

William's father.

**William Taverner
Sr. - Playwright**

by

John P. Taverner

Volume XVII

VOLUME 17

WILLIAM TAVERNER LAWYER AND PLAYWRIGHT

William Taverner Sr, Lawyer and Playwright born Circa 1675, died 1731.

Volume 4 of the Taverners described the life and works of William Taverner, who lived from 1700 to 1772 he was a lawyer and landscape painter. I noted that William Taverner's father was a lawyer and playwright. This volume describes William Sr (William's father) and presents a copy of his first play which was performed at Drury Lane Theatre.

William Sr's father was Jeremy Taverner of Hexton, Herts. Jeremy was one of a large family of 13 children. Their pedigree can be traced on pages 24, 25 and 26 of my book "The Taverners Vol 1". Jeremy was born in 1651, in 1674, the same year that Jeremy and his brothers sold Hexton, he married Elizabeth Needham of London. Jeremiah was a portrait painter who practised in the early 18th Century, says the dictionary of National Biography.

Jeremy, sometimes called Josiah Taverner had counted Daniel Defoe amongst his sitters or so says Edward Croft-Murray. A portrait of Jeremiah Taverner was reproduced in Mezzotint by J. Smith (Redgrave, Dictionary of Artists). I cannot locate the births of Jeremiah's children but it is clear that he had a son, William, who was bred to the Civil Law, which he practised at Doctors Commons, Knightrider Street, London. He became a procurator general of the court of arches of Canterbury.

I wrote to Canterbury to find out what this position entailed. The Deanery of Canterbury writes "The Court of Arches was an appeal court to which disputed wills were sent from the provincial court of Canterbury, it covered England, South of York. The court itself was situated in Bow Church, London. The records are kept at Lambeth Palace Library---".

The library was most helpful, they wrote "The library collection includes records of the appointments of William Taverner, father and son, as public notaries in 1700 and 1737 respectively and as proctors of the court of Arches in 1709 and 1739. Proctors/Procurators were the equivalent of solicitors, but they practised in ecclesiastical courts, such as the court of Arches which is the Archbishop of Canterbury's court of appeal for the province of Canterbury---".

Richard Burn's - Ecclesiastical law, 1842 describes proctors and is reproduced overleaf.

PROCTOR

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1. Appointment of, and Proxies

["Proctors in the Ecclesiastical and Admiralty Courts discharge duties similar to those of solicitors and attornies in other courts.

["In order to entitle a person to be admitted a proctor, to practise in the Court of Arches, it is required that he shall have served a clerkship of seven years, under articles, with one of thirty-four senior proctors, who must be of five years standing; and who, by the rules of the court, is prohibited from taking a second clerk until the first shall have served five years; except in the event of the death of a proctor, to whom a clerk may have been articulated, before the term of his clerkship is completed. In this case any other of the thirty-four senior proctors may take such clerk for the remainder of the term, although he himself may at the same time have a clerk of less than five year's standing. Before a clerk is permitted to be articulated, he is required to produce a certificate of his having made reasonable progress in classical education.

["When the term of seven years is completed, the party is admitted a notary, by a faculty from the Archbishop of Canterbury; a petition is then presented to his grace, accompanied by a certificate, signed by three advocated and three proctors, that the party applying to be admitted has served, as article clerk to a proctor of the court, for the full term of seven years. If this certificate is approved, the archbishop issues his fiat, whom the party is admitted under the title of a supernumerary, with similar ceremonies to those observed on the admission of an advocate.

["The proctor so admitted is qualified to commence business upon his own account immediately, but he is not entitled to take an articulated clerk, until he shall have been for five years].

So we now know quite a lot about the formal side of William Taverner Sr's career.

However William was best known for his plays, a number are mentioned in the "Dictionary of Biography".

The history biography says about William Sr:-

TAVERNER, WILLIAM (d 1731) dramatist, was son of Jeremiah Taverner, portrait-painter, who practised early in the eighteenth century. A portrait of Jeremiah Taverner was reproduced in mezzotint by J. Smith (Redgrave, Dictionary of Artists). William Taverner, the son, was bred to the civil law, which he practised at Doctors' Commons. He became a procurator-general of the court of arches of Canterbury, but he is best known by the plays which he produced. The first of these was 'The Faithful Bride of Granada' acted at Drury Lane in 1704, and published in the same year. It was followed by 'The Maid the Mistress' brought out at Drury Lane on 5 June 1708 (Genest, Account of the English Stage, ii. 403), and 'The Female Advocates, or the Frantic Stock-jobber' acted only once, at Drury Lane on 6 Jan 1712-1713. This latter comedy was in part copied from 'The Lunatic', and anonymous piece of 1705, which was not acted (ib. ii. 334, 507).

Taverner's best play 'The Artful Husband' was produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 11 Feb 1716-1717, when it ran for fifteen nights. The applause he obtained is said to have made Taverner very vain. The play was acted again in May 1721, and was afterwards adapted by the elder George Colman (1732-1794) [q.v] ('The Female Chevalier' 1778) and William Macready, the father of William Charles Macready [q.v] ('The Bank Note, 1795). Taverner himself borrowed from Shirley's 'Lady of Pleasure' and from The Counterfeit Bridegroom (1677) an adaption of Middleton's No Wit, No Help, like a Woman's (ib.ii.609). It was reported, too that he was assisted by Dr Joseph Brown. In it's printed form the play ran through three editions, in the preface Taverner complains of the injustice of the patentee of the theatre (John Rich [q.v]) towards authors. Notwithstanding this complaint on 3 Dec 1717 appeared at Lincoln's Inn Fields a companion comedy, 'The Artful Wife' printed with the date 1718 on the title page (ib.ii.625), and on 28 Feb 1719 a piece called 'Tis well if it takes' which ran for five nights (ib.ii.652). Other pieces attributed to Taverner are 'Presumptuous Love', printed without date in 1716 (Brit.Mus.Cat.) and 'Everybody Mistaken' brought out at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 10 March 1716, and acted thrice (Genest ii.585). This play includes a masque on the story on Ixion, which is sometimes spoken of as a separate work.

Taverner died on 8 Jan 1730-1 at his house in Doctor's Commons, and was described as 'remarkably honest in his business' (Gent.Mag 1731, p33; Political State of Great Britain, 1731, p100). His widow, Alatheia Taverner, took out letters of administration at the prerogative court of Canterbury on 6 Feb 1731. Taverner's plays are for the most part comedies of intrigue, of little merit: he is entirely passed over by Lowndes and other bibliographers.

I cont acted the British Museum regarding William Taverner Sr, Public Notary and Playwright.

Their first response is attached.

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

THE MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Mr J. P. Tavener
Rougemont
238, Hesketh Lane
Tarleton
PRESTON
Lancashire
PR4 6RH

GREAT RUSSELL STREET
LONDON WC1B 3DG
Telephone 071-323
Fax 071-323 7745
Switchboard 071-636 1544

our ref
your ref
date November 23rd 1994

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of November 6th, relating to the plays of William Taverner, to which the Manuscripts Librarian has asked me to reply.

There do not appear to be any *manuscripts* of Taverner's plays in the collections of this Department, but there are the following *printed* items to be found in the Printed Books collections:

The female advocates; or, The frantick stock jobber. 1713. - 161c1

The faithful bride of Granada. 1704. - 163k35

Presumptuous love (extracted from *Everybody mistaken*). 1716.

The maid the mistress. 1708. - 161e60

The artful husband. 1718. (several editions) - The only 1718 I can find = RP1

The artful wife. 1718 - 163i54

'Tis well if it takes. 1719. (several editions) - 163i55

I have sent a copy of your letter and my reply to the department which deals with enquiries relating to printed books, and you should be hearing from them in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Kathryn Johnson (Mrs)
Curator E

May
not be
our
copy.

To date I do not have many facts about William Sr.

Working forward from his father's Jeremy's known birth date in 1651 and the date that Hexton Manor was sold in 1674 when Jeremy was 23, this also is the year when a Jeremiah Taverner married Elizabeth Needham in London. The Needham family is strongly associated with the Taverners of Hexton. Joan Needham married Francis Taverner of Hexton around 1610, Francis sister Margaret Taverner married Edward Wingate, and their daughter Frances Wingate married an E. Needham of Wimondly around 1620 (see page 25 of Volume 1 of The Taverners).

Jeremy is an unusual Taverner christian name and so my assumption that the two references are one person seems justified. That accepted William Sr should have been born after in or after 1675, although I have no records of any births to Elizabeth and Jeremiah. It is possible that William was born abroad, since there is ample proof that the brothers who left Hexton were merchants and seaman. I have made extensive searches without being able to uncover more than 2 or 3 references to Jeremiah's work. If he worked abroad a lot, this would explain the fact that little of his work is known here in England.

The next facts - for certain come from the parish record of St Martin's Ludgate in London. Searching births, marriages and deaths revealed only 2 Taverner entries:-

"25th November 1700 William, son of William Taverner a public notary, by Alatheia his wife (born and baptised 25th November) the entry signed by William Hamond".

