XLII
ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY

Amongst the interesting visitors to the Lyceum and the Beefsteak Room was Arminius Vambéry, Professor at the University of Buda-Pesth. On April 30, 1890, he came to see the play, *The Dead Heart*, and remained to supper. He was most interesting, and Irving was delighted with him. He had been to Central Asia, following after centuries the track of Marco Polo and was full of experiences fascinating to hear. I asked him if when in Thibet he never felt any fear. He answered:

“Fear of death—no; but I am afraid of torture. I protected myself against that, however!”

“How did you manage that?”

“I had always a poison pill fastened here, where the lappet of my coat now is. This I could always reach with my mouth in case my hands were tied. I knew they could not torture me; and then I did not care!”

He is a wonderful linguist, writes twelve languages, speaks freely sixteen, and knows over twenty. He told us once that when the Empress Eugénie remarked to him that it was odd that he who was lame should have walked so much, he replied:

“Ah, Madam, in Central Asia we travel not on the feet but on the tongue.”

We saw him again two years later, when he was being given a Degree at the Tercentenary of Dublin University. On the day on which the delegates from the various Universities of the world spoke, he shone out as a star. He soared above all the speakers, making one of the finest speeches I have ever heard. Be sure that he spoke loudly against Russian aggression—a subject to which he had largely devoted himself.

XLIII

Shortly after the publication of this book I received a letter from a gentleman, Mr. Charles Richard Ford, who had in early life been one of Irving’s companions at Thacker’s in Newgate Street. We met and a few days afterwards he sent me the following memorandum which he had written. I give it *in extenso*, as it bears on a period of his life but little known. This reminiscence of one who was a close friend and who had kept and valued for more than fifty years every little souvenir of their companionship—even to his visiting card—is to my mind a valuable enlightenment as to his life and nature in early days.

By Mr. Ford's kind permission I am able to reproduce the photograph alluded to in the monograph.

AN EARLY REMINISCENCE OF SIR HENRY IRVING

BY MR. C. R. FORD

It seems evident that the numerous memoirs of the late Sir Henry Irving that have appeared in the newspapers have been intended to cover only that part of his life since he became famous: it may therefore be interesting to the many friends who have known and admired him during that period to hear something of his earlier years in London while engaged in what he himself described as a "musty City office."

He began life at the early age of fifteen, and in 1853 was to be met most days walking down Cheapside, tall, thin and striking-looking, with that firm, long stride, since so well known, on his way to the Bank to pay in the firm's cash.

The thoroughness and carefulness so consistently displayed in all his future life were eminently apparent in his short City career: he was always punctual and regular in his attendance at 87 Newgate Street, and the whole day saw him hard at work at the books committed to his keeping. These ledgers were put away among other disused books and remained unthought of for years; 240some time after he became famous they were sought for but have never been found.

One of his memoirs speaks of his giving "us boys a halfpenny for mis-pronouncing words." The fact, of which this is a perversion, really showed his keenness in helping others. The staff at Messrs. Thacker's was a mixed one and contained in addition to well-educated gentlemen some who had never grasped the true pronunciation of their own language. To help the latter, the following paper was drawn up by Irving (it is still in existence in his handwriting) and signed by most of the clerks:

LIST OF FINES

Fine for not aspirating h's, whether in the beginning or in the middle of words such as house and behaviour.

Exceptions: Honour, heir, honest, herb, hour, hostler, and their derivatives.

Fine for misplacing the h such as hart for art.

Fine for not giving the pure sound to the u as dooty for duty, toone for tune and the like.

Exception: blue.

Fine for omitting the g at the end of words, as shillin for shilling.

Fine for saying jist for jest, jest for just, instid for instead and such like cockneyisms.

Fine for using the singular number instead of the plural and all ungrammatical expressions.

We, the undersigned, agree to pay the fine of one halfpenny for each breach of the foregoing rules and to appoint Mr. J. H. Brodribb as treasurer.

(Signed) John Henry Brodribb,

(and five others).

March 20th, 1856.

Only two of the other five are known to be living.

While thus most conscientiously discharging his office duties and seeking to improve others, he was hard at work after business hours in self-improvement and in fitting himself for his future career on the stage. He was a frequent attendant at the Old Sadler's Wells Theatre and often stood for more than an hour at the door in order to secure one particular corner seat in the pit, where he could watch every emotion in the face of Phelps, 241especially in his Shakespearean parts. His other method was to practise himself in the art of elocution by inviting his relatives and friends to some large rooms placed at his disposal by his father and mother and entertain them by reading a play through, or with a selection of recitations. His favourite play for such occasions was the *Lady of Lyons*, although he more than once read through (somewhat "cut") one of Shakespeare's dramas. His two recitations most impressed on the mind after fifty years were *Eugene Aram* and *Skying the Copper*, evidencing as they undoubtedly did both his remarkable tragic and comic powers. As showing his thoroughness even then in small matters, his "make up" for the servant girl in the latter piece has never been forgotten by one who helped him to rouge his bare arms to the proper red tint for a "slavey's."

The efforts he afterwards so constantly made to place the stage in what he considered its proper position in the country and its education—as witness his last speech in favour of a Municipal theatre—were really begun when still in his "teens." A young friend had promised to open a discussion on his suggestion at a literary debating society on the question of the moral effect of theatrical representations and sought his aid in forming his arguments in their favour. He at once took a great deal of trouble, giving him many authorities and writing out long quotations in favour of the educational value of the stage when properly conducted; in fact, composing a good half of the paper subsequently read.

In 1856 he could no longer endure the privation of being kept away from the profession for which his inner consciousness told him he was fitted. As an illustration of the errors of judgment clever men may make, his old employer went to see him at Manchester some time after he left Newgate Street, and wrote to his son:

“We went to see Brodribb and did not think much of him; he would have done much better to keep to his stool in Newgate Street.”

This use of his old name brings to remembrance the fact that the name he made famous was not the first he thought of adopting: indeed he had cards printed with an entirely different one, J. Hy. Barringtone. The decision for “Irving” was a sudden one and was made known to a friend in a short note saying, “I have decided that the name shall be Irving”; 242but for some years after this he continued to sign his notes “J. H. B.” to his family and friends.

Nothing he enjoyed more than studying human nature in its various phases of excitement. He was found one day on the hustings of a contested election and much enjoyed pointing out how the passions of those in front of his view-point were delineated in their actions and faces. At another time he happened to be present at a provincial cricket dinner, which ended in a fiasco, and it is not easy to forget how eagerly he watched the physiognomies of those who unhappily contended around him. It was on this occasion, after he had previously electrified the company with one of his powerful recitations (he was still a City clerk), that upon being asked to give a toast, he gave one typical of his own feelings on such occasions, “The Pleasure of Pleasing.”

The time came when he left the City—July 1856—and entered upon his new and loved profession. He was most careful in the selection of articles that would be useful to him in his future career, and the wonderful forethought and adaptation which were afterwards so successful at the Lyceum were foreshadowed in the purchases for his first small wardrobe.

Although he did not look back with much pleasure to his days in the City, he always welcomed most heartily and kindly any of his former companions who called on him at the Lyceum, and in one instance gave employment to one needing it.

One object of these reminiscences is to show his numerous friends that as a youth he developed the same kindly, thoughtful and clever characteristics which they recognised and admired in his later life.

The very early portrait of him in the possession of the writer gives clear evidence to those who knew his father in the early fifties, how closely he inherited his remarkable

physiognomy, while much of his mental power was undoubtedly derived from the mother who doted on him—of whom she always spoke as “My Boy.”

One later reminiscence may be added. He was met on June 21, 1887, walking up and down opposite the Horse Guards, studying the holiday crowd and waiting for the return of the Queen’s Jubilee procession. As his salutation, his friend asked him “How is it you are not in the Abbey?” The reply was, “Oh, they have given me a seat, but I don’t think I shall go in.” The service was then about half over, but his well-known face appears in the plate 243published to commemorate the Jubilee, in the place assigned to him. This is only one out of many illustrations that might be given of his delight in quiet enjoyment, rather than in any desire for public notoriety. We know that the laurel pall used over his coffin in Westminster Abbey covered the ashes not only of a “dominating personality” but also of a true gentleman.

C. R. F.

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XLIV
IRVING’S PHILOSOPHY OF HIS ART

I

Irving and I were alone together one hot afternoon in August 1889, crossing in the steamer from Southsea to the Isle of Wight, and were talking of that phase of Stage Art which deals with the conception and development of character. In the course of our conversation, whilst he was explaining to me the absolute necessity of an actor’s understanding the prime qualities of a character in order that he may make it throughout consistent, he said these words:

“*If you do not pass a character through your own mind it can never be sincere!*”

I was much struck with the phrase, coming as it did as the crown of an argument—the explanation of a great artist’s method of working out a conceived idea. To me it was the embodiment of an artistic philosophy. Even in the midst of an interesting conversation, during which we touched upon many subjects of inner mental working, the phrase presented itself as one of endless possibilities, and hung as such in my mind. Lest I should forget the exact words I wrote them then and there in my pocket-book. I entered them later in my diary.

I think that if I had interrupted the conversation at the above words and asked my friend to expound his philosophy and elaborate it, he would have been for an instant amused, and on the impulse of the moment would have deprecated the use of such

an important word. Men untrained to mental science and unfamiliar with its terminology are apt to place too much importance on abstract, wide-embracing terms, and to find the natural flow of their true thought interrupted by disconcerting fears. His amusement would have been only momentary, however. I know now, after familiar acquaintance with his intellectual method for over a quarter of a century, that with his mental quickness—which was so marked 245as now and again to seem like inspiration—he would have grasped the importance of the theme as bearing upon the Art to which he had devoted himself and to his own part in it. He would have tried to explain matters as new and relevant subjects, causes or consequences, presented themselves. But such an exposition would have been—must have been—confused and incomplete. The process of a creative argument is a silent and lonely one, requiring investigation and guesses; the following up of clues in the labyrinth of thought till their utility or their falsity has been proved. The most that a striving mind can do at such a time is to keep sight of some main purpose or tendency—some perpetual recognition of its objective. If in addition the thinker has to keep eternally and consciously within his purview a lot of other subjects bearing on his main idea, each with its own attendant distractions and divergencies, his argument would to a listener seem but a jumble of undigested facts, deductions and imaginings. Moreover, it would leave in the mind of the latter a belief that the speaker is without any real conviction at all; a mere groper in the dark. If, on the other hand, the man in thinking out his problem tries to bear in mind his friend's understanding—with an eye to his ultimate approval and acceptance of his argument and conclusion—he is apt to limit himself to commonplace and accepted truths. In such case his thought is machine-made, and lacks the penetrative force which has its origin in intellectual or psychic fire. A whole history of such thought cannot equal a single glimpse or hint of an earnest mind working truly.

As Irving on that pleasant voyage spoke the words which seemed to explain his whole intellectual method I grasped instinctively the importance of the utterance, though the argument did not then present itself in its entirety.

To me the words became a text of which the whole of his work seemed the expounding. From him, as an artist, the thought was elementary and basic; explanatory and illuminative.

II

To "pass a character through your mind" requires a scientific process of some kind; some process which is natural, and therefore consistent. If we try to analyse the process we shall find that it is in accord with any other alimentative process. Nature

varies 246in details, but her intents and objects are fixed: to fit and sustain each to its appointed task. In the animal or vegetable kingdoms, so in the mind of man. The hemlock and the apple take the juices of the earth through different processes of filtration; the one to noxious ends, the other to beneficence. Hardness and density have their purpose in the mechanism of the vegetable world; the wood rejects what the softer and more open valves or tissues receive. So too in the world of animal life. The wasp and the viper, the cuttle-fish and the stinging ray work to different ends from the sheep and the sole, the pheasant and the turtle. But one and all draw alimentative substance from common sources. But he who would understand character must draw varying results from common causes. And the only engine powerful enough in varying purposes for this duty is the human brain. Again, the worker in imagination is the one who most requires different types and varying methods of development. And still again, of all workers in imagination, the actor has most need for understanding; for on him is imposed the task of re-creating to external and material form types of character written in abstractions. It behoves him, then, primarily to understand what exactly it is that he has to materialise. To this end two forms of understanding are necessary: first, that which the poet—the creator or maker of the play—sets down for him; second, the truth of the given individual to the type or types which he is supposed to represent. This latter implies a large knowledge of types; for how can any man judge of the truth of things when to him both the type and the instance are strange. Thus it happens that an actor should be a judge of character; an understander of those differences which discriminate between classes and individuals of the class. This is an actor's study at the beginning of his work—when he is preparing to study his Art.

Let me say at the outset of this branch of my subject, that I am trying to put into words and the words into some sort of ordered sequence, that knowledge of his craft which in a long course of years Irving conveyed to me. Sometimes the conveyance was made consciously, sometimes unconsciously. By words, by inferences, by acting; by what he added to seemingly completed work, or by what he omitted after fuller thought or experience. One by one, or group by group, these things were interesting, though often of seeming unimportance; but taken altogether they go to make up a philosophy. In trying to formulate this I am not speaking for myself. I am but following so well as I can the manifested wisdom 247of the master of his craft. Here and there I shall be able to quote Irving's exact words, spoken or written after mature thought and with manifest and deliberate purpose. For the rest, I can only illustrate by his acting, or at worst by the record of the impression conveyed to my own mind.

III

We may, I think, divide the subject thus:

CHARACTER

{*x.—The Dramatist's setting out of it*

A.—Its Essence {*y.—Its truth to accepted type*

{*z.—The Player's method of studying these two*

B.—Reticence

C.—Art and Truth

THE PLAY

STAGE PERSPECTIVE

DUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

INDIVIDUALITY, AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF IT

IV
CHARACTER

A.—Its Essence

We think in abstractions, but we live in concretions. In real life an individual who is not in any way distinguishable from his fellows is but a poor creature after all and is not held of much account by anybody. That law of nature which makes the leaves of a tree or the units of any genus, any species, any variety all different—which in the animal or the vegetable world alike makes each unit or class distinguishable whilst adhering to the type—is of paramount importance to man. Tennyson has hammered all this out and to a wonderful conclusion in those splendid stanzas of *In Memoriam* LIV to LVI beginning "Oh yet we trust that somehow good" to "Behind the veil, behind the veil." Let it be sufficient for us to know and accept that there can be endless individual idiosyncrasies without violation of type. To understand these is the study of character. The *differentia* of each individual is an endless and absorbing study, not given to all to master. Some at least of this mastery is a necessary part of the equipment of an actor. Now 248there is a common saying that "the eyebrow is the actor's feature." This is largely true; but there is a double purpose in its truth. In the first place the eyebrow is movable at will; a certain amount of exercise can give mobility and control. It can therefore heighten expression to a very marked degree. But in addition it, when in a marked degree, is the accompaniment of large frontal sinuses—those bony ridges above the eyebrows which in the terminology of physiognomy imply the power to distinguish minute differences, and so are credited with knowledge of "character"—the difference between one and another; divergences within a common type. With this natural equipment and the study which inevitably follows—for powers are not given to men in vain—the actor can by experience know types, and endless variants and combinations of the same. So can any man who has the quality. But the actor alone has to work out the ideas given to him by this study in recognisable material types and differentiated individual instances of the same type.

x

The dramatist having, whether by instinct or reason, selected his type has in the play to give him situations which can allow opportunity for the expression of his qualities; words in which he can expound the thoughts material to him in the given situations; and such hints as to personal appearance, voice and bearing as can assist the imagination of a reader. All these things must be consistent; there must be nothing which would show to the student falsity to common knowledge. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" has a large application in art, and specially in

stage art. It is the ignorance or neglect of this eternal law which is to my mind the weakness of some writers. Instance Ibsen who having shown in some character an essential quality through one or two acts makes the after action of the character quite at variance with it. A similar fault weakens certain of the fine work of “Ian Maclaren” when he proceeds to explain away in a later story some perfectly consistent and understandable quality of mind or action in one of his powerful and charming character stories. No after-explanation can supersede the conviction of innate character.

y

Now a dramatist is at perfect liberty to choose any type he likes and to deal with his individual creations just as he chooses. There 249is no law against it; however ridiculous it may be, it makes no breach of any code in accepted morals. But he should at least be true to itself. It is by such qualities that posterity as well as the juries of the living judge. The track of literary progress is littered with wreckage from breaches of this truth.

Of this we may be sure: if a character have in itself opposing qualities which cannot be reconciled, then it can never have that unity which makes for strength. Therefore the actor who has to represent the abstract idea as a concrete reality must at the beginning understand the dramatist’s intention. He can by emphasis of one kind or another help to convey the dominant idea. There is an exact instance of this from Irving’s own work; one which at the same time illustrates how an actor, howsoever thoughtful and experienced he may be, can learn: For a good many years he had played Shylock to universal praise; then, all at once, he altered it. Altered it in the manner of utterances of the first words he speaks: “Three thousand ducats,—well.” He explained it to me when having noticed the change I asked him about it. He said that it was due to the criticism of a *blind* man—I think it was the Chaplain of the American Senate, Dr. Milburn.

“What did he say?” I asked. He answered with a thoughtful smile:

“He said: ‘I thought at first that you were too amiable. I seemed to miss the harsh note of the usurer’s voice!’ He was quite right! The audience should from the first understand, if one can convey it, the dominant note of a character!”

This was distinctly in accordance with his own theory; and he always remembered gratefully the man who so enlightened him. The incident illustrates one phase of “passing a character through one’s own mind.” When it has gone through this process it takes a place as an actual thing—a sort of clothing of the player’s own identity with

the attributes of another. This new-seeming identity must have at first its own limitations; the clothing does not fit—somewhere too tight, elsewhere too loose. But at last things become easier. The individuality within, being of plastic nature, adapts itself by degrees to its surroundings. And then for purposes of external expression the mastery is complete.

Experience adds much to this power of mastery. When an actor has played many parts he learns to express the dominant ideas of various characters in simple form, so that each, through a sort of artistic metonymy, becomes a type. In fact, as he goes on studying 250fresh characters he gets a greater easiness of expression; he is not creating every time, but is largely combining things already created. This is true Art. The etymology of the word shows that its purpose is rather to join than to create. Were it not that each mind must create the units which have to be joined, histrionic art would not be primarily a creative art.

In Irving's own words:

"It is often supposed that great actors trust to the inspiration of the moment. Nothing can be more erroneous. There will, of course, be such moments when an actor at a white heat illumines some passages with a flood of imagination (and this mental condition, by the way, is impossible to the student sitting in his arm-chair); but the great actor's surprises are generally well weighed, studied, and balanced.... And it is this accumulation of such effects which enables an actor, after many years, to present many great characters with remarkable completeness."

