

BY MALCOLM C. SALAMAN.

(With Illustrations from photographs by Cassell & Co., Ltd.)

HOW well Mr. Pinero interpreted an old man's glowing mood of reminiscence and the magic of a name when, in his comedy, *Trelawny of the "Wells,"* he showed us stern old Sir William Gower transfigured and moved to sympathy at the sudden mention of Edmund Kean by a girl whose mother had played Cordelia to his Lear. "My dear, I—I've seen Edmund Kean . . . Lord bless us! How he stirred me!" It was a happy touch and a true. It was like hearing my own father. Why, but yesterday I happened to say I was going to Drury Lane Theatre, and at once his memory went back to the great days of Edmund Kean. "We always had one of those side boxes right down on the stage. I shall never forget the thrill Kean gave me the night I saw him as King Lear, when, with a piteous mad look in his eyes, he came close up to our box and cried, "Look, look, a mouse!" And that was in 1827; yet all Hazlitt's criticisms could not bring Kean so near to me. There is one especial advantage in having a very aged father, he keeps one in personal touch with the historic past; the dead great ones are not mere names or traditions as long as one can speak familiarly of them with one who has seen or known them in the flesh. He enables one to understand antique emotions, as Lamb would say, in their quiddity, to discount remote decades, and feel contemporary almost with George IV. So, to visit Drury Lane Theatre fresh from a talk with one who knew it in the 'twenties is to be carried in spirit across a bridge of

echoes, till one begins to fancy that one is wondering whether Edmund Kean is really going to play to-night. To have thrilled at Kean, what a glorious memory—worth a wilderness of biographies!




THE THEATRE IN 1776.


(From a contemporary engraving at Drury Lane.)

As one sits nowadays, however, in the very same theatre that has resounded with Kean's voice, watching one of Mr. Arthur Collins's sumptuous spectacular productions that hold the melodramatic mirror up to the passing actualities—the stage, with its hydraulic lift and every modern contrivance for producing scenic illusion, elaborately built upon and bustlingly crowded—it is difficult to picture there the great Kean moving a multitude with

along the corridors of the past and call up the ghosts of Old Drury.

And these ghosts are countless, including, as they do, nearly all the great and familiar names in English stage history; for Old Drury represents not a theatre only, but a race of theatres, a dynasty, and though the present building is the fourth of its line, it proudly inherits the glorious legends of its race. As with more than one of our great


THEATRE DRURY ROYAL LANE.
 BY COMMAND OF
THEIR MAJESTIES
 This evening WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 1790.
PIZZARRO.
 THE SCENERY, DRESSING, and DECORATIONS, entirely New.
 The Music, Airs, and Choruses, all new to the Piece.
 Composed and adapted by Mr. KELLY.
 The Symphony preceding the Piece, and those received the Act, Composed for the Theatre, by Mr. DUNBAR.
 The Characters by
 Mr. POWELL, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. HARRISON, Mr. HARRYMORE, Mr. CAULFIELD, Mr. WENTWORTH,
 Mr. R. PALMER, Mr. ATKIN, Mr. DOWTON, Mr. CORY, Mr. HOLLAND, Mr. ARCHER,
 Mr. JORDAN, Mrs. SIDDONS,
 The Vocal Parts by
 Mr. E. J. BIGNAM, Mr. SEDGWICK, Mr. DIGNAM, Mr. TRUMAN, Mr. DANBY, Mr. CROUCH, Mr. B. CAMP, Mr. STEPHENS, Mr. LEAK, Mr. BURTON.
 The SCENERY designed and executed by Mr. MARRIAGE, BANKS, BUCHANAN, &c.
 The MACHINERY, DECORATIONS, and DRESSING under the Direction of Mr. THOMSON.
 And executed by him, Mr. S. MURPHY, &c.
 The Noble Order originated and introduced by Mr. P. P. T. &c.
WEDDING DAY.
 Lord Ranelagh, Mr. HUSSEY, Sir Adam Cochrane, Mr. WIND, Mr. Milner, Mr. MADON, Mr. COOPER, Mr. TRUMAN, Lady Arbuthnot, Mrs. TILDWELL, Mrs. HAZARD, Mrs. WALKER, Lady Courch, Mrs. JORDAN.
 Printed by G. Lewis, near the Stage Door.
VIVANT REX ET REGINA.


Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane.
 This evening THURSDAY, June 16, 1814.
 The Attention directed to perform SUCCESSFULLY Tomorrow
OTHELLO.
 Duke of Venice, Mr. R. PHILLIPS, Robinson, Mr. POWELL, Gratiano, Mr. CARR, Iachimo, Mr. F. BRINGTON, Mowbray, Mr. J. WALLACK, Othello, Mr. KEAN,
(Being his 10th Appearance in that Character.)
 Cassio, Mr. HOLLAND, Rodrigo, Mr. DE CAMP, Antonio, Mr. CHATTELLEY, Juliet, Mr. FISHER, Iago, Mr. POPE, Myrtle, Mr. LEE, Paolo, Mr. ERSWORTH, Desdemona, Mr. BURTON, Lucia, Mr. ASH, EST, Manager, Mr. COOKE, Lorenzo, Mr. EVANS, Doctor, Mrs. SMITH, Emilia, Mrs. GLOVER.
 To be acted in the Grand Theatre, the New Melodramatic Theatre, &c. &c. called **Woodman's Hut.**
 With New Scenes, Dresses, &c.
 Ferdinand Count Courtenay, Mr. HALL, Viceroy, (the French), Mr. CHORLEY, Maitre d'Hotel, (the English), Mr. RAYMOND, Antonio, Mr. I. WALLACK, The Sprig, (the Cavalier), Mr. CHATTELLEY, Myrtle, Mr. ASH, Smith, (the Woodman), Mr. LOVEGROVE, Myrtle, (the Soldier), Mr. OSBERRY.
VASSALS and SOLDIERS.
 Myrtle, Evans, Burton, Duke, Edmund, &c. &c.
WOODCUTTERS.
 Myrtle, Evans, Burton, Hope, Malvern, &c. &c.
 Antonio, (the Soldier), (the Chief Woodcutter), Mrs. KELLY, Myrtle, (the Soldier), Mrs. C. BRISTON, Lucia, (the Soldier), (the Chief), Mrs. BLAND.
 The Theatre designed by Mr. GREENWOOD, and executed by him and Assistant, The Directors, Mr. BANE, and Mr. KEAN, Fishamble, Mrs. ROBINSON, The Machines by Messrs. DUNBAR and DUNBAR. The Decorations by Mr. MARRIAGE.
VIVANT REX ET REGINA.
 Printed by G. Lewis, near the Stage Door.

A FAMOUS ROYAL PLAYBILL.

The original, printed on satin, is in the British Museum. The bill was that used by George III. on the occasion of his last visit to Drury Lane. And when the Russian Emperor visited the Theatre in 1814 the playbill for the day was printed on the reverse of the same piece of satin.)

Shakespeare, poorly mounted. No; to realise in these days of costly and elaborate play-mounting the "two boards and a passion" of the actor of old, with the resultant thrill of the playgoing public, one should go, if privileged, to the venerable theatre out of season in the daytime, when the auditorium is draped with ghostly effect in white holland coverings, and the huge stage is almost bare of scenery, and the light in the vast playhouse is dim, and the silence is broken only by the muffled noises of sweeping and dusting. Then one can dreamily peer

houses, its title dates from Charles II., owing much to his pleasure.

Among all the traditions of the English theatre there is no place-name more fragrant with bright and splendid memories than Drury Lane. Shakespeare's Globe, upon the Bankside, may have, perhaps, a sweeter flavour from its immortal association with the poet and the stage-birth of his plays; but it has come to sound to us more like a loved name in some old romantic legend, while Drury Lane Theatre is still alive and busy in our midst. And even in Shake-