"31st December 1702, Cordelia, daughter of William Taverner, public notary lodging with Mr Salter, an apothecary in Ave Maria Lane (EC4) by Alatheia, his wife (born and baptised 31st December) William Hammond (the vicar).

Other known records concerning William Sr are that on 6th August 1700 he was admitted as a "Notary Public" to serve a 7 year apprenticeship to Edward Bernard Cooke, one of the council of the Arches Court of Canterbury. William is described as "born in the diocese of London. aged about 23 years - so he was born in London and in 1676 or 1677.

In another document dated 18th November 1709 William is confirmed after his 7 year training as a proctor of the Arches Court of Canterbury. The other dates for him around this time are the dates of publication of his plays, so we can say that the "Faithfull Bride of Granada" was written before 1704.

"The Maid and the Mistress" before 5th June 1708.
"The Female Advocate" (acted once) before 6th January 1713.
"Presumptious Love" before 1716.
"Everybody Mistaken" before 10th March 1716 (acted twice).
"The Artful Husband" before 11th February 1717.
"The Artful Wife" before 3rd December 1717.
"Tis Well if it Takes" before 28th February 1719.

The first 3 are recorded as being acted in Drury Lane, but William's best play "The Artful Husband" was produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 11th February 1717 where it ran 15 nights and again in May 1721. The Artful Wife was also produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields and was "Tis Well if it Takes" and "Everybody Mistaken".

William Taverner Sr died on 8th January 1731 at his house in Doctor's Commons.

He seems to have left no proper will which is surprising as he was a lawyer and his wife Alathea took out letters of administration (copied and transcribed later).

These then are the bare facts concerning William Sr. I cannot find the marriage entry, which would have been 9 months or more before William Jr's birth on 25th November 1700 and would be easily identified since Alathea is an unusual name - so unusual I speculate that it was adopted rather than given to her by her parents. If this is so, then there is one likely marriage:-

23rd November 1699 at St Katherine-By-The-Tower, London of William Taverner to Rebecca Corbin. This would fit neatly with the birth 1 year and 2 days later of William Jr.

I can find no other records of children born to William and Alathea nor is there a record in the 1992 I.G.I. of the marriage of Cordelia.

William Jr's will in 1772 mentions an Anabella Taverner - could this be Cordelia?

THE TAVERNERS OF NORTH ELMHAM, NORFOLK.

RALPH LE TAVERNER had lands in North Elmham 1272

WARIN LE TAVERNER had land thereabouts 1300

SIR NICHOLAS LE TAVERNER

WILLIAM LE TAVERNER OF DONWICH SUFFOLK who had a corrodie in the Abbey of Sibton, Suffolk 1317

JOHN TAVERNER had lands in Norfolk 1352 = CECILIE GELHAM and in North Elmham 1393

HENRY TAVERNER councillor at law 1413-22 lands in N. Elmham died 1466

WILLIAM TAVERNER freeman of London dead by 1454

JOHN TAVERNER soldier in Battle of Agincourt and in wars with France

(1) NICHOLAS TAVERNER = MARGARET DETHICK lives 1461 died 1492 da of THOMAS OF WORMEGAY

(2) HENRY
(3) THOMAS

= JOHN lands in North Elmham 1488 died 1545 aged 88 in Brisley Church
(2)* ANN CRANE OF BILNEY NORFOLK

(1) ALICE SILVESTER da of ROBERT OF BRISLEY, GENT

ROBERT cannon in Walsingham Monastery

- (5) JAMES
- (6) THOMAS
- (7) MARGARET

- (1) RICHARD B.1505
- (2) ROGER B.1507
- (3) ROBERT B.1509
- (4) SILVESTER B.1511

* Ann's sister was the mother of Sir John Petty of Norfolk Kt, father of Sir Augustin Petty Kt.

Some flesh on the bones of the early Taverners has been provided by Dr J.H. Baker of St Catherine's College, Cambridge.

Firstly William Taverner, Third son of John Taverner and Cecilie Gelham. William went to Lincoln's Inn sometime before 1440, although there is no direct evidence of a legal career says Dr Baker. Our tree suggest he became a freeman of London.

FIRST SON OF JOHN TAVERNER

Margaret Guildford = Walter Lambert
 daughter of Sir John

Margaret Lambert of Carshalton, Surrey. M1537 D1561

Sir John = Agnes Darrel of Stanton of Sussex Harcourt

Anthony Lee of Bucks = Margaret Wyatt of Kent

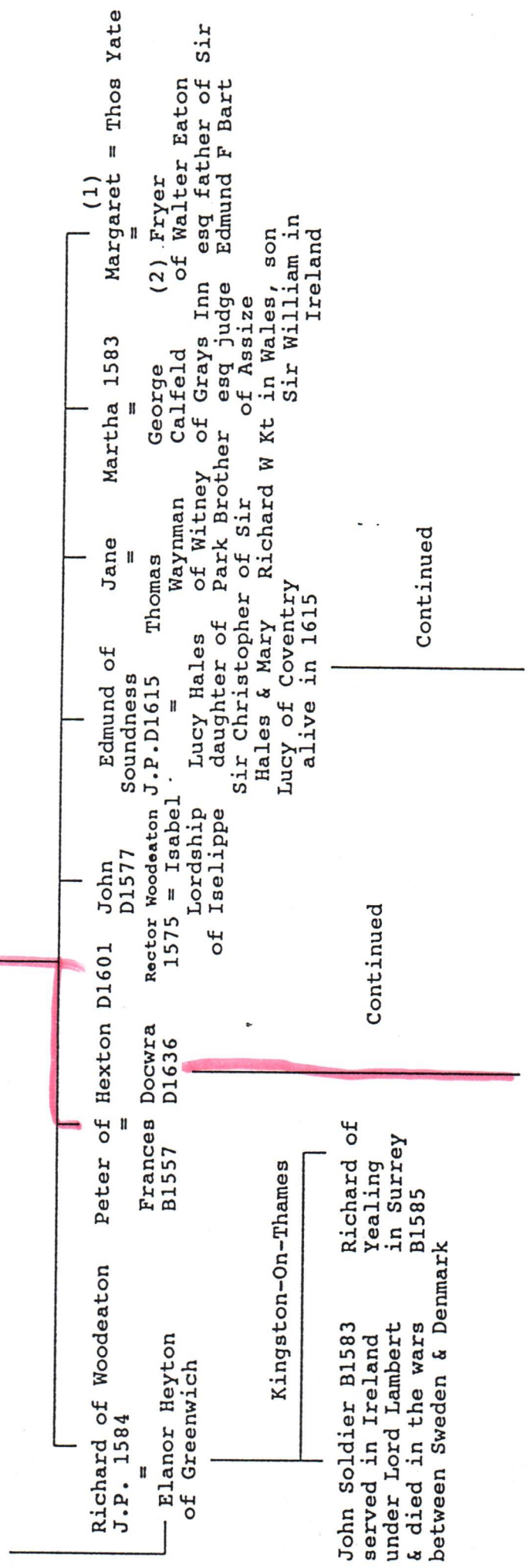
(1) = RICHARD TAVERNER (2) = (1) Mary Harcourt M Circa 1565