And again when he insists upon the *intention* of effect:

"It is necessary that the actor should learn to think before he speaks.... Let him remember, first that every sentence expresses a new thought, and, therefore, frequently demands a change of intonation; secondly, that the thought precedes the word. Of course, there are passages in which thought and language are borne along by the streams of emotion and completely intermingled. But more often it will be found that the most natural, the most seemingly accidental effects are obtained when the working of the mind is seen before the tongue gives it words."

I well remember at one of our meetings in 1876 when after dinner we had some "recitations," according to the custom of that time, Irving was very complimentary to my own work because I anticipated words by expression, particularly by the movement of my eyes.

z

So far, the study of natural types and the acceptance of the dramatist's ideas. But next the actor has to learn how to show best the development of character. It is not to the purpose of a high-grade play that each character can be at the start as though labelled thus or thus. As the story unfolds itself the new situations 251bring into view qualities hitherto unknown; there has been heretofore no necessity for knowing them. Here it is that the dramatist must not make contradictions. He may show opposing qualities—such make the struggles of life and passions which it is the duty of the drama to portray; but the opposing forces, though they may clash, must not deny each other's very existence. Honour and baseness do not synchronously coexist; neither do patriotism and treachery; nor truth and falshood; nor cruelty and compassion. If it be necessary in the struggles of good and bad—any of the common phases of human nature—in the same individual to show that now and again either dominates for a time, the circumstances must be so arranged as to show preponderating cause. If the dramatist keeps up to this standard all can go well. But if his work be crude and not in itself illuminative, the actor's work becomes more complex and more difficult. He has in the manifold ways of his own craft to show from the first the *possibilities* of character which later on will have to be dealt with. He will have to suggest the faintest *beginnings* of things which later are to be of perhaps paramount importance.

This it is that Irving meant when he said that a character should be "sincere." It must not be self-contradictory. He put this point very definitely:

"… the actor must before all things form a definite conception of what he wishes to convey. It is better to be wrong and consistent, than to be right, yet hesitating and uncertain."

And thus it is that the actor's skill can so largely supplement that of the dramatist. He must add whatever the other has omitted or left undone. He must make straight the path which is in common to himself, the dramatist, and the public. He must prepare by subtle means—not too obtrusive to be distracting to the present purpose, nor too slight to pass altogether unnoticed—the coming of something as yet below the horizon. If this be done with care—and care implies both study and premeditation—the sincerity of the character will from first to last be unimpaired.

***B*.—Reticence**

On the other side of this phase of the Art of Acting is that fine undefinable quality of all art which is known as "reticence." Restraint is almost as rare as passion. The "reticence" of the 252actor is perhaps its most difficult phase. For he has to express that which has in the others to be concealed; and if his expression be too marked, not

only does the restraint cease to exist, but a wrong idea—that of concealment—is conveyed.

C.—Art and Truth

All these things are parts of an integral whole; they all go to the formation of an Art. Art is in itself only a part of the mechanism of truth. It is from the inner spirit that the outward seeming must derive. Rules and laws are but aids, restraints, methods of achievement; but it is after all to nature that the artist must look. In the words of Pope:

“These laws of old discover’d, not deviz’d,

Are nature still but nature methodiz’d.”

Irving put the idea thus:

“… merely to imitate is not to apply a similar method … the greatest of all the lessons that Art can teach is this: that truth is supreme and eternal. No phase of art can achieve much on a false basis. Sincerity, which is the very touchstone of Art, is instinctively recognised by all.”

V
THE PLAY

The play as a whole is a matter of prime consideration for the actor, though it only comes into his province *quâ* actor in a secondary way. In the working of a theatre it is the province of the stage manager to arrange the play as an entity; the actor has to deal with it only with reference to his own scenes. But the actor must understand the whole scheme so as to realise the ultimate purpose; otherwise his limitations may become hindrances to this. Irving, who was manager as well as actor, puts the matter plainly from the more comprehensive point of view:

“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 the composition. All the members of the company should work toward a common end, with the nicest subordination of their individuality to the general purpose.”

253Here we have again the lesson of restraint—of reticence. There are also various other forms of the same need, to which he has at various times alluded. For instance, speaking of the presentation of a play he said:

“You want, above all things, to have a truthful picture which shall appeal to the eye without distracting the imagination from the purpose of the drama.”

In fact Irving took the broadest possible views of the aims and possibilities of his chosen art, and of the duties as well as of the methods of those who follow it. He even put it that the State had its duty with regard to the art of illusion:

“The mere study of the necessities and resources of theatre art—the art of illusion—should give the theatre as an educational medium a place in State economy. Just think for a moment: a comprehensive art effort which consolidates into one entity which has an end and object and purpose of its own, all the elements of which any or all of the arts and industries take cognisance—thought, speech, passion, humour, pathos, emotion, distance, substance, form, size, colour, time, force, light, illusion to each or all of the senses, sound, tone, rhythm, music, motion. Can such a work be undertaken lightly or with inadequate preparation? Why, the mere patience necessary for the production of a play might take a high place in the marvels of human effort.”

VI
STAGE PERSPECTIVE

One of the things on which Irving always insisted was a knowledge and understanding of stage perspective, and of its application in the practice not only of the art of the stage in its scenic and illusive aspect but of the art of acting:

“The perspective of the stage is not that of real life, and the result of seeming is achieved by means which, judged by themselves, would seem to be indirect. It is only the raw recruit who tries to hit the bull’s eye by point-blank firing and who does not allow for elevation and windage.”

254In pointing out the necessity of speaking more loudly on the stage than in a room, he puts the same idea in a different and perhaps a broader way:

“This exaggeration applies to everything on the stage. To appear to be natural, you must in reality be much broader than natural. To act on the stage as one really would in a room would be ineffective and colourless.”

He never forgot—and never allowed any one else to forget—that the purpose of stage art is illusion. Its aim is not to present reality but its semblance; not to be, but to seem. He puts it thus:

“The function of art is to do and not to create—it is to make to seem, and not to make to be, for to make to be is the Creator’s work.”

He had before said:

"It must never be forgotten that all art has the aim or object of seeming and not of being, and to understate is as bad as to overstate the modesty or the efflorescence of nature."

Thus we get the higher aim: to seem to be—but always in such wise that nature shall be worthily represented. Nature

"At once the end and aim and test of art."

So Pope. Irving put the value nature as against the mere pretence thus:

"To be natural on the stage is most difficult, and yet a grain of nature is worth a bushel of artifice.… Nature may be overdone by triviality in conditions that demand exaltation.… Like the practised orator, the actor rises and descends with his sentiment, and cannot be always in a fine frenzy."

How true this is; how consistent with eternal truth! Nature has her moods, why not man; has her means of expressing them, why not man also? Nature has her tones; and with these why may not the heart of man vibrate and express itself?

In this connection and with the same illustration—the orator compared with the actor—Irving put a new phase of the same idea:

255"It matters little whether the actor sheds tears or not, so long as he can make his audience shed them; but if tears can be summoned at will and subject to his control it is true art to utilise such a power, and happy is the actor whose sensibility has at once such delicacy and discipline. In this respect the actor is like the orator. Eloquence is all the more moving when it is animated and directed by a fine and subtle sympathy which affects the spectator though it does not master him."

VII
DUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The last-mentioned utterance of Irving's brings us at once to the deepest problem in the art of acting: the value and use of sensibility. Throughout his later life, from the time he first entered the polemics of his art, he held consistently to one theory. To him the main disputants were Diderot and Talma; any other was merely a supporter of the theory of either.

Diderot in his *Paradox of Acting* held that for good acting there must be no real feeling on the part of the actor:

"Extreme sensibility makes middling actors; middling sensibility makes the ruck of bad actors; in complete absence of sensibility is the possibility of a sublime actor."

Irving's comment on this theory is:

"The exaltation of sensibility in Art may be difficult to define, but it is none the less real to all who have felt its power."

Talma[1] held quite the opposite view to that of Diderot. To him one of the first qualifications of an actor is sensibility, which indeed 256he considered the very source of imagination. To this quality, he held, there must be added intelligence:

1. When Irving began to consider this branch of the "true inwardness" of his work he was so much struck with the argument of Talma that he had it translated and inserted in *The Theatre*. This was easy of accomplishment, for with regard to that magazine he had only to ask.

As a matter of fact *The Theatre* at that time belonged to him. He had long considered it advisable that there should be some organ in which matters deeply concerning the stage could be set forth. He accordingly arranged with the late Mr. F. W. Hawkins, then a sub-editor of the *Times*, to take the work in hand. Hawkins had already by his work shown his interest in the stage; Irving had a high opinion of his "Life of Edmund Kean" and of his book on the French stage which he had then well in hand. He trusted Hawkins entirely; gave him a free hand, and never interfered with him in any possible way except to suggest some useful article of a neutral kind. He would never even give a hint of his own opinion regarding any one of his own profession, but kept studiously out of the theatrical party-politics of the day. Hawkins had his own views which he was perfectly well able to support; he could take care of himself. Irving was content that the magazine should exist, and footed the bills. Later on when the editorship was vacant Irving made a present of the whole thing to Clement Scott who said that he would like to see what he could do with it.

The Talma articles appeared in *The Theatre* for the 30th January and 6th and 13th February 1877. This was before I came to Irving. It was long afterwards when I read them.

In 1883 Walter Herries Pollock, then editor of the *Saturday Review*, a great friend of Irving, produced an edition of the *Paradox of Acting* to which Irving wrote a preface. In this he set out his own views in his comments on the work of Diderot.

"To form a great actor … the union of sensibility and intelligence is required."

Irving used his knowledge of the controversy to this effect:

"I do not recommend actors to allow their feelings to carry them away …; but it is necessary to warn you against the theory, expounded with brilliant ingenuity by

Diderot, that the actor never feels.... Has not the actor who can ... make his feelings a part of his art an advantage over the actor who never feels, but makes his observations solely from the feelings of others? *It is necessary to this art that the mind should have, as it were, a double consciousness, in which all the emotions proper to the occasion may have full swing, while the actor is all the time on the alert for every detail of his method*.... The actor who combines the electric force of a strong personality with a mastery of the resources of his art, must have a greater power over his audiences than the passionless actor who gives a most artistic simulation of the emotions he never experiences."

The sentence printed in italics is a really valuable addition to the philosophy of acting. It is Irving's own and is, as may be seen, a development or corollary of Talma's conclusion. Talma required as a necessity of good acting both sensibility and intelligence. But Irving claimed that in the practice of the art they must exist and 257act synchronously. This belief he cherished, and on it he acted with excellent result. I have myself seen a hundred instances of its efficiency in the way of protective self-control; of conscious freedom of effort; of self-reliance; of confidence in giving the reins to passion within the set bounds of art.[2]

2. I have seen a good many times Irving illustrate and prove the theory of the dual consciousness in and during his own acting; when he has gone on with his work heedless of a fire on the stage and its quelling: when a gas-tank underneath the stage exploded and actually dispersed some of the boarding close to him, he all the time proceeding without even a moment's pause or a falter in his voice. One other occasion was typical. During a performance of *The Lyons Mail*, whilst Dubose surrounded by his gang was breaking open the iron strong-box conveyed in the mail-cart the horses standing behind him began to get restive and plunged about wildly, making a situation of considerable danger. The other members of the murderous gang were quickly off the stage, and the dead body of the postillion rolled away to the wings. But Irving never even looked round. He went calmly on with his work of counting the *billets de banque*, whilst he interlarded the words of the play with admonitions to his comrades not to be frightened but to come back and attend to their work of robbing. Not for an instant did he cease to be Dubose though in addition he became manager of the theatre.

In speaking of other branches of the subject Irving said:

"An actor must either think for himself or imitate some one else."

And again:

“For the purely monkey arts of life there is no future—they stand only in the crude glare of the present, and there is no softness for them, in the twilight of either hope or memory. With the true artist the internal force is the first requisite—the external appearance being merely the medium through which this is made known to others.”

VIII
INDIVIDUALITY, AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF IT

If an actor has to learn of others—often primarily—through his own emotions, it is surely necessary that he learn first to know himself. He need not take himself as a standard of perfection—though poor human nature is apt to lean that way; but he can 258accept himself as something that he knows. If he cannot get that far he will never know anything. With himself then, and his self-knowledge as a foothold, he may begin to understand others.[3]

3. As an instance of the efficacy of the method, let any one try to tell character by handwriting. It is very simple, after all. Let him take the strange writing, and after making himself familiar with it, measure it by himself, asking himself: “Under stress of what emotion would my own writing most nearly resemble that?” Let him repeat this with each sign of divergence from his own caligraphy: and in a short time he will be astonished with the result. So it is with all studies of character. Without any standard the task is impossible; but weigh each against your own self-knowledge and you at once begin to acquire comparative knowledge of simple qualities capable of being combined endlessly.

Γνῶθι σεαυτὸν Know thyself! It is, after all, the base of all knowledge—the foothold for all forward thought. Commenting on the speech of Polonius: “To thine own self be true,” Irving said:

“But how can a man be true to himself if he does not know himself? ‘Know thyself’ was a wisdom of the Ancients. But how can a man know himself if he mistrusts his own identity, and if he puts aside his special gifts in order to render himself an imperfect similitude of some one else?”

IX

Thus we have come back to Irving’s original proposition:

“If you do not pass a character through your own mind it can never be sincere.” The logical wheel has gone its full round and is back at the starting-place. Begin with the argument where you will it must come sooner or later to the same end: “To know others know yourself.” Your own identity is that which you must, for histrionic

purposes, clothe with attributes not your own. You must have before your mind some definite image of what you would portray; and your own feeling must be ultimately its quickening force.

So far, the resolution of the poet's thought into a moving, breathing, visible, tangible character. But that is not the completion of the endeavour. In the philosophy of histrionic art are rarer heights than mere embodiment, mere vitality, mere illusion. The stage is a world of its own, and has its own ambitions, its own duties. Truth either to natural types or to the arbitrary creations 259of the dramatist is not sufficient. For the altitudes something else is required. Irving set it forth thus:

"Finally in the consideration of the Art of Acting, it must never be forgotten that its ultimate aim is beauty. Truth itself is only an element of beauty, and to merely reproduce things vile and squalid and mean is a debasement of art."

Here he supports the theory of Taine that art, like nature, has its own selective power; and that in the wisdom of its choosing is its power for good. Does it not march with that sublime apothegm of Burke: "Vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness"?

Finally Irving summed up the whole Philosophy of his Art and of its place amongst the sister Arts in a few sentences:

"In painting and in the drama the methods of the workers are so entirely opposed, and the materials with which they work are so different, that a mutual study of the other work cannot but be of service to each. Your painter works in mouldable materials, inanimate, not sensitive but yielding to the lightest touch. His creation is the embodiment of the phantasm of his imagination, for in art the purpose is to glorify and not merely to reproduce. He uses forms and facts of nature that he may not err against nature's laws. But such natural facts as he assimilates are reproduced in his work, deified by the strength of his own imagination. Actors, on the other hand, have to work with materials which are all natural, and not all plastic, but are all sensitive—with some of the strength and all the weakness of flesh and blood. The actor has first to receive in his own mind the phantasmal image which is conveyed to him by the words of the poet; and this he has to reproduce as well as he can with the faulty material which nature has given to him. Thus the painter and the poet begin from different ends of the gamut of natural possibilities—the one starts from nature to reach imagination, the other from imagination to reach at reality. And if the means be not inadequate, and if the effort be sincere, both can reach that veritable ground where reality and imagination join. This is the true realism towards which all should aim—the holy ground whereon is reared the Pantheon of all the Arts."

XLV
THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

I

For fourteen years, from 1881 to 1895, Mr. Gladstone was a visitor at the Lyceum. The first occasion was on the First night of *The Cup*, January 3, 1881, of which I have already written. He had known Irving before, but this was the first time he had been behind the Lyceum scenes. He was very interested in everything, especially those matters of which up to then he knew little such as the setting of the scenes. His fund of information was prodigious and one could feel that he took a delight in adding to it. He was on that occasion very complimentary about all he saw and very anxious to know of the reality—as distinguished from the seeming—of things such as food and drink used, &c. That night his visit to the stage was only a passing one as he sat through the active part of the play in his own box, except during a part of one scene.

He seemed ever afterwards to take a great interest in Irving and all he did. On July 8 of the same year he came to the Lyceum and brought Lord Northbrook with him. Whenever he visited the theatre after 1881 he always came and went by the private door in Burleigh Street, and he always managed to visit Irving on the stage or in his dressing-room or both. The public seemed to take a delight in seeing him at the theatre, and he appeared to take a delight in coming. I honestly believe that he found in it, now and again, an intellectual stimulant—either an excitement or a pausing-time *before* some great effort, or a relief of change from fact to fancy *after* it. For instance: On April 8, 1886, Thursday, he made his great speech in the House of Commons introducing the Home Rule Bill—amid a time of great excitement. Two nights after, Saturday night, he came to the Lyceum—and received an immense ovation. Again, in the time of bitter regret and anxiety when Parnell made the violent attack on him in his Manifesto, November 29, 1890, Saturday, he took his earliest opportunity, Tuesday, December 2, of coming to the Lyceum.

Photo Window & Grove

ELLEN TERRY AS IMOGEN, 1896

261This visit was a somewhat special one, for it was the first time that Mr. Gladstone came to sit behind the scenes in the O.P.[4] proscenium corner which then became known as “Mr. Gladstone’s seat.” The occasion of it was thus: I had the year previously written an Irish novel, *The Snake’s Pass*, which after running as a serial through the London *People* and several provincial papers had now been published in book form. I had done myself the pleasure of sending an early copy to Mr. Gladstone, whose magnificent power and ability and character I had all my life so much admired. Having met and conversed with him several times I felt in a way justified in so doing. He had at once written; I received his letter the same day—that of publication, November 18, 1890. I give his letter, which was in the post-card form then usual to him. I think it is a good example of his method of correspondence, kind and thoughtful and courteous—a model of style. I had as may be gathered written with some diffidence, or delicacy of feeling:

4. Opposite prompt.

“Dear Mr. Bram Stoker,—My social memory is indeed a bad one, yet not so bad as to prevent my recollection of our various meetings. I thank you much for your work, and for your sympathy; and I hope to have perused all your pages before we meet again. When that will be I know not; but I am so fond a lover of *The Bride of Lammermoor* that I may take the desperate step of asking Mr. Irving whether he will some night, if it is on, let me sit behind the stage pillar—a post which C. Kean once gave me, and which alone would make me sure to hear.—Yours faithfully,

“W.E. Gladstone.

“*N. 18, 90.*”

Some days later, after a most cordial invitation from Irving, it was arranged that he should choose exactly what date he wished and that all should be ready for him. There could be no difficulty, as *Ravenswood* was the only play then in the bill and would hold it alone till the beginning of the new year. When he did come I met him and Mrs. Gladstone at the private door and piloted them across the stage, which was the nearest way to Irving’s box. The door to it was beside the corner where Mr. Gladstone would sit.

