# BRITISH DRAMA IN THE EIGHTEEN THIRTIES

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BY

MARGARET M. MORRISON

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AUTHOR : MARGARET M. MORRISON M.A. (Glasgow)

SUPERVISOR : DR. M. JUNEJA

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS : This study examines the most successful plays of the eighteen thirties in conjunction with contemporary commentaries on the intentions of the authors, and the reactions of critics and of audiences, in order to determine the nature of eighteen thirties drama, and thus to suggest a means of approaching the plays which will enable their particular achievement to be appreciated.

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# CHAPTER ONE

The British drama of the first half of the nineteenth century does not enjoy a very high reputation. It is generally considered to be characterised by extravagant spectacle, ridiculous plots and utter banality, and thus not worth serious critical attention. In the absence of detailed knowledge, preconceptions have fed on such representations of the theatre as that by Dickens in Nicholas Nickleby; Crummles and his incredible troop of actors have come to epitomise the ludicrous conditions of the theatre:

> 'Do you understand French?'
> 'Perfectly well.'
> 'Very good,' said the manager, opening the table-drawer, and giving a roll of paper from it to Nicholas. 'There! Just turn that into English and put your name on the title-page.' (Nicholas Nickleby, chapter XXIII.)

When the theatre is examined as part of the literary history of the period, it is treated negatively as unsuccessful drama and literature. Any space allotted to it is occupied by restatements of the platitude that the writers of the period did not think in dramatic terms, as demonstrated by the failure of the major literary figures to write drama, or by representations of the theatre as inane and worthless in itself, but partially vindicated because it led on to the later realist theatre of Taylor and Robertson in the eighteen sixties.

Klingopulos' treatment is typical:

> Poets, for example Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, continued to write dramas, but none have the interest of their non-dramatic work. Perhaps there is a certain determinism in the flowering of the different genres . . . A better phase, more realistic and topical, is usually considered to have begun with T. W. Robertson's Caste (1867) and continued in the work of Henry Arthur Jones and Pinero . . .[1]

Allardyce Nicoll, in volume IV of A History of English Drama 1660 - 1900[2] and Reynolds in Early Victorian Drama[3] examine the theatre of the first half of the nineteenth century in more detail, but although both provide useful information about theatrical conditions, neither looks at all closely at the plays themselves. Nicoll is interested primarily in tracing the development from the Gothic melodrama of the beginning of the century to the realist drama of the eighteen sixties. In his treatment of the plays produced between these two periods, he indicates the elements these plays have in common with the previous and subsequent dramas, but he does not attempt to show the particular characteristics of the plays themselves. Reynolds is concerned to provide a sociological explanation from contemporary cultural conditions for the absence of great drama from the early Victorian period; in assuming the plays to be worthless as drama and as literature, he focuses instead on the social and political background. Both writers are influenced by their own preconceptions as to what constitutes dramatic literature, and having previously evaluated the plays of the period by

their own standards, reject them as suitable subject matter for serious study and concentrate on other aspects of the theatrical situation.

The object of this study is to determine the nature of the drama in the eighteen thirties, as it emerges from the common characteristics of the most successful plays of the decade. The eighteen thirties is selected for study because the plays of this period are not obviously related either to the drama of the beginning of the century or to that of the eighteen sixties; the plays have been more than usually distorted in previous attempts to demonstrate their relation to the previous and subsequent dramas. The plays selected for study are those that were most popular on the stage in the eighteen thirties; their popularity can be readily established from contemporary data, and the plays will be examined in conjunction with contemporary commentaries on the intentions of the authors and the reactions of critics and of audiences. Thus the plays will be considered not in the light of twentieth century conceptions about drama, but from the viewpoint of contemporary audiences.

## CHAPTER TWO

Contemporary accounts divide the plays of the eighteen thirties into two different kinds of drama, the serious drama and the popular drama. The comments of writers, actors and critics indicate that while the artistic achievement of particular serious plays was generally agreed upon, the nature of the achievement of serious drama as a whole was much debated. Three different attitudes are apparent: some writers attempted to analyse what was wrong with the serious drama, some proposed certain means of achieving great drama, and some complacently contemplated what they believed to be the satisfactory situation in the contemporary theatre.