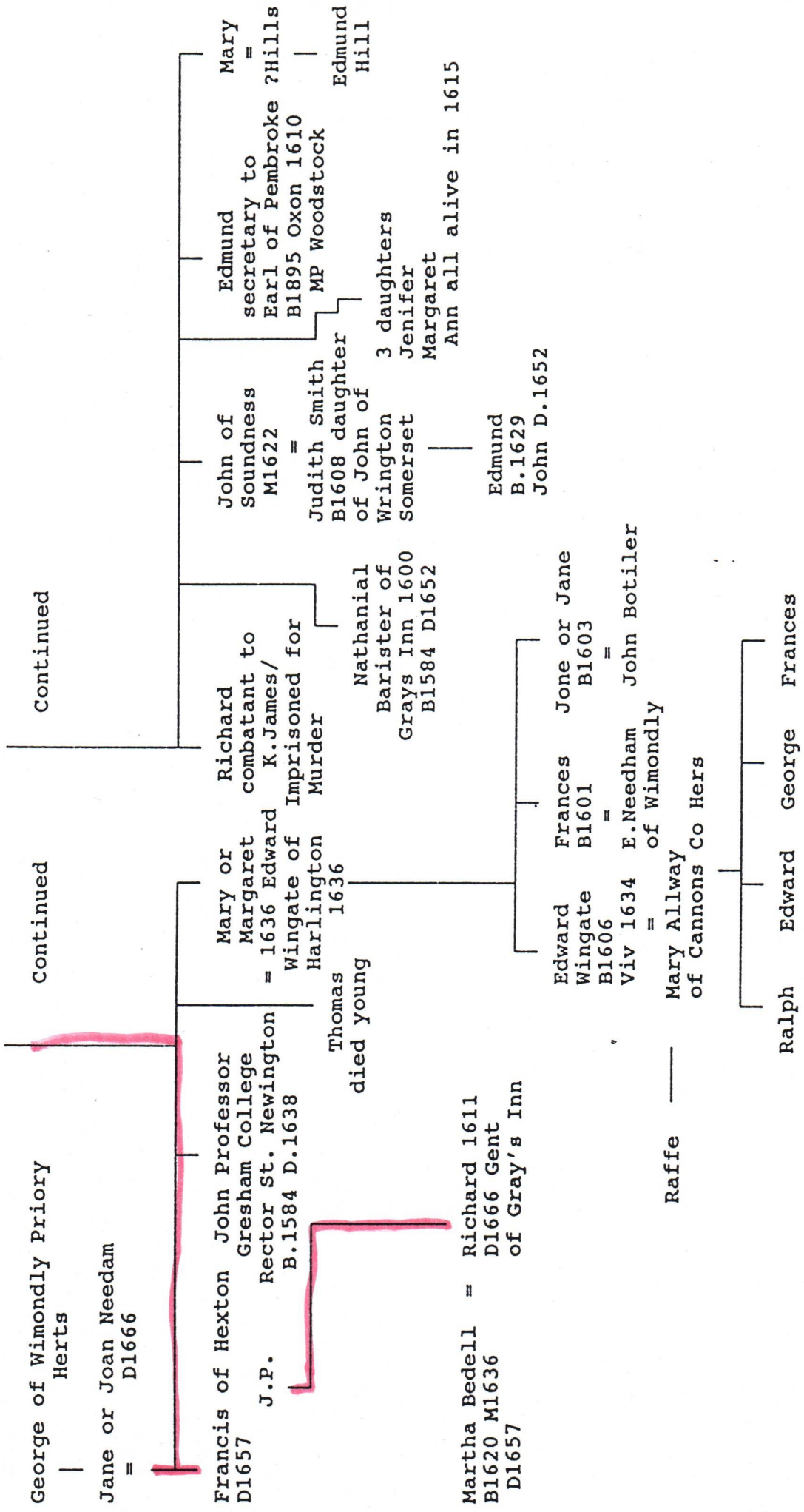
(2) = Cromwell Lee Godson of Thomas Cromwell D1603 left land to Edmund see Edmunds will.

Harcourt Taverner D1587

Penelope 1583? baptised 8/9/1566

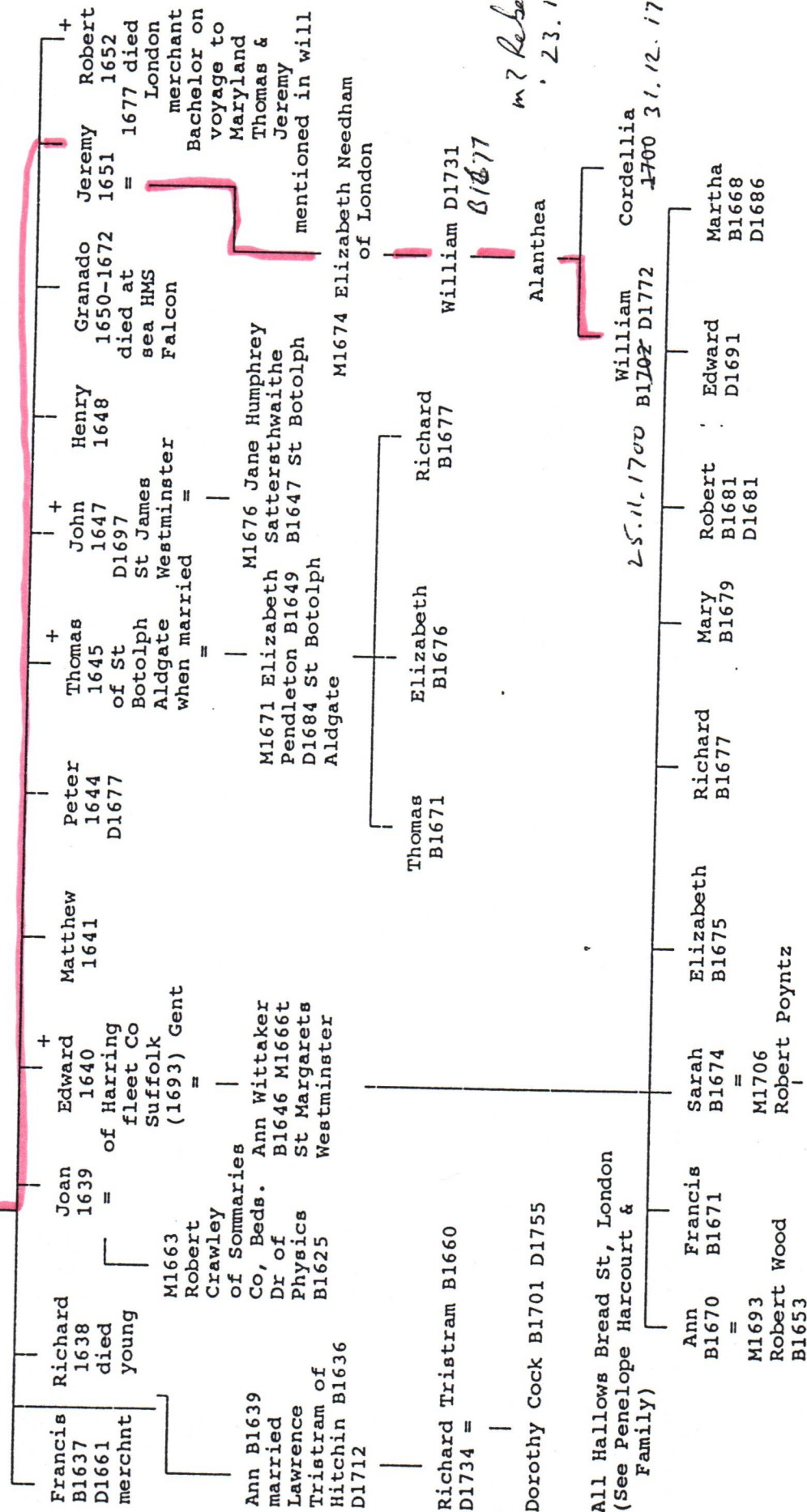
Francis





RICHARD TAVERNER = MARTHA BEDELL
of Hexton died 13/10/1653
1636

+ SOLD HEXTON
1674 TO JOHN CROSS



All Hallows Bread St, London
(See Penelope Harcourt & Family)

Newdigate Poyntz died 1772 owned Hexton manor 1764 = Elizabeth Castledon D1772 aged 60

Administration of Estate of William Taverner, 1731

PRO ref PROB6 / 107 / 41LH

William Taverner, 1731

On the sixth day issued forth a grant to Alathea Taverner, widow, the relict of William Taverner, late one of the Proctors General of the Gracious Court of Canterbury at the Arches, London, in the parish of St Gregory, London, deceased,

Having (goods sufficient to found the jurisdiction of the Court etc),

She being sworn well etc to administer the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased.

Notes in Margin:

Ultima Augusti [(issued by) last day of August]

Ultima Februarii [(inventory to be exhibited by) last day of February]

Guilielmus CAROLINUS
6 F 25 1731
Dicit defuncti debere 1/2 Surat — — — — — Vult Febrü 1731
Dicit defuncti debere 1/2 Surat — — — — — Vult Augusti
Javener P^{re}sbe^{re} Relicta Gulielm^o Javener n^ona
mus Procuratorum Gendralium Alme Curie Cantuar
des Breibus London^{is} in parochia^e S^{an}c^ti Gregorij London
Defuncti habentis 1/2 ad Hospitalium donat^{um} sua et cetera
Dicit defuncti debere 1/2 Surat — — — — — Vult Febrü 1731

PAR 6/107 / 41.41

By the most Reverend Father
in Divine Providence God's Blessing
his grace Primate of all England

His humble petition of William
Solary Publick.

Sheweth

That your Petitioner served Master
Edward Cook Solary Publick one of the Proctors
General of your Graces Court of Canterbury
for the space of seven years as his Clerk till the
27th of July 1700 and therefore humbly conceiveth and
hopeth he may be fitly qualifyed for your Graces
favour to be admitted unto the Number of the
Proctors of Your Graces Court of Canterbury

Your Petitioner therefore humbly prayeth
Your Graces Will to the most Worshipfull
S^r John Cook Rector of St. Dunstons
of the said Courts Court of Canterbury
for his admission unto the Number of the
Proctors excoent of your Graces said
Court of Canterbury and your Petitioner
shall ever pray

18. Novemb. 1709.

Trial Commissio.

No. Cantuar.

18 NOV 1709

W^o [Signature]

1709/15

John the Right Worth J^r Charles Judge
Knight Doctor of Laws and Master
of the Faculties.

These are to Certify, That William Carver born
in y^e Diocese of London, altho' about three and
twenty years, is a person of a sober life and
Conversation, conformable to y^e Doctrine and Discipline
of y^e Church of England as by Law is now established
And hath served as Clerke to M^r Edward Cooke
Doctor ^{and} Chancellor of the Arches Court of Cantuarburie
for y^e space of seven years and upwards.