speare's time Drury Lane was associated with the play, for there, near the site of the present house, was the Cockpit or Phœnix, where many of the plays of Shakespeare's famous contemporaries first saw the light, before the Puritans destroyed it in their wrath. But the first theatre of the existing line was that which Killigrew opened, under Charles II.'s patent, on April 8th, 1663. This was called the King's House, and the players there were known as the King's Company, in opposition to the Duke's Company, ruled by Sir William Davenant, under the second patent granted by the "merry monarch." The King's House was burnt down in 1672, and a new theatre, the second of the Drury Lane line, was built by Sir Christopher Wren and opened on March 26th, 1674, when Dryden supplied the prologue and the epilogue. Here, after Killigrew's death, the Duke's

her bounding on to the stage, under the auspices of her lover and teacher Charles Hart—once accounted an excellent actor of women's parts—and, after a brief prelude of serious acting, which was not her forte, laughing and winning her way, by sheer force of bewitching personality and natural sparkling comedy, into the hearts of town and King and posterity. How infectious her fun and laughter must have been—they even echo across the centuries, silencing any hard thought for all her naughtiness! What a delicious thing her Florimel, in Dryden's *Maiden Queen*! "So great a performance of a comical part was never, I believe, in the world before as Nell do this," wrote Samuel Pepys, who loved the playhouse—and the



THE ENTRANCE.

Company joined with the King's, and the allied forces began operations at the King's House in 1682; and so the great name of Betterton took its immortal place in the Drury Lane record. But the earlier of the King's Houses, the first Drury Lane, must ever have a special perfume for the playgoer's memory, for there we hear Nell Gwyn—"pretty, witty Nell," as Pepys calls her—first crying her oranges melodiously in the pit, and selling them wittily, flaunting the gallants, and loving the link boy. And there we see

pretty actresses too, as witness his sprightly philanderings with that clever and charming "baggage" Mistress Knipp, who was "most excellent company."

Wren's theatre, although the interior was considerably altered in 1775, stood until 1791, when it was condemned as unsafe and pulled down. And in the interval of a hundred and seventeen years just think what that playhouse must have seen and heard! What a wonderful panorama of actors and actresses, authors, critics, and playgoers passes before the mind's eye between 1674 and 1791! What historic scenes and incidents,

what first performances! To name them merely would fill a volume. Imagine! In that building, through nearly three decades, Thomas Betterton proved himself not only the greatest actor of his time, but one of the greatest of all time; of whom Colley Cibber—another of Old Drury's great ghosts—said, "Betterton was an actor as Shakespeare was an author, both without competitors, formed for the mutual assistance and illustration of each other's genius." That building also saw the splendid career of David Garrick, greatest of all our stage heroes; it was familiar with Barton Booth, Quin, and Macklin; with Spranger Barry and Mossop; and it welcomed John Philip Kemble. It echoed the voices of Nance Oldfield, Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Bracegirdle in its youth; of Kitty Clive,



DAVID GARRICK AND HIS WIFE.
(From the painting by W. Hogarth.)