Possibly it was that as Mr. Gladstone was then full of Irish matters my book, being of Ireland and dealing with Irish ways and specially of a case of oppression by a

“gombeen” man under a loan secured on land, interested him, for he had evidently read it carefully. As we walked across the stage he spoke to me of it very 262kindly and very searchingly. Of course I was more than pleased when he said:

“That scene at Mrs. Kelligan’s is fine—very fine indeed!”

Now it must be remembered that, in the interval between his getting the book and when we met, had occurred one of the greatest troubles and trials of his whole political life. The hopes which he had built through the slow progress of years for the happy settlement of centuries-old Irish troubles had been suddenly almost shattered by a bolt from the blue, and his great intellect and enormous powers of work and concentration had been for many days strained to the utmost to keep the road of the future clear from the possibility of permanent destruction following on temporary embarrassment. And yet in the midst of all he found time to read—and remember, even to details and names—the work of an unimportant friend.

When it had been known on the stage that Mr. Gladstone was coming that night to sit behind the scenes the men seemed determined to make it a gala occasion. They had prepared the corner where he was to sit as though it were for Royalty. They had not only swept and dusted but had scrubbed the floor; and they had rigged up a sort of canopy of crimson velvet so that neither dust nor draught should come to the old man. His chair was nicely padded and made comfortable. The stage men were all, as though by chance, on the stage and all in their Sunday clothes. As the Premier came in all hats went off. I showed Mr. Gladstone his nook and told him, to his immense gratification, how the men had prepared it on their own initiative. We chatted till the time drew near for the curtain to go up. Then I fixed him in his place and showed him how to watch for and avoid the drop-scene, the great roller of which would descend guided by the steel cord drawn taut beside him. Lest there should be any danger through his unfamiliarity with the ways of theatres, I signalled the Master Carpenter to come to me and thus cautioned him:

“Would it not be well,” I said, “if some one stood near here in case of accident?”

“It’s all right, sir, we have provided for that. The two best and steadiest men in the theatre are here ready!” I looked round and they were—alert and watchful. And there they remained all night. There was not going to be any chance of mishap to Mr. Gladstone *that* night!

I went always to join him between the acts, and Irving, when he 263had opportunity from his dressing—of which there was a good deal in *Ravenswood*—would come to talk with him. We were all, whatever our political opinions individually, full of the

Parnell Manifesto and its many bearings on political life. For myself, though I was a philosophical Home-Ruler, I was much surprised and both angry at and sorry for Parnell's attitude, and I told Mr. Gladstone my opinion. He said with great earnestness and considerable feeling:

"I am very angry, but I assure you I am even more sorry."

On that particular night he was very chatty, and in commenting on the play compared, strangely enough, Caleb Balderstone with Falstaff. He was interested and eager about everything round him and asked innumerable questions. In the course of conversation he said that he had always taken it for granted that the stage word "properties" included costumes.

He was seemingly delighted with that visit, and from that time on whenever he came to the theatre he always occupied the same place, Mrs. Gladstone and whoever might be with him sitting in Irving's box close at hand.

II

The next time he came, which was on January 29 of the next year, 1891, he generously brought Irving a cheque for ten pounds for the Actors' Benevolent Fund. That evening too he was delighted with the play, *Much Ado About Nothing*, which he had seen before in 1882, in the ordinary way. He applauded loudly, just as he used to do when sitting in the front of the house.

III

He came again in 1892, May 7, when we were playing *Henry VIII.*, and in the course of conversation commented on Froude's estimate of the population of England in the sixteenth century, which according to his ideas had been stated much below the mark. He also spoke of Dante being in Oxford—a subject about which he wrote in the *Nineteenth Century* in the next month.

Another instance of Mr. Gladstone's visit to the Lyceum: on the evening of February 25, 1893, he came to see *Becket*. He had introduced his second Home Rule Bill on the thirteenth of the month, and as it was being discussed he was naturally full of it—so were we all. By the way the Bill was carried in the Commons 264at the end of August of that year. That night when speaking of his new Bill, he said to me:

"I will venture to say that in four or five years those who oppose it will wonder what it was that they opposed!"

He was delighted with *Becket*, and seemed specially to rejoice in the success of Tennyson's work.

IV

He was as usual much interested in matters of cost. Irving talked with him very freely, and amongst other things mentioned the increasing expenses of working a theatre, especially with regard to the salaries of actors which had, he said, almost been doubled of late years. Gladstone seemed instantly struck with this. When Irving had gone to change his dress, Gladstone said to me suddenly:

"You told me, I think, that you are Chancellor of the Exchequer here."

"Yes!" I said. "As in your own case, Mr. Gladstone, that is one of my functions!"

"Then would you mind answering me a few questions?" On my giving a hearty acquiescence he began to inquire exhaustively with regard to different classes of actors and others, and seemed to be weighing in his mind the relative advances. In fact his queries covered the whole ground, for now and again he asked as to the quality of materials used. I knew he was omnivorous with regard to finance, but to-night I was something surprised at the magnitude and persistence of his interests. The reason came shortly. Three days after the visit, 28th February, Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson, M.P. for Handsworth, voiced in the House the wishes then floating of the Bi-Metallists for an International Monetary Conference. Mr. Gladstone replied to him in a great speech, the immediate effect of which was to relegate the matter to the Greek Kalends. In this speech he began with the standard of value, and by figures arrived at gold as the least variable standard. Then he went on to the values and change of various commodities, leading him to what he called "the greatest commodity of the world—human labour." This he broadly differentiated into three classes of work which were dependent on ordinary trade laws and conditions, and of a more limited class which seemed to illustrate the natural changes of the laws of value, inasmuch as the earners were not 265influenced to any degree by the course of events or the cost of materials. This, broadly speaking, was his sequence of ideas. When he had got so far he said:

"Take also the limited class about whom I happened to hear the other day—the theatrical profession. I have it on unquestionable authority that the ordinary payments received by actors and actresses have risen largely."

With his keen instinct for both finance and argument he had seized at once on Irving's remark about the increase of salaries, recognising on the instant its suitability as an

illustration in the setting forth of his views. And I doubt if he could have found any other class of wage-earning so isolated from commercial changes.

V

Irving told me of an interesting conversation which he had in those days with Lord Randolph Churchill in which the latter mentioned Gladstone in a striking way. Answering a query following on some previous remark, he said:

“The fact is we are all afraid of him!”

“How is that—and why?” asked Irving.

“Well, you see, he is a first-class man. And the rest of us are only second class—at best!”

Mr. Gladstone was a really good playgoer and he seemed to love the theatre. When he came he and Mrs. Gladstone were always in good time. I once asked him, thinking that he might have mistaken the hour, in which case I would have borne it in mind to advise him on another occasion, if he liked to come early, and he said:

“Yes. I have always made it a practice to come early. I like to be in my place, and composed, before they begin to tune the fiddles!”

This is the true spirit in which to enjoy the play. No one who has ever sat in eager expectation can forget the imaginative forcefulness of that acre of green baize which hid all the delightful mysteries of the stage. It was in itself a sort of introduction to wonderland, making all the seeming that came after as if quickened into reality.

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XLVI
THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

I

I never saw Benjamin Disraeli (except from the Gallery of the House of Commons) but on the one occasion when he came to see *The Corsican Brothers*. Irving, however, met him often and liked to talk about him. He admired, of course, his power and courage and address; but it was, I think, the Actor that was in the man that appealed to him. I think also that Beaconsfield liked him, and gauged his interest and delight in matters of character. Somehow the stories which he told him conveyed this idea.

One was of an ambitious young clergyman, son of an old friend of the statesman, who asked him to use his influence in having him appointed a Chaplain to the Queen. This

he had effected in due course. The Premier, to his surprise, some time afterwards received a visit from his protégé, who said he had, on the ground of the kindness already extended to him, to ask a further favour. When asked what it was he answered:

"I have through your kindness—for which I am eternally grateful—been notified that I am to preach before Her Majesty on Sunday week. So I have come to ask you if you would very kindly give me some sort of hint in the matter!" The Premier, after a moment's thought, had answered:

"Well, you see, I am not much in the habit of preaching sermons myself so I must leave that altogether to your own discretion. But I can tell you this: If you will preach for fifteen minutes the Queen will listen to you. If you will preach for ten minutes she will listen with interest. But if you will preach for five minutes you will be the most popular chaplain that has ever been at Court."

"And what do you think," he went on, "this egregious young man said:

"'But, Mr. Disraeli, how can I do myself justice in five minutes!'" Then came the super cynical remark of the statesman-of-the-world:

267"Fancy wanting to do himself justice—and before the Queen!"

II

Sir George Elliott, Bart., M.P., the great coal-owner, was a friend of Irving's and used to come to the Lyceum. One night—4th December 1890—at supper in the Beefsteak Room, he told us of a visit he paid to Lord Beaconsfield at Hughenden Manor. Disraeli had taken a fancy to the old gentleman, who was, I believe, a self-made man—all honour to him. He was the only guest on that week-end visit. His host took him over the house and showed him his various treasures. In the course of their going about, Beaconsfield asked him:

"How do you like this room?" It was the dining-room, a large and handsome chamber; in it were two portraits, the Queen and the Countess Beaconsfield—Disraeli had had her title conferred whilst he was still in the Commons. At the time of Sir George's visit he was a widower.

"I thought it odd," said Sir George, "that the Queen's picture should hang on the side wall whilst another was over the chimney-piece, which was the place of honour, and asked Dizzy if they should not be changed." He smiled as he said, after a pause:

“Well, Her Majesty did me the honour of visiting me twice at Hughenden; but *she* did not make the suggestion!”

“He said it very sweetly. It was a gentle rebuke. I don’t know how I came to make such a blunder.”

There is another reading of the speech which I think he did not see.

III

Disraeli was always good to his Countess, who loved and admired him devotedly. She must, however, have been at times something of a trial to him, for she was outspoken in a way which must now and again have galled a man with his sense of humour; no man is insensitive to ridicule. One night at supper in the Beefsteak Room, a member of Parliament, who knew most things about his contemporaries, told us of one evening at a big dinner-party at which Disraeli and Lady Beaconsfield were present. Some man had been speaking of a new beauty and was expatiating on her charms—the softness of her eyes, her dimples, her pearly teeth, the 268magnificence of her hair, the whiteness of her skin—here he was interrupted by a remark of Lady Beaconsfield made across the table:

“Ah! you should see my Dizzy in his bath!”

IV

James McHenry told me an anecdote of Disraeli which illustrates his astuteness in getting out of difficulties. The matter happened to a lady of his acquaintance. This lady was very anxious that her husband should get an appointment for which he was a candidate—one of those good things that distinctly goes by favour. One evening, to her great joy, she found that she was to sit at dinner next the Premier. She was a very attractive woman whom most men liked to serve. The opportunity was too good to lose, and as her neighbour “took” to her at once she began to have great hopes. Having “ground-baited” the locality with personal charm she began to get her hooks and tackle ready. She led the conversation to the subject in her mind, Disraeli talking quite freely. Then despite her efforts the conversation drifted away to something else. She tried again; but when just close to her objective it drifted again. Thus attack and repulse kept on during dinner. Do what she would, she could not get on the subject by gentle means. She felt at last that she was up against a master of that craft. Time ran out, and when came that premonitory hush and glance round the table which shows that the ladies are about to withdraw she grew desperate. Boldly attacking once more the arbiter of her husband’s destiny, she asked him point blank to give the

appointment. He looked at her admiringly; and just as the move came he said to her in an impressive whisper:

"Oh, you are a darling!"

V

Irving told me this:

He was giving sittings for his bust to Count Gleichen, who was also doing a bust of Lord Beaconsfield. One day when he came the sculptor, looking at his watch, said:

"I'm afraid our sitting to-day must be a short one—indeed it may be interrupted at any moment. You won't mind, I hope?"

"Not at all!" said Irving. "What is it?"

269"The Premier has sent me word that he must come at an earlier hour than he fixed as he has a Cabinet Meeting." He had already unswathed the clay so as not to waste in preparation the time of the statesman when he should come. Irving was looking at it when something struck him. Turning to Count Gleichen he said:

"That seems something like myself—you know we actors have to study our own faces a good deal, so that we come to know them."

Just then Disraeli came in. When they had shaken hands, the sculptor said to the new-comer:

"Mr. Irving says that he sees in your bust a resemblance to himself.

Disraeli looked at Irving a moment with a pleased expression. Then he walked over to where Irving's bust was still uncovered. He examined it critically for a few moments; and then turning to Count Gleichen said:

"What a striking and distinguished physiognomy!"

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XLVII
SIR WILLIAM PEARCE, BART.

I

Sir William Pearce—made a Baronet in 1887—was a close friend of Irving. He was the head of the great Glasgow shipbuilding firm of John Elder & Co. In fact he *was* John Elder & Co., for he owned the whole great business. He went to Glasgow as a

shipwright and entered the works at Fairfield. He was a man of such commanding force and ability that he climbed up through the whole concern right up to the top, and in time—and not a long time either for such a purpose—owned the whole thing. He built many superb yachts, notably the *Lady Torfrida* and the *Lady Torfrida the Second*. The first-named was in his own use when we were playing in Glasgow in the early autumn of 1883. We accepted Mr. Pearce's invitation to go on a week-end yachting tour, to begin after the play on the following Saturday night, 1st September.

II

The *Lady Torfrida* was berthed in the estuary of the Clyde off Greenock; so a little after eleven o'clock we all set off for Greenock.

It had been a blustering evening in Glasgow; but here in the open it seemed a gale. I think that the hearts of all the landsmen of our party sank when we saw the black water lashed into foam by the fierce wind. Pearce had met us at the station and came with us. Of the yachting party were his son the present Baronet, and a College friend of his, Mr. Bradbury. With the bluff heartiness of a yachtsman Pearce now assured us that everything was smooth and easy. At the stairs we found a trim boat with its oarsmen fending her off as with every rising wave she made violent dashes at the stonework. One of the men stood on the steps holding the painter; he dared not fasten it to the ring. From near the level of the water the estuary looked like a wide sea and the water 271so cold and dark and boisterous that it seemed like madness going out on such a night in such a boat *for pleasure*. There were several of us, however, and we were afraid of frightening each other; I do not think that any of us were afraid for ourselves. Ellen Terry whispered to me to take her son, who was only a little chap, next to me, as she knew me and would have confidence in me.

We managed to get into the boat without any of us getting all wet, and pushed off. We drove out into the teeth of the wind, the waves seeming much bigger now we were amongst them and out in the open Firth. Not a sign of yacht could be seen. To us strangers the whole thing was an act of faith. Presently Pearce gave an order and we burned a blue light, which was after a while answered from far off—a long, long distance off, we thought, as we looked across the waste of black troubled water, looking more deadly than ever in the blue light—though it looked even more deadly when the last of the light fell hissing into the wave. By this time matters were getting really serious. Some one had to keep baling all the time, and on the weather side we had to sit shoulder to shoulder as close as we could so that the waves might break on our backs and not over the gunwale. It was just about as unpleasant an experience as one could have. I drew the lad next to me as close as I could, partly to comfort him

and more particularly lest he should get frightened and try to leave his place. And yet all the time we were a merry party. Ellen Terry with the strong motherhood in her all awake—a lesson and a hallowed memory—was making cheery remarks and pointing out to her boy the many natural beauties with which we were surrounded: the distant lights, the dim line of light above the shore line, the lurid light of Greenock on the sky. She thought of only one thing, her little boy, and that he might not suffer the pain of fear. The place seemed to become beautiful in the glow of her maternity. He did not say much in answer—not in any enthusiastic way; but he was not much frightened. Cold waves of exceeding violence, driven up your back by a fierce wind which beats the spray into your neck, hardly make a cheerful help to the enjoyment of the æsthetic!

Irving sat stolid and made casual remarks such as he would have made at his own fireside. His quiet calm, I think, allayed nervous tremors in some of the others. I really think he enjoyed the situation—in a way. As for Pearce, who held the tiller himself, he 272was absolutely boisterous with joviality, though he once whispered in my ear:

“Keep it up! We shall be all right; but I don’t want any of them to get frightened. It is pretty serious!” I think we settled in time into a sort of that calm acceptance of fact which is so real a tribute to Belief. It certainly startled us a little when we heard a voice hailing us with a speaking-trumpet—a voice which seemed close to us. Then a light flashed out and we saw the *Lady Torfrida* rising high from the water whereon she floated gracefully, just swaying with wave and wind. She was a big yacht with 600 h.p. engines, after the model of those of the *Alaska*, one of Pearce’s building, then known as the “Greyhound of the ocean!”

I think we were all rejoiced; even Pearce, who told me before we went to our cabins in the early morning that all through that miserable voyage in the dark the sense of his responsibility was heavy upon him.

“Just fancy,” he said, “if anything had happened to Irving or Ellen Terry! And it might have, easily! We had no right to come out in such a small boat on such a night; we were absolutely in danger at times!”

We were not long in getting aboard. The whole yacht seemed by comparison with the darkness we emerged from to be blazing with light and filled with alert, powerful men. We were pulled, jerked, or thrown on board, I hardly knew which; and found ourselves hurried down to our luxurious cabins where everything was ready for our dressing. Our things had fortunately been sent on board during the day; anything coming in the boat would have had a poor chance of arriving dry.

III

In a very short time we were sitting in the saloon, light and warm and doing ample justice to one of the most perfect meals I ever sat down to. It was now after one o'clock and we were all hungry. After supper we sat and talked; and after the ladies had retired we sat on still till the September sun began to look in through the silk curtains that veiled the ports.

Pearce was a man full of interesting memories and experiences, and that night he seemed to lay the treasures of them at the feet of his guests. But of all that he told—we listening eagerly—none was so fascinating as his account of the building and trial trip of the *Livadia*.

273This was the great yacht which the Czar Alexander II. had built from the designs of Admiral Popoff of his own navy. It was of an entirely new pattern of naval construction; a turtle with a house on its back. The work of building had been entrusted to the Fairfield yard with *carte blanche* in the doing of it. No expense was to be spared in having everything of the best. Under the circumstances it could not be contracted for; the builder was paid by a fixed percentage of the prime cost. The only thing that the builder had to guarantee was the speed. But that was so arranged that beyond a certain point there was to be a rising bonus; the shipbuilder made an extra £20,000 on this alone. Pearce told us that it was the hope of the Czar to be able to evade the Nihilists, who were then very active and had attempted his life several times.
The *Livadia* was really a palace of the sea whereon he could live in comfort and luxury for long periods; and in which by keeping his own counsel he could go about the world without the knowledge of his enemies. It was known that the Nihilists regarded very jealously the building of the ship, and careful watch was kept in the yard. One day when the ship was finished and was partly coaled, there came a wire from the Russian Embassy that it was reported that there were two Nihilists in the shipyard. When the men were coming back from dinner, tally was kept at the gate where the Russian detectives were on watch. I have seen that return from dinner. Through the great gates seven thousand men poured in like a huge living stream. On this occasion the check showed that *two men were missing*. The Nihilists also had their own Embassy and secret police!