John Carver

W. Carver

Therefore We have thought very able and
fitt to be admitted a Notary Publicke on
Testimony whereof we have subscribed
our hands, this thirtieth first day of July in y^e
years of our Lord 1700

Witness

Geo. Brampton.

J. Cooke

Tho: Ayliffe

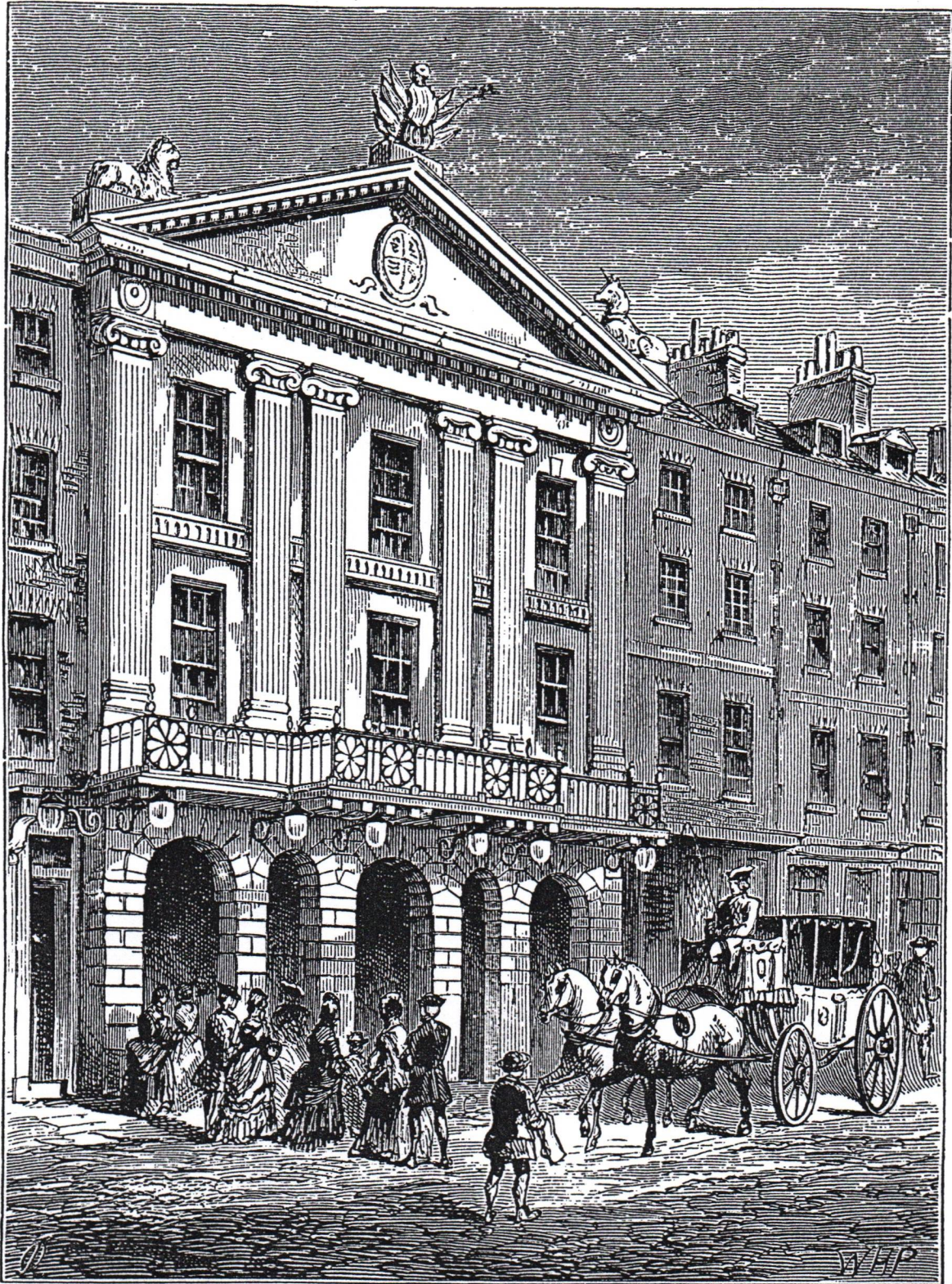
W. Clements

W. Cooke
J. Ayliffe
J. Clements

6 AUGUST 1700

John Carver
W. Carver

J. Cooke



FRONT OF OLD DRURY LANE THEATRE.

"As lately as the year 1767," says a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "another mass-house was discovered in Hog Lane, near the Seven Dials," and the officiating priest was "condemned to perpetual imprisonment"—simply for saying mass and giving the communion to a sick person. After four years' imprisonment his sentence was "commuted into exile for life." At the end of the last century, if not early in the present, Dr. Archer, a well-known Roman Catholic divine, and the author of several

volumes of sermons, said mass in the garret of a small public-house in St. Giles's, kept by an Irishman who was not ashamed of his religion. This sounds strange in our ears in the present state of general toleration and liberty; but more than a century before, in 1663, Pepys records the fact that "a priest was taken in his vestments officiating somewhere in Holborn the other day, and was committed [to prison] by Mr. Secretary Morris, according to law."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DRURY LANE THEATRE.

"I sing of the singe of Miss Drury the First,
And the birth of Miss Drury the Second."—*Rejected Addresses.*

The Original Playhouse in Covent Garden—The Players Imprisoned in the Gate House—The Cockpit Theatre—Killigrew's Theatre in Drury Lane—Betterton's Early Triumphs—The Players first styled "His Majesty's Servants"—Testimonial to Mrs. Bracegirdle—Lovely "Nancy" Oldfield—Colley Cibber as Manager and Dramatist—Garrick at Drury Lane—Kitty Clive, the Comic Actress—A Batch of Fortunate Actresses—Edmund and Charles Kean—Mrs. Nisbet, Macready, and Madame Celeste—Anecdote of Madame Malibran—Michael Balfe, and the Statue erected to his Honour—Salaries of Celebrated Players—Changes and Vicissitudes of "Old Drury"—The New Theatre closed by Order of the Lord Chamberlain—Mrs. Siddons' *Début*—The Kembles—Sheridan's Habit of Procrastination—The Theatre again destroyed by Fire—Coolness of Sheridan—The "Rejected Addresses"—Mr. Whitbread and the Colonnade—Rebuilding and Opening of the New Theatre—Its subsequent Vicissitudes—Van Amburgh and his Wild Beasts—The Theatre opened as an Opera-house.

In speaking of Drury Lane Theatre there arises a frequent source of confusion in the fact that it had no especial name till the middle of the eighteenth century; being in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, where the quality then resided, it was often styled "The Covent Garden Theatre." Thus Pepys, writing under date 1662: "To Lincoln's Inn Fields, and, it being too soon to go to dinner, I walked up and down, and looked upon the outside of the new theatre building in Covent Garden, which will be very fine." The late Mr. Richardson, of coffee-house celebrity, was in possession of a ticket inscribed, "For the Music at the Play House in Covent Garden, Tuesday, March 6, 1704"—nearly thirty years before Covent Garden Theatre, properly so called, was opened. It was also styled "The King's Theatre," and "The King's House;" Killigrew and his company being "His Majesty's Servants," while Davenant and his rival company were known by the name of "The Duke's Servants."

Guest writes, "I have not met with any play which is said on its title-page to have been acted in the Theatre Royal Drury Lane till after the division of the company in 1695; nor am I aware that the theatre is called 'Drury Lane' in any preface of the time. Even in 1704, *Love the Leveller* is said on its title-page to have been acted at the Theatre Royal in Brydges Street, Covent Garden. In 1719-20, an order from the Lord Chamberlain's

office is addressed to 'The Managers of the Theatre in Drury Lane, in Covent Garden.'

It is worthy of note that, although there were other theatres in London at an earlier date, there was, according to Guest, in the time of Shakespeare one at least outside the walls—namely, the Phoenix or Cockpit, on the eastern side of Drury Lane, the site of which was afterwards defined by Pitt Court—formerly Cockpit Alley. The company who acted there were styled "The Queen's Servants." In 1647, when an act was passed for the suppression of stage plays, the Cockpit was converted from the error of its ways into a school-room, but, in spite of the supremacy of the Puritans, its existence as a seat of learning was brief; it backslided, and again became a place of profane amusement, until in 1649, when the Puritan soldiers broke into the playhouse during a performance, routed the audience, and broke up the seats and stage. Nor was this all. Dr. Doran says that "the players, some of them the most accomplished of their day, were paraded through the streets in all their stage finery, and clapped into the Gate-house and other prisons, whence they were only too glad to escape, after much unseemly treatment, at the cost of all the theatrical property which they had carried on their backs." They had already experienced similar treatment in 1617, in a popular outbreak, when their clothes and properties were torn up by the mob, for what cause is not apparent.

Subsequently, after General Monk's arrival in London, the theatrical standard was raised again, and the drama commenced its new career at the Cockpit, with Rhodes for its "master"—managers being not then known—and Betterton as his pupil and apprentice.

