and The School for Scandal, whilst Mansfield prepared his "heavy guns". On January 26 he wrote to Dithmar:

> Richard III is to be an interesting production at least. If archaeology is the rage - then archaeology they shall have - and whereas Mr Irving is said to be correct (but is really only effective) I shall strive to be both. For the first time the actual armour - the actual "Fechtweise" of the period of Richard will be reproduced from the most careful tracings in the British Museum and under the supervision of Egerton Castle (the greatest authority here) & all the costumes & scenes under the direction of Seymour Lucas A.R. [30]

In addition to these appeals to the taste for archaeology Mansfield intended to offer an unconventional interpretation of the main character:

> My ideas of Richard III are different I think in many respects to the accepted & usual and may perhaps on that account be interesting - at all events Richard will himself speak for the Visions - i.e., you will see his dream - faintly - shadowy - but you will not hear it but in broken dreamy & agonized accents from Richard, - in fact as men under the influence of "night-mare" speak. I shall endeavour to make Richard a man who might perchance be reasonably supposed to win a woman under such circumstances as those under which he wins Lady Anne - and as I find that he was inordinately fond of dress - I shall dress him finely. Please God I may be successful.

In this interpretation archaeological exactitude was to be taken to its ultimate degree - not only the setting but the characterisation was informed by historical research. The proceeding was not entirely sound, for, as Archer pointed out, "To insist upon historical details is not to make Shakespeare's Richard real, but rather to remind us of his unreality": even Irving had not tried to adapt Macbeth's theatrical character to the "rather virtuous and enlightened sovereign" revealed by history (The World, 20 March 1889). The historicism of Mansfield's revival was enhanced by notes in the programme of the years in which the separate scenes took place, giving the following scheme:

Prologue	The Tower
Act One May 1471	1.The Tower 2.King Henry's Chamber

Act Two	May 1471 - Twelve Years have elapsed, the date of events being A.D.1483 -	1.The Road to Chertsey 2.A Room in Baynard Castle
Act Three	A.D.1483	1.The Hall in Crosby Palace 2.The Same
Act Four	Part One -	A.D. 1483 1.Within the Tower 2.The Presence Chamber (morning) 3.The Presence Chamber (evening)
	Part Two -	A.D. 1485 1.The Sanctuary
Act Five	A.D.1485	1.The Camp on Bosworth Field 2.The Country near Tamworth 3.A Glade 4.The Battle Field

The clumsiness of this division is apparent: the only important lapses of time come in the middle of Acts Two and Four, and, as Archer noticed, it takes the Prince of Wales twelve years to get from Ludlow to London (1471-1483). In order to present the historical events more clearly, Bensfield had included the Prologue from Cibber's version and a scene (I.2 in the 1889 version) showing the murder of King Henry - in other instances he had followed Shakespeare or Cibber as he saw fit, so that the resulting text was a patch-work. The reviewers spent a good deal of effort identifying the Cibberian and Shakespearean lines, and pondering the wisdom of the readings, but it seemed by and large a workmanlike job - "a good and attractive version", commented The Stage, reminding readers that without some additional explanatory scenes the play was not easily comprehensible (22 March).

.....

The play began with the Prologue, in which Henry VI learns of his son's fate, and is committed to the Tower. When the warrant arrives, Henry accepts his imprisonment in lines borrowed from Richard II:

> Good night to all then: I obey it.
>
> (Lieutenant retires)
>
> And now, good friend, suppose me on my death-bed
> And take of me thy last, short living leave.
> Nay, keep thy tears till thou hast seen me dead;
> And when in tedious winter nights, with good

> Old folks thou sit'st up late
> To hear 'em tell the dismal tales
> Of times long past, ev'n now with woe remember'd,
> Before thou bidd'st good night, to quit their grief,
> Tell thou the lamentable fall of me,
> And send thy bearers weeping to their beds.
>
> (Exeunt King Henry, Lieutenant, and Tressel)[32]

George Becks, in the annotated copy of Mansfield's acting edition now in New York Public Library, added the direction "bowing to Gloster who enters R.U.E." and noted that in New York most of the Cibber prologue was omitted. Mansfield wavered over the use of this appendage: on the first night he gave the whole of it, but later in the run he removed it. In a second notice William Archer observed that most of the Cibberian alterations had been discarded, including the opening scene:

> The curtain now rises on Queen Elizabeth Woodville's triumphant entry into the Tower, which is immediately followed by "Now is the winter of our discontent", restored to something like its pristine proportions.
>
> (The World, 15 May 1889)

The Becks prompt-copy shows a selective cutting of the prologue and, curiously, the omission of the speech "Now is the winter..." on the first night. Plainly Mansfield could not decide how to achieve the correct balance of legitimacy and clarity.

The first scene of the first act used the same set as the Prologue - Bruce Smith's exterior of the Tower, praised by The Stage for its "apparent solidity and...artistic colouring". The second scene, derived from a mixture of Cibber and the third part of Henry VI, showed the murder of Henry in his bedchamber, described in The Stage as "a fine example of stage architecture":

> ...down left is a recess in which is situated the King's bed, while another recess (centre) contains a desk at which, as the scene opens, the King is discovered at prayer.

The Saturday Review found this a "shocking and ill-placed circumstance", and felt that it produced some difficulties for the actor who, wishing to avoid an anti-climax at the beginning of the play was "rhetorical and ineffective" (6 April 1889). One of the reviews of the New York production

recorded Mansfield's business in the scene:

> His pause upon the threshold, his warming of his hands at the fire, his careful arrangement of himself in a pose against the wall at the head of the King's bed, his deliberate drawing of his sword, and the testing of the tip, were all so many tricks, performed with a deadly precision in which there was no quiver of life or emotion.
>
> (New York Evening Post, 17 December 1889)

Becks noted a grisly touch after the stabbing of Henry - Richard "shakes blood off sword" as a cue for the lines:

> What! will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
> Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted.
> See how my sword weeps for the poor king's death.

The second act began with Telbin's set of the road to Chertsey: and Richard's interruption of the funeral procession. The scene was "beautifully painted":

> Upon a rising mound of ground right under the shadow of a tree Gloster is discovered. To him enter Hastings and followers, and then the sound of muffled drums is heard and wondering villagers enter and crowd behind a wooden fence down left. Then from the right enters the funeral procession, headed by soldiers and boys waving incense... while attendant upon the coffin are Lady Anne and her ladies, who are in turn followed by priests and more soldiers; the sight is a most imposing one, and the general stage management of this scene is excellent.
>
> (The Stage)

This splendour hardly fulfilled the demands of historical accuracy - Hall describes the austerity of the procession - or of Shakespeare's text, which calls only for enough men to bear "the hearse of Harry the 6", but the demands of stage effect were not easily ignored[33]. In his acting of this scene Mansfield's aptitude for "facial action" and "slight, but positive and clearly defined modifications of expression" seemed to the Saturday Review critic to have found their best use:

> His meekness under Lady Anne's denunciations, his flash of impudent hypocrisy in "The fitter for the King of Heaven that hath him", his splendid rodomontade and lover-like persuasiveness in "thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine", are excellent, and prepare us for the it and duplicity of the succeeding scenes.

Archer, however, regretted that Mansfield made nothing of the transition from "fawning hypocrisy" to "malignant exultation" in his breach of the promise to have the body taken to Chertsey. The act concluded with "A Room in Baynard's Castle" (again Telbin) - a version of Shakespeare's II.2.

The third act, announced as taking place twelve years later, in1483, showed the arrival of the young prince of Wales and his reception in Crosby Palace. Again, Mansfield's powers of facial expression showed themselves. When York mocked Richard's deformity, "the grimace which is Richard's only reply is admirably subtle, it thrills the audience, it is a manifest harbinger of tragedy" (The Saturday Review). A similar subtlety was noted by the same reviewer in Richard's treatment in the scene following of the Lord Mayor and citizens:

> He slips, in a reverie, into the throne; with trembling lips he pretends to mutter the phrases in his book; he does not even glance up at Buckingham through all his florid sentences, but seems to show consciousness of the offer only by an intenser pallor - a reflection of the leaves of the prayer-book held closer to his face. His expression of weary resignation in
>
> Even then you please, since you will have it so,
>
> carries conviction in it; they leave him bowed over his book of prayers, and it is not until the footsteps of the last of them have died away that he rises, still stealthily, spreads out his arms with an ineffable gesture of relief, and flings the prayer-book from him.

This is from the second notice, published on 6 April - on 23 March the first review in The Saturday Review had censured the playing of the sequence, finding the action of throwing the book into the air "too light-hearted and school-boyish.", but conceding that Richard might well throw it contemptuously aside". It is not apparent whether Mansfield had modified the business slightly (it appears in Becks' prompt-copy) or the journal had sent a new reviewer: both notices are anonymous. The Stage noted that "the introduction of the Bishop of Ely" lent "lightness and colouring to the stage", but did not give

any specific description of the effect.

The fourth act of Mansfield's version began with an abridged text of Shakespeare's IV.1, situated within the Tower. The set was by W.G.Banks, and as commended by The Stage as "another fine bit of stage masonry, in which the stone work stands out as if in reality it existed" - the texture appears to have been achieved by trompe d'oeil painting rather than moulding. This scene was "lugubrious", thought The Saturday Review (6 April), and might well be condensed further. After the second scene, in which Richard, "a striking violence in his air and eye", suggested the murder of the Princes to Buckingham, the tableau-curtains fell. They rose on the same setting, but some hours later, at evening. This was the occasion of one of Mansfield's most striking visual effects:

> ...the sun is streaming through a coloured window, making all within blood-red. Tyrrell tells how the murder of the children was enacted, and then Richard enters and, after a speech solus, seats himself upon his throne. It is here that Mr Mansfield introduces some highly dramatic business. Richard is alone, the news of the children's death has fallen into open ears, but there comes a brief moment of fear or remorse, and Richard looks upon his hand, on which the last dying sun is shedding its ray: to his imagination it is bloody, and in an agony of mind the monarch cries aloud, a cry that is half strangled in its birth by the entrance of Catesby...
>
> (The Stage)

The Saturday Review gave additional details: Richard, seeing the "blood" on his hands, wrung them, attempted to wipe them, and, "in an agony of terror", leapt from the throne and crouched in its shadow. Was this legitimate? It appeared that Mansfield's Richard felt very early the conscience to which in Shakespeare's text he first admits in the tent scene. A review of the New York production suggests that the violence of this piece of business had been diminished by the time Mansfield returned to America, and that Gorman's music reinforced its effect:

> The music, which is peculiar to the Princes and which has been heard whenever they have appeared, is played, and the audience at once feels that Richard is thinking of the murdered innocents, and that the red light suggests to

> him nothing but blood. Terror-stricken, he slides from the throne and sits brooding at its foot.
>
> (Boston Herald, 22 October 1889)

There is no mention of the "leap" and the cry of anguish. In Dramatic Notes - which reprinted a review first published in The Observer - Richard is described as "stealing to the throne and starting at the reflection upon his hand...before beginning 'The Son of Clarence have I pent up close'" (Dramatic Notes,1889 (1890) pp.29-31). However modified the business, although vivid, had little justification in Shakespeare's text (IV.3) where Richard's account of his crimes is followed by the sardonic "To her I go, a jolly thriving wooer" - Mansfield's guilty thoughts, whether violent or restrained, sort ill with the business-like tones of Richard's reception of Stanley's bad news. The effect was in any case un-literary, achieved by mime, setting and music.

In the fifth act, all the scenery for which was by Telbin, Mansfield moved quickly to the tent scene and, with the death of Richard, the play's climax. He had included as a second part of Act Four the confrontation with Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York, during which Richard started guiltily at each mention of his crimes - guilt which The Saturday Review found excessively marked. On the tent scene his fear had reached its zenith. Becks recorded an extraneous piece of business in the lines,

> Impatience chides this tardy gaited night
> That like a foul and ugly witch does limp
> So tediously away. I'll to my couch.[34]

Becks observed:

> goes towards tent - sees his shadow - fancies it as someone - grasps sword from table & slashes! Oh! Oh! replaces sword and retires.

The text was arranged to "discover" Richard sitting at a bodfire before his tent, stage-right - The Stage found the scene "most imposing". Mansfield's plan, acumbrated to Bithman, of having Richard seek for the visions, was evidently abandoned, but a series of gauzes was used to give the apparitions the appropriate ethereal quality, most artistically managed". A reviewer in The Theatre (April 1889) found the behaviour of

Richard "rather hysterical", but approved of the "frenzied spirit" of the speech beginning "Give me another horse", and the manner in which the king suspected Catesby of being another ghost. Archer, in his second notice, remarked upon Mansfield's alteration of the stress in the line "Catesby, I fear, I fear -". This was spoken with strong emphasis on the final "fear" - "as who should say, 'Even I now know the taste of terror!'" - instead of the usual reading, by which Catesby interrupted Richard in mid-speech.

After a brief scene in "A Glade" for Richmond's address to his troops, came the battlefield:

> On a rising mound up the stage (left) are realistically painted dead bodies, and the same may be seen down right under the spreading branches of a tree, while up stage, right, is a bridge.
>
> (The Stage)

The fight was well-arranged, and the bridge gave the combatants some reason for choosing this particular confined space to join battle. The Theatre saw in Richard's heroism a quality "beyond mere animal courage":

> There was the desperation of a man who had set "life upon a cast", and the actual fight between Richard and Richmond was no more child's play or delicate fence, but a hacking at each other that, should the shield of either by any chance fail to receive the blow, would probably be very painful to the unlucky recipient.

The Captious Critic was not so impressed, and likened the combat to "a concerted battle with rolling pins and saucepan lids" (ISDrN 6 April 1889).

.....

Mansfield's performance was obviously an intelligent one, but its insistent avoidance of the more obvious "points" was not entirely consistent with his adherence to Cibber. Some of the most famous lines from the old adaptation (including "Off with his head! - so much for Buckingham") had been discarded, and some of the more suspect innovations, notably the Prologue, retained. Mansfield's strategy lay in presenting Richard as a personable, courtly man, whose gradual decline

into guilt-ridden criminality accompanied a change in appearance from the youthfulness of the earlier scenes to the more haggard, older man of the later part of the play. This was, to some critics, reminiscent of Dr Jekyll's transformation from elegant youth to the hideous derangement of Hyde. To have asserted the play's disunity by reminding the audience of the passage of time was not altogether wise - The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News found the new version a series of situations and effects, "connected by intervals" rather than by any narrative development, and commented on the need of "something more than an individual and good scenery to make a dramatic Richard III". The more sympathetic reviewers admired the performance's originality and psychological insight, but felt that it did not have enough dramatic support. The scenery was much praised - The Graphic pronounced it "unequalled by anything in the past, in the way of mounting an historical play" and "all of the strictly relevant and illustrative kind which should help the interpretation of the play" (23 March 1889). Unfortunately the company was, apart from the central performer, undistinguished and exhibited "no particular aptitude for the poetical drama": a second review in The Graphic states that the public seemed to welcome the "conversational tone" in which the blank verse was delivered, but other reviewers were unenthusiastic, and the complaint of the lack of good verse-speaking on the modern stage is raised again.

Mansfield's production was not received coldly - it fared much better than the efforts of Kendal and Hare, or even Miss Anderson - but Mansfield was not satisfied. Eight days after the first performance he wrote bitterly to William Winter:

> There are more hypocrites, liars, parasites and sycophants here to the square mile than in America to the square state.[35]

In May he wrote with anticipation of pleasure at leaving "these beautiful but inhospitable shores and this apathetic people"[36]. His letters have an habitual tone of self-pity, and the fact that his Richard was less than extravagantly praised seems to have upset the returned exile - the tendency lasted through-

but his career, and his rationalisations of the manner in which he conducted his business were often perverse and puzzling. Shaw described Mansfield as a "spoilt child", and his behaviour towards Gilbert appears to have been a foretaste of his habitual attitude to critics, authors, and public. In August 1906, when he was discussing with (of all people) William Winter the adaptation of Peer Gynt, he wrote in one letter of his great admiration for the play and in the next, thirteen days later, of his intention to present it "in a spirit of travesty" and thus to "hoist the Ibsen craze etc. with its own petard"[37]. The difficulties Mansfield experienced in coming to terms with Ibsen's work were partly a result of his extraordinary temperament - his earliest biographer, Paul Wilstach, characterised him as "whimsical": after an argument with an impresario he spent hours in a deep depression, travelling backwards and forwards on the ferry from the Battery to Staten Island[38].