It then became necessary to examine the ship in every part. Those were the days of the Thomassin "infernal machine," which was suspected of having been the means by which many ships had been sent to the bottom. These machines were exploded by clockwork set for a certain time, and were made in such fashion as would not excite suspicion. Some were in the form of irregularly shaped lumps of coal. The first thing to

be done was therefore to take out all the coal which had already been put in. When the bunkers were empty and all the searchable portions of the ship had been carefully examined inch by inch, a picked staff of men opened and examined the watertight compartments. This was in itself a job, for there were, so well as I remember, something like a hundred and fifty of them. However, as each was done Pearce himself set his own seal upon it. At last he was able to assure the Grand 274Duke, who was in command and who had arrived to take the boat in charge, that she was so far safe from attack from concealed explosives. When she was starting the Grand Duke told Pearce that the Czar expected that he would go on the trial trip. In his own words:

"It is not any part of a shipbuilder's business to go on trial trips unless he so wishes. But in this case I could not have thought of refusing. The Czar's relations with me and his kindness to me were such that I could not do anything but what would please him!"

So the *Livadia* started from the Clyde with sealed orders. Her first call was at Holyhead. There they met with a despatch which ordered an immediate journey to Plymouth. At Plymouth she was again directed with secret orders to go to Brest, whither she set out at once.

At Brest there was an "easy," and certain of the officers and men were allowed shore leave. The "easy" should have been for several days; but suddenly word was received to leave Brest at once; it was said that some suspected Nihilists were in the way. The men on shore were peremptorily recalled and in haste preparations were made for an immediate start for the south. Pearce's own words explain the situation:

"I went at once to the Grand Duke Nicholas and remonstrated with him. 'I can answer for the workmanship of the *Livadia*,' I said; 'but the design is not mine, and so far as I know the principle on which she has been constructed has never been tested. There is no possibility of knowing what a ship of the pattern will do in bad weather, and that we have ahead of us. It is dirty now in the Bay and a storm is reported coming up. Does your Highness really think it wise to attempt the Bay of Biscay under the conditions?' To my astonishment not only the Grand Duke but some of his officers who were present, who had not hitherto shown any disposition to despise danger, spoke loudly in favour of going on at once. Of course I said no more. I had built the ship, and though I was not responsible for her I felt that if necessary I should go down in her. We had a terrible experience in the Bay, but got through safely to Ferrol. There she was laid up in a land-locked bay, round the shores of which guards were posted night and day for

months. It was necessary that she should lie up somewhere as the dock at Sebastopol—the only dock in the world large enough to hold her—was not ready.

275"And whilst she lay there the Czar was assassinated." This was on 13th March, 1881.

IV

Then he went on to tell us how once already the *Livadia* had been the means of saving the Czar's life:

"When she was getting on I had a model of her made—in fact, two; one of them," he said, turning to me, "you saw the other day in my office. These models are troublesome and costly things to make. The one which I intended as a present to the Czar cost five hundred pounds. It was my present to his Majesty on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his succession. It arrived the day before, 17th February—29th February old style. The Czar was delighted with it. That evening there was a banquet in the Winter Palace, where he was then in residence. He had been threatened for some time by means of a black-edged letter finding its way every morning into the Palace, warning him in explicit terms that if his oppression did not cease he would not live past the anniversary of his accession, which would be the following day. When he was leading the way to the dining-hall from the drawing-room he turned to the lady with him—Princess Dolgoruki, his morganatic wife—and said:

"'By the way I want to show you my new toy!' The model had been placed in the salon at the head of the grand staircase and they stopped to examine it.

"As they were doing so the staircase down which they would have been otherwise passing was blown up. The Nihilists, knowing the exact routine of the Court and the rigid adherence to hours, had timed the explosion for the passage of the staircase!"

We spent a delightful Sunday going around Arran. We dined at anchor in Wemyss Bay and slept on board. On the forenoon of Monday we went back to Glasgow.

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XLVIII
STEPNIAK

I

On the evening of 8th July 1892, after the play, *Faust*, Irving had some friends to supper in the Beefsteak Room. I think that, all told, it was as odd a congeries of personalities as could well be. Sarah Bernhardt, Darmont, Ellen Terry and her

daughter, Toole, Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Aldrich of Boston, two Miss Casellas—and Stepniak. It was odd that the man was known only by the one name; no one ever used his first name, Sergius. Other men have second names of some sort; but this one, though he signed himself S. Stepniak, I never heard spoken of except by the one word. I sat next to him at supper and we had a great deal of conversation together, chiefly about the state of affairs in Russia generally and the Revolutionary party in especial. He, who had presumably been in the very heart of the Revolutionary party and in all the secrets of Nihilism, told me some of his views and aspirations and those of the party—or rather the parties—of which he was a unit.

II

Stepniak was a very large man—large of that type that the line of the shoulders is high so that the bulk of the body stands out solid. He had a close beard and very thick hair, and strongly marked features with a suggestion of the Kalmuck type. He was very strong and had a great voice. On 1st May of that year, 1892, I had heard him speak at the great meeting in Hyde Park for the "Eight-hour" movement. There were in the Park that day not far from a quarter of a million of people, so that from any of the tribunes—which were carts—no one could be heard that was not strong of voice. The only three men whom I could hear were John Burns, Stepniak, and Frederick Rogers—the latter a working bookbinder and President of the Elizabethan Society—also one of the very finest speakers—judged by any standard—I have ever heard.

277In our conversation at supper that night he told me of the letters which they were receiving from the far-off northern shores of Siberia. It was a most sad and pitiful tale. Men of learning and culture, mostly University professors, men of blameless life and takers of no active part in revolution or conspiracy—simply theorists of freedom, patriots at heart—sent away to the terrible muddy shores of the Arctic sea, ill housed, ill fed, overworked—where life was one long, sordid, degrading struggle for bare life in that inhospitable region. I could not but be interested and moved by his telling. He saw that I was sympathetic, and said he would like to send me something to read on the subject. It came some weeks later, as the following letter will show:

"31 Blandford Road,

Bedford Park, W.,

August 2, 1892.

"Dear Mr. Stoker,—It is a long time that I wanted to write to you since that delightful party at the Lyceum. But I was so busy, and the parcel I wanted to send to you for one reason or another could never be ready, and so it dragged on. What I send to you is the

paper, *Free Russia*, I am editing. Since you have read all my books and have been so kind and indulgent for them, and so interested in the Russian Cause, I suppose you will be interested in the attempt to give a practical expression to English sympathies. Unfortunately the collection of *Free Russia* is incomplete (No. 1 is quite out of print). But what you will have is quite sufficient to give you an idea of the whole.

"May I ask whether you live permanently in London and whether I may hope to see you some day once again?—Yours very truly,

S. Stepniak."

III

In February 1893 Stepniak saw Irving and Ellen Terry play in *King Lear*. The following excerpts are from a letter which he sent to Irving—a long letter of fourteen pages. I was so struck with it when Irving showed it to me that I asked leave to make a copy. Whereupon he gave me the letter.

This was after a habit of his; he generally gave me things which would be of interest to me—and to others. In the letter Stepniak said:

"The actor is a joint creator with the author—even with such an author as Shakespeare. He has a right of his own in 278interpretation, and the only point is how far he makes good his claims, and that you have done to a wonderful extent. Yours was not acting: it was life itself, so true, natural and convincing was every word, every shade of expression upon your face or in your voice. The gradual transformation of the man, his humbling himself, the revelation of his better, sympathetic self—it was all a wonder of realism, nature and subtlety. Your acting reminded me of the pictures of the great Flemish master who seems to paint not with a brush but with a needle. Yet this astonishing subtlety was in no way prejudicial to the completeness and the power and masterliness of the great whole.... I cannot forbear from asking you to transmit my compliments and admiration to Miss Ellen Terry—if you think that she may care about such a humble tribute. There is a passage from 'I love your Majesty according to my bonds, not more or less' and the following monologue, which I am bold enough to say are the weakest in the play: too cold and dry and forward and elaborate for Cordelia. But in her rendering there was nothing of that: it was all simplicity, tenderness, spontaneous emotion. The charm of her personality and character, which she has such a unique gift of infusing into everything, has partially improved the original text. I hope you will not consider my saying so too sacrilegious. There are spots upon the sun. And the scene in the French camp! Her 'No cause, no cause!' was quite a stroke

of genius. I would not believe before I saw her in that, that words can produce such an emotion.”

And this was the man who stood for wiping tyrants from the face of the earth; who aided in the task, if *Underground Russia* be even based on truth. This gentle, appreciative, keenly critical, sympathetic man!

Strange it was that he who must have gone through such appalling dangers as beset hourly the workers in the Nihilist cause and come through them all unscathed was finally killed in the commonplace way of being run over by a train on the underground railway.

IV

It reminds me of another experience with Irving and a surprising *dénouement*. When we were in California in 1893 a gentleman called to see Irving at his hotel. He was a countryman of Stepniak, but of quite the opposite degree—a Prince claiming blood kin with the Czar, Nicholas Galitzin. He supped with Irving and some others, forty-five in all, at the Café Riche, 13th September, when 279he gave Irving a very charming souvenir in the shape of a gold match-box set with gems. Several times after we met at supper and came to be quite friends. Prince Galitzin was a mighty hunter and had slain much big game, including even grizzlies and other bears. He told us many interesting hunting adventures. He had lost one arm. He had not mentioned any adventure bearing on this, and Irving asked him if it was by a mischance in a hunting adventure that he had suffered the loss. He said with a laugh:

“No! No! Nothing of the kind. It was a damn stupid fellow who let a Saratoga trunk fall on me over the staircase of a hotel!”

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XLIX
E. ONSLOW FORD, R.A.

One morning—it was 12th January 1880—I got a note from Irving sent down by cab from his rooms. In it he said:

“There is a certain Mr. Onslow Ford coming to the theatre this morning. Please see him for me and give him some fatherly or brotherly advice.”

I left word with the hall-keeper to send for me whenever the gentleman came. I did not know who he was or what he wanted: but I did know what “fatherly or brotherly advice” meant. At that period of his life the demands made on Irving’s time were

fearful. There was no end to them; no limit to the range of their wants. And I was the "fatherly adviser" in such cases.

A little after noon I was sent for; the expected stranger had arrived. In those days the stage door in Exeter Street was very small and absolutely inconvenient. There was comfortable room for Sergeant Barry, the hall-keeper, who was a fine, big, bulky man; two in the room crowded it. Barry waited outside and I went in. The stranger was a young man of medium height, thin, dark haired. His hair rose back from his forehead without parting of any kind, in the way which we in those days associated in our minds with French artists. His face was pale, a little sallow, fine in profile and moulding; a nose of distinction with sensitive nostrils. He had a small beard and moustache. His eyes were dark and concentrated—distinctly "seeing" eyes. My heart warmed to him at once. He was young and earnest and fine; I knew at a glance that he was an artist, and with a future. Still I had to be on guard. One of my functions at the theatre, as I had come to know after a year of exceedingly arduous work, was to act as a barrier. I was "the Spirit that Denies!" In fact I had to be. No one likes to say "no!"—a very few are constitutionally able to. I had set myself to help Irving in his work and this was one of the best ways I could help him. He recognised gratefully the utility of the service, and as he trusted absolutely in my discretion. 281I gradually fell into the habit of using my own decision in the great majority of cases.

When Mr. Onslow Ford told me that he wished to make a statuette of Henry Irving as Hamlet I felt that the time for "advice" had come, and began to pave the way for a *non possumus*, strong in intention though gentle in expression. The young sculptor, however, had thought the matter all over for himself. He knew the demands on Irving's time and how vastly difficult it would be to get sittings so many and so long as would be required for the work he had projected. I listened of course and thought better of him and his chance in that he knew his difficulties at the beginning.

Presently he put his hand in his pocket and took out something rolled in paper—a parcel about as big as a pork pie. When he had unrolled it he held up a rough clay model of a seated figure.

"This," said he, "is something of the idea. I have been several times in the front row of the stalls watching as closely as I could. One cannot well model clay in the stalls of a theatre. But I did this after the first time, and I have had it with me on each other occasion. I compared it on such opportunities as I had—you do keep the Lyceum dark all but the stage; and I think I can see my way. I don't want to waste Irving's time or my own opportunities if I am so fortunate as to get sittings!"

That was the sort of artist that needed none of my “advice”—fatherly, brotherly, or otherwise. My mind was already made up.

“Would you mind waiting here a while?” I asked. In those early days we had only the one office and no waiting-room except the stage. He waited gladly, whilst I went back to the office. Irving had by this time arrived. I told him I had seen Mr. Ford.

“I hope you put it nicely to him that I can’t possibly give him sittings,” he said.

“That is why I came to see if you had arrived.”

“How do you mean,” he asked again. So I said:

“I think you had better see him, and if you think as I do you will give him sittings!”

“Oh, my dear fellow, I can’t. I am really too pressed with work.”

“Well, see him any way!” I said; “I have asked him to wait on purpose.” He looked at me keenly for an instant as though I had somehow “gone back” on him. Then he smiled:

282“All right. I’ll see him now!”

I brought Onslow Ford. When the two men met, Irving *did* share my opinion. He did give sittings for a bronze statuette. The result was so fine that he gave quite another series of sittings for him to do the life-size marble statue of “Irving as Hamlet” now in the Library of the London Guildhall. It is a magnificent work, and will perhaps best of all his works perpetuate the memory of the great Sculptor who died all too young.

Irving gave many sittings for the statue. With the experience of his first work Onslow Ford could begin with knowledge of the face so necessary in portrait art. I often went with him and it was an intense pleasure to see Onslow Ford’s fine hands at work. They seemed like living things working as though they had their own brains and initiation.

I was even able to be of some little assistance. I knew Irving’s face so well from seeing it so perpetually under almost all possible phases of emotion that I could notice any error of effect if not of measurement. Often either Irving or Onslow Ford would ask me and I would give my opinion. For instance:

“I think the right jowl is not right!” The sculptor examined it thoughtfully for quite a while. Then he said suddenly:

“Quite right! but not in that way. I see what it is!” and he proceeded to add to the left of the forehead.

After all, effect is comparative; this is one of the great principles of art!

On 31st March 1906, one of the Academy view days of those not yet Royal Academicians, I went to Onslow Ford's old studio in Acacia Road, now in possession of his son, Wolfram the painter, to see his portrait of his beautiful young wife, the daughter of George Henschel. Whilst we were talking of old days he unearthed treasures which I did not know existed: casts from life of Henry Irving's hands.

No other such relics of the actor exist; and these are of supreme interest. Irving had the finest man's hands I have ever seen. Later on he sent me a cast of one of them in bronze; a rare and beautiful thing which I shall always value. Size and shape, proportion and articulation were all alike beautiful and distinguished and distinctive. It would be hard to mistake them for those of any other man. With them he could *speak*. It was not possible to doubt the meaning which he intended to convey. With such models to work on a few lines of pencil or brush made for the 283actor an enlightening identity of character. The weakness of Charles I., which not all the skill of Vandyck could hide; the vulture grip of Shylock; the fossilised age of Gregory Brewster; the asceticism of Becket.

What, after the face, can compare with the hand for character, or intention, or illustration. It can be an index to the working of the mind.

284

L
SIR LAURENCE ALMA-TADEMA, R.A.

I

In his speech at the close of the second "season" at the Lyceum, 25th July, 1879, Irving announced amongst the old plays which he intended to do, *Coriolanus*. He never announced any play, then or thereafter, without having thought it well over and come to some conclusion as to its practicability. In this instance he had already made up his mind to ask Laurence Alma-Tadema to make designs for the play and to superintend its production. The experience of having a free hand in such matters, now that he was his own master in regard to stage productions, had shown to him the great possibilities of effect to be produced by the great masters of technique. There had in the past been great painters who had worked for the stage. Loutherbourg and Clarkson Stanfield, for instance, had made fame in both ways of picturesque art, the gallery and the stage. But the idea was new of getting specialists in various periods to apply their personal skill as well as their archæological knowledge to stage effect. Indeed up to that time even great painters were not always historically accurate. A

survey of the work of most of the painters of the first half of the Victorian epoch will show such glaring instances of anachronism and such manifest breaches of geographical, ethnological, and technological exactness as to illustrate the extraordinary change for the better in the way of accuracy in the work of to-day. The National Gallery and Holland House have instances of errors in costumes incorrect as to alleged nationality and date. Irving wanted things to be correct, well knowing that as every age has its own suitabilities to its own needs that which is accurate is most likely to convince. Alma-Tadema had made a speciality of artistic archæology of Ancient Rome. In working from his knowledge he had reformed the whole artistic ideas of the time. He had so studied the life of old Rome that he had for his own purposes reconstructed it. Up to his time, for instance, the toga was in art depicted as a thin linen robe of somewhat scanty proportions. Look 285at the picture of Kemble as Cato by Lawrence, or indeed of any ancient Roman by any one. Irving had become possessed of the toga of Macready, and anything more absurd one could hardly imagine; it was something like a voluminous night-shirt. Of course the audience also were ignorant of the real thing, and so it did not matter; the great actor's powers were unlessened by the common ignorance. In his studying for his art Alma-Tadema had taken from many statues and fragments the folds as well as the texture of the toga. With infinite patience he had gathered up details of various kinds, till at last, with a mind stored with knowledge, he set to himself the task of reconstruction; to restore the toga so that it would answer all the conditions evidenced in contemporary statuary. And the result? Not a flimsy covering which would have become draggle-tailed in a day or an hour of strenuous work; but a huge garment of heavy cloth which would allow of infinite varieties of wearing, and which would preserve the body from the burning heat of the day and the reacting chills of night. Even for the purposes of pictorial art the revived toga made a new condition of things, in all ways harmonising with the accepted facts. There is on record plenty of marble and stone work of old Rome; of work in bronze and brass and iron and copper; in silver and gold; in jewels and crystals—in fact in all those materials which do not yield to the ravages of time. All this Alma-Tadema had studied till he *knew* it. He was familiar with the kinds of marble and stone used in Roman architecture, statuary, and domestic service. The kinds of glass and crystal; of armour and arms; of furniture; of lighting; sacerdotal and public and domestic service. He knew how a velarium should be made and of what, and how adorned; how it should be put up and secured. He was learned of boats and chariots; of carts and carriages, and of the trappings of horses. Implements of agriculture and trade and manufacture and for domestic use were familiar to him. He was a master of the many ceremonial undertakings which had such a part in Roman life.... In fact, Alma-Tadema's artistic reconstruction was like that of Owen; he

reconciled fragments and brought to light proof of the unities and harmonies and suitabilities of ancient life.