Pepys thus writes in his "Diary," November 20th, 1660: "This morning I found my lord in bed late, he having been with the king, queen, and princesses at the Cockpit all night, where General Monk treated them, and after supper a play." It may be added that the original name of the "pit" in our theatres was the "cock-pit"—a word strongly corroborating the fact that our earliest places of such entertainment were used for lower sports before being applied to the purposes of the dramatic muse.

The principal actors at the Cockpit were Betterton and the beautiful youth, Edward Kynaston, who generally performed women's parts, before female actresses were permitted on the stage. Of Kynaston Pepys writes, Aug. 18: "Capt. Ferrers took me and Creed to the Cockpitt play—the first that I have had time to see since my coming from sea. *The Loyall Subject*, where one Kynaston, a boy, acted the duke's sister, but made the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life." "Jan. 7. Tom and I and my wife to the theatre, and there saw *The Silent Woman*. Among other things here Kynaston, the boy, had the good turn to appear in three shapes: first as a poor woman, in ordinary clothes, to please 'Morose;' then in fine clothes, as a gallant, and in them was clearly the prettiest woman in the whole house; and lastly as a man, and then likewise did appear the handsomest man in the whole house."

Pepys tells us that the old actors were in possession of the Cockpit in August, 1660; also that he saw *The Cardinal* acted there, October 2, 1662; but the theatre was small, and seems to have soon been superseded. At all events, nothing further is known of its history. There is a chance allusion to it in *The Muse's Looking-glass* of Randolphe, wherein the following dialogue occurs:—

"Mrs. Flowerdew. It was a zealous prayer
I heard a brother make concerning playhouses.

Bird. For charity, what is it?

F. That the Globe,

Wherein (quoth he) reigns a whole world of vice,
Had been consum'd; the Phoenix burnt to ashes."

We hear very little of the other actors of the Cockpit, save that one Allen became a major in Charles's army, and acted as quartermaster-general at Oxford; and that two others, named Perkins and Sumner, finding their occupation gone, "kept

house together at Clerkenwell, where they died some years before the Restoration."

Soon after the Restoration Thomas Killigrew, Page of Honour, and subsequently Master of the Revels, to Charles I., purchased from the Earl of Bedford a lease for forty-one years of a piece of ground situated in the two parishes of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields and St. Paul's, Covent Garden. On this site, until then known as the "Riding Yard," he erected, we are told, at a cost of £1,500, a theatre, the dimensions of which were 112 feet by 59 feet, and which was opened in 1663. The following is a copy of the first playbill issued:—

"By His Majesty his company of Comedians, at the New Theatre in Drury Lane. This day, being Thursday, April 8th, 1663, will be acted a comedy called *The Humorous Lieutenant*. The King, Mr. Wintersell; Demetrius, Mr. Hart; Seleucus, Mr. Burt; Leontius, Major Mohun; Lieutenant, Mr. Clun; Celia, Mrs. Marshall. The Play will begin at Three o'clock exactly. Boxes, 4s.; Pit, 2s. 6d.; Middle Gallery, 1s. 6d.; Upper Gallery, 1s."

This comedy (by Beaumont and Fletcher) is mentioned in Pepys' "Diary," in the following terms:—"To the King's House, and there saw *The Humorous Lieutenant*—a silly play, I think—only the spirit in it that grows very tall, and then sinks again to nothing, having two heads breeding upon one, and then Knipp's singing, did please us. Here, in a box above, we spied Mrs. Pierce; and going out, they called us, and so we staid for them; and Knipp took us all in, and brought us to Nelly, a most pretty woman, who acted the great part, 'Coelia,' to-day, very fine, and did it pretty well. I kissed her, and so did my wife; and a mighty pretty soul she is."

Of Killigrew it is recorded by Pepys that "when a boy he would go to the 'Red Bull,' and when the man cried to the boys, 'Who will go to be a devil, and he shall see the play for nothing?' then would he go in, and be a devil on the stage, and so get to see plays." It may here be remarked by way of parenthesis that the "Red Bull" which stood at the end of St. John Street, Clerkenwell, was, according to tradition, the playhouse before which Shakespeare held gentlemen's horses.

Dr. Doran writes:—"In December, 1661, there is a crowded house at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, to see young Mr. Betterton play the Dane's part in *Hamlet*; charming Mistress Saunderson acting 'Ophelia.' Old ladies and gentlemen flock in crowds to witness it, and the streets are fairly blocked with the lumbering carriages; among the carriage folk being Mrs. Palmer, destined to become, next year, Countess of Castlemaine." "It's beyond imagination," whispers Mr. Pepys to his neighbour,

who answers only with a long-drawn "Hush!" "Mr. Betterton," rejoins Pepys, in the complacent tone of one qualified to judge, "is the best actor in the world, and Miss Saunderson is the best lady on the stage. It is a pity they are not married."

Fifty years after these early triumphs Mr. and Mrs. Betterton, having made their fortune as well as their fame, are living in Great Russell Street, Covent Garden, in a well-appointed house. In April, 1710, the former retired from the stage, fixing the 13th as his benefit-night at the Haymarket Theatre, then newly built. He died within forty-eight hours afterwards.

Actors were first known as "His Majesty's Servants" in 1603, having been previously styled "The Servants of the Lord Chamberlain." It may be mentioned here that as "His Majesty's Servants" the actors were entitled to wear, and did wear, the royal livery of scarlet. The last actor who wore it was Baddeley, who gave the annual "cake" to the green-room of Drury Lane. He was, we believe, the original "Moses" in *The School for Scandal*. A portrait of Baddeley, in his red waistcoat, used to be seen in poor old "Paddy" Green's collection at "Evans's." At this period dramatic entertainments began at one and terminated at three o'clock in the afternoon.

In 1663, as we see by the playbill before quoted, fashion had altered the hour of commencement to three p.m.; in 1667 it had crept on to four o'clock, until by degrees the evening came to be recognised as the most appropriate time for such amusements. Mohun and Hart had both held commissions in the army, and excelled in tragic and heroic parts. The former was a boon companion and favourite of Rochester. "Becky Marshal" is frequently mentioned by Pepys, and always with praise, as also is Mrs. Knipp, of whom Killigrew told him, "Knipp is like to make the best actor that ever come upon the stage, she understanding so well, that they are going to give her thirty pounds a year more."

Time and space alike, however, would be wanting to enumerate all the dramatic celebrities who have immortalised themselves upon the boards of "Old Drury;" their name is "Legion." As they pass in review before our imagination we can only briefly particularise a few of the most remarkable.

Here Thomas Betterton, who, as we have seen, served his apprenticeship at the Cockpit, and was long the chief attraction of the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, took a farewell benefit in 1709, preliminary to the one before mentioned, being then in his seventy-fifth year. As admirable in his private as in his professional character; a devoted husband to a wife who, herself an actress, was as virtuous

as she was beautiful; generous and charitable to excess to his poorer "brethren of the buskin;" the son of the cook of Charles I. fairly earned the universal esteem in which he was held, and which procured him a royal funeral in Westminster Abbey. Here Mrs. Bracegirdle, equally celebrated for her beauty and her coldness, drove troops of scented fops to distraction.

There seems little doubt of her attachment to the unfortunate Mountford, who acted "Alexander" to her "Statira," and who was murdered by Captain Hill, one of her many rejected suitors. Hill and Lord Mohun having made an abortive attempt to carry off Mrs. Bracegirdle, the former (as we have seen) vowed vengeance upon Mountford, whom he regarded as the cause of the lady's coldness. He accordingly laid wait for the actor in the street, and struck him. Mountford demanded "what that was for;" upon which (according to the dying man's deposition) Hill drew his sword and ran it through the actor's body.

At Drury Lane flourished the lovely "Nancy" Oldfield, who quitted the bar of the "Mitre" for the stage, and whose notorious intimacy with General Churchill, cousin of the great Duke of Marlborough, obtained for her a grave in Westminster Abbey. Persons of rank and distinction contended for the honour of bearing her pall, and her remains lay in state for three days in the Jerusalem Chamber!

Here, too, Barton Booth stimulated the rival parties of Whigs and Tories in Addison's famous tragedy of *Cato*. Of this piece Johnson remarks, in his "Life of Addison:" "The whole nation was at that time on fire with faction. The Whigs applauded every line in which liberty was mentioned as a satire on the Tories, and the Tories echoed every clap, to show that the satire was unfelt. The story of Bolingbroke is well known. He called Booth to his box, and gave him fifty guineas for defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual dictator."

Is not Drury Lane Theatre also intimately associated with the name of Colley Cibber, successful manager and dramatist, and for twenty-seven years Poet Laureate? His annual birthday and New Year odes, all religiously preserved in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, are so invariably bad that his friends asserted that he wrote them as so many jokes. The *London Magazine* for 1737 contains the following epigram:—

"ON SEEING TOBACCO-PIPES LIT WITH ONE OF THE LAUREATE'S ODES."