The first attitude is exemplified by Fitzball, himself a dramatist, who deplores the conditions of the theatre as inauspicious to the development of the drama:

> how . . . are men gifted, perhaps, as Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer, or many others of great genius, blushing unseen, languishing under a cold sun, ever to add a literary lyric glory to their country?[1]

John Lacy condemns the love of poetry for its own sake:

> All our modern tragedists indulge in a similar liberal effusion of the talking-principle within them: the same indolent dicacity, the same proneness to disburse copious harangues and monotonous dissertations, characterize the poetic school of the drama in general. A verbal diarrhoea is the epidemic disease which afflicts the whole tribe . . . It seems to be forgotten . . . that the end of tragedy is not to tranquillise, but to rouse.[2]

And G. H. Lewes attacks Elizabethan imitation in the drama, one of the methods advocated by other writers as a means of creat-

ing great drama:

> all our poets could learn in that Old Drama was . . . poetry; . . . they learned to think that poetry was enough to make a drama! Whereas, if they had never known this Old Drama, they must perforce have created a new form and instead of the thousand-and-one imitations of the old dramatists, which the last twenty years have produced, we might have had some sterling plays.[3]

The return to the Old Drama is suggested by James Cook, a dramatist, who exemplifies the second attitude, in seeing the development of serious drama to be hindered by the "neglect of the great models of stage literature".[4] He urges that such neglect be repaired by the publication of Elizabethan plays, in order that "the public mind be instructed to the knowledge of what a rich mine of pure dramatic gold we have amongst us".[5] The comments of R. H. Horne, another dramatist, indicate the assumptions underlying this proposal:

> the propensity of modern times to reduce everything as much as possible to a tangible reality . . . has done incalculable mischief in its sweeping application to the ideal arts . . . whether the circumstances of modern society and civilization are eventful enough to give new incidents to the Drama, may be doubted.[6]

Lewes proposes an alternative:

> The drama should be a reflex of our life, idealized, of course, but issuing out of the atmosphere we breathe . . . To appeal to the public taste, to move the general heart of men, you must quit the study, and try to image forth some reflex of the world that all men know, speaking their language, uttering their thoughts, espousing their idealisms.[7]

The third attitude is well demonstrated by the laudatory speeches made at the retirement dinner given in honour of Macready, the most successful actor in and producer of serious plays in his time. The chairman, Bulwer Lytton, spoke thus:

Many a great performer may attain to a high reputation if he restrains his talents to acting Shakespeare and the great writers of the past; but it is perfectly clear that in so doing he does not advance one inch the literature of his time. It has been the merit of our guest to recognize the truth that the actor has it in his power to assist in creating the writer . . . He has identified himself with the living drama of his period, and by so doing he has half created it . . . Who does not recollect the rough and manly vigor of Tell, the simple grandeur of Virginius, or the exquisite sweetness and dignity and pathos with which he invested the self-sacrifice of Ion? . . . And who does not feel that but for him these great plays might never have obtained their hold upon the stage, or ranked among those masterpieces which this age will leave to posterity? . . . the drama of England appeared suddenly to revive and to promise a future that should be worthy of its past . . . when, by a union of all kindred arts, and the exercise of a taste that was at once gorgeous and severe, we saw the genius of Shakespeare properly embodied upon our stage, though I maintain that the ornament was never superior to the work.[8]

and John Forster observed that Macready's name

was equally allied with present and past dramatic literature, and that it would hereafter be associated with a long line of original poetic creations which first derived form from the inspiration of his art.[9]

Forster referred to

the connection of Mr. Macready, as an actor, with the dramas of Lord Byron, Sir Bulwer Lytton, Mr. Knowles, Mr. Justice Talfourd . . . Mr. Procter, the Rev. Mr. White, Mr. Sheil, Miss Mitford, Douglas Jerrold, and others. . . .[10]

Taylor, the dramatist, praises unrestrainedly the achievement

of the drama:

There has been no period, for the last two centuries, in which invention and activity have been more conspicuous in the dramatic field than during the thirty or forty years which include the epoch of such dramatists as Miss Mitford, Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer Lytton, James White, Jerrold, Browning, G. Darley, Searle, Marston, Horne . . .[11]

The list of names is considerably longer.