II

Irving felt that with such an artist to help—archæologist, specialist, and genius in one—he would be able to put before an audience such work as would not only charm them by its beauty 286and interest them in its novelty, but would convince by its suitability. For there is an enormous aid to conviction in a story when those who follow it accept from the beginning in good faith the things of common knowledge and use which are put before them. I often say myself that the faith which still exists is to be found more often in a theatre than in a church. When an audience go into a playhouse which is not connected in their minds with the habit of deceit they are unconsciously prepared to accept all things *ab initio* in the simple and direct manner of childhood. When therefore what they see is *vraisemblable*—with the manifest appearance of truth to something—all the powers of intellectual examination and working habit come into force in the right direction.

In that summer of 1879 when Irving announced *Coriolanus* he also announced several other plays.

It was not, of course, his intention to produce these plays all at once, but one by one as occasion served. As has been seen, the putting on of *The Merchant of Venice* and its phenomenal success shelved or postponed most of the plays then announced; but Irving did not lose sight of *Coriolanus*. One morning in the following winter, whilst Sir Laurence Alma-Tadema, as he himself told me, was in his studio in his house in North Gate, Regent's Park, he heard the sound of sleigh bells coming over the bridge. Naturally his thoughts went back to *The Bells* and Irving, for no one who has seen the play can hear the sound unexpectedly without the thought. He heard the sound stop at his own gate; and whilst wondering what it could mean Irving was announced. He was accompanied by Mr. W. L. Ashmead Bartlett, who afterwards took his present name on his marriage to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. Irving at once entered upon the subject of his visit; and the great painter was charmed to entertain it. As was usual with him when working on a new play, Irving had a rough scenario in his mind, and he and Alma-Tadema spoke of it then and there. Irving could tell him of the scenes he wanted and give some hints not only as to their practical use but of the ideas which he wished them to convey. When he had gone Alma-Tadema took down his Shakespeare and began his own study of the play. The continuous success of *The Merchant of Venice* gave him ample time, and his studies and designs were unique and lovely.

III

As we know, the production of *Coriolanus* did not take place till twenty-two years later; but all through 1880 and 1881 Alma-Tadema had the matter in hand. In those years the high policy of his theatre management was a good deal changed. When Irving had experience of Ellen Terry's remarkable powers and gifts he wisely determined to devote to them, so far as was possible, the remaining years of her youth. She had now been twenty-five years on the stage; and though she began in her very babyhood—at eight years old—the flight of time has to be considered, for the future if not for the past. She was now thirty-three years of age; in the very height of her beauty and charm, and to all seeming still in her girlhood. He therefore arranged *Romeo and Juliet* as the next Shakespearean production. This was followed in time by *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *Olivia*, *Faust*—all plays that showed her in her brightness and pathos; and so *Coriolanus* was kept postponed. But well into 1881 it was still being worked on, and in those days I had many visits to the studio of Alma-Tadema.

IV

Let me give an instance of his thoroughness in his art work.

Once when in his studio I saw him occupied on a beautiful piece of painting, a shrub with a myriad of branches laden with berries and but few leaves, through which was seen the detail of the architecture of the marble building beyond. The picture was then almost finished. The next time I came I found him still hard at work on the same painting; but it was not nearly so far advanced. Dissatisfied with the total effect, he had painted out the entire background and was engaged on a new and quite different one. The labour involved in this stupendous change almost made me shudder. It needs but a small amount of thought to understand the infinite care and delicacy of touch to complete an elaborate architectural drawing between the gaps of those hundreds of spreading twigs.

V

This devotion to his art is often one of the touchstones of the success of an artist in any medium; the actor, or the singer, or the musician as well as the worker in any of the plastic arts.

288I remember Irving telling me of a conversation he had with the late W. H. Vanderbilt when, after lunch in his own house in Fifth Avenue, the great millionaire took him round his beautiful picture gallery. He was pointing out the portrait of himself finished not long before by Meissonier, and gave many details of how the great painter

did his work and the extraordinary care which he took. Vanderbilt used to give long sittings, and Meissonier, to aid the tedium of his posing, had mirrors fitted up in such a way that he could see the work being executed. "Do you know," the millionaire concluded, "that sometimes after a long sitting he would take his cloth and wipe out everything he had done in the day's work. And I calculated roughly that every touch of his brush cost me five dollars!"

VI

When in 1896 Irving produced *Cymbeline*, Alma-Tadema undertook to design and supervise the picturesque side; or, as it was by his wish announced in the programme: "kindly acted as adviser in the production of the play."

He chose a time of England when architecture expressed itself mainly in wood; natural enough when it was a country of forest. It is not a play allowing of much display of fine dresses, and Irving never under any circumstances wished a play to be unsuitably mounted. The opportunities of picturesque effect came, in this instance, in beautiful scenery.

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LI
SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES, BART.

I

It was to Irving an intense pleasure to work with Sir Edward Burne-Jones. The painter seemed to bring to whatever he had in hand a sort of concentration of all his great gifts, and to apply them with unsparing purpose and energy. His energy was of that kind which seems to accomplish without strenuous effort; after all it is the waste of force and not its use which proclaims itself in the doing. This man had such mighty gifts that in his work there was no waste; all the creations of his teeming brain were so fine in themselves that they simply stood ready for artistic use. His imagination working out through perfected art, peopled a whole world of its own and filled that world around them with beautiful things. This world had been opened to Irving as to every one else who admired it. But when the player came adventuring into it, the painter displayed to him a vast of hidden treasures. There was simply no end to his imaginative ideas, his artistic efforts, his working into material beauty the thoughts which flitted through his mind. As a colourist he was supreme, and he could use colour as a medium of conveying ideas to the same effect as others used form. His own power of dealing with the beauties of form was supreme.

To work with such an artist was to Irving a real joy. He simply revelled in the task. Every time they met it was to him a fresh stimulation. Burne-Jones, too, seemed to be stimulated; the stage had always been to him a fairyland of its own, but he had not had artistic dealings with it. Now he entered it with full power to let himself run free. The play which he undertook for Irving, *King Arthur*, was of the period which he had made his own: that mystic time when life had single purposes and the noblest prevailed the most; when beauty was a symbol of inner worth; when love in some dainty as well as some holy form showed that even flesh, which was God's handiwork, was not base.

290In the working out of the play each day saw some new evidence of the painter's thought; the roughest sketch given as a direction or a light to scene-painter or property maker or costumier was in itself a thing of beauty. I veritably believe that Irving was sorry when the production of the play was complete. He so enjoyed the creative process that the completion was a lesser good.

Regarding human nature, which was Irving's own especial study, Burne-Jones had a mind tuned to the same key as his own. To them both the things which were basic and typal were closest. The varieties of mankind were of lesser importance than the species. The individual was the particular method and opportunity of conveyance of an idea; and, as such, was of original importance. To each of the two great artists such individual grew in his mind, and ever grew; till in the end, on canvas or before the footlights, the being lived.

II

It would be hard to better illustrate the mental attitude of both to men and type and individual than by some of the stories which Burne-Jones loved to tell and Irving to hear. The painter had an endless collection of stories of all sorts; but those relating to children seemed closest to his heart. In our meetings on the stage or at supper in the Beefsteak Room, or on those delightful Sunday afternoons when he allowed a friend to stroll with him round his studio, there was always some little tale breathing the very essence of human nature.

I remember once when he told us an incident in the life of his daughter, who was then a most beautiful girl and is now a most beautiful woman, Mrs. J. W. Mackail. When she was quite a little girl, she came home from school one day and with thoughtful eyes and puckered brows asked her mother:

"Mother, can you tell me why it is that whenever I see a little boy crying in the street I always want to kiss him; and when I see a little girl crying I want to slap her?"

III

Another story was of a little boy, one of a large family. This little chap on one occasion asked to be allowed to go to bed at the children's tea time, a circumstance so unique as to puzzle the domestic authorities. The mother refused, but the child whimpered and persevered—and succeeded. The father was presently in his 291study at the back of the house looking out on the garden when he saw the child in his little night-shirt come secretly down the steps and steal to a corner of the garden behind some shrubs. He had a garden fork in his hand. After a lapse of some minutes he came out again and stole quietly upstairs. The father's curiosity was aroused, and he too went behind the shrubs to see what had happened. He found some freshly turned earth, and began to investigate. Some few inches down was a closed envelope which the child had buried. On opening it he found a lucifer match and a slip of paper on which was written in pencil in a sprawling hand:

"Dear Devil,—Please take away Aunt Julia."

IV

Another story related to a little baby child, the first in the household. There was a dinner party, and the child, curious as to what was going on, lay awake with torturing thoughts. At last, when a favourable opportunity came through the nurse's absence, she got quietly from her cot and stole downstairs just as she was. The dining-room door was ajar, and before the agonised nurse could effect a capture she had slipped into the room. There she was, of course, made much of. She was taken in turn on each one's knees and kissed. Mother frowned, of course, but father gave her a grape and a wee drop of wine and water. Then she was kissed again and taken to the waiting nurse. Safe in the nursery her guardian berated her:

"Oh, Miss Angy, this is very dreadful. Going down to the dining-room!—And in your nighty!—And before strangers!—*Before Gentlemen!* You must never let any gentleman see you in your nighty!—Never! Never! Never! That is Wicked!—Awful!" And so on!

A few nights afterwards the father, when going from his dressing-room for dinner, went into the nursery to say another "good-night" to baby. When he went in she was saying her prayers at nurse's knees, in long night-robe and with folded hands like the picture of the Infant Samuel. Hearing the footstep she turned her head round, and on catching sight of her father jumped up crying: "Nau'ty—nau'ty—nau'ty!" and ran behind a screen. The father looked at the nurse puzzled:

"What is it, nurse?"

292“I don’t know, sir! I haven’t the faintest idea!” she answered, equally puzzled.

“I’ll wait a few minutes and see,” he said, as he sat down. Half a minute later the little tot ran from behind the screen, quite naked, and running over to him threw herself on his knee. She snuggled in close to him with her arms round his neck, and putting her little rosebud of a mouth close to his ear whispered wooingly:

“Pap-pa, me dood girl now!”

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LII
EDWIN A. ABBEY, R.A.

I

When Irving was having the enforced rest consequent to the accident to his knee in December 1896, he made up his mind that his next Shakespearean production should be *Richard II*. For a long time he had had it in view and already formed his opinion as to what the leading features of such a production as was necessary should be. He knew that it could not in any case be made into a strong play, for the indeterminate character of Richard would not allow of such. The strong thing that is in the play is, of course, his suffering; but such, when the outcome of one’s own nature, is not the same as when it is effected by Fate, or external oppression. He knew therefore that the play would want all the help he could give it. Now he set himself to work out the text to acting shape, as he considered it would be best. Despite what any one may say to the contrary—and it is only faddists that say it—there is not a play of Shakespeare’s which does not need arranging or cutting for the stage. So much can now be expressed by pictorial effect—by costume, by lighting and properties and music—which in Shakespeare’s time had to be expressed in words, that compression is at least advisable. Then again, the existence of varied scenery and dresses requires time for changes, which can sometimes be effected only by the transposition of parts of the play. In his spare time, therefore, of 1897 he began the arrangement with a definite idea of production in 1899. When he had the general scheme prepared—for later on there are always changes in readings and minor details—he approached the man who in his mind would be the best to design and advise concerning the artistic side: Edwin A. Abbey, R.A.

II

Irving and Abbey were close friends; and I am proud to say I can say the same of myself and Abbey for the last twenty-five years. 294Irving had a great admiration for

his work, especially with regard to Shakespeare's plays, many of which he illustrated for *Harper's Magazine*. The two men had been often thrown together as members of "The Kinsmen," a little dining club of literary and artistic men of British and American nationality. Abbey and George Boughton and John Sargent represented in London the American painters of the group. Naturally in the intimate companionship which such a club affords, men understand more of the wishes and aims and ambitions of their friends. Irving had instinctive belief that the painter who thought out his work so carefully and produced effects at once so picturesque and so illuminative of character would or might care for stage work where everything has to seem real and regarding which there must be an intelligent purpose somewhere. Irving, having already produced *Richard III.* with the limited resources of the Bateman days, knew the difficulties of the play and the effects which he wished to produce. When afterwards Abbey painted his great picture of the funeral of Henry VI., Irving recognised a master-hand of scenic purpose. Years afterwards when he reproduced the play he availed himself, to the best of his own ability and the possibilities of the stage, of the painter's original work. It was not possible to realise on the stage Abbey's great conception. It is possible to use in the illusion of a picture a perspective forbidden on the stage by limited space and the non-compressible actuality of human bodies.

When he came to think over *Richard II.*, he at once began to rely on Abbey's imagination and genius for the historical aspect of the play. He approached him; and the work was undertaken.

III

Abbey has since told me of the delight he had in co-operating with Irving. Not only was he proud and glad to work with such a man in such a position which he had won for himself, but the actual working together as artists in different media to one common end was pleasure to him. Irving came to him with every detail of the play ready, so that he could get into his mind at one time both the broad dominating ideas and the necessary requirements and limitations of the scenes. The whole play was charted for him at the start. Irving could defend every position he had taken; knew the force and guidance of every passage; and 295had so studied the period and its history that he could add external illumination to the poet's intention.

In addition, the painter found that his own suggestions were so quickly and so heartily seized that he felt from the first that he himself and his work were from the very start prime factors in the creation of the *mise en scène*. In his words:

“Irving made me understand him; and he understood me! We seemed to be thoroughly at one in everything. My own idea of the centre point of the play was Richard’s poignant feeling at realising that Bolingbroke’s power and splendour were taking the place of his own. The speech beginning:

“‘O God! O God! that ere this tongue of mine,

That laid the sentence of dread banishment....’

“This seemed to be exactly Irving’s view also—only that he seemed to have thought out every jot and tittle of it right down to the ‘nth.’ He had been working out in his own mind the realisation of everything whilst my own ideas had been scattered, vague, and nebulous. As we grew to know the play together it all seemed so natural that a lot of my work seemed to do itself. I had only to put down in form and colour such things as were requisite. Of course there had to be much consulting of authorities, much study of a technical kind, and many evasive experiments before I reached what I wanted. But after I had talked the play over with Irving I never had to be in doubt.”

To my humble mind this setting out of Abbey’s experience—which is in his own words as he talked on the subject with me—is about as truthful and exhaustive an illustration of the purpose and process of artistic co-operation as we are ever likely to get.

IV

In his designs Abbey brought home to one the *cachet* of mediæval life. What he implied as well as what he showed told at a glance the conditions and restrictions—the dominant forces of that strenuous time: the fierceness and cruelty; the suspicion and distrust; the horrible crampedness of fortress life; the contempt of death which came with the grim uncertainties of daily life. In one of his scenes was pictured by inference the life of the ladies in such a time and place in the way which one could never forget. It was a corner in the interior of a castle, high up and out of reach of 296arrow or catapult; a quiet nook where the women could go in safety for a breath of fresh air. Only the sky above them was open, for danger would come from any side exposed. The most had been made of the little space available for the cultivation of a few plants. Every little “coign of vantage” made by the unequal tiers of the building was seized on for the growth of flowers. The strictness of the little high-walled bower of peace conveyed forcibly what must have been the life of which this was the liberty. It was exceedingly picturesque; a grace to the eye as well as an interest to the mind. There was a charming effect in a great copper vase in a niche of rough stonework, wherein blossomed a handful of marigolds.

V

In this play Irving was very decided as to the “attack.” He had often talked with me about the proper note to strike at the beginning of the play. To him, it should seem to be stately seriousness. In Richard’s time the “Justice” of the King was no light matter; not to take it seriously was to do away with the ultimate power of the Monarch. Richard, as is afterwards shown, meant to use his kingly power unscrupulously. He feared both Bolingbroke and Norfolk, and meant to get rid of them. So meaning, he would of course shroud his unscrupulous intent in the ermine of Justice. A hypocrite who proclaims himself as such at the very start is not so dangerous as he might be, for at once he sounds the note of warning to his victims. This, *pace* the critics, makes the action of Bolingbroke simple enough. *He* saw through the weaker Richard’s intent of treachery, and knew that his only chance lay in counter-treachery. A King without scruple was a dangerous opponent in the fourteenth century. It was not until Richard had violated his pledge regarding the succession and right of Lancaster—thus further intending to cripple the banished Duke—that the new Lancaster took arms as his only chance.

In Irving’s reading of the character of Richard this intentional hypocrisy did not oppose his florid, almost flamboyant, self-torturing vapouring of his pain and woe. He is a creature of exaggerations of his greatness, as of his own self-surrender.

As the production of the play progressed Irving began to build greater and greater hopes on it. Already when he was taken ill at Glasgow in 1898 he had expended on the scenery alone—for the time for costumes and properties had not arrived—a sum of over 297sixteen hundred pounds. It was a bitter grief to him that he had to abandon the idea of playing the part. But he still cherished the hope that his son Harry might yet play it on the lines he had so studiously prepared. To this end he wished to retain the freshness of Abbey’s work, and when during his long illness, another manager, believing that he intended abandoning the production, wished to secure Abbey’s co-operation, the painter refused the offer so that Irving might later use the work for his son. Abbey, though no fee or reward for all his labour had yet passed, considered the work done as in some way joint property. This generous view endeared him more than ever to Irving, who up to the day of his death regarded him as one of the best and kindest and most thoughtful of his friends.

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LIII
J. BERNARD PARTRIDGE

For a good many years Bernard Partridge was a *persona grata* at the Lyceum Theatre. He made the drawings of Irving and Ellen Terry for the souvenirs which we issued for the following plays, *Macbeth*, *The Dead Heart*, *Ravenswood*, *Henry VIII.*, *King Lear*, *Becket*, and *King Arthur*. He has a wonderful gift of "remembering with his eyes." This was particularly useful in working any drawing of Henry Irving, whose expression altered so much when anything interested him that he became the despair of most draughtsmen. Partridge used to stand on the stage and watch him; or sit with him in his dressing-room for a chat. He would make certain notes with pen and pencil, and then go home and draw him. In the meantime Hawes Craven, the scene-painter, would make sketches in monochrome of the scenes chosen for the souvenir, putting in the figures but leaving the faces vacant. Then would come Bernard Partridge with his own fine brushes and Hawes Craven's palette and put in the likeness of the various actors. These were so admirably done that any one taking up any of the souvenirs can say who were the actors—if, of course, the individuality of the latter be known to him. He used to laugh whenever I spoke of his "putting in the noses." Of course, the single figures were his own work entirely. I think in all the years of Irving's management Bernard Partridge was the only person outside the *personnel* of the Company or staff who was allowed to pass in and out of the stage door just as he wished. He used to be present at rehearsals from which all others were forbidden.