"While the soft song that warbles George's praise
From pipe to pipe the living flame conveys,
Critics who long have scorn'd must now admire;
For who can say his ode now wants its fire?"

Drury Lane at this time exhibited a perfect constellation of talent. Quin, Macklin, Garrick, Mrs. Clive, and Mrs. Pritchard, with others of subordinate merit, formed a company which has rarely been equalled. It must have been a cruel blow to Quin, long the favourite tragedian of the town, to see himself rivalled by Macklin, and subsequently surpassed by Garrick. In spite of the contempt with which he affected to regard the latter, he expressed his own secret misgivings in his first burst of indignation at the rapid success of the rising actor:—"If this young fellow be right, then we have all been wrong."

From 1747 to 1776 Drury Lane owned the sway of David Garrick, the English Roscius, of whom Horace Walpole says: "All the run is now after Garrick, a wine-merchant who is turned player. The Duke of Argyll says he is superior to Betterton." This, however, was not the opinion of the cynical Horace, although Alexander Pope's verdict on Garrick was, "That young man never had his equal as an actor, and he will never have a rival." And Dr. Johnson awarded him a still higher meed of praise in saying: "Here is a man who has advanced the dignity of his profession. Garrick has made a player a higher character."

Drury Lane made the fortune of the ugly, witty, and most popular comic actress, Kitty Clive, thus celebrated by Horace Walpole—

"Here liv'd the laughter-loving dame—
A matchless actress—Clive her name;
The comic muse with her retir'd,
And shed a tear when she expir'd."

To which Peter Pindar (Dr. Wolcot), who was a devoted admirer of Mrs. Jordan, retorted—

"Know Comedy is hearty—all alive;
Truth and thy trumpet seem not to agree;
The sprightly lass no more expir'd with Clive
Than Dame Humility will do with thee."

Here the silver-toned Mrs. Billington appeared in the opera of *Rosetta*. Haydn the composer, who admired this lady greatly, observed of Sir Joshua Reynolds' celebrated picture of her—where she is represented as "St. Cecilia" listening to the heavenly choir—"It is a very fine likeness, but there is a strange mistake in the picture. You have painted her listening to the angels; you ought to have represented the angels listening to her."

Old Drury witnessed the farewell performance of Miss Farren (Countess of Derby) in 1797, just before she exchanged the buskin for a coronet; witnessed, too, the first appearance of Harriet Mellon, in 1795, and her last, in February, 1815—for in the previous month she had wedded Mr. Coutts, the banker. In 1827, Mrs. Coutts having been

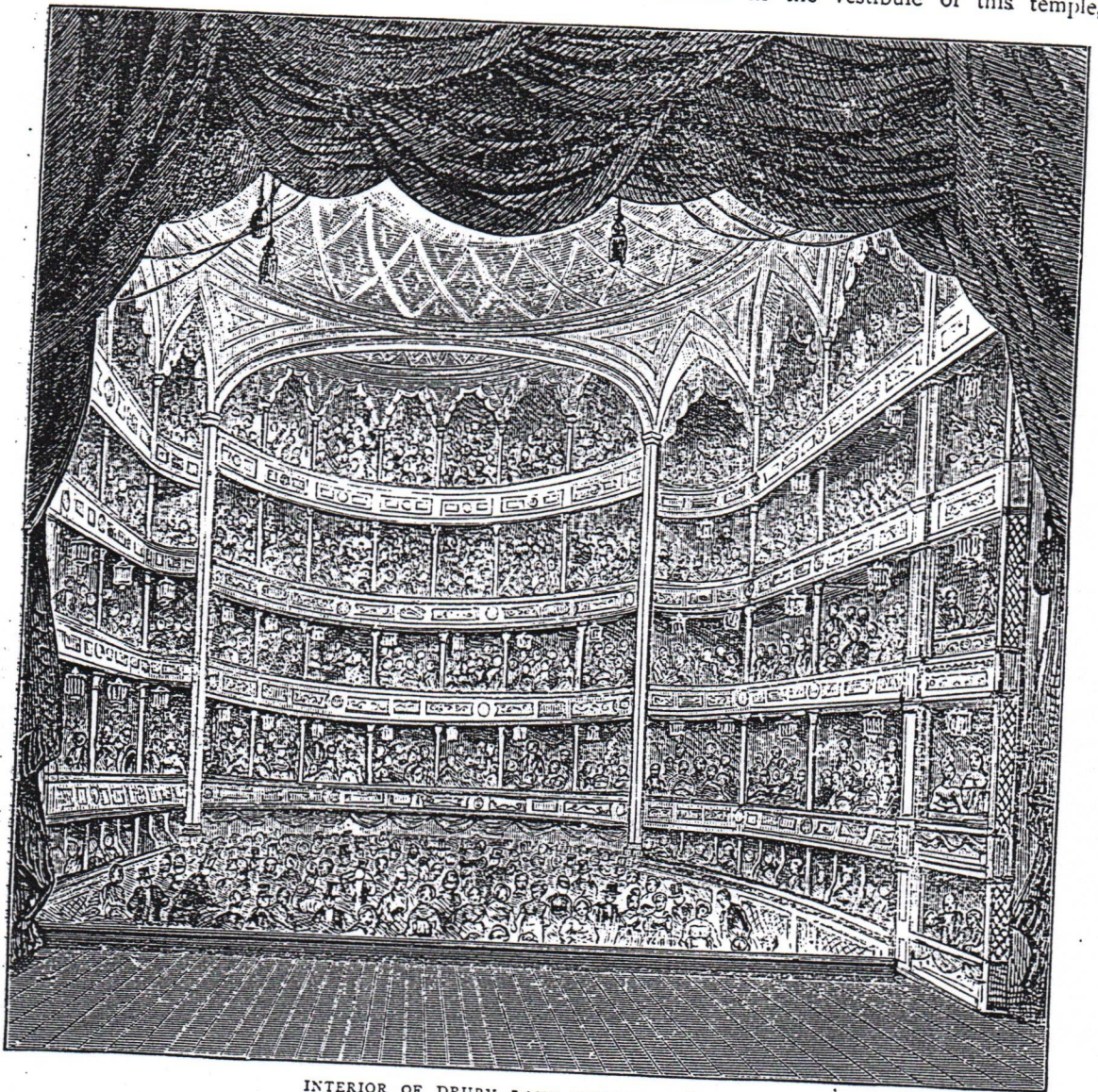
then five years a widow, married the Duke of St. Albans, at that time in his twenty-seventh year. Drury Lane saw the rise of the long and devoted attachment of the Duke of Clarence to Mrs. Jordan, and the short-lived passion of George, Prince of Wales, for the lovely Mrs. Robinson, better known as "Perdita," the character in which she appeared on the evening when she captivated her royal admirer.

Here, in the present century, Edmund Kean ran his brilliant but erratic career, and his more estimable, although less highly gifted, son Charles made his *début* as "Young Norval." Here, in 1828, Joe Grimaldi, prince of clowns and of good fellows, took his farewell of the stage, where, the following year, Mrs. Nisbet (subsequently Lady Boothby), made her first curtsey to a London audience; and there for several years the imperious Macready rode roughshod over supers, brother-actors, and managers, until, after a personal assault upon the lessee, he transferred his services to the rival house. Neither must the name of Madame Celeste be omitted from the list; for, although it was not Drury Lane Theatre to which she owed her reputation as an actress, it was nevertheless there that she made her first appearance in London, in the ballad of *La Bayadere* in 1830. This lady may fairly be ranked among the wonders of her age, for in 1874 we find her performing the part of the Indian huntress in *The Green Bushes* with all the vigour and pathos and muth of the freshness of her youth. During those four-and-forty years generations of great actresses had arisen, shone as stars for a score of years, and passed away into oblivion, marriage, or death; but Celeste still survived and flourished—half a century after her *début*—bidding defiance alike to old Time and new fashions, as if warranted, like Tennyson's brock, to "go on for ever."

The two first operas of Michael Balfe—*The Siege of Rochelle* and *The Maid of Artois*—were produced at Drury Lane in 1835-6. The gifted and ill-fated Madame Malibran sustained the principal part in *The Maid of Artois* a few months before her premature death. In Bunn's "History of the Stage" we are told an amusing anecdote of the famous vocalist in this character. She was supposed in the last act to be perishing with thirst in the desert; the scene was long and exhausting, the lady in delicate health. She therefore proposed to Bunn that he should somehow convey a pint of porter to her in the desert, promising him in that case an *encore* to the finale. "So," says Bunn, "I arranged that behind the pile of drifted sand on which she sinks exhausted a small aperture should be made in the

stage, and through that aperture a pewter-pint of porter was conveyed to the parched lips of this rare child of song, which so revived her, after the terrible exertion of the scene, that she electrified the audience, and had strength to repeat the finale."

quent triumphs as a successful composer of English, French, and Italian opera. The works of Michael Balfe are appreciated not only in England, but in France, Germany, and Italy. The statue erected to his honour in the vestibule of this temple,



INTERIOR OF DRURY LANE THEATRE, 1804.