The comments on particular serious plays, h[redacted], are

wholeheartedly enthusiastic. The reactions to Knowles Virginius, Talfourd's Ion and Lytton's The Lady of Lyons and Richelieu, the most successful of the serious plays, will be considered subsequently when these plays are examined in detail, but even a relatively unsuccessful play such as Horne's Gregory VII evoked reactions such as these:

> "Gregory VII": "We regard it as the noblest production of its class that has for many years conferred honour upon the literature of the country." -- Atlas.
> "We have a grand whole before us; the work of an artist." -- Monthly Review.
> "The noble tragedy of Gregory VII." -- British and Foreign Review.
> . . . . . .
> "Mr. R. H. Horne's noble dramas are not the mere wordy imitations of the elder dramatists, but kindred productions, inspired by a like vigorous and splendid imagination, alike guided by the instinct of a lofty genius, at once penetrating and universal. They are the outpourings of a rich and abundant genius . . . -- Tomlin's Brief Review of the Drama.[12]

In such comments, whether or not it is claimed that the serious plays were great drama, certain general assumptions as to what should be the nature of a great drama for the period are apparent. Most evident is the belief that the material afforded by contemporary circumstances was not suitable subject matter for great drama; the standard for great drama was based on the Elizabethans, imitation of whom was felt to be a certain means of writing great plays. Closely linked to this assumption is the belief that great drama should be poetic, in the sense that it should imitate the language and cadences of Elizabethan blank verse.

The contemporary comments on the popular theatre are

similarly divided, into the comments of those considering the popular theatre solely in terms of its success on the stage, and of those who consider the popular theatre as part of the achievement of the drama of the period. Comments of the first kind are focused mainly on particular plays, and will be exemplified in more detail when the most successful popular play of the eighteen thirties, Jerrold's Black-Ey'd Susan, is examined. Here it can be seen that great emphasis is placed on novel stage effects. Fitzball, for example, tells how he introduced into his play Paul Clifford "a stage coach, and six real horses, determined to have a run of some kind"[13] and for Thalaba the Destroyer, the manager told Fitzball, the author, that he

> had luckily . . . engaged superior strength . . . He told me, with a gust of satisfaction, that he had engaged the Burmah bulls, elephants, ostriches, I think, and heaven knows what besides, from the Surrey Zoological Gardens.[14]

The focal point of most reviews is the performance of the leading actor or actress, in their interpretation, particularly, of pathetic and sentimental emotions. Coleman comments thus on Charlotte Cushman's performance in an adaptation of Scott's Guy Mannering:

> There swept on like a whirlwind a great, gaunt, spectral thing, clad from head to heel in one, and only one, loose flowing garment . . . its eyes, aflame with living fire, were riveted on the lost heir . . . who gasped and remained speechless . . . . The audience were breathless and dumbfounded . . .[15]

In the text, the character is merely a stock version of the weird woman, and in the case of extremely popular actors, such

as Liston, the actual play tended to become merely an excuse for the actor to go through his habitual routine. Marston, himself a dramatist, writes this of the popular actor Buckstone:

> His genial people were ultra genial, his cowards thorough poltroons. His mischief-makers revelled in their sports. But it is quite true to say that character with him was subordinate to mirth . . . in almost every part he was Buckstone. It is equally true that the public did not want him to be anyone else.[16]

Such actors as Liston, and T. P. Cooke, who rose to fame in Black-Ey'd Susan, were received with similar enthusiasm.

Comments of the second kind consider the popular theatre rather than the serious theatre as presenting a drama expressive of the period. Such comments do not indicate any great enthusiasm for the popular theatre, but rather a reluctant acknowledgment that any drama indigenous to the age is to be found in the popular theatre. Horne, whose opinions altered, writes:

> the most legitimate, because the genuine offspring of the age, is that Drama which catches the manners as they rise and embodies the characteristics of the time. This, then, has forsaken the five-act form, and taken shelter at what have been named 'Minor Theatres' . . . Whatever the amount of their ability, the truly dramatic, as far as it exists on the modern stage at all, will be found in those comparatively neglected writers of the minor drama.[17]

Lytton calls on serious dramatists to use

> tales of a household nature, that find their echo in the heart of the people -- the materials of the village tragedy, awakening an interest common to us all; intense yet homely, actual -- earnest -- the pathos and passion of every-day life . . .[18]

This was the material of the popular theatre.