Thus he came to have an exceptional knowledge of Irving's face in pretty well all its moods and phases. For this reason, too, the coloured frontispiece of this book is of exceptional interest. It was the last work of art done from Irving's sitting before his death. Later on, he was, of course, photographed; the last sun picture done of him was of him sitting alongside John Hare, with whom he was staying at his place in Overstrand two months before he died. But 299Partridge's pastel was the last art study from life. On the evening of 17th July 1905, he was dining with Mr. and Mrs. Partridge in their pretty house in Church Street, Chelsea. Sir Francis and Lady Burnand were there and Anstey Guthrie, and Mr. Plowden, the magistrate. Irving enjoyed the evening much—one can see it by the happy look in his face. Partridge, in the fashion customary to him, made his "eye notes" as Irving sat back in his arm-chair with the front of his shirt bulging out after the manner usual to such a pose. Early next morning Partridge did the pastel.

To me it is of priceless worth, not only from its pictorial excellence, but because it is the last artistic record of my dear friend; and because it shows him in one of the happy moods which, alas! grew rarer with his failing health. It gives, of course, a true impression of his age—he was then in his sixty-eighth year; but all the beauty and intelligence and sweetness of his face is there.

LIV
ROBERT BROWNING

It was quite a treat to hear Irving and Robert Browning talking. Their conversation, no matter how it began, usually swerved round to Shakespeare; as they were both excellent scholars of the subject the talk was on a high plane. It was not of double-endings or rhyming lines, or of any of the points or objects of that intellectual dissection which forms the work of a certain order of scholars who seem to always want to prove to themselves that Shakespeare was Shakespeare and no one else—and that he was the same man at the end of his life that he had been at the beginning. These two men took large views. Their ideas were of the loftiness and truth of his thought; of the magic music of his verse; of the light which his work threw on human nature. Each could quote passages to support whatever view he was sustaining. And whenever those two men talked, a quiet little group grew round them; all were content to listen when they spoke.

We used to meet Browning at the houses of George Boughton, the Royal Academician, and of Arthur Lewis, the husband of Kate, the eldest sister of Ellen Terry. Both lived on Campden Hill, and the houses of both were famous for hospitality amongst a large circle of friends radiating out from the artistic classes.

Robert Browning once made Irving a present which he valued very much. This was the purse, quite void of anything in the shape of money, which was found, after his death, in the pocket of Edmund Kean. It was of knitted green silk with steel rings. Charles Kean gave it to John Foster who gave it to Browning who gave it to Irving. It was sold at Christie's at the sale of Irving's curios, with already an illustrious record of possessors.

Irving loved everything which had belonged to Edmund Kean, whom he always held to be the greatest of British actors. He had quite a collection of things which had been his. In addition to this purse he had a malacca cane which had come from Garrick, to Kean; the knife which Kean wore as Shylock; his sword and 301sandals worn by him as Lucius Brutus; a gold medal presented to him in 1827; his Richard III. sword and boots; the Circassian dagger presented to him by Lord Byron.

He had had also two Kean pictures on which he set great store. One of large size was the scene from *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, in which Kean appeared as Sir Giles. The other was the portrait done by George Clint as the study for Kean in the picture. This latter was the only picture for which Edmund Kean ever sat, and Irving valued it accordingly. He gave the large picture to the Garrick Club; but the portrait he kept for

himself. It was sold at the sale of his effects at Christie's where I had the good fortune to be able to purchase it. To me it is of inestimable value, for of all his possessions Irving valued it most.

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LV
WALT WHITMAN

I

In the early afternoon of Thursday, 20th March, 1884, I drove with Irving to the house of Thomas Donaldson, 326 North 40th Street, Philadelphia. We went by appointment. Thomas Donaldson it was who had, at the dinner given to Irving by the Clover Club on December 6, 1883, presented him with Edwin Forrest's watch.

When we arrived Donaldson met us in the hall. Irving went into the "parlour"; Hatton, who was with us, and I talked for a minute or so with our host. When we went in Irving was looking at a fine picture by Moran of the Great Valley of the Yellowstone which hung over the fireplace. On the opposite side of the room sat an old man of leonine appearance. He was burly, with a large head and high forehead slightly bald. Great shaggy masses of grey-white hair fell over his collar. His moustache was large and thick and fell over his mouth so as to mingle with the top of the mass of the bushy flowing beard. I knew at once who it was, but just as I looked Donaldson, who had hurried on in front, said:

"Mr. Irving, I want you to know Mr. Walt Whitman." His anxiety beforehand and his jubilation in making the introduction satisfied me that the occasion of Irving's coming had been made one for the meeting with the Poet.

When he heard the name Irving strode quickly across the room with outstretched hand. "I am delighted to meet you!" he said, and the two shook hands warmly. When my turn came and Donaldson said "Bram Stoker," Walt Whitman leaned forward suddenly, and held out his hand eagerly as he said:

"Bram Stoker—Abraham Stoker is it?" I acquiesced and we shook hands as old friends—as indeed we were. "Thereby hangs a tale."

II

In 1868 when William Michael Rossetti brought out his Selected Poems of Walt Whitman it raised a regular storm in British literary 303circles. The bitter-minded critics of the time absolutely flew at the Poet and his work as watch-dogs do at a

ragged beggar. Unfortunately there were passages in the *Leaves of Grass* which allowed of attacks, and those who did not or could not understand the broad spirit of the group of poems took samples of detail which were at least deterrent. Doubtless they thought that it was a case for ferocious attack; as from these excerpts it would seem that the book was as offensive to morals as to taste. They did not scruple to give the *ipsissima verba* of the most repugnant passages.

In my own University the book was received with cynical laughter, and more than a few of the students sent over to Trübner's for copies of the complete *Leaves of Grass*—that being the only place where they could then be had. Needless to say that amongst young men the objectionable passages were searched for and more noxious ones expected. For days we all talked of Walt Whitman and the new poetry with scorn—especially those of us who had not seen the book. One day I met a man in the Quad who had a copy, and I asked him to let me look at it. He acquiesced readily:

"Take the damned thing," he said; "I've had enough of it!"

I took the book with me into the Park and in the shade of an elm-tree began to read it. Very shortly my own opinion began to form; it was diametrically opposed to that which I had been hearing. From that hour I became a lover of Walt Whitman. There were a few of us who, quite independently of each other, took the same view. We had quite a fight over it with our companions who used to assail us with shafts of their humour on all occasions. Somehow, we learned, I think, a good deal in having perpetually to argue without being able to deny—in so far as quotation went at all events—the premises of our opponents.

However, we were ourselves satisfied, and that was much. Young men are, as a rule, very tenacious of such established ideas as they have—perhaps it is a fortunate thing, for them and others; and we did not expect to convince our friends all at once. Fortunately also the feeling of intellectual superiority which comes with the honest acceptance of an idea which others have refused is an anodyne to the pain of ridicule. We Walt-Whitmanites had in the main more satisfaction than our opponents. Edward Dowden was one of the few who in those days took the large and liberal view of the *Leaves of Grass*, and as he was Professor of English Literature at the University his opinion carried great weight in 304such a matter. He brought the poems before the more cultured of the students by a paper at the Philosophical Society on May 4, 1871, on "Walt Whitman and the Poetry of Democracy." To me was given the honour of opening the debate on the paper.

For seven years the struggle in our circle went on. Little by little we got recruits amongst the abler young men till at last a little cult was established. But the attack

still went on. I well remember a militant evening at the “Fortnightly Club”—a club of Dublin men, meeting occasionally for free discussions. Occasionally there were meetings for both sexes. This particular evening—February 14, 1876—was, perhaps fortunately, not a “Ladies’ Night.” The paper was on “Walt Whitman” and was by a man of some standing socially; a man who had had a fair University record and was then a county gentleman of position in his own county. He was exceedingly able; a good scholar, well versed in both classic and English literature, and a brilliant humorist. His paper at the “Fortnightly” was a violent, incisive attack on Walt Whitman; had we not been accustomed to such for years it would have seemed outrageous. I am bound to say it was very clever; by confining himself almost entirely to the group of poems, “Children of Adam,” he made out, in one way, a strong case. But he went too far. In challenging the existence in the whole collection of poems for mention of one decent woman—which is in itself ridiculous, for Walt Whitman honoured women—he drew an impassioned speech from Edward Dowden, who finished by reading a few verses from the poem “Faces.” It was the last section of the poem, that which describes a noble figure of an old Quaker mother. It ends:

“The melodious character of the earth,

The finish beyond which philosophy cannot go,

and does not wish to go,

The justified mother of men.”

I followed Dowden in the speaking and we carried the question. I find a note in my diary, which if egotistical has at least that merit of sincerity which is to be found now and again in a man’s diary—when he is young:

“Spoke—I think well.”

III

That night before I went to bed—three o’clock—I wrote a long letter to Walt Whitman. I had written to him before, but never 305so freely; my letters were only of the usual pattern and did not call for answer. But this letter was one in which I poured out my heart. I had long wished to do so but was, somehow, ashamed or diffident—the qualities are much alike. That night I spoke out; the stress of the evening had given me courage.

Mails were fewer and slower thirty years ago than they are to-day. My letter was written in the early morning of February 15. Walt Whitman wrote in answer on March

6, and I received it exactly two weeks later; so that he must have written very soon after receipt of my letter. Here is his reply:

“431 Stevens St.

Cor. West.

Camden, N. Jersey,

U.S. America,

March 6, ’76.

“Bram Stoker,—My dear young man,—Your letters have been most welcome to me—welcome to me as a Person and then as Author—I don’t know which most. You did well to write to me so unconventionally, so fresh, so manly, and so affectionately too. I, too, hope (though it is not probable) that we shall one day personally meet each other. Meantime I send you my friendship and thanks.

“Edward Dowden’s letter containing among others your subscription for a copy of my new edition has just been rec’d. I shall send the book very soon by express in a package to his address. I have just written to E. D.

“My physique is entirely shatter’d—doubtless permanently—from paralysis and other ailments. But I am up and dress’d, and get out every day a little, live here quite lonesome, but hearty, and good spirits.—Write to me again.

“Walt Whitman.”

In 1871 a correspondence had begun between Walt Whitman and Tennyson which lasted for some years. In the first of Tennyson’s letters, July 12, 1871, he had said:

“I trust that if you visit England, you will grant me the pleasure of receiving and entertaining you under my own roof.”

This kind invitation took root in Walt Whitman’s mind and blossomed into intention. He was arranging to come to England, and Edward Dowden asked him to prolong his stay and come to Ireland also. This was provisionally arranged with him. When he should have paid his visit to Tennyson he was to come on to Dublin, where his visit was to have been shared between Dowden and myself. Dowden was a married man with a house of his own. I was a bachelor, living in the top rooms of a house, which I had 306furnished myself. We knew that Walt Whitman lived a peculiarly isolated life, and the opportunity which either one or other of us could afford him would fairly suit his taste. He could then repeat his visit to either, and prolong it as he wished. We had

also made provisional arrangements for his giving a lecture whilst in Dublin; and as the friends whom we asked were eager to take tickets, he would be assured of a sum of at least a hundred pounds sterling—a large sum to him in those days.

But alas!

“The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men

Gang aft agley.”

At the very beginning of 1873 Walt Whitman was struck down by a stroke of paralysis which left him a wreck for the rest of his days. He could at best move but a very little; the joys of travel and visiting distant friends were not to be for him.

IV

At the meeting in 1884 he and Irving became friends at once. He knew some at least of Walt Whitman’s work, for we often spoke of it; I myself gave him a two-volume edition. Walt Whitman was sitting on a sofa and Irving drew up a chair, a large rocker, beside him. They talked together for a good while and seemed to take to each other mightily. Irving doubtless struck by his height, his poetic appearance, his voice, and breadth of manner, said presently:

“You know you are like Tennyson in several ways. You quite remind me of him!” Then knowing that many people like their identity to be unique and not comparable with any one else, however great, he added:

“You don’t mind that, do you?” The answer came quickly:

“Mind it! I like it!—I am very proud to be told so! I like to be tickled!” He actually beamed and chuckled with delight at the praise. He always had a lofty idea of Tennyson and respect as well as love for him and his work; and he was hugely pleased at the comparison. He stood up so that Irving might gauge his height comparatively with Tennyson’s.

Donaldson in his book on Walt Whitman, published after the Poet’s death, wrote of the interview:

“Mr. Whitman was greatly pleased with Mr. Irving, and remarked to me how little of the actor there was in his 307manner or talk. Frequently, after this, Mr. Whitman expressed to me his admiration for Mr. Irving, now Sir Henry Irving, for his gentle and unaffected manners and his evident intellectual power and heart.”

Be it remembered that Walt Whitman was fond of the theatre and went to it a good deal before he was incapacitated by his paralysis; but he did not like the vulgarity of certain actors in their posing off the stage. When he met the great actor, with whose praise the whole country was then ringing, and found that he was gentle and restrained and unassuming in manner the whole craft rose in his estimation.

When it came to my own turn to have a chat with Walt Whitman I found him all that I had ever dreamed of, or wished for in him: large-minded, broad-viewed, tolerant to the last degree; incarnate sympathy; understanding with an insight that seemed more than human. Small wonder, I thought, that in that terrible war of '61–5 this man made a place for himself in the world of aid to the suffering, which was unique. No wonder that men opened their hearts to him—told him their secrets, their woes and hopes and griefs and loves! A man amongst men! With a herculean physical strength and stamina; with courage and hope and belief that never seemed to tire or stale he moved amongst those legions of the wounded and sick like a very angel of comfort materialised to an understanding man.

To me he was an old friend, and on his part he made me feel that I was one. We spoke of Dublin and those friends there who had manifested themselves to him. He remembered all their names and asked me many questions as to their various personalities. Before we parted he asked me to come to see him at his home in Camden whenever I could manage it. Need I say that I promised.

V

It was not till after two years that I had opportunity to pay my visit to Walt Whitman. The cares and responsibilities of a theatre are always exacting, and the demands on the time of any one concerned in management are so endless that the few hours of leisure necessary for such a visit are rare.

At last came a time when I could see my way. On 23rd October 1886 I left London for New York, arriving on 31st. I had come over to make out a tour for *Faust* to commence next 308year. On 2nd November I went to Philadelphia by an early train. There after I had done my work at the theatre I met Donaldson, and as I had time to spare we went over to Camden to pay the visit to which I had looked forward so long.

His house, 328 Mickle Street, was a small ordinary one in a row, built of the usual fine red brick which marks Philadelphia and gives it an appearance so peculiarly Dutch. It was a small house, though large enough for his needs. He sat in the front room in a big rocking-chair which Donaldson's children had given him; it had been specially made for him, as he was a man of over six feet high and very thick-set. He was dressed all in

grey, the trousers cut straight and wide, and the coat loose. All the cloth was a sort of thick smooth frieze. His shirt was of rather coarse cotton, unstarched, with a very wide full collar open low—very low in the neck and fastened with a big white stud. The old lady who cared for him and nursed him had for him a manifest admiration. She evidently liked to add on her own account some little adornment; she had fastened a bit of cheap narrow lace on his wide soft shirt cuffs and at the neck of his collar. It was clumsily sewn on and was pathetic to see, for it marked a limited but devoted intelligence used for his care. The cuffs of his coat were unusually deep and wide and were stuck here and there with pins which he used for his work. His hair seemed longer and wilder and shaggier and whiter than when I had seen him two years before. He seemed feebler, and when he rose from his chair or moved about the room did so with difficulty. I could notice his eyes better now. They were not so quick and searching as before; tireder-looking, I thought, with the blue paler and the grey less warm in colour. Altogether the whole man looked more worn out. There was not, however, any symptom of wear or tire in his intellectual or psychic faculties.

He seemed genuinely glad to see me. He was most hearty in his manner and interested about everything. He asked much about London and its people, specially those of the literary world; and spoke of Irving in a way that delighted me. Our conversation presently drifted towards Abraham Lincoln for whom he had an almost idolatrous affection. I confess that in this I shared; and it was another bond of union between us. He said:

"No one will ever know the real Abraham Lincoln or his place in history!"

I had of course read his wonderful description of the assassination 309by Wilkes Booth given in his *Memoranda during the War*, published in the volume called *Two Rivulets* in the Centennial Edition of his works in 1876. This is so startlingly vivid that I thought that the man who had written it could tell me more. So I asked him if he were present at the time. He said:

"No, I was not present at the time of the assassination; but I was close to the theatre and was one of the first in when the news came. Then I afterwards spent the better part of the night interviewing many of those who were present and of the President's Guard, who, when the terrible word came out that he had been murdered, stormed the house with fixed bayonets. It was a wonder that there was not a holocaust, for it was a wild frenzy of grief and rage. It might have been that the old sagas had been enacted again when amongst the Vikings a Chief went to the Valhalla with a legion of spirits around him!"

The memory of that room will never leave me. The small, close room—it was cold that day and when we came in he had lit his stove, which soon grew almost red-hot; the poor furniture; the dim light of the winter afternoon struggling in through the not-over-large window shadowed as it was by the bare plane-tree on the sidewalk, whose branches creaked in the harsh wind; the floor strewn in places knee-deep with piles of newspapers and books and all the odds and ends of a literary working room. Amongst them were quite a number of old hats—of the soft grey wide-brimmed felt which he always wore.

Donaldson and I had arrived at Mickle Street about three, and at four we left. I think Walt Whitman was really sorry to have us go. Thomas Donaldson describes the visit in his book *Walt Whitman as I knew him*.

VI

The opportunity for my next visit to Walt Whitman came in the winter of 1887 when we were playing in Philadelphia. On the 22nd December Donaldson and I again found our way over to Mickle Street. In the meantime I had had much conversation about Walt Whitman with many of his friends. The week after my last interview I had been again in Philadelphia for a day, on the evening of which I had dined with his friend and mine, Talcott Williams of the *Press*. During the evening we talked much of Walt Whitman, and we agreed that it was a great pity that he did not cut certain lines and passages out of the poems. Talcott Williams said he 310would do it if permitted, and I said I would speak to Walt Whitman about it whenever we should meet again. The following year, 1887, I breakfasted with Talcott Williams, 19th December, and in much intimate conversation we spoke of the subject again.

We found Walt Whitman hale and well. His hair was more snowy white than ever and more picturesque. He looked like King Lear in Ford Madox Brown's picture. He seemed very glad to see me and greeted me quite affectionately. He said he was "in good heart," and looked bright though his body had distinctly grown feebler.

I ventured to speak to him what was in my mind as to certain excisions in his work. I said:

"If you will only allow your friends to do this—they will only want to cut about a hundred lines in all—your books will go into every house in America. Is not that worth the sacrifice?" He answered at once, as though his mind had long ago been made up and he did not want any special thinking:

"It would not be any sacrifice. So far as I am concerned they might cut a thousand. It is not that—it is quite another matter:"—here both face and voice grew rather

solemn—"when I wrote as I did I thought I was doing right and right makes for good. I think so still. I think that all that God made is for good—that the work of His hands is clean in all ways if used as He intended! If I was wrong I have done harm. And for that I deserve to be punished by being forgotten! It has been and cannot not be. No, I shall never cut a line so long as I live!"