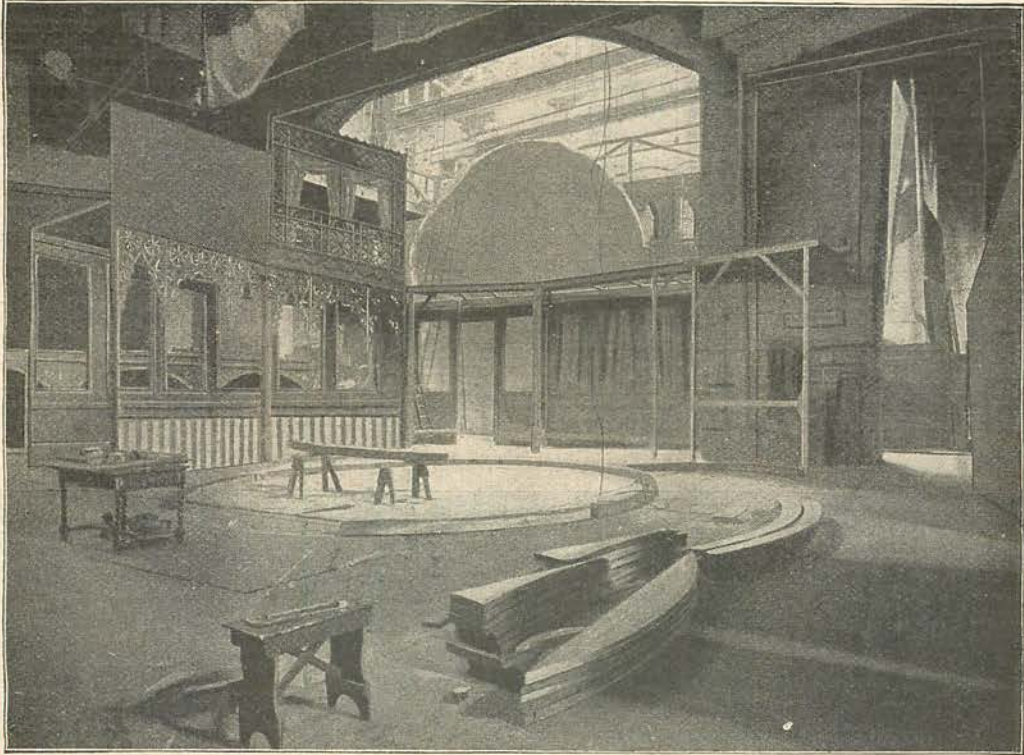
The Incorporated Actors belonging to the Theatre Royal Drury Lane humbly beg leave to present their perpetual President *David Garrick Esq.* with this Medal, in testimony of their Gratitude for his having raised and supported by his excellent performance on the Stage, and finally glorified by an Act of Parliament obtained by his Intercessions, and at his sole expense, THE THEATRICAL FUND, hoping he will condescend to accept it as a small Memorial of their respect and affection for him as a Man of their admiration of his unequalled Talents as an Actor, as well as an acknowledgment of the high Sense they entertain of the Honour and Happiness they enjoyed under the direction of a Manager whose Virtues and Abilities have so long and so justly, been encouraged and Applauded by the united Voice of the Public.

FROM THE PATENT APPOINTING DAVID GARRICK PRESIDENT OF THE THEATRICAL FUND.

Peg Woffington, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, and Mrs. Yates in its middle age; and Mrs. Siddons in its later years. Within those walls were first heard the comedies of Congreve and Wycherly, Farquhar and Vanbrugh, Dryden, Cibber, and Steele. Here, on April 14th, 1713, took place that memorable first performance of Addison's overpraised *Cato*, when excited Whigs and Tories interpreted the tragedy politically, and famous statesmen, with the enthusiasm of faction, subscribed to present Barton Booth, the actor, with a purse of fifty guineas for his efforts in defence of political liberty. But we get an interesting sidelight on the first-night habits of authors in those days in a letter from Bishop Berkeley to his friend Sir John Percival: "I was present with Mr. Addison and two or three more friends in a side box, where we had a table and two or three flasks of burgundy and champagne, with which the author (who is a very sober man) thought it necessary to support his spirits." That must have been a wonderful audience, with Swift, Steele, Pope, Harley, Bolingbroke, Berkeley, and Addison himself in the house; but imagine Mr. Pinero, or Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, or even Mr. Cecil Raleigh, sitting with his friends in a box, sipping wine during the

play's progress to keep up his spirits! It was in Wren's Drury Lane that on May 8th, 1777, Sheridan first gave to the world *The School for Scandal*. The newspapers had announced, "On Saturday next (for the first time) a new comedy called *The School for Scandal*. The principal characters by Mr. King, Mr. Yates, Mr. Dodd, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Parsons, Mr. Baddeley, Mr. Aicken, Mr. Farren, Mr. La Mash, Mr. Burton, and Mr. Smith, Miss Pope, Mrs.

hursts, Sedleys, and Sucklings doing exactly as they pleased, crowding upon the stage, loudly commenting, often quarrelling, and going unrestricted into the actresses' tiring rooms, and criticising them as they dressed and made up, until a brutal incident provoked the King, at the instance of Mrs. Marshall, the actress, to forbid the practice. What scenes of comedy, of drama, and sometimes even of tragedy, were enacted in that old playhouse, quite apart from the play itself!