The commentary on popular plays indicates that these were considered in terms of their impact on the stage, and not, as in the case of the serious plays, in terms of their achievement as great drama. Such a stage impact was considered to be created through the use of striking technical effects and novelties and through the presentation of sentimental situations.

## CHAPTER THREE

Knowles' Virginius was one of the most successful of the serious plays. It was first produced at Covent Garden in 1820, with Macready in the title role. Virginius from then on formed part of Macready's stock repertoire till his retirement in 1851, and was frequently performed to enthusiastic audiences during the eighteen thirties. Throughout the nineteenth century, most of the leading tragedians, including Edmund Kean, Young, Forrest and Phelps, prior to 1850, and G. V. Brooke, Charles Dillon and John McCullough, after 1850, appeared in the title role. Macready describes the enthusiasm of the first night audience:

> the action of the scene told its story with sufficient distinctness to keep alive its interest . . . With the progress of the play the rapt attention of the audience gradually kindled into enthusiasm. Long-continued cheers followed the close of each succeeding act; half-stifled screams and involuntary ejaculations burst forth when the fatal blow was struck to the daughter's heart; and the curtain fell amidst the most deafening applause of a highly-exited auditory. The play was an unquestionable triumph, which Knowles had sat in the pit to witness and enjoy.[1]

Knowles himself has left little comment on his work, and in his transactions with Macready over the initial production of the play, he assumes the role of the self-deprecating author, grateful for the efforts made by Macready on his behalf. All the earlier editions of Virginius are dedicated as follows:

> TO WILLIAM MACREADY, ESQ./ My Dear Sir, -- What can I do less

than dedicate this Tragedy to you? . . . I cannot do less; and if I could do more, I ought and would.

I was a perfect stranger to you: you read my play, and at once committed yourself respecting its merits. This, perhaps, is not saying much for your head, but it says a great deal for your heart; and that is the consideration which above all others makes me feel happy and proud . . . [2]

Knowles' contemporaries, however, were of very decided opinions about his play. Macready describes his reaction to reading Virginius:

The freshness and simplicity of the dialogue fixed my attention; I read on and on, and was soon absorbed in the interest of the story and the passion of its scenes . . . My first impressions were confirmed by a careful re-perusal and in sober certainty of its justness I wrote my opinion of the work to Knowles, pointing out some little oversights . . . Procter was with me betimes the morning after my call . . . We read the play together, and no word of exception was heard to jar against the praise he spontaneously and liberally bestowed on the work -- but he had ever a ready and unenvying admiration of contemporary genius.[3]

Hazlitt thought that Virginius was the best modern tragedy on the stage and Knowles "the first tragic writer of the age".[4] Charles Rice called him "our modern Shakespeare".[5] R. H. Horne alone goes further than delivering an enthusiastic eulogy:

The only way in which Mr. Knowles personifies our age, is in his truly domestic feeling. . . In what consists the interest and force of his popular play of Virginius? The domestic feeling. The costume, the setting, the decorations are heroic. We have Roman tunics, but a modern English heart, -- the scene is the Forum, but the sentiments those of the "Bedford Arms." The affection of the father for his daughter -- the pride of the daughter in her father, are the main principles of the play . . .[6]

Commentaries on productions of the play focus on Macready. In writing on the delivery of Virginius' lines to his daughter: "I never saw you look so like your mother/ In all my life!" (Virginius, IV, i) Marston recalled

Here Macready's transition from overmastering wrath to tenderness was made with such nature and force of contrast, that many of his audience wept.[7]

Of Virginius' exclamation in the previous camp scene, "I thank thee, Jupiter! I am still a father!" (Virginius, III, v)

Marston wrote

Whoever has heard Macready's interruption of convulsive joy . . . will hardly look for any more supreme example of manly pathos.[8]

The Times reviewed the 1820 production as follows:

Macready deserves peculiar praise for his Virginius . . . he has in this character touched the passions with a more masterly hand, and evinced deeper pathos . . . The tone with which in the judgment scene he uttered the words -- 'My poor child here, who clings to me for protection' -- was truly pathetic . . . the blow when given was terrific. As a catastrophe nothing could be finer, and the play should end, if possible, as that of Alfieri does, with the line from Livy, addressed to Appius, 'With this blood I devote thy head to the infernal Gods.'[9]

The Morning Herald commented:

Virginius is drawn a dramatic person of high order. His historical character and the Roman manners of the time are preserved with great force and fidelity of touch . . . The delineation of this arduous character by Mr. Macready will take its place among the first performances on the stage. . . Austere, tender, familiar, elevated, mingling at once terror and pathos . . . we must not pass unnoticed the scene of sensibility so strong, so natural, in which he yields his child with tears even to the lover of his choice, his first meeting with Virginia on his return, and his appearance before the tribunal.[10]

Knowles was considered by his contemporaries to be a serious dramatic author whose play was an achievement of great drama. Even Horne examines the play as serious drama, and his criticism is directed not against the play but against the serious drama in general. Although the play is praised for its serious Elizabethan elements, the success of the play as a piece of

theatre is defined in the comments in terms of its pathos and domestic sentiment. Horne points this out specifically, while it is assumed in the kind of praise given to the play by Marston and the reviewers for The Times and The Morning Herald. Macready as actor is considered to be a successful portrayor of these sentiments in striking scenes engineered to create the maximum of stage effect.

The plot of Virginius deals with the lust of Appius, a corrupt senator in ancient Rome, for Virginia, the daughter of Virginius, a noble senator. Virginius is devoted to his daughter, who is in love with Icilius, a noble young Roman. Unable to gain possession of Virginia through bribery, Appius contrives that one of his retainers, Claudius, should claim that Virginia is the daughter of one of Claudius' slaves, and has been passed off as Virginius' daughter. Virginia, as a slave, would then be handed over to Claudius where she would be available to Appius. Virginius contests the claim but fails; to preserve his daughter's virtue, he kills her, and he himself subsequently loses his reason and kills Appius.

Even so bare a plot summary as this indicates the simplified nature of the play. The characters are representations of stock types, without any further complexity: Virginius, the devoted father; Virginia, the innocent maiden; Icilius, the young, noble suitor; Appius, the scheming villain. The characters have no interest or function beyond filling out the stereotypes they

embody. The demarcation of vice and virtue is very definite; Appius and his retainer are completely vicious, while Virginius and the other characters are completely virtuous. There is no doubt as to what is the morally correct course of action for a virtuous character, nor do any of the characters have to struggle with the conflicting claims of contradictory principles. The situation is as stereotyped as the characters who are placed in it: vice lays seige to virtue, and virtue finally triumphs, although here the ultimate triumph is qualified, in the interests of creating a tragic effect.

Thus the audience is in no doubt as to how it should respond to the material presented, as the play is directed to produce stock responses from the audience by the manipulation of stock characters in stock situations. Instead of provoking the audience to thought, the play provides a substitute for thought by demonstrating general, optimistic assumptions, such as that virtue ultimately triumphs while vice is confounded. There is no moral or intellectual interest in the play; the audience's enjoyment is derived from the satisfaction of seeing the confirmation of the most elementary and optimistic of platitudes.

Interest is thus provided by the stage technique, which is directed to gain the maximum of stage effect by gratifying the simplest appetites of the audience: the appetite for visual sensation and that for sentimental emotion. The structure of the play is conceived so as to obtain the maximum of effect from

a series of striking scenes which are emphasised by stage technique and by the language used. These scenes all occur at the points where the emotional situation is most heightened. The Morning Herald review, quoted above, draws attention to

> the scene of sensibility so strong, so natural in which [Virginius] yields his child with tears even to the lover of his choice, his first meeting with Virginia on his return, and his appearance before the tribunal.[11]

The pathos and *sentiment* is aroused by working on the elementary bonds of domestic feeling. Despite the context of political and social unrest, both in Rome itself and outside the city, what is most important in the play is the father-daughter relationship of Virginius and Virginia; fullest use is made of the relationship at the climax of the play where the father is led, by paternal love, to kill his daughter. All the previous scenes of emotional effect lead up to this point; the scene at the beginning of Act II, where Virginius recognises the love between his daughter and Icilius, and that in Act IV where Virginius comes to defend his daughter in court, emphasise the relationship in order to derive the maximum amount of sensation from the emotional catastrophe. The anti-climax of the last act further indicates that the emphasis of the play is focused on domestic sentiment. Virginius' insanity and his murder of Appius are more in harmony with a theme of revenge; the weakness of the last act results from the author's inability to follow the climax, in which the emotions have been exploited to the fullest.