Mansfield's Richard III was useful to him in his American career - Dithmar helped him by reporting the première in Boston as "a series of fourteen historical pictures, some of exquisite beauty, all intensely interesting, and fraught with the spirit of a fascinating epoch" (New York Times, 22 October 1889). Of the play's presentation in New York, on 10 December at Palmer's Theater, Dithmar wrote that Mansfield's acting might be "too elaborate in design" for "the common mind" but possessed "splendid vigor and rich vitality" (New York Times, 5 January 1890). The production was, Odell remembered in his Annals of the New York Stage, "comparable in beauty and accuracy of detail to what Henry Irving had staged at the Lyceum". In his two-volume study, Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving, Odell wrote:

> I remember better appropriateness, even impressiveness of staging, but the production was ephemeral and made no mark.[39]

The reason for this lack of a lasting impression lay partly in Mansfield's failure to follow Richard III with other productions of a similar nature: he had staged the play after six months in London, during which time he had enjoyed some success in a

sensational play. He had not established himself, although he was clearly heading in the right direction when he decided to leave the "inhospitable shores" of England. He had presented one of the history plays - a part of the dramatists's canon which might be considered especially suited to the prevailing tastes in presentation, and which had been neglected since Coleman's awkward attempt to revive Henry V. The last major revival of the play had been that of Irving, under Bateman's management at the Lyceum in 1877 and, with exception of a scene given at a benefit for J.L.Toole at Toole's Theatre in July 1883, Irving had not appeared in the character since he became lessee of the theatre in Wellington Street. But, unlike Irving, Mansfield reverted to Cibber's adaptation, and would hardly be able to claim the credit of restoring Shakespeare's text to the stage. Moreover, the scenic splendours of the Globe production required long intervals for scene-changing - over an hour - and did not advance the argument for realistic display. The inadequacy of the acting in supporting rôles only served to confirm the suspicions of critics that elocution was a dying art, if not one which had already expired.

.....

v. The advent of Benson: A Midsummer Night's Dream.

On 23 March 1889 the editor of The Era noted that F.R. Benson was reported to be contemplting the management of the Globe:

> Well, I wish him every success in the world, though I should not care for my bread-and-cheese to be dependent on the chance of the success of such an enterprise. I am about a pretty good deal, but I have never heard anybody express a burning desire to see Mr Mansfield as Richard III, and nobody in my hearing has yearned for a sight of A Midsummer Night's Dream as done by Benson and Co.

The Academy, less suspicious than the professional journal of Benson's ideals, welcomed the proposal of a London season when it was first made public, early in 1888:

> When he comes we hope he will have sufficient confidence in his present method of proceeding to dispense with costly scenery, and never to dream of long runs. What is wanted most of all in London is a manager who will audaciously rely upon the attraction of the art of acting as the single attraction to his theatre.
>
> (28 January 1888)

His company was known as possessing "perhaps the best and largest repertory of any company that goes about the provinces". After a false start as a promising but callow amateur and a frustrating period with Irving, Benson had joined a touring company run by Charles Bernard for Miss Alleyn. He left this, dissatisfied with the parts he was offered, to join another tour managed by Walter Bentley. When the company was deserted by Bentley, who fled to Australia, Benson persuaded his father to give him the hundred pounds with which he might take over the company. In the years since this salvage operation in Fifeshire, Benson had consolidated the reputation to which The Academy alluded[40].

In his first ventures on the stage Benson was uncompromisingly idealistic, carrying into his professional life the asceticism and intellectualism of his Oxford career. The austerity was later softened, although the company's athletic prowess became a familiar professional joke, of which Max Beerbohm's review of Henry V is the most polished exemplar: "Speech after speech was sent spinning across the boundary"[41]. The London performances of The Agamemnon in which he played Clytemnestra had enjoyed a succès d'estime and had induced the young amateur to attempt Romeo in a production at the Imperial Theatre in 1881. The staging was far more satisfactory than the acting, and Benson received little support. In My Memories (1930) he related the production's failure to his ideas of acting:

> The Agamemnon company had succeeded by their simple sincerity in a Greek play. Why not apply the same method to Shakespeare? There I was right; I had grasped the idea of simple strength, the simple strength and complex potentiality dormant in a Greek statue. I had unfortunately not learned the complexity of the life it presents and the technical skill required for its expression
>
> (p.145)

An engagement at the Lyceum, in September 1882, showed Benson the extent of his ignorance: he did not know how to fight or die effectively and unobtrusively, he did not understand why the make-up which he so mistrusted was necessary on a stage brilliantly lit by gas, and he did not have any inkling of the "focus and balance" by which actors arranged themselves on stage. In his autobiography Benson describes the learning of these lessons, reporting them as delivered by Irving and others - the most memorable was an injunction of Allen, the prompter:

> We don't want any bloody brains on the stage, my boy, we want guts, guts, guts!
>
> (p.168)

After the run of Romeo and Juliet Benson joined Miss Alleyn in Manchester, leaving behind him the fashionable success of the Agamemnon company and the grandeurs of the Lyceum. The years that followed were an apprenticeship of sorts, but the exertions and economies of touring were soon mitigated by his being - after so short a time - his own manager and by the application to a standard provincial repertoire of the ideals he had preserved from Oxford. Although the practicalities of management and the mastery of stage techniques qualified Benson's application of his theories, he retained a certain angularity and stiffness of vocal expression. In 1883 William Archer found "the play of features...singularly wanting" and the voice of the actor "hard and unmusical", but admired for his dedication:

> ...he works hard, and is a most conscientious actor; and the general level of performance is far above the average of youthful actors.
>
> (The World, 31 October 1883)

Benson told the young applicant for a job who was later to become his wife that the company was run upon the Meiningen system, implying that all the actors took small parts on occasion[42]. He believed in the virtues of a repertory system, as opposed to long runs of elaborate productions, a policy which was as much a consequence of the nature of the company he had taken over as of any theory of dramatic art. Benson's company had to offer its provincial audiences a variety of plays, economically staged. This economy did not yet consist

in the use of unit sets, stylized décor and neo-Elizabethan costume - for Benson the design of a production would be traditional in its succession of painted cloths and set scenes, but inexpensive, sturdy and easily trasported.

.....

For his London début as a manager Benson had chosen a play which had long been considered above theatrical artifice. Hazlitt, reviewing a Covent Garden production in January 1816, had set the pattern for reviewers of subsequent revivals:

> We have found to our cost, once for all, that the regions of fancy and the boards of Covent Garden are not thesame thing. All that is fine in the play, was lost in the representation. The spirit was evaporated, the genius was fled; but the spectacle was fine: it was that which saved the play.[43]

The later part of this review had been included in Characters of Shakespeare's Plays, first published in 1817, and had become a lucus classicus of anti-theatrical sentiment:

> Poetry and the stage do not agree together. The attempt to reconcile them fails not only of effect, but of decorum. The ideal has no place upon the stage, which is a picture without perspective: everything there is in the foreground. That which is merely an airy shape, a dream, a passing thought, immediately becomes an unmanageable reality.[44]

The argument persists in Morley's notice of Phelps's revival:

> The device of the clowns in the play to present Moonshine seems but a fair expression of the kind of success that might be achieved by the best actors who should attempt to present A Midsummer Night's Dream on the stage...

Phelps had used a green gauze, subduing "the flesh and blood of the actors into "something more nearly resembling dream-figures" and incorporating them with the stage-picture, "throwing the same green fairy tinge, and the same mist over all"[45]. The comic scenes could, if handled carelessly, spoil the unity of the magic - Coleridge had found the betrayal of Hermia to Demetrius unworthy of Helena, and complained that the representation of female character, although just, was "not poetical":

> we shrink from it and cannot harmonize it with the ideal.[46]

Phelps, according to Morley, managed to incorporate Bottom with the "ideal", particularly in his awakening ("he cannot sever the real from the unreal, and still we are made to feel that his reality itself is but a fiction"), but he allowed the lover's scenes to become boisterous, obscuring what Morley felt to be the pathos of Helena's part:

> The merriment which Shakespeare connected with these scenes was but a little of the poet's sunlight meant to glitter among tears.[47]

Charles Kean's production, in October 1856, was too showy for Morley, who objected to its "Shadow dance" of Fairies, the maypole, moving panorama, and magnificent palace set:

> I do not wish the splendour less, or its attraction less, but only ask for more heed to the securing of a perfect harmony between the conceptions of the decorator and those of the poet.[48]

Kean's stage-management was best suited to the histories and "classical" plays, of which A Midsummer Night's Dream was an example only in a secondary sense. Kean could make historical events bright and real to the eye of the spectator, but he could not use the same resources to produce the "ideal" qualities which critical opinion demanded in A Midsummer Night's Dream.

In June 1880 Edward Saker, a Liverpool manager, had presented the play with modest success at the Medler's Wells Theatre, under general management of Miss Bateman. The new régime at the theatre did not last long, and the employment of Saker and his company seems to have been an attempt to recoup the losses of an enterprise which set out with ideals not dissimilar to those of Benson. On 25 February, the first night of a season of Macbeth, a manifesto had appeared in the programme:

> Mrs bateman had endeavoured, so far as her means and the apliances of a new theatre would permit, to properly produce this great play. She asks from the press and the public their generous indulgence toward an effort which she believes a laudable one, viz: the re-establishment, at a Theatre where the prices

> are within reach of all, the old system of carefully but not extravagantly producing good plays at moderate cost, and for a limited number of nights.

The private boxes and orchestra stalls would cost two pounds, ten shillings, andseven shillings and sixpence respectively, and in them evening dress would be obligatory - the other parts of the house ranged from Balcony stalls at four shillings and Family Circle at two shillings to Pit and Gallery at one shilling and six pence respectively. This was not unreasonable, but the Lyceum prices did not differ in proportion to the relative prestige of the two theatres - a gallery seat for Irving's Merchant of Venice, in June 1880, cost one shilling, Upper Circle three shillings, Amphitheatre half-a-crown and Pit two shillings. A Lyceum stall in1880 cost only ten shillings - although by the end of the decade it had risen to half-a-guinea. When a revival at the Lyceum merited half a column in The Times, and a new production at Mrs Bateman's received a grudging half-inch, the well-to-do were hardly to be tempted to Islington.

To rekindle Phelps's flame was proving an expensive and difficult task, and Saker's commonplace but spectacular A Midsummer Night's Dream, with Little Addie Blnche as Puck, would, it was hoped, save the day. The measure of Saker's production can be taken from a note on the cover of its programme:

> Produced by Mr Edward Saker, of the Alexandra Theatre, with the completeness which has commanded success in Liverpool, Dublin, Brighton, etc. An efficient Dramatic Company, beautiful Classic and Sylvan Scenery, magnificent Dresses and Appointments, and Orchestra and Chorus expressly selected for the performance of Mendelssohn's music, and a troupe of Gifted Child Artists as Oberon, Titania, Puck etc., who have gained extraordinary favour wherever they have appeared by their remarkable ability, will, Mrs Bateman trusts, gain for Mr Saker's production of this exquisite play the same popularity it has won elsewhere.
>
> (Programme, 28 June 1880)

The infant phenomena, however accomplished, made the play into a musical and balletic entertainment with occasional dialogue,

and The Times described Saker's presentation as one "in which the musicians cut a more prominent figure than the dramatist, and of which the most attractive feature proved to be the clever troop of children who played the fairy parts." (15 July 1880). Mrs Bateman's management was granted a temporary reprieve.

The few London productions of the play seen in the ensuing nine years followed the same plan: children and Mendelssohn. At the Crystal Palace Theatre Oscar Barrett, a producer noted for Christman pantomimes, found summer employment for the juvenile pupils of Mme Katti Lanner's National Training School for Dancing, who personated "Fairies, Elves, Wood-Nymphs, Dragon-Flies, Glow-Worms, Frogs, Rabbits, etc.". All the fairy parts were distributed among children, and the only adults in the programme were Bottom and his fellow mechanicals. The text was a tissue of songs and choruses, with vestiges of the dialogue and the mechanicals' scenes. These comic passages were sometimes seen at benefit performances, but the full text, or any approximation to Shakespeare's intentions, disappeared from London until 1889[49].

.....

Produced at the Christmas season, Benson's revival of the play catered for the taste for Mendelssohn, fairies and music. The scenery was built on a "patent match-box principle" devised by Hugh Moss, who was the "director" of the staging, and the fairy costumes were designed by Constance Benson:

> Mrs Benson had most successfully carried out in the costumes the idea of merging the fairies into the trees, plants and flowers decorating the stage. The small elves were the spring's choicest flowerets come to life, taking human shape. The wood-nymphs, in their green leaves and green muslin, blended with the graceful shrubs and foliage of Oberon's wooded glade and Titania's bower.[50]

This is reminiscent of the flower ballets designed by Wilhelm (cf.p.147) but it is also a step towards the fulfilment of the Romantic desire to render dream and reality indivisible. Moreover, the critics who praised Benson's staging, and exceeded in number those who enjoyed his acting, suggested that this was, of all Shakespeare's works, that most suited

to the new stagecraft. Archer argued that the critics cited as authorities against the theatrical presentation of this ply "knew nothing of modern methods of stage presentation", and that the crudities of the Georgian stage had been left behind (The World, 29 January 1890). Wedmore, in The Academy, went so far as to propose that the play was dependent on spectacle - of a modest and tasteful kind, be it understood - for any claims it might have to be performed. Either the scenes should be played for all their worth, or there should be "exquisite spectacle" good enough to rouse the man in the stalls and boxes, "the man who has dined and wishes nobody ill", to something other than "the polite indifference which is proper to him". There was nothing in the plot or the characterisation to hold the attention:

> No-one wants to take very seriously this exquisite farce, save for the literature which its framework enshrines; and it is not to the Globe nor to any other theatre that we need go for the fulleenjoyment of literature.
>
> (11 January 1890)

Benson had produced the play with the necessary "goodly show", and that was all a reasonable man could demand of a manager. The Stage was of the opinion that A Midsummer Night's Dream was an ideal choice for a young company not yet fully versed in elocution and acting techniques, and one which lent itself admirably "to all the wonderful improvements" that had come about "in stage-dressing, scenic effects and lighting" (27 December 1998). The Era stated that, in the absence of another Phelps to play Bottom, the staging must be the factor to distinguish one new production from another, for the other characters were "shadowy beings, in whom it is difficult to take any real interest" (21 December 1889). The suspicion of the theatre had come full circle, from the contention that the stage could do no justice to Shakespeare's play, to the dismissal of the comedy as a piece interesting only as an opportunity for the display of scenic skill.

The acting of Benson's company was judged accordingly, and shortcomings were listed and then pardoned. Wedmore concluded that "intelligence" was to be looked for in the company, "from

star to super", but that "great dramatic capacity" was "not as clearly evident". The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News was unusual in its condemnation of acting treated elsewhere with patronizing indulgence:

> As to the acting, not only of Mr and Mrs Benson, but of most of the principals, tottering all the time under its own inadequacy, the additional weight of the mise-en-scène was too much for it entirely. (8 February 1890)

The setting was praised highly in all quarters. The first scene showed the exterior of Theseus' palace, with a columned entrance guarded on either side by a marble lion. Sea and hills were visible in the distance, andthe grouping in the scene was, thought The Era, "creditable". The markings in an 1897 prompt-book, now at Stratford, show movements similar to those at the beginning of Mary Anderson's Winter's Tale, with supers performing suitably classical actions (in this case, filling jars at a fountain)[51]. After a second scene in Quince's shop, there was a brief interval - eight minutes in 1897 - followed by the first sight of the woodland glade by moonlight, a "masterpiece of poetical effect":

> The medium between too much "Building up" and mere flatness and unreality is happily hit; and particularly tender is the effect of the hazy copse is the background. The over-branching trees and foliage are finely done, and the lightingis very adroit.

The only improvements which The Era could suggest were that the electric "glo-worms" crawling on the leaves of a thicket down right should be white rather than yello and that a thick felt mat should be laid under the stage-cloth to absorb the sound of the fairies' feet.

Titania's bower, in the fourth act, elicited further praise, as did the set for the final act, with its altar and attendant priests. The fairies appeared in "various dances and groupings", at times carrying coloured lamps, and their dresses had "that delicate indefiniteness which best suits the vague and supernatural nature of the 'good people'" (The Era). At the end of the play, after the departure of the mortals, slaves cleared the stage,the white lines gave way to green,

and the fairies performed an elaborate dance culminating in the ascent of Puck on a wire. Archer suggested that Miss Grace Geraldine should "put a little elasticity into her final flight, instead of allowing herself to be hauled aloft like a bale of cotton".

Benson's Lysander did not recieve more than polite acknowledgement for a conscientious effort, and the Captious Critic wrote that the classical stiffness of pose adopted by the men of the cast (with the exception of the mechanicals) made it difficult to distinguish between their acting abilities. Sydney Price, substituted at short notice for Joseph Anderson in the part of Theseus, was described by Archer as one of the two "most serious blots" on the performance. Theseus was played in the manner of a drill-sergeant, in contradiction to the other seriously inadequate character, Otho Stuart's "languid and lackadaisical" Oberon. Shaw, in his column as music critic of The Star, described the company as walking "in thick darkness through Shakespeare's measures", and Scott, in The Daily Telegraph, likened the hearing of the company's verse to listening at "some muffled telephone":

> We put our distracted ear to the tube and nothing is forthcoming but indistinct and hazy utterance. We hear sound, but the sense seldom falls on expectant ear [sic].
>
> (20 December 1889)[52]

Scott was disappointed to find little more than good setting and management: "the text of Shakespeare, with all its aroma and fragrance, clean gone".

.....