Bunn having paid Malibran £125 for each of fifteen performances in one month, she, after much persuasion, consented to sing for him throughout the next month for the sum of £1,000, but added, "For goodness' sake, do not let any one know I am singing on such terms!"

The name of Balfe, not the least eminent of British composers, is intimately associated with Drury Lane, from the time of the young Irishman's unassuming *début* in the orchestra to his subse-

where so many of his triumphs have been achieved—a memorial to which numbers of the most distinguished patrons and professors of music, literature, and the drama, both native and foreign, added their quota—will be a lasting proof of the estimation in which he has been held both at home and abroad.

It is worth while to notice how the salaries of actors have been steadily rising during the last two centuries. We have Pepys' authority that Mrs.

Knipp, "who was like to make the best actor of her time," had her salary increased £30 a year. A century later Garrick, as head of his company, drew the highest salary—*i.e.*, £16 16s. a week. Yet fifty years, and Miss Farren, "the Oldfield of her day," is receiving £31 10s. a week, while scarcely a decade afterwards we find Edmund Kean drawing double that sum nightly.

It was remarked about fifty years ago by a well-known writer "that Malibran drew five times the salary of the Colonial Secretary, the President of America was not so well paid as Ellen Tree, or the Premier of Great Britain as Mr. Macready." What would he have said in 1874, when Madame Christine Nilsson received £200 a night at Drury Lane, and Madame Patti demanded and was paid £800 for singing six songs at the Liverpool Musical Festival?

"Old Drury," viewed simply as a building, has experienced many changes and vicissitudes. In 1672 it was burnt to the ground, and the company migrated to the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, until the completion of a new building, designed by Sir Christopher Wren.

The new theatre was opened in 1674, with a prologue and epilogue by Dryden, who, as shown by Mr. R. P. Collier, in Vol. IV. of the Shakespeare Society's Papers, was joined with Killigrew, Mohun, &c., in the speculation of what was then colloquially termed "the New Play House."

In 1707 this theatre, of which Christopher Rich was then the patentee, was temporarily closed, by order of the Lord Chamberlain, in consequence of the violent quarrels between the proprietors and the actors. It subsequently passed into the hands of Willer, Dogget, Cibber, and Booth. In 1714 a life patent was granted to Sir R. Steele, which five years afterwards was revoked. In 1747, when Lacy and Garrick entered into partnership, the latter revived here the performance of Shakespeare's plays; the prologue on that occasion being written, as every Englishman knows; by Dr. Johnson.

In 1780, during the Gordon Riots, a "No Popery" mob got up a row in the theatre, to which they did considerable damage. The objects of their fury were "the papists and Frenchmen" whom Garrick had engaged to dance in a grand spectacular piece entitled *The Chinese Festival*. His Majesty George III., who happened to be present the night of the riot, seemed, it is said, rather amused than otherwise!

In 1775 the afterwards famous Mrs. Siddons, then in her twentieth year, made her first appearance at Drury Lane, in the character of "Portia," in *The Merchant of Venice*. She seems to have

excited but little notice at this time, and retired to the provinces the following year. It was not until 1782, when her performance at the Bath Theatre had excited general admiration, that she obtained a re-engagement at Drury Lane—which she used often to call "the wilderness"—and where her brother, John Kemble, made his *début* as Hamlet, in 1783. In 1776, when Garrick retired from the profession, Messrs. Sheridan, Linley, and Ford became the proprietors of the theatre which he had rendered so justly celebrated. It was pulled down in 1791, and rebuilt, the company meanwhile performing at the Haymarket. In 1794 the new theatre—which was designed by Mr. Holland, and is said to have been a model of elegance and beauty—opened, with every prospect of a long and brilliant career. For some years subsequently the gifted Kemble family—John and Charles, with their unapproachable sister, Mrs. Siddons—were the principal attraction at Drury Lane, and the fortunes of the theatre were seriously affected by their withdrawal, in 1803.

We are told in the "Memoirs" of Sheridan that his translation of *The Death of Rolla*, under the title of *Pizarro*, brought him in £25,000 in five weeks. The *Era Almanack* mentions a curious instance of Sheridan's inveterate habit of procrastination:—"At the time the house was overflowing, on the first night's performance of *Pizarro*, all that was written of the play was actually rehearsing; and, incredible as it may appear, until the end of the fourth act, neither Mrs. Siddons, nor Charles Kemble, nor Barrymore, had all their speeches for the fifth. Mr. Sheridan was up-stairs in the prompter's-room, where he was writing the last part of the play while the earlier parts were acting, and every ten minutes he brought down as much of the dialogue as he had done, piecemeal, into the green-room, abusing himself and his negligence, and making a thousand winning and soothing apologies for having kept the performers so long in such painful suspense."

In 1809 Drury Lane Theatre was again destroyed by fire. Sheridan, at the time of the conflagration, was at the House of Commons, which voted an immediate adjournment when the disastrous news arrived; though Sheridan himself protested against such an interruption of public business on account of his own or any other private interests. He went thither, however, in all haste, and whilst seeing his own property in flames, sat down with his friend Barry in a coffee-house opposite, to a bottle of port, coolly remarking, in answer to some friendly expostulation, that it was "hard if a man could not drink a glass of wine by his own fire!"

The fire which burnt down "Old Drury" was

not altogether profitless to the world of poetry, though so heavy a blow to the dramatic muse, for it proved the immediate cause of the appearance of the "Rejected Addresses"—the joint production of Horace and James Smith—one of the most popular contributions to modern light literature. The history of the book was as follows:—In the month of August, 1812, there appeared in the daily newspapers an advertisement to the effect that the committee for rebuilding Drury Lane Theatre were anxious to promote a "free and fair competition" for an address to be spoken upon the re-opening of the theatre on the 10th of October ensuing, and that they had therefore announced to the public that they would be glad to receive such compositions, addressed to their secretary. Some hundred and twelve compositions were sent in—good, bad, and indifferent; and the two Smiths, seizing on the occasion, put together and published in a small volume twenty-one such imaginary addresses or prologues, imitating in the most delicate and graceful manner the styles of the chief writers of the day. The book, as soon as published, sold like wild-fire, and ran through very many editions before the end of the year, and soon established itself as an English classic. Among those writers who were thus travestied were Lord Byron, Scott, Crabbe, Wordsworth, Thomas Moore, Dr. Johnson, "Monk" Lewis, Fitzgerald, William Cobbett, and Samuel T. Coleridge. Of all the imitations, however, that of Sir Walter was universally pronounced the best; and as it contains a vivid description of the scene of conflagration, though in mock-heroic style, we may be pardoned for drawing upon it here rather largely.

First we have a picturesque description of London in darkness; next, we are thus introduced to the outbreak of the fire in the early morning—by a poetical licence, of course, since it happened, in fact, in the evening:—

"As Chaos, which, by heavenly doom,
Had slept in everlasting gloom,
Started with terror and surprise
When light first flashed upon her eyes:
So London's sons in nightcap woke,
In bedgown woke her dames;
For shouts were heard 'mid fire and smoke,
And twice ten thousand voices spoke—
'The Playhouse is in flames!'—
And, lo! where Catherine Street extends,
A fiery tail its lustre lends
To every window-pane;
Blushes each spout in Martlet Court,
And Barbican, moth-eaten fort,
And Covent Garden kennels sport
A bright ensanguined drain."

44

Then follows the description of the arrival of the fire-engines, quite in the style of Sir Walter Scott in "Marmion" or "The Lady of the Lake":—

"The summoned firemen woke at call,
And hied them to their stations all;
* * * * *
The engines thundered through the street,
Fire-hook, pipe, bucket, all complete,
And torches glared, and clattering feet
Along the pavement paced.
And one, the leader of the band,
From Charing Cross along the Strand,
Like stag by beagles hunted hard,
Ran till he stopped at Vinegar Yard.
The burning badge his shoulder bore,
The belt and oilskin cap he wore,
The cane he had his men to bang,
Showed foreman of the British gang.
His name was Higginbottom: now
'Tis meet that I should tell you how
The others came in view:
The Hand in Hand the race begun,
Then came the Phoenix and the Sun,
The Exchange, where old insurers run,
The Eagle, where the new."

And then we have the fire itself brought before us in all its sensational details:—

"A sadder scene was ne'er disclosed;
Without, within, in hideous show,
Devouring flames resistless glow,
And blazing rafters downwards go,
And never halloo, 'Heads below!'—
Nor notice give at all.
The firemen, terrified, are slow
To bid the pumping torrent flow,
For fear the roof should fall.
Back, Robins, back! Crump, stand aloof!
Whitford, keep near the walls!
Huggins, regard your own behoof!
For, lo! the blazing, rocking roof
Down, down, in thunder, falls.
An awful pause succeeds the stroke,
And o'er the ruins volumned smoke,
Rolling around its pitchy shroud,
Concealed them from the astonished crowd.
At length the mist awhile was cleared,
When, lo! amidst the wreck upheared,
Gradual a moving head appeared,
And Eagle firemen knew
'Twas Joseph Muggins—name revered!—
The foreman of their crew.
Loud shouted all, in signs of woe,
'A Muggins! to the rescue, ho!
And poured the hissing tide.
Meanwhile, Joe Muggins fought amain,
And strove and struggled, all in vain,
For, rallying but to fall again,
He tottered, sunk, and died."