Visual effect is used both to provide interest in its

own right and to emphasise the most striking scenes. The play is carefully constructed with an eye to providing opportunities for the maximum of stage effect, such as in the scenes of confrontation between the senators and the people in the streets of Rome, the court scene in the forum, and the final scene in prison. The Roman setting is important in that it permits the actors to wear costumes that are visually interesting, something of which Macready was well aware when, being refused new costumes and scenery by the Covent Garden management for the first production, he supplied them himself. Linking the appeal to the emotions and the visual emphasis, is the opportunity afforded by the play for a popular actor to dominate the action by his representation of sentimental emotions in a series of striking scenes; as the reviews suggest, Virginius is very much a star vehicle.

The language of Virginius functions in a similar way. It is very strongly reminiscent of Elizabethan blank verse, and frequently Knowles hovers on the edge of Shakespearean imitation, particularly at those points where he seeks the greatest emotional effect. Virginius has just assented to the union of his daughter and Icilius:

ICILIUS. Virginia, my Virginia! I am all
Dissolv'd -- o'erpower'd with the munificence
Of this auspicious hour. And thou nor mov'st
Nor look'st -- nor speak'st -- to bless me with a sign
Of sweet according joy! I love thee but
To make thee happy! If to make thee so
Be bliss denied to me -- lo, I release
The gifted hand -- that I would faster hold
Than wretches bound for death would cling to life --

If thou would'st take it back -- then take it back.
VIRGINIA. I take it back -- to give it thee again!
ICILIUS. O help me to a word will speak my bliss,
Or I am beggar'd . . . . . .
(Virginius, II, ii)

This is Appius' reaction to the sight of Virginia:

Paint me that smile! I never saw a smile
'Till now. My Claudius, is she not a wonder?
I know not whether in the state of girlhood
Or womanhood to call her. 'Twixt the two
She stands, as that were loth to lose her, this
To win her most impatient. The young year,
Trembling and blushing 'twixt the striving kisses
Of parting spring and meeting summer, seems
Her only parallel!
(Virginius, II, iv)

Appius expatiates on friendship:

Friends ever are provisionally friends --
Friends for so far -- friends just to such a point
And then 'farewell!' Friends with an understanding --
As 'should the road be pretty safe' -- 'the sea
Not over-rough,' and so on -- friends of ifs
And buts -- no friends! O could I find the man
Would be a simple, thorough-going friend!
(Virginius, III, i)

Virginius condemns Appius in court thus:

. . . . . Friends! Fellow citizens!
Look not on Claudius -- look on your Decemvir!
He is the master claims Virginia!
The tongues that told him she was not my child
Are these -- the costly charms he cannot purchase,
Except by making her the slave of Claudius,
His client, his purveyor, that caters for
His pleasures -- markets for him -- picks and scents
And tastes, that he may banquet -- serves him up
His sensual feast, and is not now asham'd,
In the open, common street, before your eyes --
Frighting your daughters and your matrons' cheeks
With blushes they ne'er thought to meet -- to help him
To the honour of a Roman maid, my child,
Who now clings to me, as you see, as if
This second Tarquin had already coil'd
His arms around her . . . . . .
(Virginius, IV, ii)

Virginius speaks thus when he loses his reason, and cannot accept that Virginia is dead:

> Vile tyrant! Think you, shall I not believe
> My own eyes before your tongue? Why, there she is!
> There at your back -- her locks dishevell'd and
> Her vestment torn! Her cheeks all faded with
> Her pouring tears, as flowers with too much rain!
> Her form no longer kept and treasur'd up.
> Villain! is this a sight to show a father?
> And have I not a weapon to requite thee?
> (Virginius, V, iii)

Significantly, there is no speech when Virginius stabs his daughter. Here, the action alone provides the effect which the poetic, neo-Elizabethan language is intended to heighten.

The Elizabethan imitation serves two purposes for Knowles: he infuses his play thereby with the appeal of a historical setting, and acquires an easy model by which his play is elevated to the status of serious drama. Knowles uses his most exaggerated poetic flights to reinforce the other elements of the play: the appeal to the emotions, for his language is one calculated to express sentiment, not intellectual debate, and the emphasis on stage effect, as striking situations are underlined by the language.