Benson's first night was patronized by the literary, artistic and fashionable world: William Morris, Alma Tadema, Walter Crane and Holman Hunt were in the audience, and The Stage reported that "Miss Ellen Terry and her son arrived just in time to witness the last scene". A letter from Walter Crane congratulated Benson on the costuming of the fairies, but the favour of artistic society was not enough to outweigh the reservations of the reviewers, or The Pall Mall Gazette's judgement that the production was "a model Shakespearean

play for our young folks" (20 December 1889). The complaints of Shaw and Archer that Benson inserted superfluous, drawling syllables ("Not Hermia but Helenar I love") and Scott's censure were criticisms of him in the aspects of his art which he most valued. His revival which included portions of the text which had not been heard since Phelps, was praised for the qualities aimed at by Saker and Oscar Barrett.

Adhering to his principle of giving plays in repertoire, Benson took A Midsummer Night's Dream off the bills, and substituted The Taming of the Shrew on 23 January. The move was not a wise one:

> Even the leniency justly due to Mr Benson's youth, earnestness, and bold endeavour, cannot prevent our confessing that this performance ...was deficient in breadth, body and comedy tone.
>
> (The Era, 25 January 1890)

The play, although treated as farce, was "laboriously uninteresting". Archer tempted to compare the revival with that of Daly, decided that such a comparison would be "too cruel" (The World, 29 January 1890). The play failed to draw audiences, and spoiled the business of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Hamlet, produced on 6 March, did little to improve matters, being overlong (from eight until five past midnight) and inadequately acted. Wedmore found Benson "a university man who has taken pains" and wondered whether he could be said to possess "the poetry, imagination, grace, ease and sense of rhythm" demanded by the part (The Academy, 15 March 1890). The Dramatic Review, desperately charitable, pronounced the new Hamlet "thoroughly interesting sometimes in consequence, rather than in spite of, the mistakes" (15 March 1890) - hardly a notice to attract playgoers. Othello followed on 24 April: its staging was "neat, artistic, and picturesque, but not weightily elaborate", but such an undertaking where Irving, in 1881, had failed was "most courageous, not to say rash" (The Era, 26 April 1890).

Not only did it seem that Benson's success with A Midsummer Night's Dream had been of a kind he did not welcome, but that his season was dwindling into another of the sporadic attempts

to provide a repertory theatre in London where none was welcome. His best work henceforth lay in Stratford and the provinces, and it was Tree who by a policy of sumptuous "legitimacy", punctuated with sensational modern successes, was preparing to inherit Irving's ascendancy. In the coming decade that Tree and Irving, with incursions by Daly, Alexander and Forbes Robertson, dominated the performance of Shakespeare in London. In 1890 was seen the last of Wingfield's productions, and the final attempt by Mrs Langtry to become a female rival of the important actor-managers.

Chapter Eight:

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA IN 1890.

To a society which had made a cult of chaste femininity, and consequently was fascinated by transgression, Cleopatra had a peculiar attraction. Swinburne awarded her one from his abundant stock of crowns:

> To sum up, Shakespeare has elsewhere given us in ideal incarnation the perfect mother, the perfect wife, the perfect daughter, the perfect mistress, or the perfect maiden: here only once for all he has given us the perfect and the everlasting woman.[1]

In addition to the attraction of the heroine, he wrote, the play was remarkable for the "world of great men and great things, 'high actions and high passions'" which the author had "spread under her for a footcloth or hung behind her for a curtain". The impersonation of the Egyptian queen and the representation of her court, together with the Roman locations of the play, were tempting and daunting tasks: the original dramatic material would need to be ruthlessly adapted, and the impersonation of Antony and Cleopatra would require an actor and actress of exceptional skill and power. In 1881 Edward Dowden wrote to Bram Stoker:

> I am still haunted by the thought of Irving as Antony & Miss Terry, if she could be embrowned by an Egyptian sun, as Cleopatra. The Egyptian scenery would delight the lovers of beautiful spectacle. And the two parts are so <u>predominant</u> in the play, & each so glorious.[2]

But Irving, wisely, avoided the challenge - the failure of his Othello and his Romeo suggests that he may have made an interesting Octavius Caesar, but hardly an Antony. The play had not been attempted since 1873 when, in 1890, it was produced for an actress who had quite recently entered the profession.

.....

i. The Play and its Producers.

The major productions of Shakespeare's text - or an approximation to it - had been three: Phelps's in 1849, Calvert's in 1866 and Chatterton's in 1873. Of these the last, in a

version by Andrew Halliday, had been least important. Calvert's production in Manchester was a praiseworthy effort and its text was used for a revival in London at the Princess's with Isabella Glyn as Cleopatra.

Miss Glyn was by now established as the Cleopatra of her generation, having played the part at Sadler's Wells. The Illustrated London News pronounced her performance "the most superb thing ever witnessed on the modern stage" (27 October 1849) and The Athenaeum considered her final scene "a triumph":

> With the asp at her bosom, the countenance of Cleopatra became irradiated with a sudden gladness...
>
> (27 October 1849)

This was of a piece with her acting throughout the latter part of the tragedy, in which "indignant majesty, compulsory resignation, heroic resolve, and tender mercy were all adequately pronounced". The earlier scene of Cleopatra's interview with the messenger who brings news of Antony's marriage (II. 5) is instanced as one of "those parts where dignity and anger were expressed" - the reviewer did not look for any comedy in the Queen. In the list of the character's moods given by The Illustrated London News there is a trace of light-heartedness: Mrs Glyn

> ...combined grace and dignity - all the fascination of a Vestris with the majesty of a Pasta; she was, as it were, the impersonation at once of the sublime and the beautiful...Gorgeous in person, in costume, and in her style of action, she moved the Egyptian Venus, Minerva, Juno - now pleased, now angry - now eloquent, now silent - capricious, and resolved, according to the situation and sentiment to be rendered. Withal she was classical, and her poses severely statuesque.

Miss Glyn's first role at Sadler's Wells was Volumnia, and her Cleopatra appears to have retained traces of the Roman matron. She was very much to the taste of her contemporaries, although photographs do not convey her charm, giving rather an impression of severe respectability. Rossetti, after seeing her in Leigh Hunt's Legend of Florence, wrote that she was "godlike", but an engraving in The Illustrated London News suggests Mrs Proudie.[3]

Her public readings, and the revival of the play in 1867, served to associate Miss Glyn firmly with Cleopatra. The notice of this later performance which appeared in The Times attempted a novel explanation of the difficulty of the character:

> Cleopatra is, in point of fact, a comedy character, who comes to a tragic end, and has therefore presented no remarkable temptation to actresses in either of the great departments of their art. She is made up of subtlety, and is not blessed with those situations that take an audience by storm, and remain fixed in the memory when the rest of the work is comparatively forgotten.
>
> (18 May 1867)

The description of Miss Glyn's performance does not suggest any great fund of comicality, hinting rather at a veiled and guilty sensuality. Cleopatra, "enraptured with the joys of the moment", courts the destruction of her lover and herself,

> and when robbed of its delights finds refuge, like a true voluptuary of the antique type, in a painless death. She lives for love and pleasure, and in a sort of sleepy ecstasy she dies.

Not a very amusing woman, nor one capable of hopping forty paces in the public street.

The production by Phelps was sound and well-appointed, and that of Calvert drew from Tom Taylor, who amongst other things was art-critic of The Times, a letter to The Manchester Guardian applauding its educational potential:

> It occurred to me that while a Social Science congress was sitting at Manchester, a visit to the Prince's Theatre might suggest to some of our leading lights in "sociology" how important an element in national education and culture a well-managed theatre might be made; how much, in a town like Manchester, such a performance as this was calculated to awaken a living interest in the past, and to connect its monuments and scenery with the great figures that lived and m moved among them and their association, which constitutes one of the chief sources of interest for educated minds.
>
> (9 October 1866)

In a kindred spirit the critic of The Illustrated London News represented Shakespeare's intentions in the Roman Plays:

> He purposed to show the origin and growth of aristocratic and imperial principles in nations and peoples, and the fatal issues to which the influence, if unrestricted in its operators, has always inevitably conducted.

The tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra was that of two persons who chose to live by will, to the denial of other forces, and the poet used his power to suggest erotic and sentimental feeling only in order to enforce his moral. Shakespeare was not primarily interested in passion, and had avoided it in the preceding Roman Plays:

> but he had now arrived at a portion of his theme where the ornament he had previously bestowed on the subject of Troilus and Cressida was expedient; and again... he became magniloquent and ultra-poetic.
>
> (25 October 1867)

Such reflections, and so naive an attitude to the play's poetry, might be expected from Tom Taylor's "educated minds".

The 1873 production was part of Chatterton's campaign to revive Drury Lane as a home of legitimate drama - The Times remarked that "as usual" he aimed for "the golden mean, which lies between unpractical 'legitimists' and advanced despisers of the past" (22 September 1873). The reviewer quoted at length Halliday's preface to the acting edition, in which Schlegel, Gervinus and Johnson were adduced as supporting the respectability of adaptation. Halliday reinforced these authorities with the reflection that "If half a loaf be better than no bread, surely it is better to have a little of Shakespeare than none at all", and that, in any case, the author was regarded in his day "not as a legitimate, but a sensational dramatist"[4]. Chatterton's programme note assured the spectator that the play was to be produced in "unprecedented splendour", with scenery by William Beverley and costume copied "from the splendid collection of Roman and Egyptian antiquities in the British Museum". The Times reviewer admitted that such a proceedure was necessary to attract "a public with whom an appreciation of appropriate decoration has been cultivated to an almost morbid degree".

Halliday divided the text into four acts and thirteen scenes, each act concluding with a visual, if not histrionic, coup de theatre. At the end of the first act was seen Cleopatra's barge, "here transferred to Egypt in order that so magnificent a scene may not be lost". Having thus beggar'd all description, the version proceeded to a second act con-

sisting of two short scenes in Caesar's house, dispatching all the events in Rome, and a third giving a "view of Rome, and grand Roman Festival in honour of Antony and Octavia". Antony and Octavia passed down a "path of flowers" whilst a choir of thirty boys sang Andrew Levey's setting of The Merry Month of May and a Miss Banks performed a "new and original song" entitled The May Song. Act Three consisted of two short scenes in Cleopatra's palace, followed by the sea-shore and a naval battle between the Roman and Egyptian fleets. Act Four had three scenes, the final catastrophe taking place in "The Temple of Isis!" (Chatterton's exclamation mark).

The Illustrated London News did not wholly disapprove of this mutilation, but pointed out its consequences for the actress, Ellen Wallis:

> It may seem a slight thing whether a scene commences with a discovery or an entrance, but frequently it is a matter of great importance, in an artistic point of view. The former gives occasion for a quiet beginning and a gradual working up of a climax, a process which recommends itself to the judicious auditor by a graduated sense of beauty, which is inconsistent with the treatment insisted on by the latter. There was, accordingly, a lack of repose in the general style of Miss Wallis's performance.
>
> (27 September 1873)

The most distinguished performance was that of John Ryder as Enobarbus, James Anderson's Antony having little power or feeling. Although some (including the Times critic) considered her powerful and passionate, Miss Wallis seemed hysterical and unconvincing to many observers. Dutton Cook wrote that she failed "to display the exaltation of poetic temperament of the character", and was "somewhat torpid" with "intervals of vociferation":

> ...an actress competent to appear as Cleopatra could hardly perhaps be found in the present condition of the stage.[5]

.....

ii. Mrs Langtry's Stage Career.

Born in 1852, Emily Charlotte Langtry was by her own account "launched on a career of pleasurable striving after the un-

attainable" in 1881 by Henrietta Hodson, an actress of some reputation and wife of Henry Labouchere.[6] Her first appearance on the professional stage was as Kate Hardcastle at the Haymarket in December, and other roles followed. Punch expressed the refusal of many critics to take Mrs Langtry seriously in an account of her Lady Macbeth, "Anticipatory of the Notice which would probably appear in a Morning Paper" - the actress combined the disparate talents of Kate Vaughan, Marie Wilton, Genevieve Ward and Connie Gilchrist, and gave the character "a Society tone" with which it had "never heretofore been invested":

> The fair lady's dresses (marvels of the milliner's art) were voted charming. The pale pink satin, trimmed with yellow roses, and decollete with daring delicacy, sent a thrill of excitement through the audience, and evoked an impromptu sonnet from the trembling lips of Mr Oscar Wilde, who fainted with ecstasy, and was carried out by one of the attendants.
>
> SHAKESPEARE has been applauded by Fashion, and Art is satisfied!
>
> (31 December 1881)

Coghlan would play Macbeth, Vezin Macduff, and Irving "a respectable Witch" in this revival, with support from Mrs Kendal and Ellen Terry whose acting would be "an excellent foil to that of the heroine of the day".

The criticism that she acted poorly but dressed well, and the insinuation that her position in society was giving her an unfair advantage on the stage remained with Mrs Langtry throughout the 'eighties. In February 1882, when she appeared as Blanche Haye in Ours, Vanity Fair attempted to do her justice. She had been praised unwisely and attacked unfairly, wrote the critic:

> Forgetting for a moment all we know of Mrs Langrty's name and celebrity, we find a charmingly pretty woman, with a clear sweet voice and some winning tricks of manner and movement, who is evidently a novice on the stage, but who seems thoroughly in earnest about it.
>
> (4 February 1882)

This line was followed by Sala in his account of her Rosalind - the cast were for the most part a "scratch-pack" who "in the more martial days of the drama would have been liable to be

greeted with a chorus of catcalls and hisses, even if they escaped an ovation of orange peel", but Mrs Langtry and a few others were conscientious and effective:

> Her performance was unequal - first, because she was nervous; next, because she has not learned the art of concealing the artfulness with which she has been trained and drilled; and finally because she was wretchedly supported.
>
> (The Illustrated London News, 30 September 1882)

Sala considered her dress as Ganymede, "a straight-cut doublet,... with claret-coloured hose, and a cloak belted behind her", simple and effective. In The Academy Frederick Wedmore pointed out that in recent years there had been no debutante of equal promise, "and few representatives of Rosalind with less to unlearn" (30 September 1882). The critic from Vanity Fair observed a fault in Mrs Langtry's technique which may have been connected with her popularity as a subject for painters:

> It is all very well to fall into a graceful pose during the delivery of a certain passage, but the difficulty Mrs Langtry has not yet mastered is that of passing from one pose or attitude to another without giving the sense of a "gap" between the two gestures.
>
> (30 September 1882)

Punch in 1885 gave one of the least sympathetic accounts of Lillie Langtry's failings: her voice dropped at the end of each sentence, her gestures were "feeble and narrow", she did not move decisively, she was self-conscious and lacked energy and her attraction lay "in a seeming ignorance of all method, plan and purpose" (31 January 1885). William Archer, in an article entitled "The Fashion Play" suggested that in Mrs Langtry "the coming milliner-playwright" could find a "Heaven-born interpreter" (The Dramatic Review, 8 February 1885). It was felt in some quarters that Mrs Langtry was an intruder into the theatre, and that she was debasing its technical standards.

In March 1890, with nine years' experience behind her, Mrs Langtry again performed Rosalind. She had taken the St. James's Theatre and appointed Lewis Wingfield, "who had the name of being the best scenic director of Shakespeare plays at the moment" to prepare "a new and original setting"[7]. How

new or original the setting was, it is not easy to discover: the scenery used by Hare and Kendal in 1885 may have survived. Even if the sets themselves were not used again, the arrangements were similar, and the notice in The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, mentions "the wood scene" as being the only part of the revival to achieve any "exceptional effect" (15 March 1890). From Mrs Langtry's account it seems that Winyfield had prepared the play in a new arrangement", re-ordering the sequence of scenes "in such an audacious manner" that the company struck, and would not return to rehearsals until the play was put into more recognisable shape. Mrs Langtry gives no details of Winyfield's re-arrangement, but her having left rehearsals in his hands whilst she took a holiday shows a considerable trust in his judgement. It also suggests that as "scenic director" he expected to determine the text of the play as well as its setting.[8]

The performance was successful, distinguished not by the staging or the casting but by a greater maturity in Mrs Langtry's Rosalind. The Era recalled her earlier attempt as too comic, lacking in "romance" and self-conscious. Now Mrs Langtry "presented a picture that poets might dream of and artists love to paint":

> She trod the grassy slopes of Arden's forest with easy grace; her action was ever free and appropriate; her poses ever elegant and enchanting; while her clear, distinct, musical voice seemed to lend an additional charm to the many passages in which the disguised Rosalind banters Orlando on his love, and discourses of time, describes the manner of a true lover, and proposing her fantastic scheme, invites to wooing.
>
> (16 March 1890)

Shaw found her "a very womanly Rosalind" who succeeded better than any other in his recollection in making her love for Orlando "the keynote of the part"[9]. Not all were convinced that there had been any noticeable improvement - most however considered Mrs Langtry "a most unidealistic Rosalind" if a "fine animal", but added that he would defeat her "even if she could act, which she can't"[10]. The prospects for further Shakespearean ventures now seemed good, despite the persistence of detractors:

Mrs Langtry again engaged Wingfield, and began preparations for a spectacular production in the Autumn.