BEHIND THE SCENES AT DRURY LANE.

Baddeley, Miss Sherry, Mrs. Abington: with a prologue and epilogue; new scenes, dresses, and decoration." Who could have guessed that that modest paragraph, in which the author is not even named, adumbrated an immortal classic?

What audiences that hundred and seventeen year old theatre must have seen in its time, and what changes of fashion, of manner, and of custom! Picture an audience in the sumptuous and costly costumes, with the studied, captivating manners, of Charles's day; the Court ladies and the King's friends extravagantly attired, some insidiously masked, freely jesting with the wits and gallants in the boxes; the Rochesters, Buck-

That intolerable habit of wealthy and influential playgoers insisting on crowding the stage, obstructing and interrupting the actors, which not even the forbidding decree of Queen Anne, at Cibber's urging, was able to put a stop to for many a year, was responsible for much rioting and frequent drawing of swords. The Licensing Act of George II., too, was the provocation of many tumults in the theatre. In those days any disappointment or annoyance inadvertently caused by the management was sufficient excuse for the young "bloods" to break into riot, to fight, and destroy property, an entertainment in which they were always enthusiastically supported by the mob. They

would promptly usher all the ladies out of the pit, and then the fun would begin. It was one of these ebullitions, unusually aggressive, that caused the King to order a guard of soldiers to attend the patent theatres—a custom only discontinued in very recent years. But theatrical quarrels in those days were of constant occurrence—if the audiences were not quarrelling, the actors and managers were; and then there would be a flood of pamphlets, offensive and defensive, satirical and scurrilous—for the "town" discussed the squabbles of the players as if they were of national importance. There was a very pretty quarrel in 1733, between John Highmore, a stage-struck gentleman who had bought Cibber's share of the patent, and the actors who seceded from his management—or, I should say, mismanagement. He gave up the struggle; but his successor, Charles Fleetwood, fared no better, for just ten years later he found himself in very serious conflict with the actors, headed by Garrick and Macklin, who rebelled against his misrule. Of course, there were violent riots in the theatre, for the public cared nothing for Fleetwood and a great deal for their favourites.

Lacy, the next manager, was a man of very

different kind, and when, in 1745, the Jacobite Rebellion broke out, he asked Government leave to raise 200 men for service, and the Drury Lane company volunteered to a man, while the actresses, Kitty Clive, Peg Woffington, and the others, warmly encouraged their loyal brother artists. That the Drury Lane volunteers were not called upon to face the claymores of Prince Charlie's Highlanders does not lessen the credit of this episode in the honourable records of Old Drury. It was with this same Lacy that Garrick entered into joint management in 1747, retaining his managerial connection with the famous theatre until his retirement from the stage in 1776—and this period of twenty-nine years must be regarded as one of the most memorable that Old Drury has ever known. Dead as are now most of the plays they produced, those theatrical days live for us by the eternal light of Shakespeare and the vital genius of Garrick and his brethren. What casts there were, and what splendid rivalries! And yet in 1765 the expenses of the theatre were less than £70 a night, with a company consisting of 160 performers. Garrick himself was then drawing, as actor, £2 15s. 6d. per night, Yates and his wife £3 6s. 8d., Palmer and his wife £2, King



THE PROPERTY ROOM.

A REHEARSAL OF *THE PRICE OF PEACE* AT DRURY LANE.

and Parsons each £1 6s. 8d., Mrs. Cibber £2 10s., Mrs. Pritchard £2 6s. 8d., Mrs. Clive £1 15s., Miss Pope 13s. 4d., Signor Giustinelli (chief singer) £1 3s. 4d., and Grimaldi and his wife (chief dancers) £1. Other times, other expenses. If it cost Garrick £70 a night to "run" Drury Lane, it costs Mr. Arthur Collins more than three times as much to ring up his curtain.