One had to respect a decision so made and on such grounds. I said no more.

When we were going he held up his hand saying, "Wait a minute." He got up laboriously and hobbled out of the room and to his bedroom overhead. There we heard him moving about and shifting things. It was nearly a quarter of an hour when he came down holding in his hand a thin green-covered volume and a printed picture of himself. He wrote on the picture with his indelible blue pencil. Then he handed to me both book and picture, saying:

"Take these and keep them from me and Good-bye!"

The book was the 1872 edition of the *Leaves of Grass*—"As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free"—and contained his autograph in 311ink. The portrait was a photograph by Gutekunst, of Philadelphia. On it he had written:

To

Bram Stoker.

Walt Whitman. Dec. 22, '87.

That was the last time I ever saw the man who for nearly twenty years had held my heart as a dear friend.

VII

When I had come to New York after my visit to Walt Whitman in 1886 I made it my business to see Augustus St. Gaudens, the sculptor, regarding a project which had occurred to me. That was to have him do a bust of Walt Whitman. He jumped at the idea, and said it would be a delight to him—that there ought to be such a record of the great Poet and that he would be proud to do it. I arranged that I should ask if he could have the necessary facilities from Walt Whitman. We thought that I could do it best as I knew him and those of his friends who were closest to him. I made inquiries at once through Donaldson, and when business took me again to Philadelphia, on 8th and 9th November, we arranged the matter. Walt Whitman acquiesced and was very pleased at the idea. I wrote the necessary letters and left addresses and so forth with St. Gaudens. He was at that time very busy with his great statue of Abraham Lincoln for

Chicago. Incidentally I saw in his studio the life mask and hands of Lincoln made by the sculptor Volk before he went to Washington for his first Presidency. The mould had just been found by the sculptor's son twenty-five years after their making. Twenty men joined to purchase the models and present them to the nation. St. Gaudens made casts in bronze of the face and hands with a set for each of the twenty subscribers with his name in each case cast in the bronze. Henry Irving and I had the honour of being two of the twenty. The bronze mask and hands, together with the original plaster moulds, rest in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington with a bronze plate recording the history and the names of the donors. I felt proud when, some years later, I saw by chance my own name in such a place, in such company, and for such a cause.

Unhappily, for want of time—for he was overwhelmed with work—and other causes, St. Gaudens could not get to Philadelphia for 312a long time. Then Walt Whitman got another stroke of paralysis early in 1888. Before the combination of possibilities came when he could sit to the sculptor and the latter could give the time to the work he died.

VIII

I was not in America between the spring of 1888 and the early fall of 1893 at which time Irving opened the tour in San Francisco. We did not reach Philadelphia till towards the end of January 1894. In the meantime Walt Whitman had died, March 26, 1892. On 4th February I spent the afternoon with Donaldson in his home. Shortly after I came in he went away for a minute and came back with a large envelope which he handed to me:

"That is for you from Walt Whitman. I have been keeping it till I should see you."

The envelope contained in a rough card folio pasted down on thick paper the original notes from which he delivered his lecture on Abraham Lincoln at the Chestnut Street Opera House on April 15, 1886.

"With it was a letter to Donaldson, in which he said:

"Enclosed I send a full report of my Lincoln Lecture for our friend Bram Stoker."

This was my Message from the Dead.

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LVI
JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

Irving, like all who have ever known him, loved the "Hoosier" poet. We saw a great deal of him when he was in London; and whenever we were in Indianapolis, to meet him was one of the expected pleasures. Riley is one of the most dramatic reciters that live, and when he gives one of his own poems it is an intellectual delight. I remember two specially delightful occasions in which he was a participant. Once in Indianapolis when he came and supped on the car with us whilst we were waiting after the play for the luggage to be loaded. He was in great form, and Irving sat all the time with an expectant smile whilst Riley told us of some of his experiences amongst the hill folk of Indiana where conditions of life are almost primitive. One tale gave Irving intense pleasure—that in which he told of how he had asked a mountaineer who was going down to the nearest town to bring him back some tobacco. This the man had done gladly; but when Riley went to pay him the cost of it he drew his gun on him. When the other asked the cause of offence, which he did not intend or even understand, the mountaineer answered:

"Didn't I do what ye asked me! Then why do you go for to insult me. I ain't a tobacker dealer. I bought it for ye, an' I give it to ye free and glad. I ain't sellin' it!"

The other occasion was a dinner at the Savoy Hotel, July 29, 1891, to which Irving had asked some friends to meet him. "Jamesy"—for so his friends call him—recited several of his poems, most exquisitely. His rendering of the powerful little poem, "Good-bye, Jim," made every one of the other eight men at the table weep.

LVII
ERNEST RENAN

On April 3, 1880, when we were playing *The Merchant of Venice*, Ernest Renan came to the Lyceum; the Rev. H. R. Haweis was with him. At the end of the third act they both came round to Irving's dressing-room. It was interesting to note the progress through the long Royal passage of that strangely assorted pair. Haweis was diminutive, and had an extraordinary head of black hair. Renan was ponderously fat and bald as a billiard ball. The historian waddled along with an odd rolling gait, whilst the preacher, who was lame, hopped along like a sort of jackdaw. The conversation between Irving and Renan was a strange one to listen to. Neither knew the other's language; but each kept talking his own with, strange to say, the result that they really understood something of what was said. When I was alone with Irving and remarked on it he said:

"If you don't know the other person's language, keep on speaking your own. Do not get hurried or flustered, but keep as natural as you can; your intonation, being natural, will

convey something. You have a far better chance of being understood than if you try to talk a language you don't know!"

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LVIII
HALL CAINE

I

The early relations between Irving and Hall Caine are especially interesting, considering the positions which both men afterwards attained. They began in 1874. On the 16th of October in that year Irving wrote to him a very kindly and friendly letter in answer to Hall Caine's request that he should allow his portrait to be inserted in a monthly magazine which he was projecting.

A fortnight later Hall Caine, as critic of the Liverpool *Town Crier*, attended the first night of *Hamlet* at the Lyceum—31st October, 1874. His criticism was by many friends thought so excellent that he was asked to reprint it. This was done in the shape of a broad-sheet pamphlet. The critique is throughout keen and appreciative. The last two paragraphs are worthy of preservation:

"To conclude. Throughout this work (which is not confined to the language of terror and pity, the language of impassioned intellect, but includes also the words of everyday life), every passage has its proper pulse and receives from the actor its characteristic mode of expression. Every speech is good and weighty, correct and dignified, and treated with feeling. The variety, strength and splendour of the whole conception have left impressions which neither time nor circumstance can ever efface. They are happy, indeed, who hear Hamlet first from Mr. Irving. They may see other actors essay the part (a very improbable circumstance whilst Mr. Irving holds his claim to it), but the memory of the noble embodiment of the character will never leave them.

"We will not say that Mr. Irving is the Betterton, Garrick, or Kemble of his age. In consideration of this performance we claim for him a position altogether distinct and unborrowed. Mr. Irving will, we judge, be the leader of a school of actors now eagerly enlisting themselves under his name. The object will be—the triumph of *mental* over *physical* histrionic art."

316This critical forecast is very remarkable considering the writer's age. At that time he was only in his *twenty-second* year. He had already been writing and lecturing for some time and making a little place for himself locally as a man of letters.

Two years later they had a meeting by Irving's request. This was during a visit to Liverpool whilst the actor was on tour. There began a close friendship which lasted till Irving's death. Caine seemed to intuitively understand not only Irving's work but his aim and method. Irving felt this and had a high opinion of Caine's powers. I do not know any one whose opinions interested him more. There was to both men a natural expression of intellectual frankness, as if they held the purpose as well as the facts of ideas in common. The two men were very much alike in certain intellectual ways. To both was given an almost abnormal faculty of self-abstraction and of concentrating all their powers on a given subject for any length of time. To both was illimitable patience in the doing of their work. And in yet one other way their powers were similar: a faculty of getting up and ultimately applying to the work in hand an amazing amount of information. When Irving undertook a character he set himself to work to inform himself of the facts appertaining to it; when the time for acting it came, it was found that he knew pretty well all that could be known about. Hall Caine was also a "glutton" in the same way. He absorbed facts and ideas almost by an instinct and assimilated them with natural ease. For instance, when he went to Morocco to get local colour before writing *The Scapegoat* he so steeped himself in the knowledge of Jewish life and ideas and ritual that those who read his book almost accepted him as an authority on the subject.

II

When Hall Caine published *The Deemster* in 1887 Irving was one of its most appreciative admirers. We were then on tour in America and he naturally got hold of the book a little later than its great and sudden English success. Still he read it unprejudiced by its success and thought it would make a fine play. When we got back to England early in April 1888, he took his earliest opportunity of approaching the author; but only to find that he had already entered into an arrangement with Wilson Barrett with regard to dramatisation of the novel.

Irving's view of this was different to that of both Caine and 317Barrett. To him the dramatic centre and pivotal point of the play that would be most effective was the Bishop. Had the novel been available he would—Caine being willing to dramatise it or to allow it to be dramatised by some one else—have played it on those lines.

I think it was a great pity that this could not be, for Irving and Hall Caine would have made a wonderful team. The latter was compact of imagination and—then undeveloped—dramatic force. With Irving to learn from, in the way of acting needs and development, he would surely have done some dramatic work of wonderful introspection and intensity.—As he will do yet; though his road has been a rough one.

From that time on, Irving had a strong desire that Caine should write some play that he could act. Time after time he suggested subjects; theories that he could deal with; characters good to act. But there seemed to be always some *impasse* set by Fate. For instance, Irving had had for a long time a desire to act the part of Mahomet, and after the publication in France of the play on the subject by De Bornier it seemed to be feasible. Herein too came the memory of the promptings and urging of Sir Richard Burton of some three years before as to the production of an Eastern play. De Bornier's play he found would not suit his purpose; so he suggested to Hall Caine that he should write one on the subject. Caine jumped at the idea—he too had a desire to deal with an Eastern theme. He thought the matter out, and had before long evolved a *scenario*. Well do I remember the time he put it before me. At that time he was staying with me, and on the afternoon of Sunday, January 26, 1890, he said he would like to give his idea of the play. He had already had a somewhat trying morning, for he had made an appointment with an interviewer and had had a long meeting with him. Work, however, was—is—always a stimulant to Hall Caine. The use of his brain seems to urge and stimulate it "as if increase of appetite had grown by what it fed on." Now in the dim twilight of the late January afternoon, sitting in front of a good fire of blazing billets of old ship timber, the oak so impregnated with salt and saltpetre that the flames leaped in rainbow colours, he told the story as he saw it. Hall Caine always knows his work so well and has such a fine memory that he never needs to look at a note. That evening he was all on fire. His image rises now before me. He sits on a low chair in front of the fire; his face is pale, something waxen-looking 318in the changing blues of the flame. His red hair, fine and long, and pushed back from his high forehead, is so thin that through it as the flames leap we can see the white line of the head so like to Shakespeare's. He is himself all aflame. His hands have a natural eloquence—something like Irving's; they foretell and emphasise the coming thoughts. His large eyes shine like jewels as the firelight flashes. Only my wife and I are present, sitting like Darby and Joan at either side of the fireplace. As he goes on he gets more and more afire till at last he is like a living flame. We sit quite still; we fear to interrupt him. The end of his story leaves us fired and exalted too....

He was quite done up; the man exhausts himself in narrative as I have never seen with any one else. Indeed when he had finished a novel he used to seem as exhausted as a woman after childbirth. At such times he would be in a terrible state of nerves—trembling and sleepless. At that very time he had not quite got through the nervous crisis after the completion of *The Bondman*. At such times everything seemed to worry him; things that he would shortly after laugh at. This is part of the penalty that genius pays to great effort.

III

The next day, January 27, 1890, in the office at the Lyceum, Caine told—not read—to Irving the story of his play on Mahomet. Irving was very pleased with it, and it was of course understood that Caine was to go on and carry out the idea. He set to work on it with his usual fiery energy, and in a few months had evolved a *scenario* so complete that it was a volume in itself. By this time it was becoming known that Irving had in mind the playing of Mahomet. The very fact of approaching De Bornier regarding his play had somehow leaked out. As often happens in matters theatrical there came a bolt from the blue. None of us had the slightest idea that there *could* be any objection in a professedly Christian nation to a play on the subject. A letter was received from the Lord Chamberlain's department, which controls the licences of theatres and plays, asking that such a play should not be undertaken. The reason given was that protest had been made by a large number of our Mahometan fellow subjects. The Mahometan faith holds it sacrilege to represent in any form the image of the Prophet. The Lord Chamberlain's department does its spiriting very gently; all that those in contact with it are made 319aware of is the velvet glove. But the steel hand works all the same—perhaps better than if stark. It is an understood thing that the Lord Chamberlain's request is a command in matters under his jurisdiction. Britain with her seventy millions of Mahometan subjects does not wish—and cannot afford—to offend their sensibilities for the sake of a stage play. Irving submitted gracefully at once, of course. Caine was more than nice on the matter; he refused to accept fee or reward of any kind for his work. He simply preserved his work by privately printing, three years later, the *scenario* as a story in dramatic form. He altered it sufficiently to change the *personnel* of the time and place of Mahomet, laying the story of *The Mahdi* in modern Morocco.

This was not Irving's first experience of the action on a political basis of the Lord Chamberlain. I shall have something to say of it when treating of Frank Marshall's play, *Robert Emmett*.

IV

During Caine's visit to me in Edinburgh in 1891 he and Irving saw much of one another. On the 18th we took supper with Dr. Andrew Wilson, an old friend of us all, at the Northern Club. That night both Irving and Caine were in great form and the conversation was decidedly interesting. It began with a sort of discussion about Shakespeare as a dramatist—on the working side; his practical execution of his own imaginative intention. Hall Caine held that Shakespeare would not have put in his plays certain descriptions if he had had modern stage advantages to explain without

his telling. Irving said that it would be good for moderns if they would but take Shakespeare's lesson in this matter. Later on the conversation tended towards weird subjects. Caine told of seeing in a mirror a reflection not his own. Irving followed by telling us of his noticing an accidental effect in a mirror, which he afterwards used in the *Macbeth* ghost: that of holding the head up. The evening was altogether a fascinating one; it was four o'clock when we broke up.

V

On November 19, 1892, Hall Caine supped with Irving in the Beefsteak Room, bringing his young son Ralph with him. The only other guest was Sir (then Mr.) Alexander Mackenzie. It was a delightful evening, a long, pleasant, home-like chat. Irving was 320very quiet and listened attentively to all Caine said. The latter told us the story of the novel he had just then projected. The scene was to be laid in Cracow to which he was shortly to make his way.

Irving was hugely interested. Any form of oppression was noxious to him; and certainly the Jewish "Exodus" that was just then going on came under that heading. I think that he had in his mind the possibilities of a new and powerful play. As I said, he was most anxious to have a play by Hall Caine, and after the abortive attempt at Mahomet, he was more set on it than ever.

He had before this suggested to Caine that he should do a play on the subject of the "Flying Dutchman." The play which he had done in 1878, *Vanderdecken*, was no good as a play, though he played in it admirably. For my own part I believed in the subject and always wanted him to try it again—the play, of course, being tinkered into something like good shape, or a new play altogether written. The character, as Irving created it, was there fit for any setting; and so long as the play should be fairly sufficient the result ought to be good. Irving had a great opinion of Caine's imagination, and always said that he would write a great work of weirdness some day. He knew already his ability and his fire and his zeal. He believed also in the convincing force of the man.

VI

In 1894 Hall Caine wrote a poem called *The Demon Lover*, in which he found material for a play. He made a *scenario*, which he told rather than read to Irving after supper in the Beefsteak Room on St. Valentine's day of the next year, 1895. Irving was much impressed by it but thought that the part would of necessity be too young for him—he was then fifty-six. He asked Caine again to try the "Flying Dutchman."

In the June of next year 1896 we were in Manchester in the course of a tour. Hall Caine came over from the Isle of Man to stay with me, bringing with him the *scenario* of a play on the "Flying Dutchman" and also the *scenario* of a new play which he had just completed, *Home, Sweet Home*. He read, or rather told, me the latter with the MS. open before him. He never, however, turned the pages. The next forenoon we went by previous arrangement to Irving's rooms at the Queen's Hotel. There he read—or told from his script—the *scenario* of his play on the "Flying 321Dutchman." We discussed it then, and afterwards during a carriage drive. Irving asked Caine if he could not make the character of Vanderdecken more sympathetic and less brutal at the start. Caine having promised to go into this and see what he could do, then told the story of *Home, Sweet Home*. Irving feared from the description that the play would not do for him. In Act I. the character was too young; in Act II. too rough; and in Act III. too tall. For his objection in the last case he gave a reason, enlightening in the matter of stagecraft:

"There is no general sympathy on the stage for tall old men!"

Finally Caine told us the story of his coming novel, which was afterwards called *The Christian*. He knew it in his own mind by the tentative title which he used, "Glory and John Storm."

VII

In the afternoon we all went to the Bellevue Gardens to see a wonderful chimpanzee, "Jock," a powerful animal and more clever even than "Sally," who was then the great public pet at the "Zoo" in Regent's Park. Ellen Terry came with us and also Comyns Carr, who had arrived from London. Jock was certainly an abnormal brute. He rode about the grounds on a tricycle of his own! He ate his food from a plate with knife and fork and spoon! He slept in a bed with sheets and blankets! He smoked cigarettes! And he drank wine—when he could get it! His favourite tipple was port wine and lemonade, and he was very conservative in his rights regarding it. Indeed in this case it was very nearly productive of a grim tragedy.

We went into a little room close to the keeper's house; a sort of general refreshment room with wooden benches round it and a table in the centre. Jock had his cigarette; then his grog was mixed to his great and anxious interest. The keeper handed him the tumbler, which he held tight in both paws whilst he went through some hanky-panky pantomime of thanks—usually, I took it, productive of pennies. Irving said to the keeper:

"Would he give you some of that, now?" The man shook his head as he answered:

“He doesn’t like to, but he will if I ask him. I have to be careful though.” He asked Jock, who very unwillingly let him take the tumbler, following it with his paws. The arms stretched out as it went farther from him; but the paws always remained 322close to the glass. The man just put the edge of the glass to his mouth and then handed it back quickly. The monkey had acted with considerable self-restraint, and looked immensely relieved when he had his drink safe back again. Then Irving said:

“Let me see if he will let me have some!” The keeper spoke to the monkey, keeping his eye fixedly on him. Irving took the glass from his manifestly unwilling paws and raised it to his own lips. Being a better actor than the keeper he did his part more realistically, actually letting the liquid rise over his shut lips.