The Princess's Theatre, which Mrs Langtry took for a production far too grand to fit on the stage of the St. James's, had been in the hands of a syndicate since 1887. Barrett, when he left on an American tour to pay off his debts, had sub-let the theatre in 1886 to Charles Hawtrey and, later Charles Warner. Grace Hawthorne, an American actress, took it over in the name of The Princess's Theatre Syndicate in July 1887 and stayed until May 1889. In the season May 1888-May 1889 she had presented Barrett and his company, and her last production had been Buchanan's Theodora (after Sardou) under the direction of W.H.Vernon. The theatre which had opened with Booth's Hamlet in 1880, and had served for Wilson Barrett's in 1884, had a stage similar in its dimensions to the Lyceum's: a proscenium opening thirty-five feet high and thirty wide, and a depth from curtain-line to back wall of forty feet, six inches. The Lyceum stage was forty-one feet deep (with a dock giving an additional depth of twenty-three feet), with a proscenium opening thirty-two feet ten inches high and thirty-six feet six inches wide[11]. This stage was well-adapted to the processions and elaborate settings devised by Wingfield.

.....

iii. The Performance.

At eight o'clock on 10 November 1890 the curtain rose on the Atrium of Caesar's house in Rome. The fourth scene of Shakespeare's play, in which Octavius and Lepidus discuss Antony's misbehaviour, was substituted for I.1. The twenty-eight lines omitted from the text included those in which Caesar expresses his disgust at Antony's betrayal of Roman dignity ("...to sit/ And keep the turn of tippling with a slave") and the suggestion that Antony might be forgiven if his debauchery were only a spare-time occupation ("If he fill'd/ His vacancy with his voluptiousness", 26). The reflection, "I should have known no less..." (40-7) was also omitted, so that Caesar's readiness to see the failings of his fellow triumvir in the light of a fixed principle of life was not apparent - he was simply a means by which the audience might learn some partic-

ulars of Antony's personality. The messenger's account of Menecrates and Menas, famous pirates, and the picturesque detail of Antony's having drunk "the stale of horses and the gilded puddle" were omitted, although both had been retained in Calvert's version in 1.66[-70].

This scene, apparently played before a cloth, was followed by I.1 in its entirety, I.2 (lacking 1-88 and twenty-six other lines) and I.3. The conversation between Charmian, Gardian, Alexas, Iras and the Soothsayer (I.2.1-73) was removed and the most important of the other omissions was Antony's final speech in I.3. Thus Cleopatra, who had arrived by barge at the beginning of the composite scene, was given the curtain line, and the conclusion became a "picture":

> ...Upon your sword
> Sit laurel victory, and smooth success
> Be strewed before your feet!
> (I.3.99-101)

Calvert, who played Antony in his own revival, not only retained Antony's lines, "Let us go. Come...", but added four-and-a-half new ones, from IV.8.:

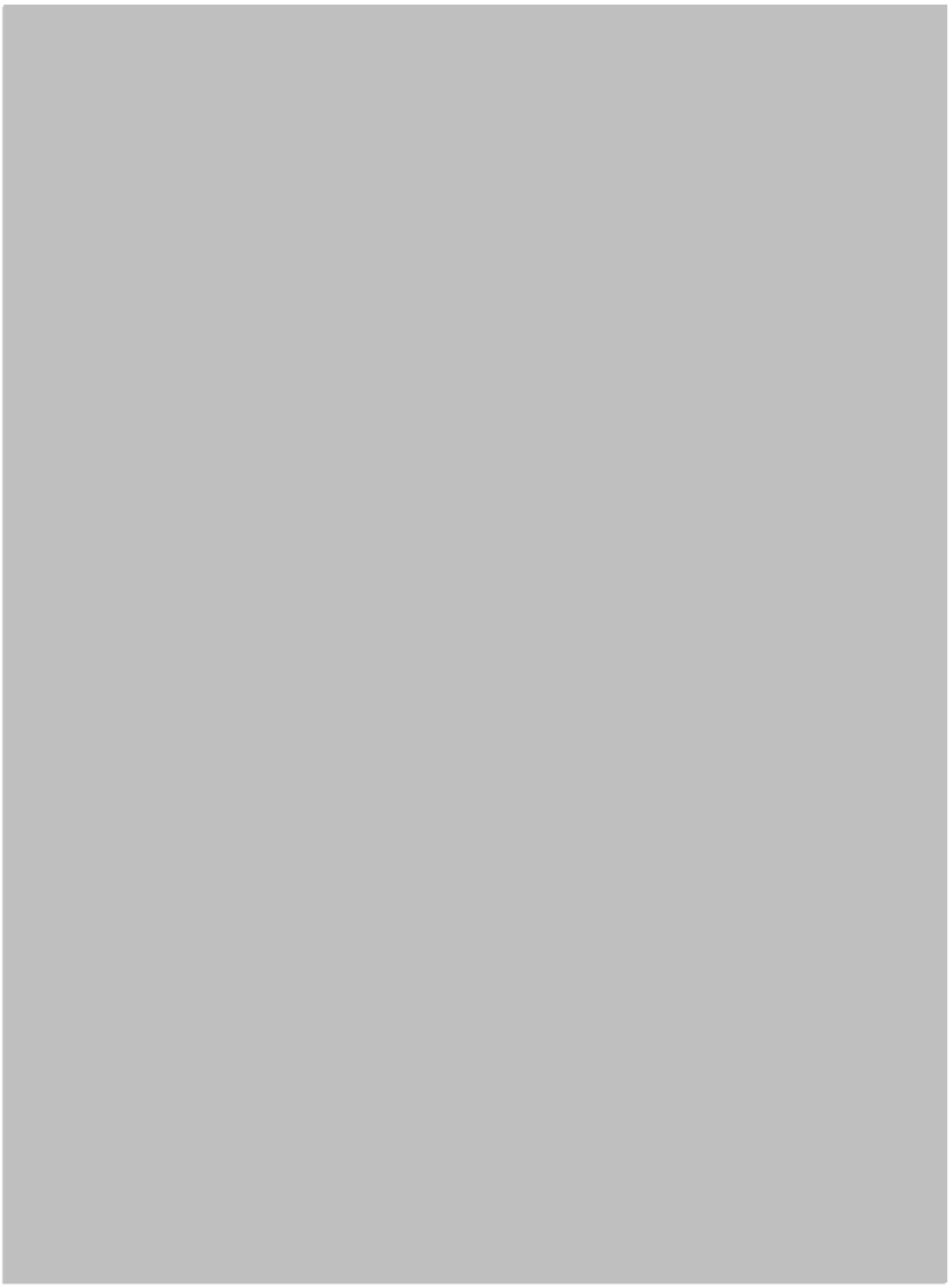
> My nightingale, thy hand. Trumpeters,
> With brazen din, blast you the city's ear.
> Make mingle with our rattling tambourines
> That heaven and earth may strike their sounds together,
> Applauding our approach.
> (IV.8.35-end)

Mrs Lantry kept the strong effects to herself.

Archer noted that "I am sick and sullen (13) was spoken "to herself...in full seriousness", and that "So Antony loves" and "So Fulvia told me" (73 and 75) were spoken without "sarcastic bitterness". Cleopatra, in this interpretation, did not rail at Antony, and Cecil Howard in The Theatre (n.s. XV (December 1890) 277-9) suggested that Mrs Lantry could act only the extreme moods: when she was not "languid or pettish", he wrote, "she played with unfisciplined force", and he went on to reflect that the lack of subtlety was an argument for "the value of an early and life-long training". In The Daily Telegraph Scott complained that she lacked "command...our only presence...voice sufficiently powerful to command" and "passion with which to subjugate" (19 November). Coghlan impressed by

virtue of his voice more than by any subtle grasp of personality. The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News (27 December) hazarded the opinion that the severe mutilation of his part, and its"total absence of graduation", hampered any efforts he might make to develop Antony. The Saturday Review (22 November) thought that, despite his excessively loud voice and his forgetting many of his lines, he came as near to portraying Antony as any predecessor had been able. The Times (19 November) mentioned a tendency to lapse on occasion "into a shambling gait, not at all suggestive of the Roman soldier" but admitted that he possessed a "manly force".

The third scene of the first act was Shakespeare's II.1., a front scene of Pompey's House in Messina - Pompey was making his first appearance in London since 1849 - which preceded a second glimpse of Bruce Smith's set depicting "The Exterior of Cleopatra's Palace: Alexandria", the setting for I.5 (Mrs Langtry's I.4). In the short scene at Messina the reflection of Pompey's on the policy of "the wise powers" was omitted - like the omissions in the first scene of the version, a sign that Mrs Langtry was not interested in the implications of actions so much as in the presentation of characters. From the final scene of the act was cut Mardian's exchange with Cleopatra - even if Mrs Langtry felt the force of the analogy between the eunuch's plight and that of the heroine, she could hardly have kept the sequence. She did proclaim herself black with Phoebus' pinches and "wrinkled deep in time", neither of which she appeared, having forsworn dark make-up and kept her own fair hair: Sarah Bernhardt, in Sardou's Cléopâtre, had coloured even the palms of her hands, maintaining that, if the audience could not see them, she would[13]. Mrs Langtry retained the argument with Charmian about Caesar and the threats of physical violence which Calvert had exercised, and made her Cleopatra more shrewish and wayward. She does not, however, appear to have conveyed any of the character's delight in her promiscuity - Archer remarked that she remained "an unapproachable queen of her own obelisks" on the "penitential cold-storage system of the period", and failed to suggest that she was the "greatest of Horizontales"! Joseph Hatton, the scene-painter, recalled her as "not



Illust ation 17 Following p.344

Charles Coghlan and Mrs Langtry
as Antony and Cleopatra.

proper person - one almost expected her to ask those around her to sit down and take tea"[14].

.....

Act Two began with Shakespeare's II.2, set in "Rome, an open place". The scene began with Lepidus' request that Enobarbus entreat his captain "to soft and gentle speech" - the reply was abbreviated to "I shall entreat him/ To answer like himself: Here comes/ The noble Antony". (3b-4a; 13b-14a). The omission of the lines between these two statements removed another passage in which Antony's nature is related to a broader attitude to human affairs. Lepidus in the original suggests that such a meeting is not fit occasion for "private stomaching":

> Enobarbus: Every time
> Serves for the matter that is then born in't.
> Lepidus: But small to greater matters must give way.
> Enobarbus: Not if the small come first.
> Lepidus: Your speech is passion:
> But pray you, stir no embers up. Here comes
> The noble Antony.
>
> (9-14)

This cut further weakens the play's presentation of the debate between decorum and inclination.

The other notable omission in this scene came in the conversation of Enobarbus with Mecenas and Agrippa which follows the barge speech. Both Calvert and Mrs Langtry deleted Agrippa's exclamation "Royal wench!" and his description of her liaison with Julius Caesar, together with Enobarbus's next speech ("I saw her once/ Hop forty paces in the public streets" etc.) and the last four lines of that following:

> ...other women cloy
> The appetites they feed; but she makes hungry
> Where most she satisfies: for vilest things
> Become themselves in her, that holy priests
> Bless her when she is riggish.
>
> (240b-244)

The next scene returned to the Atrium of Caesar's house, and the text was adapted from III.2 and II.3. The leave-taking (III.2.24-50) followed Octavia's "All which time/ Before the gods my knee shall bow in prayers/ To them for you" (II.3. 2b-4a). Antony's speech beginning "Her tongue will not obey

her heart" (III.2.47-50), as Octavia whispers to Caesar, was followed by the continuation of II.3 with their goodnights. Before reverting to the text of the earlier scene Calvert, in a similar arrangement, included Enobarbus' "Will Caesar weep?" and Agrippa's answer, "He has a cloud in's face", and Caesar's spoken answer to the unheard query of Octavia. Both versions proceeded with the Soothsayer's admonitions to Antony, but omitted most of the gaming images - more general observations on the conduct of life. Calvert included Antony's exit-lines and the short scene, II.4, which follows. The Captious Critic, in The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, regretted the curtailment of Octavia's part, and felt that she would have provided an important contrast with Cleopatra. In The Daily Graphic Frances Ivor's performance of the role was described as "the one complete success of the evening" (20 November 1890), but The Stage dismissed her as "a colourless character, prettily and sympathetically played", and found no particular significance in her.

The concluding scene of the act was a conflation of two Alexandrian scenes, II.5 and III.3, located in Joseph Harker's set of "A Hall in Cleopatra's Palace". Like the exterior designed by Bruce Smith, this appears to have taken up the full depth of the stage. All the scenes between the two here employed were omitted: II.6 (Pompey), II.7 (the galley scene) III.1 (Ventidius) and those parts of III.2 which had not already been used.

After the omission of the reference to billiards and, as might only be expected, Mardian's shortcomings, the new scene progressed without further alteration to the messenger's delivery of his news that Antony is married to Octavia. The quibble "For what good turn? - For the best turn i'th' bed" was cut, but Cleopatra uttered a threat which Calvert had rejected as too undignified for a royal Egyptian:

> Thou shalt be whipped with wire, and stewed in brine,
> Smarting in lingering pickle.
>
> (65f.)

Cleopatra's later assurance that she will not bite the messenger (II.5.80) was discarded. The reception of the messenger was one of Mrs Langtry's best effects - a notice in The Morning

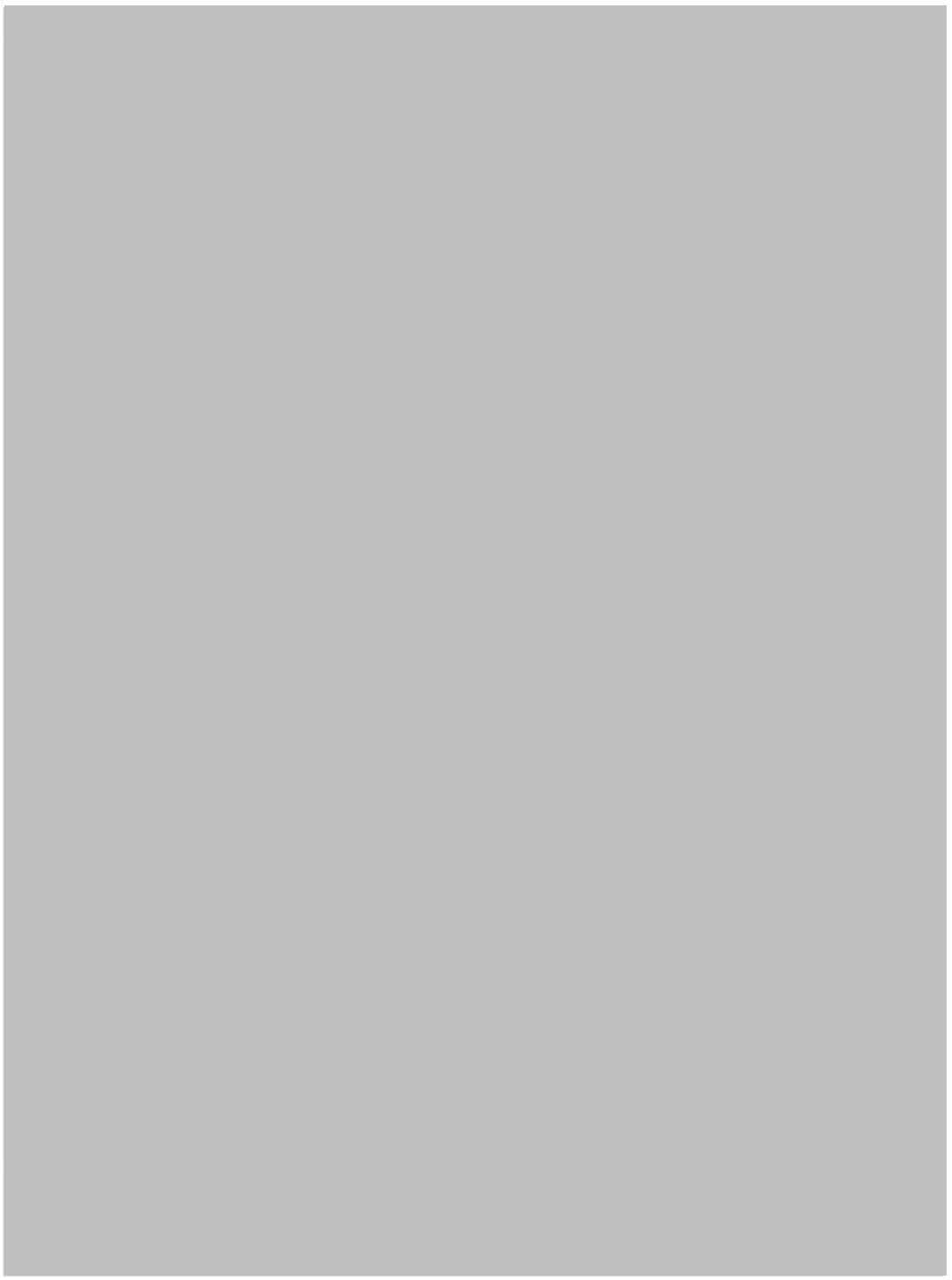


Illustration 18 Mrs Langtry as Cleopatra

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Post described it fully:

> Her method may compare with that of Madame Bernhardt. The latter actress crushes, so to speak, into the dust the bearer of ill news, and stamps upon the prostrate form in a manner recalling the treatment of Iago by Signor Salvini as Othello; and less imperious, but not less effective, is the anger of the latest Cleopatra. She holds in her hand the rich circlet which she had intended to give him as the price of his intelligence, and she strikes him again and again with the jewels, while he falls in terror at her feet.
>
> (19 November 1890)

This is ominous, but no substitute for "she hales him up and down". The scene continued with the messenger's return (III.3). Archer found in this interpretation "too much of the spoilt child, too little of the passionate woman", and the reviewer in The Saturday Review, who admired the actress's powers of "facial expression" in the performance, was disappointed by her reaction to the marriage, suggesting that Cleopatra "would have been far more furious".