Last follows a picture, too often seen in other and lesser conflagrations, of the death of a gallant fireman, told with a mock-heroic power which never certainly has been surpassed.

Of the brothers Smith, the authors of these charming parodies, we have already spoken in our description of Craven Street, Strand. It will be therefore enough to add here the fact that, having shone as wits in London society for more than a quarter of a century, they died, James in 1839, and Horace ten years later. Lord Byron himself, in spite of being one of the authors so pleasantly satirised in the volume, called the "Rejected Addresses" by far the best thing of the kind since the "Rolliad." Slight and small as was the volume, it was reviewed at considerable length by Lord Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*, while the *Quarterly* criticised it in company with forty of the "Addresses" which had really been "rejected" on the occasion, pronouncing it a model of "humour, good-humour, discrimination, and good taste." It may be of interest, and an encouragement to young authors, to learn that the copyright, which in the first instance Murray refused to buy for twenty, was sold by the brothers for upwards of a thousand pounds! The book has been republished in America, and is read with delight wherever the English language is known. The imitations of Wordsworth ("The Baby's Début"), Cobbett ("The Hampshire Farmer's Address"), Southey ("The Rebuilding"), Coleridge ("Play House Musings"), Crabbe ("The Theatre"), Lord Byron (the first stanzas of "Cui Bono?"), the songs entitled "Drury Lane Hustings" and "The Theatrical Alarm Bell" (imitations of the then editor of the *Morning Post*), and the travesties of *Macbeth*, *George Barnwell*, and *The Stranger*, were all written by James Smith; the rest, including the parody of Sir Walter Scott, by Horace.

The present edifice—the fourth erected on the site—modelled upon the plan of the great theatre at Bordeaux, by Mr. Wyatt, the architect, was opened in 1812, with a prologue written by Lord Byron. In 1831 the Doric portico in Catherine Street, and the colonnade in Little Russell Street, were added to the structure. It is not a little singular that the necessity of such a colonnade had been thus humorously brought under the notice of the Building Committee as far back as the year 1812, in one of the "Rejected Addresses," in the following lines, in imitation of S. T. Coleridge:—

"Oh, Mr. Whitbread! fie upon you, sir!
I think you should have built a colonnade.
When tender beauty, looking for her coach,
Protrudes her gloveless hand, perceives the shower,
And draws the tippet closer round her throat,
And ere she mount the step, the oozing mud
Sinks through her pale kid slipper.

On the morrow
She coughs at breakfast, and her gruff papa

Cries, 'There you go! this comes of playhouses!'
To build no portico is penny wise;
Heaven grant it prove not in the end pound foolish!"

The new building was pronounced by the imitators of Mr. Cobbett, in the "Rejected Addresses," "not a gimcrack palace, not a Solomon's temple, not a frost-work of Brobdingnag filagree, but a plain, honest, homely, industrious, wholesome, brown-brick playhouse"—a "large, comfortable house, thanks to Mr. Whitbread." The theatre, in 1818, was under a committee of noblemen and gentlemen, among whom were Lord Yarmouth (afterwards Marquis of Hertford) and Lord Byron, the latter of whom, however, soon after being appointed, left England, never to return.

For many years after that date the great national theatre ran an erratic and, for the most part, disastrous career, having been not inaptly compared to a syren luring adventurous lessees to ruin and bankruptcy. In the agony of desperation it has worn "motley," caught eagerly at every *bizarre* attraction, and been—

"Everything by turns, and nothing long;"

a monster concert-hall, a French hippodrome, and even an arena for the sports of Van Amburgh and his wild beasts, with spasmodic intervals of pantomime and legitimate drama. Sad to relate, we have it on the authority of Mr. Bunn, the lessee, that Van Amburgh was a greater success, in a pecuniary point of view, than Mr. Macready.

For several seasons it was the home of English opera, a class of entertainment which has never been appreciated as it deserves among our countrymen, though frequent attempts have been made to give it a position equal to that enjoyed by Italian opera. It may be observed here that Clara Novello, later the Countess Gugliucci, made a brilliant *début* at Drury Lane, in 1843, as "Sappho."

After the destruction by fire of Her Majesty's Theatre, in 1867, "Old Drury" rose greatly in the social scale, having been advanced to the dignity of the opposition opera-house to Covent Garden. This, however, was only a temporary arrangement until the new opera-house should be built. In 1879 the lesseeship of the theatre passed into the hands of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Augustus Harris, under whose management "Old Drury" has fully maintained its claim to be styled the "National Theatre." Sir Augustus, one of the greatest of theatrical managers, died in 1896.

Apart from the interest attaching to the theatre as a place of dramatic entertainment, some details of the present building may be placed on record here.

The general form of the edifice is that of a

parallelogram; its extent from north to south being 131 feet, and from east to west 237 feet, independently of the painting and scene-rooms, which are partially detached, extending 93 feet further eastward. The chief entrance is approached by a flight of steps, protected by a porch. The entrance-hall communicates, eastward, with the rotunda and the staircases to the boxes; on the north and south, with the pit-lobbies; and from the latter, by circuitous passages, with the pit itself. The rotunda and grand staircase form very beautiful portions of the theatre. The rotunda, 30 feet in diameter, is surrounded by a circular gallery, and crowned by an elegant dome. Here, among other statues of famous poets and actors, is the bust of Balfie already alluded to.

The auditory has a most imposing effect, and is built nearly in the form of a horse-shoe; it is 46 feet wide at the stage, 52 feet across the centre of the pit, and 48 feet from the front of the stage to the centre of the dress-circle. The height from the floor of the pit to the ceiling is 47 feet. There are three tiers of boxes, and an upper and lower gallery; and the house is calculated to accommodate upwards of 3,000 persons.

The proscenium, being as it were the portico of the stage, has less of imitative art in its decoration than the other parts of the house. On each side are two demi-columns of the Corinthian order, supporting a rich entablature, a coved ceiling, and, spanning the stage, an elliptical arch, the whole

being very rich in gilding. Down to about the year 1860, when the theatre underwent extensive renovation, the proscenium bore above it the royal arms, together with the well-known classical motto "*Veluti in speculum.*" In its original state the interior of the theatre was circular, but it was altered to its present form during the management of Mr. Elliston, at a cost of not less than £21,000. The interior has several times been renovated and beautified at considerable expense, and now presents an aspect of uncommon splendour.

The stage is of great extent, being 96 feet from the orchestra to the back wall, and upwards of 77 feet in width from wall to wall. The manager's room, actress' dressing-rooms, and various other apartments, are on the north side of the stage; and on the south are the green-rooms, the prompter's-room, the actors' dressing-rooms, and a range of stabling for twenty horses. Above the auditory are the carpenters' shops and store-rooms; whilst the gas-fitters' and property-rooms are in the immediate vicinity of the stage. The painting-room is over the eastern extremity of the stage, and measures nearly 80 feet in length by 36 in height and width. An opening has been made through the original back wall of the stage, whereby the space below the painting-room can be made available for scenic effects, thus giving to the stage an entire depth of 125 feet, the largest of any stage in Europe.

CHAPTER XXIX.

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE.

"The houses twain
Of Covent Garden and of Drury Lane."—*Rejected Addresses.*

The Building of the Theatre—"Rich's Glory"—The First Performance at Covent Garden—Ladies at the Theatre—Receipts of the House—Performance of Handel's "Messiah"—Royalty flock to the Haymarket, and Horace Walpole's Remarks upon the Subject—First Appearance of "Peg" Woffington—Death of Rich, and Sale of Covent Garden Theatre—Charles Macklin, the Comedian and Centenarian—Stephen Kemble—Inledon—George Frederick Cooke—John Philip Kemble—"The Young Roscius"—The Theatre burnt in 1808—The Duke of Northumberland's Generosity to Kemble—The Theatre rebuilt and opened—The "O. P." Riots, succeeded by a run of uninterrupted Prosperity—Poetic Effusions upon Actresses wedded to Noblemen.

We have seen that "the new playhouse in Drury Lane" was frequently spoken of as "Covent Garden Theatre," and naturally enough, for the theatre in Bow Street was not built until the year 1731. The latter was a speculation of John Rich, the celebrated harlequin, and patentee of the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, who removed hither with his company in 1732.

Hogarth's caricature of "Rich's Glory; or, His Triumphant Entry into Covent Garden," of which we give a copy on page 223, refers to this removal.

The progress of the building was thus commented on in the *Daily Advertiser* for March 2, 1730:—"We hear the new theatre which is to be built in Covent Garden will be after the model of the opera-house in the Haymarket; and by the draught that has been approved of for the same, it's said it will exceed the opera-house in magnificence of structure."

The same paper for August 4, 1731, states:—"The new theatre building in Covent Garden for Mr. Rich is carrying on with such expedition and

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