The instant the monkey saw his beloved liquor touch the mouth he became a savage—a veritable, red-eyed, restrainless demon. With a sudden hideous screech he dashed out his arms, one paw catching Irving by the throat, the other seizing the glass. It made us all gasp and grow pale. The brute was so strong and so savage that it might have torn his windpipe before a hand could have been raised. Fortunately Irving did instinctively the only thing that could be done; he yelled suddenly in the face of the monkey—an appalling yell which seemed to push the brute back. At the same moment he thrust away from him the glass in the animal’s other paw. The monkey, loosing his hold on his throat, jumped back across the wide table with incredible quickness without losing its seated attitude, and sat clutching the tumbler close to his breast and showing his teeth whilst he manifested his rage in a hideous trumpeting.

Before that, at our first coming into the room he had nearly frightened the life out of Ellen Terry. She had sat down on the bench along the wall. The monkey looked at her and seemed attracted by her golden hair. He came and sat by her on the bench and, turning over, laid his head in her lap, looking up at her and at the same time putting up his paw as big as a man’s hand and as black and shiny as though covered with an undertaker’s funeral glove. She looked down, saw his eyes, and with a scream made a jump for the doorway. The monkey laughed. He had a sense of humour—of his own kind, which was not of a high kind.

A little later he regained his good temper and forgave us all. When we went round the gardens he got on his tricycle and came with us. In the monkey house was a great cage as large as an ordinary room, and here were a large number of monkeys of a mixed kind. Our gorilla—for such he really was—started to amuse himself with them. He got a great stick and standing close to the 323cage hammered furiously at the bars, all the while trumpeting horribly. In the midst of it he would look at us with a grin, as much as to say:

“See how I am frightening these inferior creatures!” They were in an agony of fear, crouching in the farthest corners of the great cage, moaning and shivering.

VIII

Irving had had an incident with a monkey some years before. On June 16, 1887, we went to Stratford-on-Avon, where he was to open a fountain the next day. We stayed with Mr. C. E. Flower, at Avonbank, his beautiful place on the river. In his conservatory was a somewhat untamed monkey; not a very large one, but with anger enough for a wilderness of monkeys. Frank Marshall, who was of our party, would irritate the monkey when we went to smoke in there after dinner. It got so angry with his puffing his smoke at it that it shook the cage to such an extent that we thought it would topple over. We persuaded Marshall to come away, and then Irving, who loved animals, went over to pacify the monkey.

The latter, however, did not discriminate between malice and good intent, and when Irving bent down to say soothing things to it a long arm flashed out and catching him by the hair began to drag his head towards the cage, the other paw coming out towards his eyes. It was an anxious moment; but this time, as on the later occasion, a sudden screech of full lung power from the actor frightened the monkey into releasing him.

IX

Irving loved all animals, and did not, I think, realise the difference between pets and *feræ naturæ*. I remember once at Baltimore—it was the 1st January 1900—when he and I went to Hagenbach’s menagerie which was then in winter quarters. The hall was a big one, the shape of one of those great panorama buildings which used to be so popular in America. There were some very fine lions; and to one of them he took a great fancy. It was a fine African, young and in good condition with magnificent locks and whiskers and eyebrows, and whatsoever beauties on a hairy basis there are to the lion kind. It was sleeping calmly in its cage with its head up against the bars. The keeper recognised Irving and came up to 324talk and explain things very eagerly. Irving asked him about the lion; if it was good-tempered and so forth. The man said it was a very good-tempered animal, and offered to make him stand up and show himself off. His method of doing so was the most unceremonious thing of the kind I ever saw; it showed absolutely no consideration whatever for the lion’s *amour-propre* or fine feelings. He caught up a broom that leaned against the cage—a birch broom with the business end not of resilient twigs but of thin branches cut off with a sharp knife. It was the sort of scrubbing broom that would take the surface off an ordinary deal flooring. This he seized and drove it with the utmost violence in his power right into the

animal's face. I should have thought that no eye could have escaped from such an attack. He repeated the assault as often as there was time before the lion had risen and jumped back.

Irving was very indignant, and spoke out his mind very freely. The keeper answered him very civilly indeed I thought. His manner was genuinely respectful as he said:

"That's all very well, Mr. Irving; but it doesn't work with lions! There's only one thing such animals respect; and that's force. Why, that treatment that you complain of will save my life some day. It wouldn't be worth a week's purchase without it!"

Irving realised the justice of his words—he was always just; and when we came away the gratuity was perhaps a little higher than usual, to compensate for any injured feelings.

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LIX
IRVING AND DRAMATISTS

I

Only those who are or have been concerned in theatrical management can have the least idea of the difficulty of obtaining plays suitable for acting. There are plenty of plays to be had. When any one goes into management—indeed from the time the fact of his intention is announced—plays begin to rain in on him. All those rejected consistently throughout a generation are tried afresh on the new victim, for the hope of the unacted dramatist never dies. There is just a sufficient percentage of ultimate success in the case of long-neglected plays to obviate despair. Every one who writes a play sends it on and on to manager after manager. When a player makes some abnormal success every aspirant to dramatic fame tries his hand at a play for him. It is all natural enough. The work is congenial, and the rewards—when there are rewards—are occasionally great. There is, I suppose, no form of literary work which seems so easy and is so difficult—which while seeming to only require the common knowledge of life, needs in reality great technical knowledge and skill. From the experience alone which we had in the Lyceum one might well have come to the conclusion that to write a play of some kind is an instinct of human nature. To Irving were sent plays from every phase and condition of life. Not only from writers whose work lay in other lines of effort; historians, lyric poets, divines from the curate to the bishop, but from professional men, merchants, manufacturers, traders, clerks. He has had them sent by domestic servants, and from as far down the social scale as a workhouse boy.

But from all these multitudinous and varied sources we had very few plays indeed which afforded even a hope or promise. Irving was always anxious for good plays, and spared neither trouble nor expense to get them. Every play that was sent was read; very many commissions were given and purchase-money or advance fees paid. In such cases subjects were often suggested, *scenario* being 326the basis. In addition to the plays in which he or Ellen Terry took part and which he produced during his own management, he purchased or paid fees and options on twenty-seven plays. Not one of these, from one cause or another, could he produce. One of these made success with another man. Some never got beyond the *scenario* stage. In one case, though the whole purchase-money was paid in advance, the play was never delivered; it was finished—and then sold under a different title to another manager! One was prohibited—by request—by the Lord Chamberlain's department. Of this play, *Robert Emmett*, were some interesting memories.

II

In Ireland or by Irish people it had often been suggested to Irving that he should present Robert Emmett in a play. He bore a striking resemblance to the Irish patriot—a glance at any of the portraits would to any one familiar with Irving's identity be sufficient; and his story was full of tragic romance. From the first Irving was taken with the idea and had the character in his mind for stage use. In the first year of his management he suggested the theme to Frank A. Marshall, the dramatist; who afterwards co-operated with him in the editorship of the "Irving" Shakespeare. He was delighted with the idea, became full of it, and took the work in hand. In the shape of a *scenario* it was so far advanced that at the end of the second season Irving was able to announce it as one of the forthcoming plays. As we know, the extraordinary success of *The Merchant of Venice* postponed the work then projected for more than a year. Marshall, therefore, took his work in a more leisurely fashion, and it was not till the autumn of 1881 that the play appeared in something like its intended shape. But by that time *Romeo and Juliet* was in hand and a full year elapsed before *Robert Emmett* could be practically considered. But when that time came the Irish question was acute. Fenianism or certain of its *sequelæ* became recrudescent. The government of the day considered that so marked and romantic a character as Robert Emmett, and with such political views portrayed so forcibly and so picturesquely as would be the case with Irving, might have a dangerous effect on a people seething in revolt. Accordingly a "request" came through the Lord Chamberlain's department that Mr. Irving would not proceed with the production which had been announced. Incidentally I may say that nothing was mentioned 327in the "request" regarding the cost incurred. Irving had already paid to Frank Marshall a sum of £450.

In the early stages of the building up of the play there was an interesting occurrence which illustrates the influence of the actor on the author, especially when the former is a good stage manager. Marshall came to supper in the room which antedated the Beefsteak Room for that purpose. The occasion was to discuss the *scenario* which had by then been enlarged to proportions comprehensive of detail—not merely the situations but the working of them out. Only the three of us were present. We were all familiar with the work so far as it was done; for not only used Marshall to send Irving a copy of each act and scene of the *scenario* as he did it, but he used very often to run in and see me and consult about it. I would then tell Irving at a convenient opportunity; and when next the author came I would go over with him Irving's comments and suggestions. This night we all felt to be a crucial one. The play had gone on well through its earlier parts; indeed it promised to be a very fine play. But at the point it had then reached it halted a little. The scene was in Dublin during a phase or wave of discontent even with the "patriotic" party as accepted in the play. Something was necessary to focus in the minds of certain of the characters the fact and cause of discontent and to emphasise it in a dramatic way. After supper we discussed it for a long time. All at once Irving got hold of an idea. I could see it in his face; and he could see that I saw he had something. He glanced at me in a way which I knew well to be to back him up. He deftly changed the conversation and began to speak of another matter in which Marshall was interested. I knew my cue and joined in, and so we drifted away from the play. Presently Irving asked Marshall to look at a playbill which he had had framed and hung on the wall. It was one in which Macready was "starred" along with an elephant called "Rajah"—this used in later years to hang in Irving's dressing-room. Marshall stood up to look at it closely. Whilst he was doing so, with his back to us, Irving got half-a-dozen wine glasses by the stems in his right hand and hurled them at the door, making a terrific crash and a litter of falling glass. Frank Marshall, a man of the sunniest nature, was not built spiritually in a heroic mould. He gave a cry and whirled round, his face pale as ashes. He sank groaning into a chair speechless. When I had given him a mouthful of brandy he gasped out:

328"What was it? I thought some one had thrown a bomb-shell in through the window!"

"That was exactly what I wanted you to think!" said Irving quietly. "That is what those in Curran's house would have felt when they recognised that the fury to which they had been listening and whose cause they did not understand was directed towards them. You are in the rare position now, my dear Marshall, of the dramatist who can write of high emotion from experience. The audience are bound to recognise the sincerity of your work. Just write your scene up to that effect. Let the audience feel even an

indication of the surprise and fear that you have just felt yourself, and your play will be a success!" He said this very seriously but with a bland smile and his eyes twinkling; for through all the gravity of the issue in the shape of a good play he enjoyed the humour of the situation. Frank Marshall recovered his nerves and his buoyancy after a while, and when we broke up in the early morning he took his way home, eager to get to work afresh and full of ideas.

As Irving was for the time debarred from playing the piece, when completed he let Boucicault have it to see what he could do with it. He did not, I think, improve it. Boucicault played it himself in America, but without much success.

The following list, not by any means complete, will show something of the wide range which Irving covered in his search for suitable plays. I give it because certain writers, who do not know much of the man whom they criticise so flippantly or so superciliously, have been in the habit of saying that Irving did not encourage British dramatists. To those who were on the "inside track" their utterances often meant that he did not accept, pay for, and produce *their* worthless plays or those of their friends, and he did not talk about his business to chance comers. Moreover, he held that it was not good for any one to produce an inferior play. The greatest of all needs of a theatre manager is a sufficiency of plays, and it is sheer ignorant folly for any one to assert that a manager does not accept good plays out of some crass obstinacy or lack of ability on his own part.

Author.	***Play.***
W. G. Wills	Rienzi
„	Mephisto
„	King Arthur
„	Don Quixote

329Frank Marshall	Robert Emmett
Richard Voss	Schuldig
J. I. C. Clarke	George Washington
„	Don Quixote
Fergus Hume	The Vestal
Penrhyn Stanlaws	The End of the Hunting
H. T. Johnson	The Jester King
Egerton Castle and Walter Pollock	Saviolo
O. Booth and J. Dixon	Jekyll and Hyde (from Stevenson)
J. M. Barrie	The Professor’s Love Story
F. C. Burnand	The Isle of St. Tropez

„	The Count
H. Guy Carleton	The Balance of Comfort
Ludwig Fulda	The Bloody Marriage[5]

5. This was dramatised for Irving by W. L. Courtney, but the opportunity for its production had not come at the time of his last illness.

For obvious reasons I do not give what any of these authors received for play or option or advance fees; but the total was over nine thousand pounds.

Regarding one of the plays, Irving's exact reason for not playing it was that he felt it would not suit him—or rather that he would not suit it. He liked the play extremely, and when after studying the *scenario* very carefully he had to come to the conclusion that it was not in his own special range of work, he obtained permission from the author to submit it to two of his friends in turn, John L. Toole and John Hare. Both these players were delighted with the work, but neither had it in his vogue. Finally another actor saw his way to it, and made with it both a hit and fortune.

The play was Barrie's *The Professor's Love Story*; the actor who played it E. S. Willard. This is a good instance of delayed fortune. For my own part, knowing the peculiar excellences and strength of the three players who refused it, I cannot but think that they were all right. The play is an excellent one, but wants to be exactly fitted. Irving was naturally too strong for it; Toole was a low comedian, and it is not in the vein of low comedy; Hare's incisive finesse would have militated against that unconsciousness of effect which is the "note" of the Professor.

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III

In addition to the above plays on which he adventured wholly or in part Irving made efforts regarding plays by other authors, amongst whom were Mrs. Steel, K. and Hesketh Pritchard, Marion Crawford, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Henry Arthur Jones, W. L. Courtney, Miss Mary Wilkins, Robert Barr. These included the possible dramatisation of several novels.

A. W. Pinero was always regarded by Irving as a great intellectual force, and to the last he was in hopes that some day he would have the opportunity of playing in a piece by him. He often expressed his wish to Pinero; and more than once have Pinero and I talked and corresponded on the subject. Pinero, however, would not think of giving Irving a play that would not have suited him. He had for Irving a very profound regard and a deep personal affection. They were always the best of friends and Pinero was loyalty itself. I do not think that any man understood Irving's power and the excellence of his method better than he did. I fear, however, that that very affection and regard stood in the way of a play; Pinero, I think, wanted to surpass himself on Irving's behalf.

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LX
MUSICIANS

I

Musicians always took a deep interest in Irving's work both as actor and manager. They seemed to understand in a peculiarly subtle way the significance of everything he did.

II
BOITO

Boito came to the Lyceum on June 13, 1893, when we were playing *Becket*. I talked with him in his box and in the little drawing-room of the royal box. He afterwards came round on the stage to see Irving. He was wonderfully impressed with *Becket*. He said to me that Irving was "the greatest artist he had ever seen." Two nights later, 15th June, he came to supper in the Beefsteak Room. Irving had got some musicians and others to meet him. The following were of the party: A. C. Mackenzie, Villiers Stanford, Damrosch, Jules Claretie, Renaud, Brisson, Le Clerc, Alfred Gilbert, Toole, Hare, Sir Charles Euan Smith, Bancroft, Coquelin Cadet—an extraordinary group of names in so small a gathering.

III
PADEREWSKI

Paderewski was greatly taken with Irving's playing and with the man himself. He came to supper one night in the Beefsteak Room. Irving met him several times and was an immense admirer of his work. He offered to write for Irving music for some play that he might be doing.

I remember one very peculiar incident in which Paderewski had a part. Whilst we were playing in New York, Hall Caine, who had been up in Canada trying to arrange the copyright trouble 332there, came to New York also. One Sunday in November 1895 he and I took a walk in the afternoon. Our destination took us down Fifth Avenue, which in those days was a great Sunday promenade. Hall Caine was soon recognised—he is, as some one said, "very like his portraits"; and as he has an enormous vogue in America certain of the crowd began to follow him at a little distance. It is of the nature of a crowd to increase, if merely because it *is* a crowd; and in a short time I saw, when by some chance I looked back, a whole streetful of people close behind us and the crowd momentarily swelling. We increased our pace a little, wishing to get away; but the crowd kept equal pace. Between 42nd and 40th Street we met another crowd coming up the Avenue following Paderewski who was walking with a friend. We stopped to talk, whereupon *both* crowds pressed in on us—it was too interesting an opportunity to be missed to see two such men, and each so remarkable in appearance, together.

It was with some difficulty, and by going into a hotel on one side and leaving it by another that we managed to escape.

IV
GEORG HENSCHEL

Georg Henschel was from the very first a great admirer of Irving away back from 1879, and so he used to come to the Lyceum and sometimes stay to supper in the Beefsteak Room, or in the room we used before it. I shall never forget one night when he sang to us. There were a very few others present, all friends and all lovers of music. Two items linger in my memory unfailingly; one a lullaby of Handel and the other the "Elders' Song" from Handel's *Susannah*. We had all become great friends before he went to Boston where—I think succeeding Gerische—he took over the conductorship of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He had wished to study practically orchestral music. One forenoon—February 28, 1884—by previous arrangement Irving and I went to the Music Hall to hear his orchestra play Schumann's *Manfred*. It was quite a private performance given entirely for Irving; the gentlemen of the orchestra, all fine musicians, were delighted to play for him. He was entranced with the music and the rendering of it. When we were driving back to the Vendôme Hotel in 333Commonwealth Avenue where we were both staying he talked all the time about the possibilities of producing Byron's play. He had had it in his mind for a long time as a work to be undertaken; indeed the *répétition* which we had just heard was the outcome of his having mentioned the matter to Henschel on a previous occasion. He

was nearer to making up his mind to a definite production that morning than he had ever been or ever was afterwards.

It was agreed between them that later on, if he should undertake to do *Julius Cæsar*, for which he had already arranged the book, Henschel was to compose the music for it.

V
HANS RICHTER

Hans Richter was another great admirer of Irving. He too is a great master of his own art, and has the appreciative insight that only comes with greatness. Richter was not only a musician; he had had so much experience of stage production at Bayreuth and elsewhere that if he did not originate he at least understood all about it. I remember one day, 24th October 1900, after lunch with the Miss Gaskells in Manchester, when he talked with me about the new effect for *The Flying Dutchman* at the Wagner Festival on the following year. This was especially regarding lighting. They had succeeded in so arranging lights that the two ships were to approach each other, one in broad sunlight, the other bathed in moonlight.

With Hans Richter I had once the felicity of another such experience in its own way as Irving's comprehensive reading of *Hamlet*; truly another delightful experience of the survey of a great work at the hands of a master. It was when in the house of my friend E. W. Hennell, Hans Richter amongst a few friends sat down to the piano and gave us a *résumé* of Wagner's *Meistersinger*, singing snatches of the songs as he went on, and now and again explaining some subtle purpose in the music that he played. It was an hour of breathless delight which no money could purchase. With my wife I attended the Wagner Cycle at Bayreuth that summer and heard the opera in all its magnificent perfection; but I never got so clear an insight to the great composer's purpose as when Richter pictured it for us.