.....

Shakespeare's III.4 and III.5 were omitted, and the first scene of Mrs Langtry's third act began, like Calvert's, with Caesar's description of Antony's "insolence" and the arrival in Rome of Octavia (III.6) - the setting was once again the Atrium of Caesar's house. Shakespeare uses Caesar as a purveyor of information in this scene, but gives him a touch of personality in the reception of his sister. The conventionally "Roman" faith in destiny shown in his words of comfort ("let determined things to destiny/ Hold unbewailed their way") reveals a degree of hypocrisy: he knows that Fortune is like a woman and may be wooed, and has cynically used Octavia to bind Antony's hands. The little individuality given to Caesar in these words was forfeited by Mrs Langtry, for she cut the four lines from 81b to 85a.

The second scene of the act was composed of III.10 and III.12, omitting scenes 7,8 and 9; III.11 followed as third scene of the new version. This is one of the more bewildering of Mrs Langtry's alterations, for it denies the audience any

of the preparations for the battle of Actium. Instead, the play moved to "The Promontory of Actium, near Antony's Camp" (painted by Perkins). Enobarbus and Scarus discussed the disastrous flight of Cleopatra's ship, some sixteen lines were cut, and Canidius was dispensed with altogether. After the exit of Enobarbus and Scarus, the scene changed to another part of the "open country". Caesar met Antony's ambassador, who was not the schoolmaster but Eros, and dispatched Thidias to Cleopatra. The third scene (III.11 and III.13) was set in Cleopatra's palace - Harker's interior again - and included Antony's inquiry as to whether the ambassador had returned and, by transposition of the intervening III.12, Eros' arrival. Enobarbus and Cleopatra spoke the first twelve lines of III.13 ("What shall we do, Enobarbus?") while Antony and Eros conferred.

This arrangement corresponded with that by Calvert, although he had made more cuts within the scenes, omitting, for example, Antony's speech to Thidias after the whipping (III.13.134-152). Calvert had retained the substance of the preparations for Actium in II.7, but had also altered the identity of the ambassador from Antony. In this alteration Eros is allowed to say:

> I was of late as petty to his ends
> As is the morn dew on the myrtle leaf
> To his grand sea.
> (III.12.7-9)

In his mouth this was the mannerism of a courtier - Eros many appearances earlier in the play would have suggested that he was a person of some importance in Alexandria. In Shakespeare's text the schoolmaster's insignificance is genuine - he has never been seen until now - and his evocation of the reduction in Antony's circumstances has considerable force and beauty. Mrs Langtry cut little from this sequence of scenes, although she did not cut it Antony to speculate about Cleopatra's "hotter hours" (III.13.118ff.) Archer complained that she delivered "It's my birthday" without conviction and without effect, when she should have taken the stage and rushed into Antony's arms. The scene ended with Enobarbus, left alone on the stage, resolving to leave his master.

There now followed, as a separate episode between the third and fourth acts, the "Alexandrian Festival: an Allegorical Interlude representing the Conflict between Day and Night", choreographed by John D'Auban. The 1873 Drury Lane version had begun with the stage direction, "Alexandria: a Room in Cleopatra's Palace - Dancing Girls Discovered", but Mrs Langtry, after the bad old custom of the Paris Opera, kept her balletic reserves until late in the evening, and deployed them just at that point in the play's development when the momentum of defeat, partial recovery and catastrophe needed to be sustained. Any force that may have been given to Enobarbus' soliloquy was dissipated by what Archer described as "a purely conventional ballet which might appropriately be transferred to the stage of the Alhambra" - it was at that theatre that D'Auban was employed as ballet-master. The scene did not contribute much to the portrayal of the protagonists' characters - Griffith considered their appearance far from "grand, imposing, or godlike". Scott described them, "elevated on a throne at the banquet, surrounded by scarlet soldiery, whilst their amusement consisted of dancing nymphs in gauzy materials". In addition to the nymphs there were, according to The Times, a few "swarthy slaves", and The Stage noted the presence of an Egyptian mummy - as a memento mori, rather than a guest.

The preparation of this gratuitous spectacle took some time. On the first night the fourth act began with a scene set in "Open Country", apparently made up from parts of IV.7 and IV.8, which deal with the aftermath of battle. This scene appeared on the early copies of the programme, but is missing in the souvenir edition of the text - it seems that Singfield economised by cutting down the business of the play so as to retain the expensively produced spectacle of the "Triumphal Reception of Antony and Cleopatra" which formed the second scene of his fourth act. Archer, on a second visit to the production, complained:

> ...whole scenes...had disappeared since the first night, whereas I did not miss a single super or a shred of costume.
>
> (3 December 1890)

Without these short scenes the whole purpose of the triumph

was left to the audience's powers of deduction. The remaining text consisted of some twenty lines, beginning with Cleopatra's "Lord of Lords" (IV.8.16b), and The Stage observed:

> The unfolding of this gigantic set actually occupies more time than the few words that are uttered by the characters previous to its removal.

The Captious Critic had enjoyed the allegorical ballet, but the second ballet, introduced into this scene, seemed too much of a good thing.

From this point, Mrs Langtry's version moved to a close with indecent haste. Enobarbus was allowed a brief scene of remorse, transposed from IV.6 (11-39), in which he declared his intention to seek some place in which to die. He was seen no more. Then came a scene composed of IV.12, beginning with Antony's angry entrance ("All is lost", line 9) and proceeding to IV.14, when he was borne off-stage by the guard. Only twelve lines were omitted from these three short scenes of the original, the most notable omission being Dercetus' desertion of Antony. The lines,

> My queen and Eros
> Have by their grave instruction got upon me
> A nobleness in record; but I will be
> A bridegroom in my death, and run into't
> As to a lover's bed.
>
> (97-101)

were omitted. The erotic image was too powerful for Calvert or Mrs Langtry.

The greatest omission of the entire version followed: Antony was seen no more. The final act was divided into two tableaux (so described in the programme). In the published text the first of these ("Interior of an Egyptian monument - evening" by Bruce Smith) was Shakespeare's V.2, in which Cleopatra negotiates with Caesar. Sir Compton Mackenzie recalled seeing Coghlan "pulled up into a tower to die", but his memory may have played him false - he thought the first scene of the revival was the "scene between the two survivors at the end of Julius Caesar"[15]. The absence of any protests at the outrage on the part of reviewers, suggests that the death of Antony may have been given on the first night, and later cut, but its absence from the published text suggests that Mrs Langtry did not blush at the omission. In what remained,

Dolabella's interview with the queen was cut, despite its reminiscence of Antony as a titanic and brilliant figure ("His legs bestrid the ocean, his reared arm/ Crested the world"). Cleopatra received Caesar in magnificent state:

> Charming indeed, she looked, framed in jewels as she sat in the palanquin with the adoring Caesar at her feet.
>
> (Scott)

There was little reason for him to ask "Which is the Queen of Egypt?". She did not confess frailties "which before have often shamed our sex" (119-123) and her outburst against Seleucus was curtailed so as to lose the moment when a woman so often accused of prostitution cries "O slave of no more trust/Than love that's hired!" (153f.). Dolabella's information that Caesar intends to send the queen and her children ahead of him was removed, so that her revulsion at the idea of being exhibited in Rome appeared something manufactured long beforehand. In this version it would appear that Cleopatra knew of the Roman's intentions all the time she was speaking with him - more likely an accident of the revision than a point of any subtlety in Mrs Bangtry's performance. The removal of Dolabella made Cleopatra dependent on nobody's advice in this scene, and conferred on her a specious heroic isolation.

Surprisingly, in so butchered a text, the interview with the Clown was given without any cuts. The death, in an upright position, was impressive - the critic of The Morning Post especially admired the effect:

> On many separate occasions she vindicated her right to stand beside the greatest exponents of Cleopatra. One of these was the death scene, the tenderness and beauty of which has rarely been equalled. The entire spectacle was arranged with consummate art, and the appearance of the stiffened, motionless corpse sitting erect and crowned, while her damsels, dying or dead, bent over her feet, furnished a brilliant illustration of the imaginative aspects of Shakespearean tragedy.

The reviewer's idea of imagination evidently leaves much to be desired - he found Cleopatra's "Peace, peace!/ Dost thou not see my baby at my breast/That sucks the nurse asleep?" the "supremely melting" moment of the scene. But Archer at

unable to deny some power in Mrs Langtry's acting of the final sequence. She gave "excellent expression" to many passages, notably the "incomparable", "I am again for Cydnus/ To meet Mark Antony". He felt that "the quiet dignity of despair" became the actress well. The Stage was relieved to note that Mrs Langtry did not seek to emulate Sarah Bernhardt's use of a live asp.

The published acting edition ends with Cleopatra's "As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle - /O Antony!" (309f.) The programmes indicate two tableaux for the final act, distinguishing them as evening and morning in the interior of the monument, and it is possible that the tabs were lowered after the death of Cleopatra, and raised again to show Caesar, silent upon a stage in Oxford Street. There is no indication of any such arrangement in the text - if Caesar did intrude upon the early performances, he may have been dismissed as anti-climatic later in the run. The first-night performance lasted over four hours.

.....

Some of the reviewers were exasperated by the length of the evening. The Times, in a brief notice published the following day, commented:

> Of a performance which lasts from eight o'clock in the evening till a quarter past midnight the spectator can carry away but one impression - a sense of boredom.

Archer's first report, in the November 26 issue of The World, began:

> Mrs Langtry's careful and costly revival of Antony and Cleopatra reduced my brain, in the course of the four and a quarter hours it lasted on the first night, to the condition of a kaleidoscope - a whirl of shifting lights and colours, with here and there a purple patch of Shakespearean verse commingling in the vortex.

Impishly he remarked that although Scott left the theatre "well on for half-past-twelve", a lengthy notice occupied two-thirds of a column in the morning edition of The Daily Telegraph.

Inevitably, most reviewers contrasted the inadequacies of the acting with the elaboration of the décor. Truth, in a

notice headed "Cleopatra Lilyised", argued that Wingfield had been "merciful" to the "defects and shortcomings of the company", and concealed them with scenery. At the other extreme of the critical range was The Stage which gave an unusually commendatory account of the acting, but took Wingfield severely to task for the prolongation of the evening:

> Mr Lewis Wingfield seems to have had a free hand in adorning the play upon archaeological principles, and, fired by the zeal of an enthusiast, he has not made sufficient allowance for the comparatively modest appetite of the ordinary playgoer.

The acting was "in general more than commendable". The Daily Telegraph notice by Clement Scott praises the efficiency of the stage-management ("The whole thing went like a machine") but concluded that "the success of the evening was spectacular, not dramatic" and that the lover of good acting would be disappointed. In his Illustrated London News column, Scott described the unsuitability of Mrs Langtry for the part, and the deficiencies of her make-up:

> The charm of Mrs Langtry's nature is in its gentleness, its softness, its alluring grace. She grew under the ivy-trees of England, not under the lotus-blossoms of the Nile. Her physical gifts and training will not admit of her realising Cleopatra, so she makes her a wild-eyed saint instead of a passionate animal. Conceive a Cleopatra with eyes of blue and hair of an English and nut-brown hue, and a gentle countenance and mild expression, bearing wistfully at her Antony, and trembling in his presence!
>
> (22 November 1890)

Macready and Phelps, he added, did not need spectacle, but Mrs Langtry, like Charles Kean, Chatterton and Calvert, "wanted the show because they had no very remarkable acting to put in front of the pictures". It was doubly unfortunate, then, that the Cleopatra should not even look right. Archer complained that the actress's costumes were "gauzy, girlish and innocent of trains":

> Correct they may be, beautiful they are; but they lack reality.

The costuming of the Queen of Egypt was lacking in dramatic appropriateness however "correct" it might be - was this an

oversight of Wingfield's, or did his authority extend no further than the setting and the minor characters? The Captious Critic remarked that the excellent organisation of the crowds and the grand effects should have been extended to the principals, who "should stand and move as though they felt the force of it". Walkley, who described his dominant impression as "one of weakness, eked out by noise and polychromatic pageantry", complained that Wingfield had "only half the courage of his opinions" and "should have wielded the scissors as freely as the kaleidoscope". The revival was too long for a satisfying spectacle, and too spectacular for a good performance of the play[16].

The unkindest judgement on Mrs Langtry was that she was no more than a lay-figure in the pageant, ("prettiest when she was mute", according to The Stage). In Truth the disparity between actress and character was put in terms even less polite:

> Cleopatra is a woman, and not a duchess. She is a grand creature, not a pretty amateur trying to act.

Clement Scott would admit no more than that Mrs Langtry would "photograph admirably" as the "centre of innumerable lovely pictures", and The Stage wrote that she was "coldly statuesque, graceful in outline, beautiful to look upon, but making little or no appeal to the passions". But it is doubtful whether any stronger impression would have been welcome. The reviews of the Princess's production include a good deal of pious head-shaking over the excesses of Sarah Bernhardt, who had played Cleopatra in a play by Sardou and Moreau on 23 October at the Porte St. Martin. The play, Cleopatre, is not a direct translation of Shakespeare's, although it uses many passages and individual lines. It was not one of Bernhardt's best roles, but it was stronger meat than Mrs Langtry's mild English heroine. William Winter found it unbearably disgusting - "an ideal of womanhood which degrades it to the level of the tiger and the ape" - and contrasted Sardou's with Shakespeare's queen:

> ....there is a tremendous animal appetite; but also there are splendid commingled qualities of heart, mind and imagination. That great poet did

> not seek to concentrate attention simply upon an erotic fool. He magnified his original and invested it with a glory that in actual life it never possessed.

Sarah Bernhardt's performance, by distinct contrast, was "effrontery" and depravity, sprinkled over with flowgaws", a fact which Winter attributed not merely to the depraved author, but to the actress's habitual "metallic insincerity of feeling blended with saccharine monotony of expression". From a man who thought Ada Rehan a successful Rosalind because she was in actual personality identical with the fictional character, this is not surprising[17].

No suitable representative of Cleopatra appeared in London before the new century. Of Duse Archer wrote:

> There is nothing in the least voluptuous, sensuous, langorous about her performance. Her very embraces are chilly, and she kisses like a country-bird...along with the poetry, the elevation, the idealism of the part, she entirely misses its passion.[18]

This was in 1893: in 1897 Janet Achurch appeared in a production by Louis Calvert, transferred to the Olympic from Manchester. The text prepared by Calvert's father in 1866 was used, giving seventeen scenes, including Pompey's Galley, and the production was suitably lavish. The dances were "arranged" by John D'Auban. The Illustrated London News, in a short notice of the whole season, which was produced by Ben Greet, found Calvert satisfactory but complaining that his acting, though "marked throughout by strength and intensity", lacked "erotic passion and tragic power". Miss Achurch failed to make any impression, and the reviewer was still disturbed by the tableau curtains which were lowered between the scenes (10 July 1897). Archer felt that Calvert had succumbed to Irving's influence, sacrificing Shakespeare to spectacle and incidental music. The production was excessively operatic, and at times reminiscent of Aida:

> Even Cleopatra's "business" was timed to the music, and one would scarcely have been surprised if Miss Achurch, who is always rather inclined to chant her words, had broken out into a recitative and aria".

The actress should take for granted the comedy of the part, which she had overplayed, and "concentrate her thoughts on the dignity, the fascination - in a word, the poetry of the character"[19]. The least successful exponent of the role was Mrs Benson, who played it at the Lyceum in March 1900, during the seventh week of Benson's season. Frank Benson was Antony, Oscar Asche Pompey, Lyall Swete Enobarbus, George Weir the Clown and Lily Brayton Iras. The play was given in four acts and thirteen scenes (including the Galley). and needed twenty-five minutes of intervals. Mrs Benson was not very successful - Beerbohm remarked that "the shadow of an automaton would have been more welcome"[20]. The Illustrated London News felt that "mere languorous poses and deliberate intoning of Speeches" were not an adequate substitute for "real abandon":

> Truth to tell, there is only one possible Cleopatra in the theatrical world - Sarah Bernhardt. For her it is easy to compress the feline ferocity, the Oriental devilry, the feverish variations of mood, that express "the serpent of old Nile".
>
> (7 April 1900)

.....

Antony and Cleopatra ran from 18 November 1890 to 28 February 1891, when Coghlan's comedy, Lady Barter, opened. This was not particularly successful, and was succeeded by Young's Linda Grey, another failure which L.F.Austin in The Illustrated London News described as "five mortal acts and five costumes for Mrs Langtry" (18 April 1891). Meanwhile both principals were in legal difficulties. Coghlan was declared bankrupt in February, with unsecured debts amounting to three thousand, one hundred and twelve pounds, four shillings and two pence. In court he revealed that he was living in furnished accomodation in Piccadilly(number thirty-one) at a rent of four pounds weekly, and that his salary from Mrs Langtry was fifty pounds a night, with a payment of two hundred pounds to cover his travelling expenses from New York, and an additional two hundred in respect of his salary. In New York he had been accustomed to receive seventy pounds a week. Most of the debts were accounts unpaid on his departure for the United States in 1887 (The Pall Mall Gazette, 19 February 1891). At a time when Ellen Terry was drawing a touring salary

of two hundred pounds a week, and a leading actor in the Lyceum company could expect thirty, it is not surprising to learn that Mrs Langtry ran short of funds before Antony and Cleopatra opened, and was obliged (she later claimed) to borrow from the Rothschilds[21].