The successor of Wren's old theatre, built by Richard Brinsley Sheridan (Holland the architect), with money raised by debentures (the renters' shares), did not enjoy a very long or brilliant existence. It was opened March 12th, 1794, John Kemble acting as salaried manager under Sheridan's proprietorship; but it was burnt down on February 24th, 1809, and from its ashes rose three years later Benjamin Wyatt's theatre—the present Drury Lane. Of this, by the way, I remember the late William Beverley, the famous scenic artist, saying to me fifteen years ago, "Drury Lane is the only theatre in London properly constructed and fit to show a grand scene to advantage. Its proportions are perfect, though the exact focus has been interfered with by enlarging the stage." Four hundred thousand pounds were raised by subscription for the building, purchasing the patent rights, and establishing the theatre, and the new

house was opened on October 10th, 1812. But things did not go well, the attractions being scanty and not making for popularity, until, on the eventful 26th of January, 1814, Edmund Kean, from the Theatre Royal, Exeter, entered the theatre, poor, friendless, and proudly self-confident, played Shylock in a black wig and with all the innovations of genius, and took the town by storm. In all theatrical history I think there is nothing more pathetic and dramatic than Kean's triumphant first night at Drury Lane. "To-day," said the hungry actor, when he knew his chance had come, "to-day I must dine." Then, almost delirious with his victory at the theatre, he trudged back through the snow to his lodgings in Cecil Street, and cried joyously to his starving wife, "Mary, you shall ride in your carriage yet, and Charles shall go to Eton." But then came the bitter, grievous thought of the elder boy, who had died during the recent days of want. "If Howard had but lived to see it!" Kean heard himself applauded to the echo year after year; he also heard himself hissed furiously for private misconduct, but he won back the plaudits, until, his powers prematurely wasted, he fell dying in the arms of his son on the very boards that he had first trodden in triumph. And yesterday I was talking of

him with one whom he had thrilled in 1827!

This magic of vivid sympathy, how wonderful is its power, how the names of the famous dead glow under it, until the very personalities quicken again into life! When Charles Lamb tells us of the old actors, do they not live for us as if we too had seen them? Munden, for instance, Munden, "with the bunch of countenances, the bouquet of faces"—one of the dearest names in all Old Drury's records, because of Lamb's affection—is he not as living a personality to us as any actor of our own day? Do we not see him "wondering," and "seeing ghosts," and "fighting with his own shadow," and, as Old Dozey, "tacking not walking"? Is the humour of him not alive? Can we not fancy ourselves laughing, rather pathetically, with Lamb at Drury Lane on that memorable night of May 31st, 1824, when old Munden, appearing for the last time as Sir Robert Bramble, in *The Poor Gentleman*, and Old Dozey, in *Past Ten o'clock; or, A Rainy Night*, attempted, as the playbill said he would, to take leave of the public and his friends?

Who will so perpetuate, say, Mr. Dan Leno, in the tender memories of posterity?

But space is diminishing, and there remains a whole history yet untold. Remains the acting of Charles Mayne Young, the tragedian, of Charles Kean, and of G. V. Brooke; the acting and management of W. C. Macready, whom the late Westland Marston, the dramatist, once described to me as "if not the most impassioned, certainly the most intellectual and imaginative, of our tragedians," who produced the plays of Robert Browning and other modern poets, as well as those of Shakespeare, with a company that included Helen Faucit, Mrs. Nisbett, and Samuel Phelps. There remains to tell of the managements of the great Robert William Elliston, of Alfred Bunn, of E. T. Smith, of Anderson, of Chatterton. There remains the long tale of Drury Lane Opera, with a whole galaxy of great singers and dancers for heroes and heroines; also the tale of pantomime, from the primitive harlequinades of the last century to the costly and gorgeous extravaganzas of to-day, with the fanciful pen of E. L. Blanchard and the exquisite pencil of

W. R. Beverley honourably remembered. Untold also must be the very recent story of the enterprising and successful management of the late Sir Augustus Harris, who revived the fortunes of Drury Lane in a truly remarkable fashion, bequeathing to his clever young successor a heritage of ambitious endeavour. And now—vanish all the ghosts of Old Drury, for Mr. Arthur Collins, with his autumn drama in full swing, has called a rehearsal for his Christmas pantomime, and the stage is wanted.



DRURY LANE THEATRE TO-DAY.