In November 1890 the actress was being sued by Robert Buchanan, veteran quarreller, for failure to pay the second half of a fee agreed as commission for a play, Lady Gladys. The report of the action sheds some light on Mrs Langtry's way with living playwrights:

> Mrs Langtry told [Buchanan] that she desired him to write a play which she might produce in New York, and of which she would play the chief part. She also told him that she had been to Paris and had bought a number of beautiful dresses, and she desired that the piece should be so arranged that she could wear those beautiful dresses.
>
> (The Daily News, 21 November 1890)

Buchanan was to be paid one hundred and fifty pounds as down payment, and an equal amount on receipt of the manuscript, plus a weekly royalty of fifty pounds for the first run: a sum which may be compared with the ninety pounds and ten shillings' nightly royalty paid to Tennyson for his work on Barrett's Hamlet in 1884[22]. Mrs Langtry's defence counsel argued that Buchanan had written a play in which the heroine appeared in a subordinate part to a large dog. The court decided in the author's favour, awarding damages of one hundred and fifty pounds.

The failure of Antony and Cleopatra emphasised Mrs Langtry's inability to form a solid foundation for a theatrical company: unlike Tree, Irving, or, later, George Alexander, she lacked an establishment that could absorb unsuccessful ventures. To some hostile critics she was simply a pretty woman trading on a sudden social interest in art and the stage - an interest which had, it was alleged, begun to fade. In Truth the spirit of anti-Philistia which had pervaded "Philistia" in the early 'eighties persisted:

> Even the aesthetes, who stood bobbling their trash in a confidential corner, had scarcely strength left to tap, and paw one another, as in a faint whisper they murmured forth their ardent ejaculations, "Isn't she beautiful!"

> "Isn't she Royal!" "Isn't she Egyptian!"
> "Isn't she an Eastern Dream!" They knew, poor
> things, that they were talking arrant nonsense.

The last major Shakespeare production at thePrincess's seemed a fulfilment of the values and the preferences of a movement which, so far as it possessed any identifiable principles, proposed the absorption of the mind in art, rather than any intellectual rigour. Walkley accounted in this way for the "kaleidoscope" of Winnfield's production:

> A generation that has been educated on
> Delacroix, Gautier, Gérôme, Constant, the
> poet of the "Orientales" and Messrs Liberty's
> shop-window, would be satisfied with no less.[22]

.....
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CONCLUSION

William Poel's collection of essays, Shakespeare in the Theatre, appeared in 1913. The productions which served as illustrations to his argument ranged from Irving's Hamlet (an article first printed in The Era in 1881) to the King Lear of Beerbohm Tree (1909). Poel dismissed, without qualification, the method of producing Shakespeare to which E.W.Godwin and Lewis Hapfield had contributed, and the renunciation is still accepted:

> Shakespeare wrote with consummate art to show the tide of human affairs, its flow and ebb, and his constructive plan is particularly unsuited to the act-drop. Upon one of Shakespeare's plays the curtain falls like the knife of a guillotine, and the effect is similar to ending a piece of music abruptly at its highest note, simply for the sake of creating some startling impression.[1]

The productions of the eighteen-eighties which have been discussed in this thesis offer convincing evidence of the justice of Poel's contention - it might be argued that their only interest lies in their having helped to provoke a reaction against scenic display and the dislocation of the play in its pursuit. Together with the productions of Irving, which they sought to equal in scenic effect, and those of Tree, which followed them, they might seem to be the products of a decadent tradition, soon to be discarded by the good offices of Granville-Barker and his disciples.

Similarly, the plays of the eighties might be represented as the amiable charades of a garden-party - "a rather childish affair", in Granville-Barker's view, swept away by the East Wind of Ibsen[2]. Of those plays which have not been forgotten completely, those of Pinero might seem too dependent upon their Robertsonian antecedents to be an instrument for probing human nature, whilst those of Gilbert lean heavily on the charm and occasional power of Sullivan's music. Tennyson's work might be consigned to a tactful, and Wills's to a deserved oblivion.

The painting of the time can easily be dismissed as a betrayal of the strengths which modern critics concede to the pre-Raphaelites, and a negative argument for the Impressionist movement which it strove to ignore. Leighton, Alma-Tadema and Moore can be presented as labourers of the trivial, and

socialisers in paint. Indeed, it is possible to regard the entire artistic movement called Aestheticism as a whim of a newly-educated leisured class, dominated by well-informed society hostesses. The classic formulation of this view of the 'eighties is that of Chesterton, who postulates, in The Victorian Age in Literature, a time "roughly somewhere about 1880" when the "two great positive enthusiasms of Western Europe", Christianity and the French Revolution, had "exhausted each other"[3]. He proposes 1870 as the turning point of the century in another part of his essay, but is certain about the nature, if not the duration of the period:

> The years that followed on that double disillusionment were like one long afternoon in a rich house on a rainy day. It was not merely that everybody believed that nothing would happen; it was also that everybody believed that anything happening was even duller than nothing happening.

In this "stale atmosphere" a few "flickers of the old Swinburnian flame" survived. To Chesterton, the long afternoon conveyed a lesson as indirect as the moral significance of Father Brown's criminal investigations:

> ...it is time did produce an interregnum of art that had a truth of its own; though that truth was near to being only a consistent lie.[4]

This paradoxical "truth" leads Chesterton to Wilde, to whom was entrusted the "decadent idea", which in "less dexterous hands" went entirely to pieces and which "nobody has troubled to pick up"[5]. Chesterton's description of Bedford Park, under the disguise of Saffron Park, at the beginning of The Man who was Thursday (1908) offers a similar view in lighter vein:

> It had been the outburst of a speculative builder, faintly tinged with art, who called its architecture sometimes Elizabethan and sometimes Queen Anne, apparently under the impression that the two sovereigns were identical. It was described with some justice as an artistic colony, though it never in any definable way produced any art. But although its pretensions to be an intellectual centre were a little vague, its pretensions to be a pleasant place were quite indisputable.[6]

What Symons called the "beautiful farce of Aestheticism" has

lost in retrospect by contrast with its more vigorous antecedents and successors.[7]

.....

Against this negative view of the eighteen-eighties can be set a number of arguments. In the theatre, a much-acclaimed rapprochment between the artistic establishment and the commercial managements gave the artist a footing which was to the advantage of a later and more radical generation. Irving may have acquired his artistic sense from Ellen Terry- who claims as much in her autobiography - or diligently picked the brains of his advisors, but he set a standard which the other London managers were obliged to emulate if they wished to fill their houses[8]. To do this they required the services of designers like Godwin and Ingfield, and as visual effect dominated the business of the stage, so these "experts" had to be given authority over matters formerly entrusted to that elusive being, the stage-manager. The "experts" began to demand powers now associated with the function of a director. Some managers, like Barrett, established a working compromise with their advisors; some, like Tree, followed Irving in assuming a well-informed despotism; some, like the hapless John Coleman, sought to keep the old absolute managerial rule, and suffered accordingly. When two young American researchers, Kenneth Macgowan and Robert Edmond Jones, reported on a tour of the Continental theatres in 1922, they devoted a chapter to "The Artist as Director", and found that they could not usefully distinguish between the parts played in the staging of a production by the director and the artist. On the Continent, the presence of a state endowed theatre-system, with its hierarchies of production-workers and the non-managerial artistic dominance demanded by Wagner, accomplished the task of introducing the "third person". In London the requirements of an informed public let the artist into the playhouse.

The fortunes of Shakespeare at the hands of the London managements might suggest that the playwright was shown the exit when the artist was welcomed to the rehearsal. One sign that this was not necessarily the case might be seen in

Godwin's Hamlet, which showed that a "correct" and scenically sumptuous presentation of the tragedy could be accompanied by a more scrupulous regard for the dramatist's intentions than Irving or his predecessors had shown. It is also reasonable to interpret the scenic predilections of the age as a renewal of faith in the possibility of presenting Shakespeare on the stage. Hazlitt's dictum that "Poetry and the Stage do not agree well together", had long overshadowed the production of the plays. The new movement was more confident than the preceding decades in its ability to win the approval of the learned and artistically sensitive. An intelligent playgoer could now attend a performance without too great a feeling of guilt at his participation in the utter desecration of a text. The change may have been one of attitude, rather than practice, but it was no less significant for that. The attempts to write literary drama, which have been discussed in Part One, Chapter Three, may be interpreted in the same way: the work done may have been in itself uninteresting by comparison with Ibsen or Strindberg, but its intention was of vital importance to the coming dramatic movement. Ideas were beginning to be reconciled with the theatre.

The Shakespearean criticism of Wilde and Pater stands more firmly by its own qualities than does the drama of Pinero, Tennyson and Jones. Pater, it has been suggested, anticipated a new liberalism in the interpretation of the plays with which he dealt, and his essay on the History Plays has been recognised as a sign of the revolution in interpretation of Richard II[9]. Wilde's contribution to the body of criticism is less easily accepted as valuable in its own right. By his insistence that Shakespeare was a theatre poet- albeit his own sort of theatre poet - Wilde did perform a useful function in the revival of informed interest in the drama, and by his practice as a reviewer he gave the weight of his popular critical talent to the ideas he had absorbed from Godwin and others. The works of Swinburne and Helen Faucit are of more doubtful importance, the one being a melancholic flicker of the old flame, the other a document of the attitudes and temperament of a successful actress. Nothing produced in England during the decade carried the intellectual weight or emulated the thoroughness of Moulton's Shakespeare as a Dramatic

Artist (1887), but the emotional power of Pater's writing has an intellectual rigour of its own and a sense of personal involvement which Wilde and Helen Faucit share.

Finally, in defence of the 'eighties, it can be alleged that the timidity and academism of Alma-Tadema, Moore and Leighton, revealed by comparison with Whistler or their French contemporaries, are not as important as the achievement of the art-critics. A new flourishing of art-journalism was accompanied by the rejection of narrative and an understanding of the abstract values of colour, space and form. The artist's material had its own significance. The camera could give the accurate representation of reality after which the artist had striven for so long, and, by its susceptibility to manipulation, had shown the chimerical nature of that aim. Not only did photography render a certain kind of painting redundant (notably Frith's documentary canvases): it drew attention to the values of colour and form and the significance of the artist's choice in the art it was widely believed to supercede. It could hardly be maintained that the art critics of the period offered a systematic aesthetic, but they cannot be denied to have accommodated in their view of art many new ideas. Sometimes the old and the new co-exist in a bewildering way. Thus an article in The Magazine of Art on the experiments of Muybridge and others with instantaneous photography combines the rejection of the now-attained ability to see things as they are with the conservative regard for an old convention. The writer is near to endorsing Impressionism:

> The function of pictures is to revive and intensify former impressions; and I assert, without fear of contradiction, that neither Grey's nor Stillman's diagrams of galloping horses, treated never so skilfully, would revive recollections of that happy day spent at Epsom. To us horses at full gallop cannot be extended. To the lover of art agreeing to this all is said.[10]

That art lies in interpretation rather than representation was established during the 'eighties: Clive Bell's Art, published in 1914, has few arguments that would have been entirely unfamiliar to the well-informed reader of three decades before. Bell's admiration for Primitive Art was not

foreshadowed in the 'eighties, but the qualities he admired were in essence those proposed by Whistler and Godwin - "absence of representation, absence of technical swagger, sublimely impressive form"[11]. Bell's dismissal of the work of Frith and of the other narrative painters continues a process which had begun in the 'eighties, and his language and manner at times recall Wilde and Whistler:

> Into a world where the painter was expected to be either a photographer or an acrobat burst the Post-Impressionist, claiming that, above all things, he should be an artist.[12]

Compare Whistler in his "Ten O'Clock":

> To say to the Painter, that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player, that he may sit on the piano.[13]

.....

The Shakespearean productions of the eighteen-eighties may be regarded as the amusements of the rainy afternoon described by Chesterton, or as the first preparations for a new and more exacting stage-craft. It seems more useful to adopt the latter interpretation, placing them in the same relation to the efforts of Granville-Barker and Craig as the art-criticism of the decade bears towards Bell's Art. Setting aside his personal interest in the genealogy, it is reasonable to accept Gordon Craig's statement that Godwin "fathered the new movement in the European Theatre and founded that race of theatrical artists of whom the Theatre of the future shall be born"[14]. Although Wingfield did not share Godwin's genius or his ability to present his theories in public, he shared in his significance as an aesthete allowed into rehearsals - forerunner of the artist placed in charge of them.

SONDERDRUCK

DEUTSCHE SHAKESPEARE-GESELLSCHAFT WEST

JAHRBUCH 1974

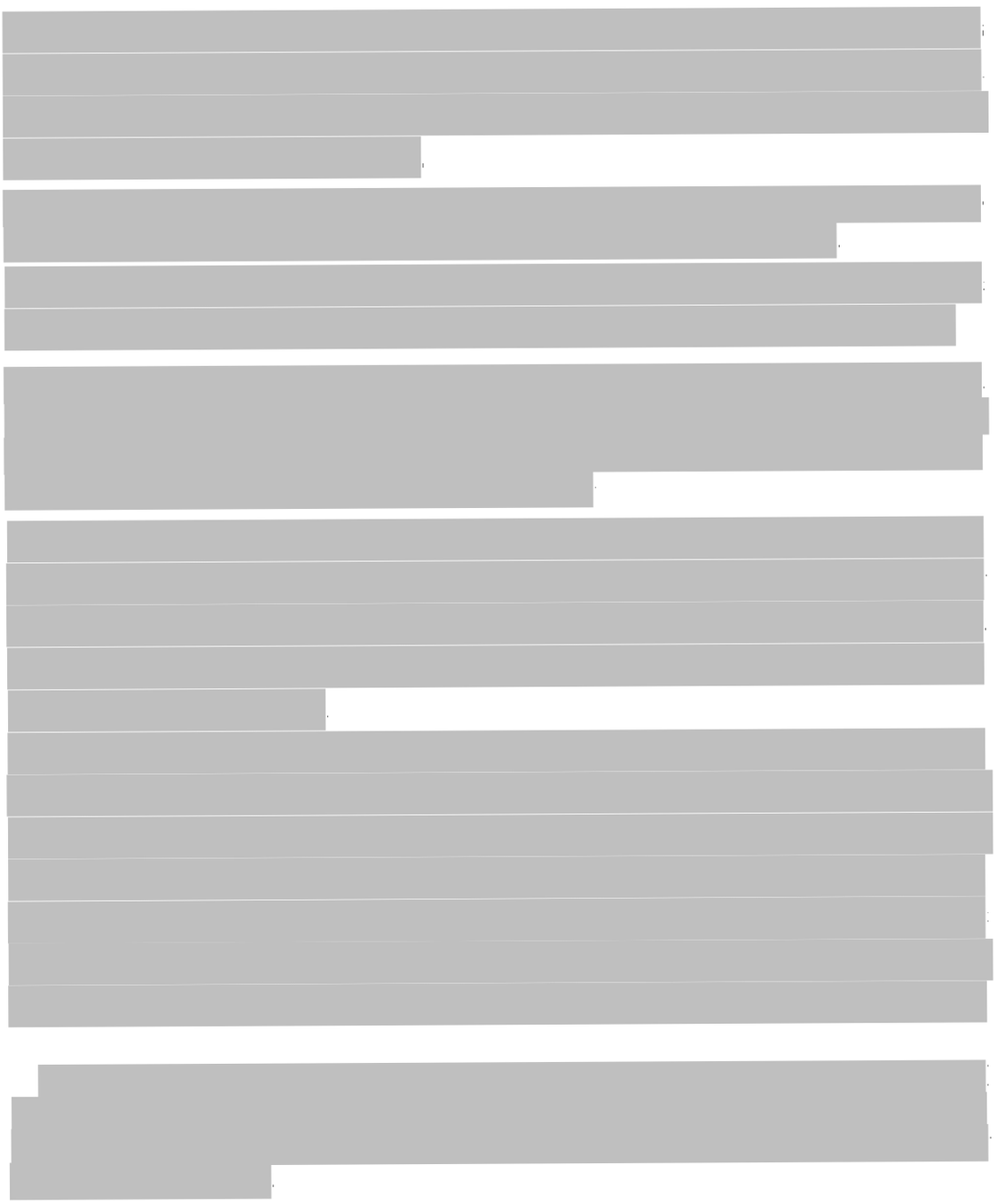
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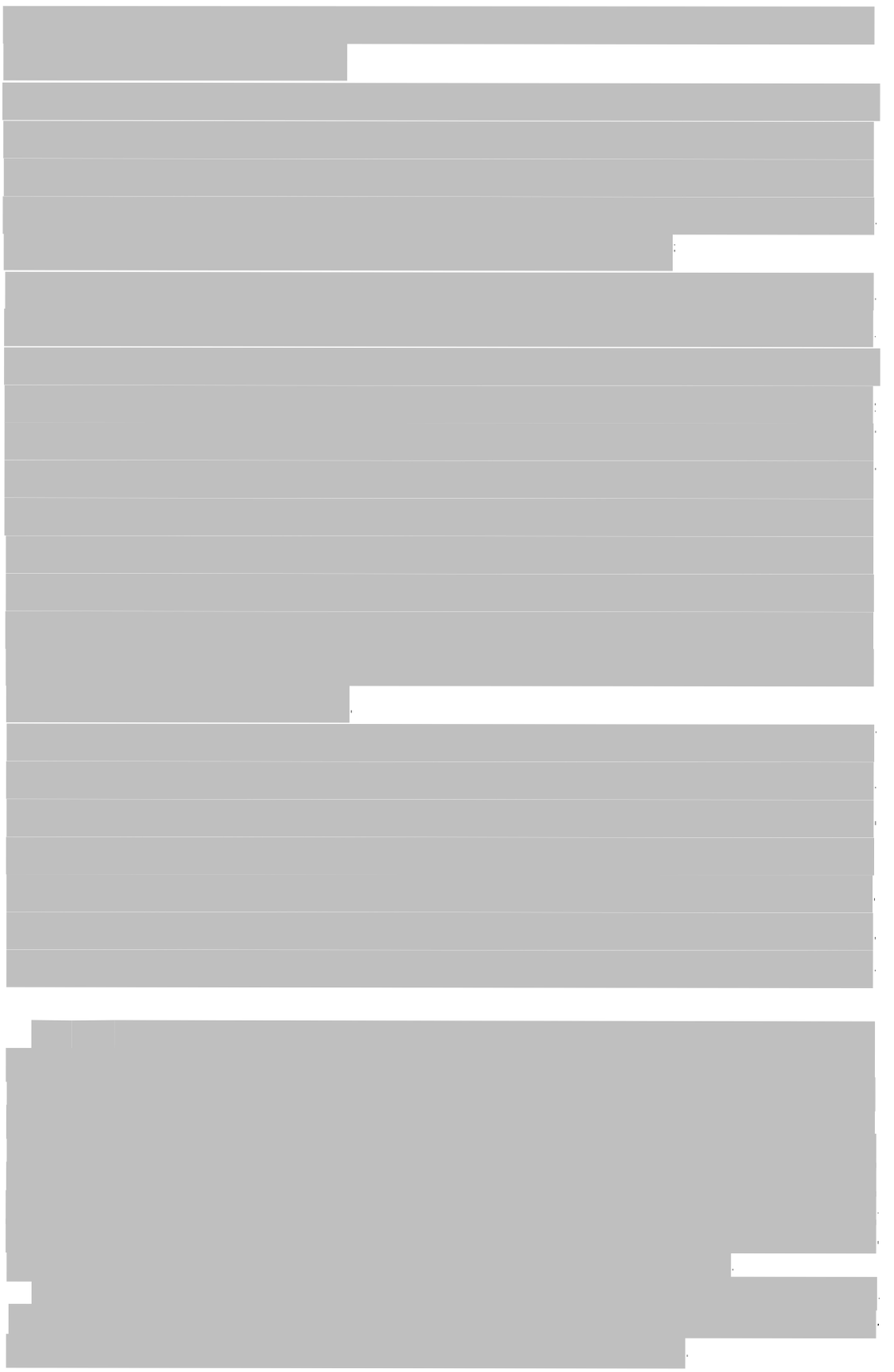
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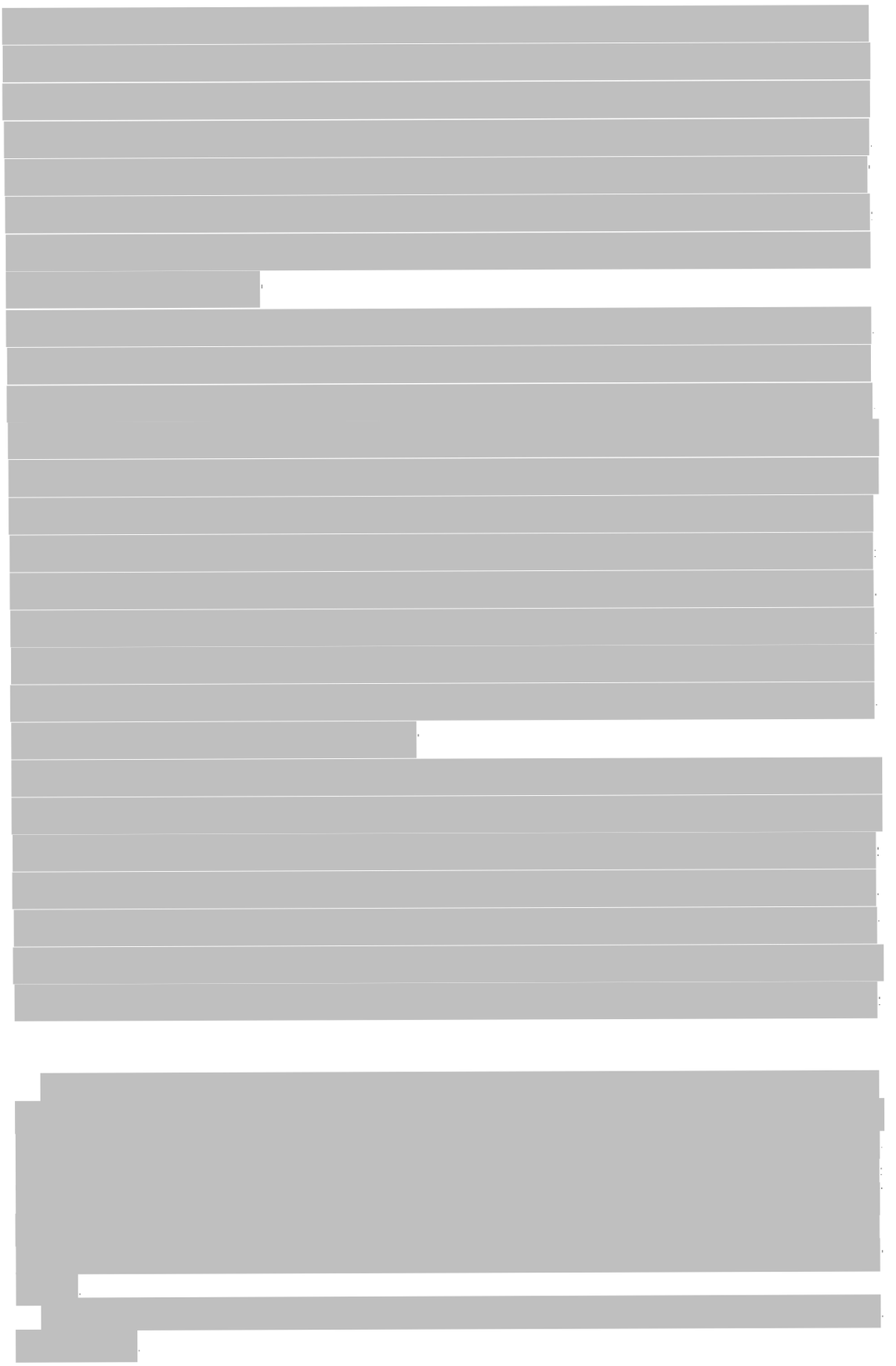
DESIGNER AND DIRECTOR: E. W. GODWIN AND WILSON BARRETT'S *HAMLET* OF 1884

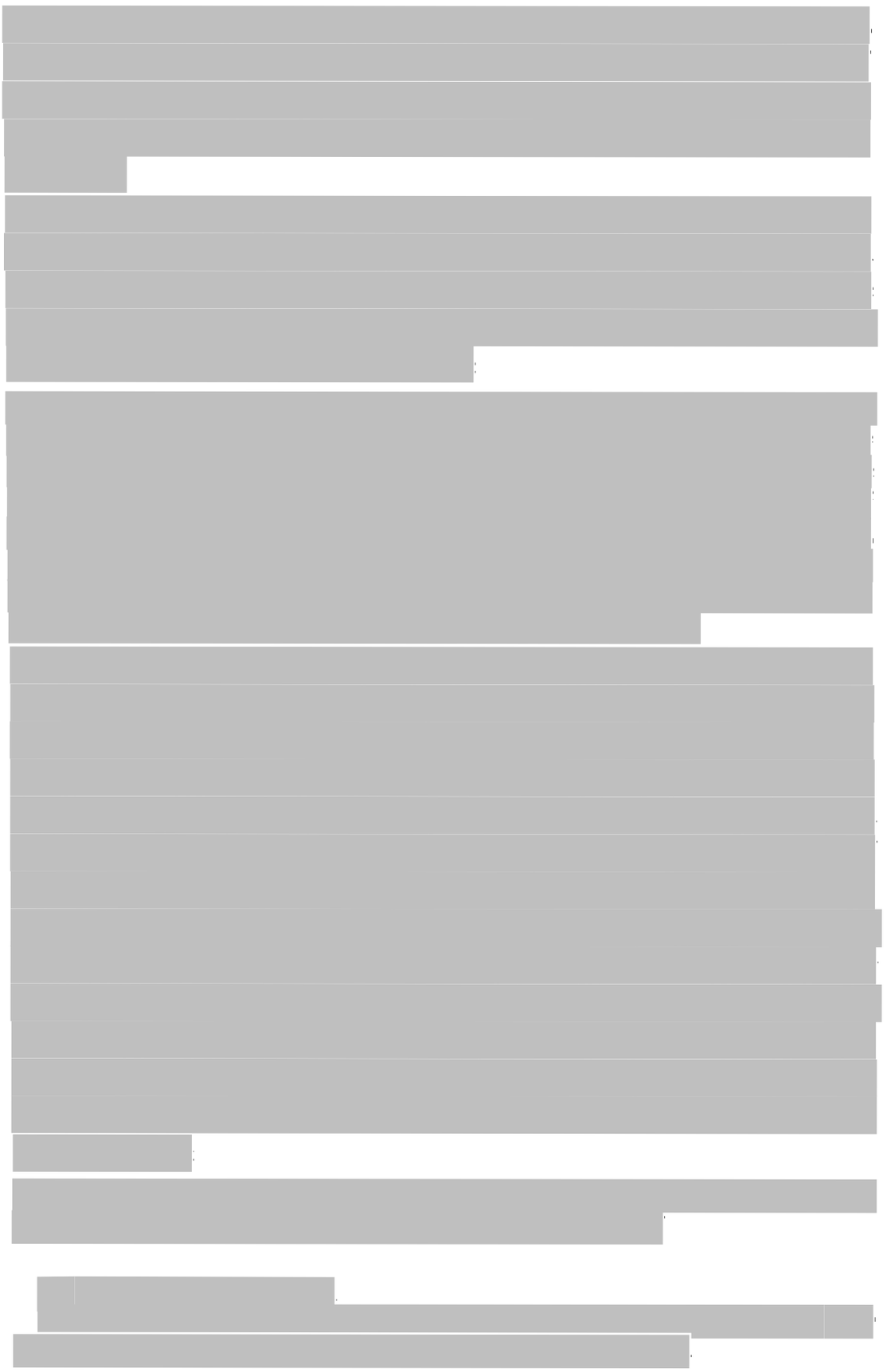
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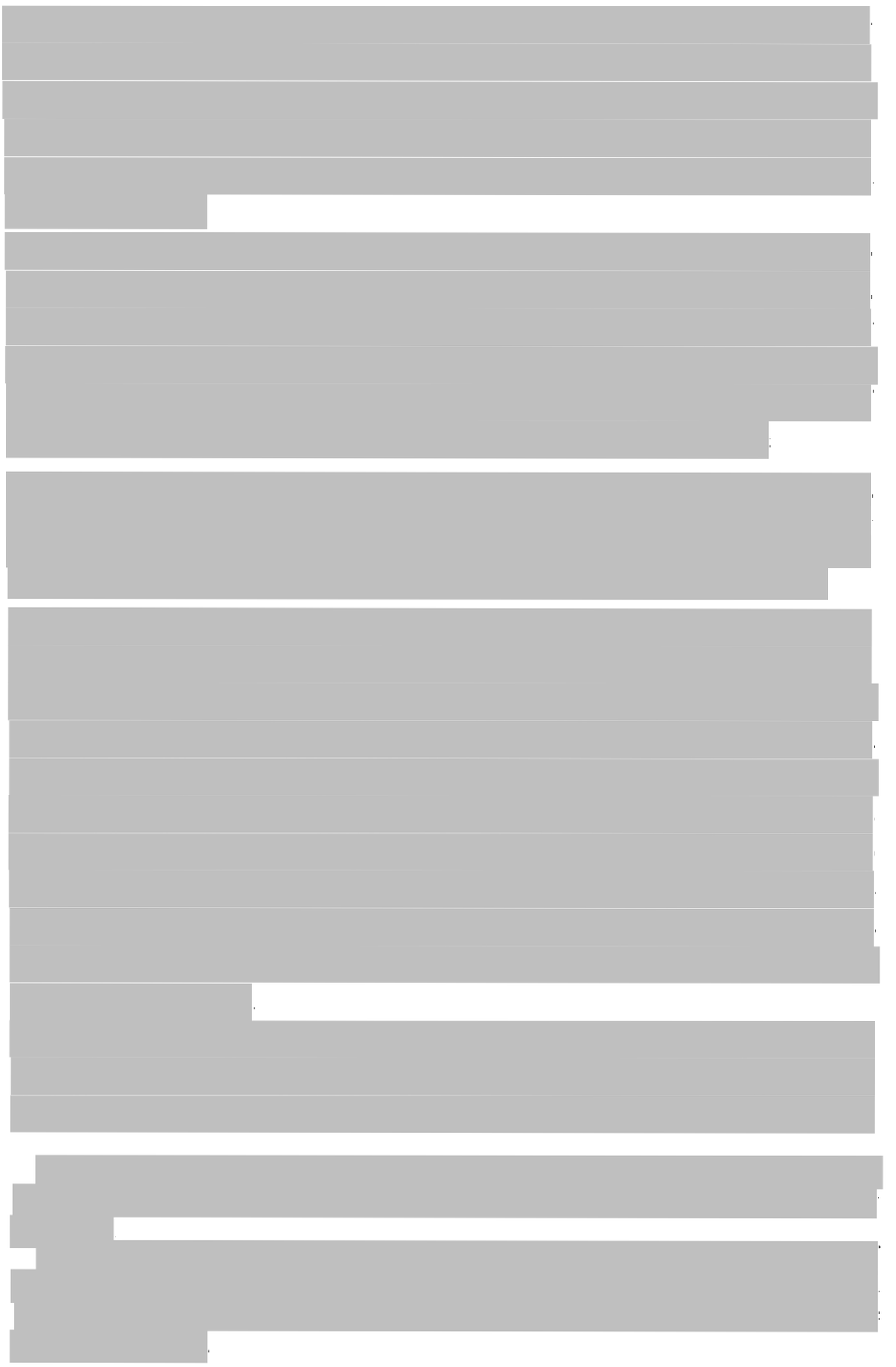


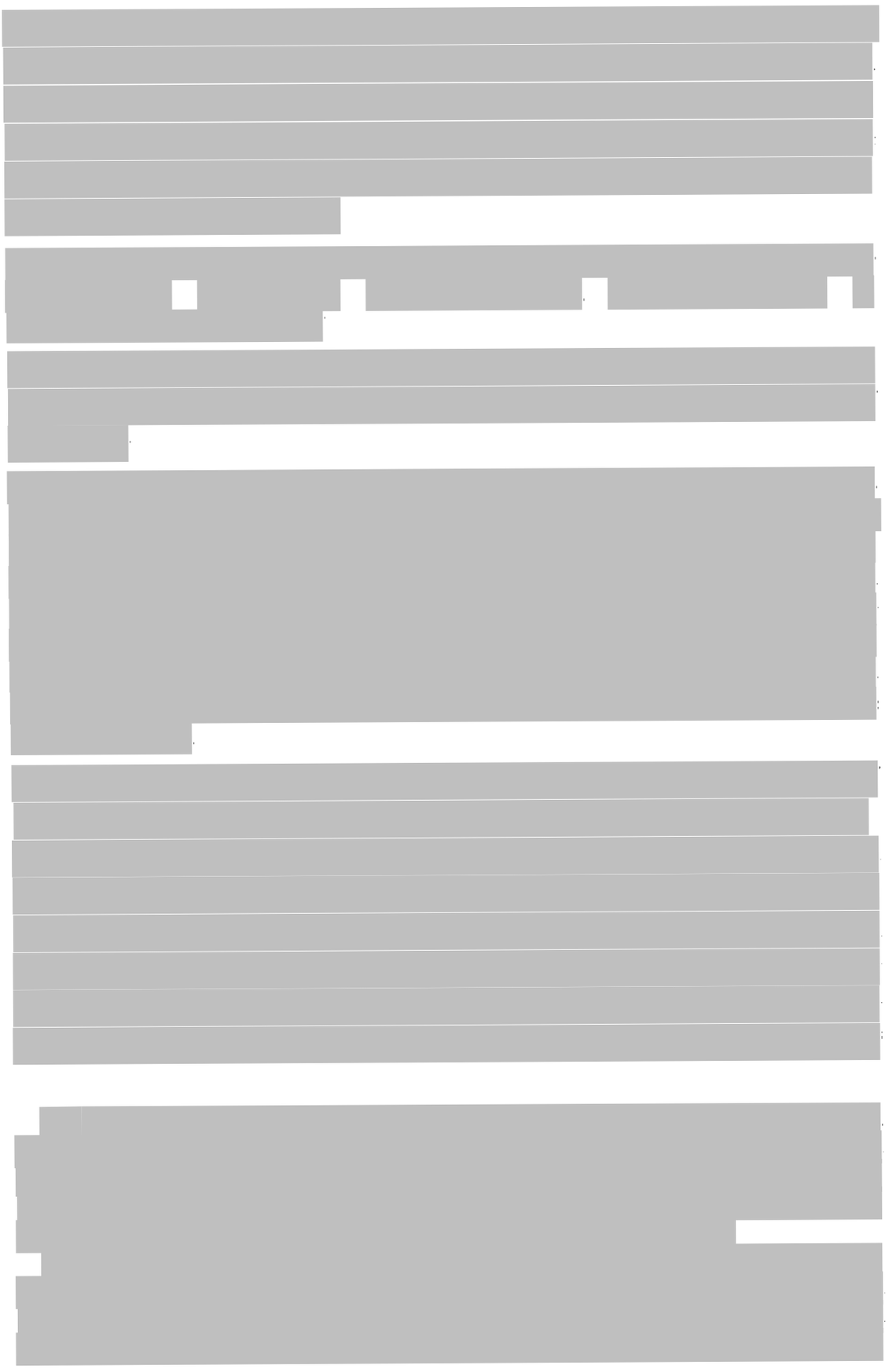


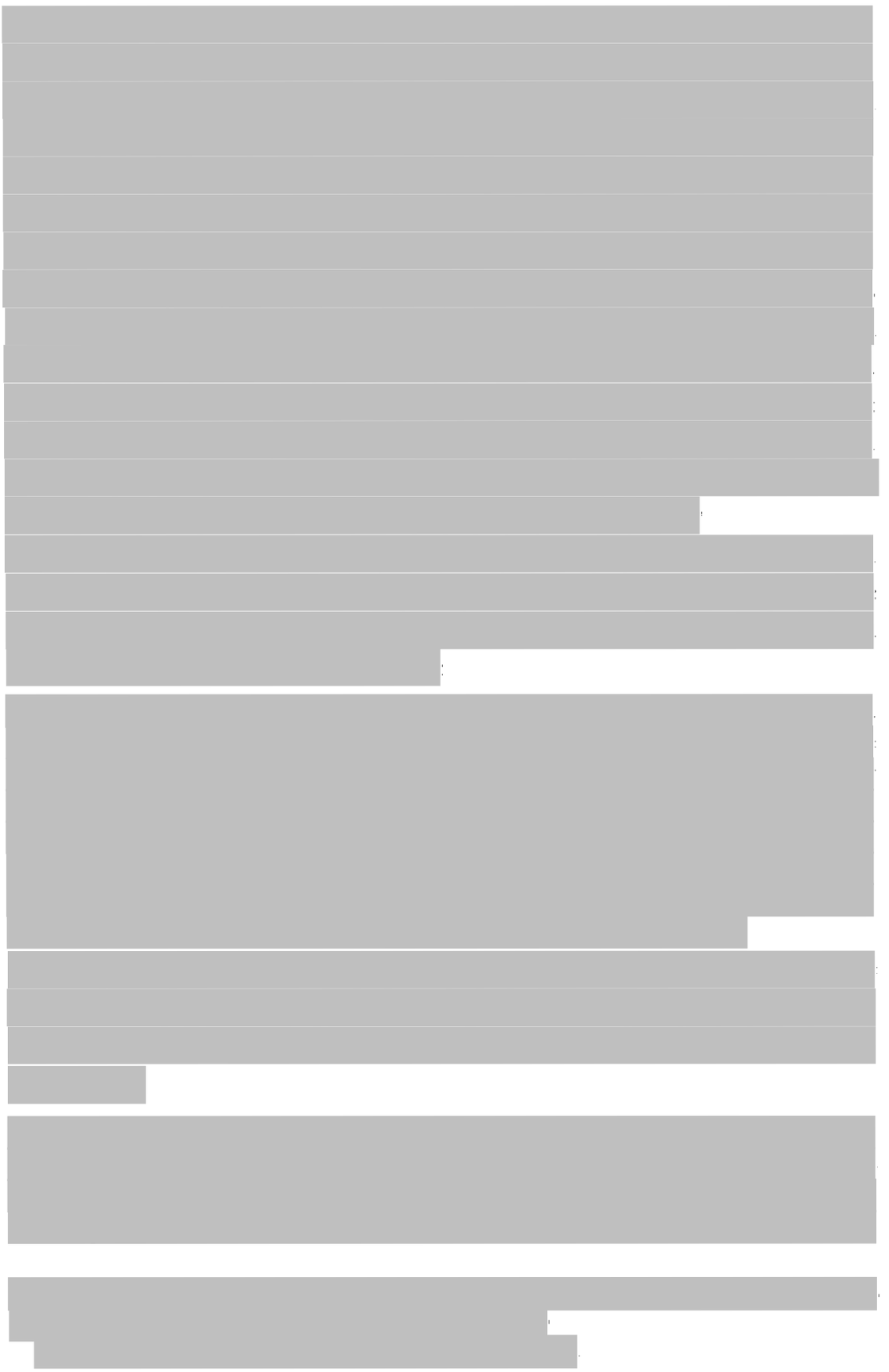




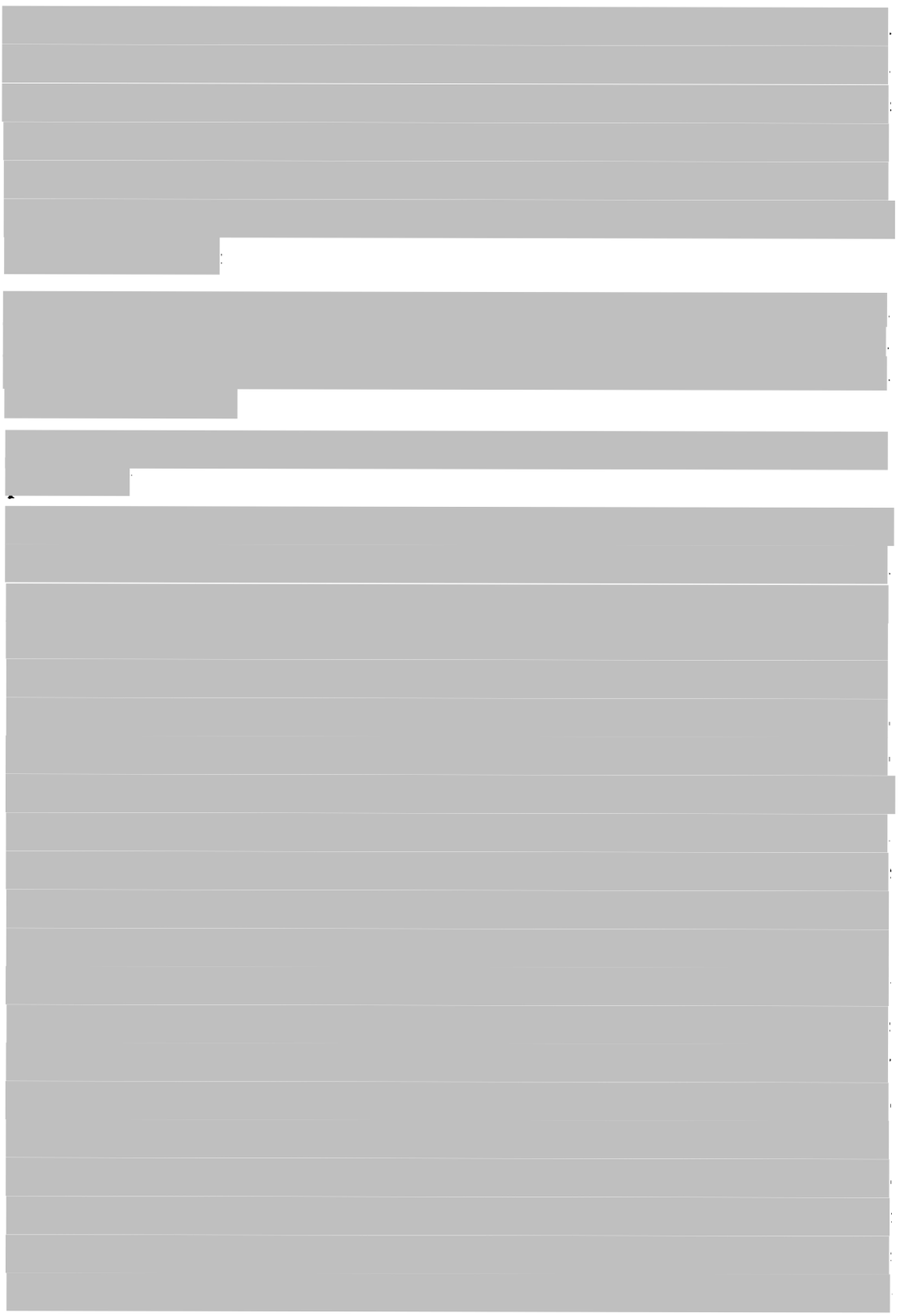
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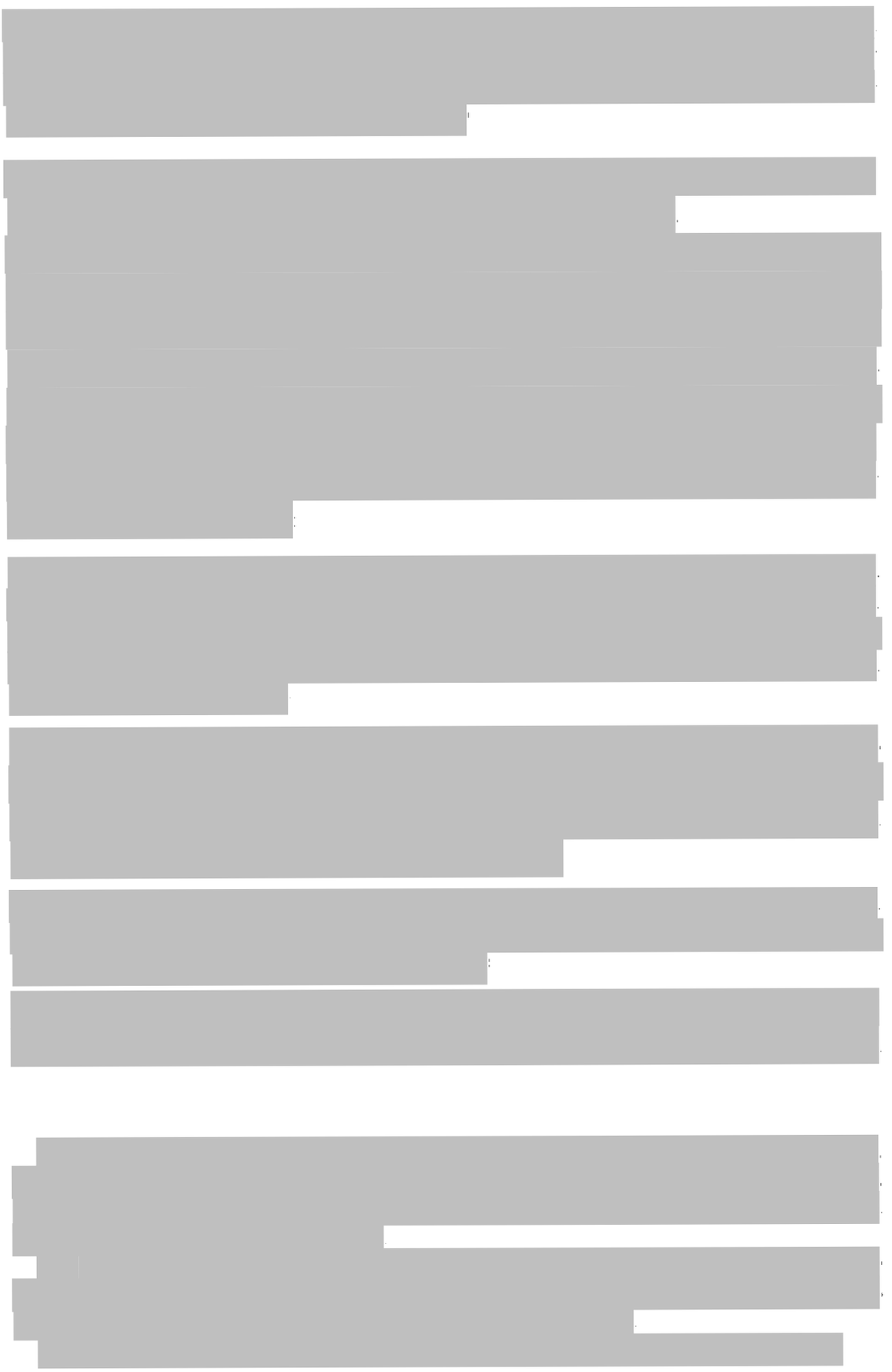


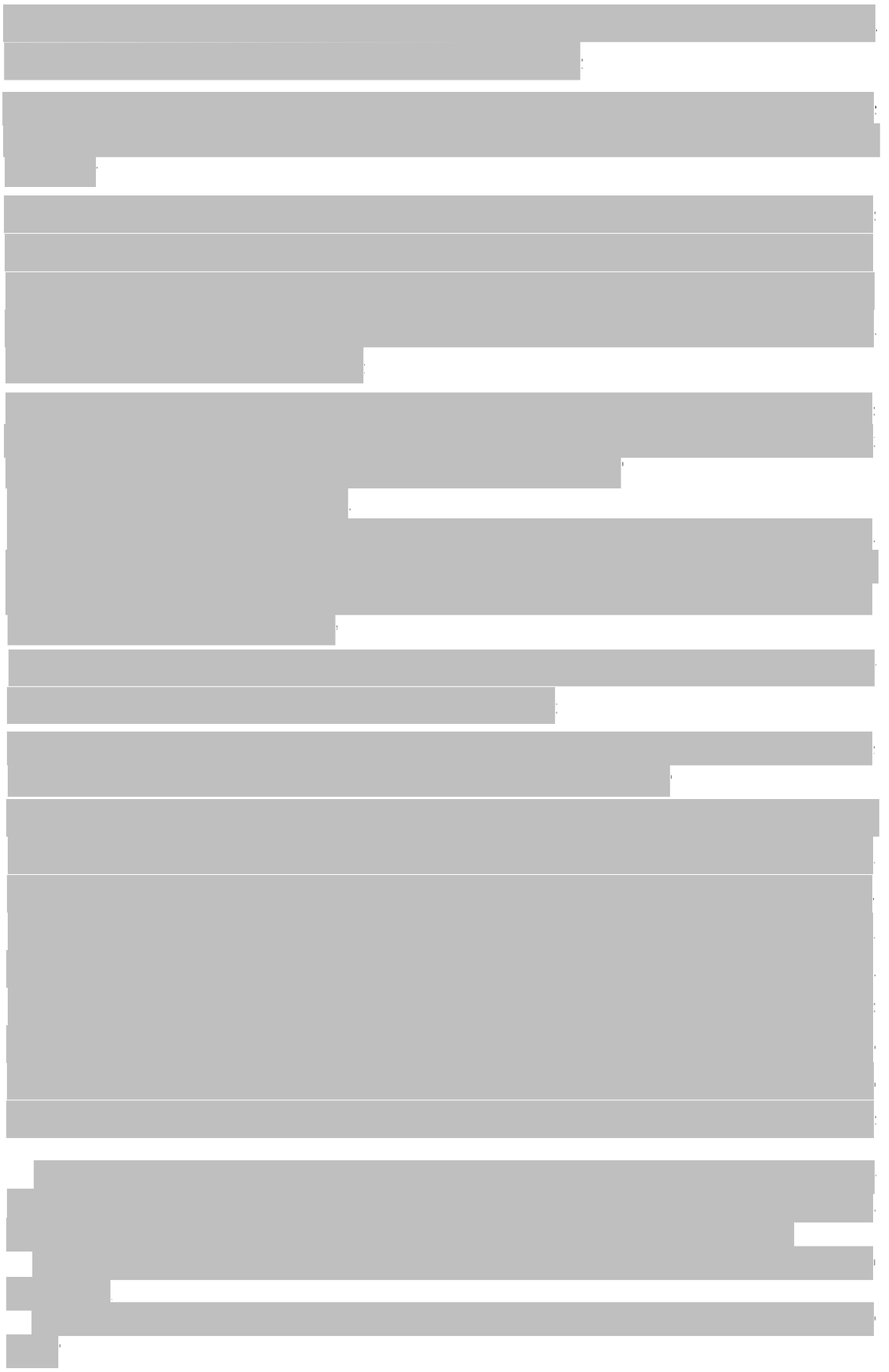
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