The other successful plays of the eighteen thirties which belong to the serious theatre show the same characteristics as Virginius, with the difference that they are set in a variety of backgrounds, all of which are equally exploited for visual effect. Knowles' other successful plays, Caius Gracchus and William Tell were similarly praised as important

dramatic works, and similarly achieve their strongest effects through a reliance on domestic sentiment and pathos and the exploitation of stage effects. Horné's achievement, despite his concern with the drama, is negligible, for although Gregory VII was highly esteemed when first produced, it enjoyed nothing of the popularity of Knowles' most famous plays. Nor did the plays of Marston, although successful at the time, seize the public imagination in the way that Virginius did. Only Talfourd and Lytton succeeded in writing plays which enjoyed phenomenal successes in the eighteen thirties, and were produced for a considerable number of years afterwards; their plays were also acclaimed as achievements of the serious theatre.

Talfourd's most successful play was Ion, which won him theatrical fame. His two following plays, The Athenian Captive and Glencoe, although based on the same elements as Ion, did not achieve such great success, and what success they did have was chiefly attributable to the reputation Talfourd gained with his first play. As in the production of Virginius, and as, later, in the production of Lytton's plays, the figure of Macready is instrumental.

Ion was first produced at Covent Garden in 1836 with Macready in the title role. Macready writes thus of the first night:

Was called for very enthusiastically by the audience, and

cheered on my appearance most heartily . . . I felt tranquilly happy . . . happy in the triumphant issue of this doubtful experiment . . .[12]

Thereafter the play, like Virginius, formed part of Macready's stock repertoire. In his preface to Ion, Talfourd is as self-effacing as Knowles, but his comment on his own play is as perceptive as that of Horne on Virginius:

gentleness and self-sacrifice have charms for the multitude which neither the frigidity of a Greek plot, nor the feebleness of its development, nor manifold errors of composition can destroy.[13]

In context, however, Talfourd is not so much lamenting his own faults as excusing the success of the play. Horne's reaction is typical of that of the critics:

The tragedy of Ion has an admirable unity of purpose and expression; a unity apart from the 'unities,' and exceeding them in critical value; and in itself an essential characteristic of every high work of art . . . The effect of the whole is such as would be created were it possible to restore the ground-plan of an Athenian temple in its majestic and simple proportions, and decorate it with the elegant statues of Canova.[14]

Talfourd's neo-Classicism pleased them as much as Knowles' neo-Elizabethanism, since both were considered to ensure the status of the plays as serious drama. Macready refers to the newspaper reviews: "Called on Forster, who gave me the criticism of the newspapers . . . of which that of the Times was the warmest, though all were enthusiastic."[15]

The same characteristics are at work in Ion as in Virginius, with the slight difference that Talfourd models his play on Classical rather than Elizabethan drama. In both plays, behind the trappings of serious drama, the appeal is to the

emotions through stage effect. In Ion, the emphasis falls on a father-son relationship, and the striking scene of the death of the father and reconciliation to the son forms the climax of the play, which, like Virginius, deteriorates in the last act with the author's inability to find anything to match the earlier climax, despite the suicide of the hero which ends the play. The language used by the two writers differs slightly; both look to poetic effects to reinforce their most striking scenes, but Talfourd draws on the poetry of the Romantics, and especially of Wordsworth:

> . . . . . Have ye beheld a pine
> That clasp'd the mountain summit with a root
> As firm as its rough marble, and, apart
> From the huge shade of undistinguished trees,
> Lifted its head, as in delight, to share
> The evening glories of the sky . . . . . .
> . . . . . -- smit by the flaming marl
> And lighted for destruction? . . . . . .
> (Ion, II, iii)

The uses of the older models are, however, identical. The nature of contemporary commentary on Ion and the characteristics of the play are so nearly identical to those seen in Virginius that there is little point in examining the play in greater detail.

## CHAPTER FOUR

The Lady of Lyons presents a somewhat different case. Lytton is the only writer in the eighteen thirties who had achieved distinction in other areas of literature before he turned to the theatre, for which he managed to write plays which were both successful and praised as serious drama. Lytton wrote three highly successful plays; in addition to The Lady of Lyons he wrote Richelieu and Money, the latter of which falls outside the scope of this study.

The Lady of Lyons; or, Love and Pride was first produced at Covent Garden in 1838, with Macready as Melnotte. The cheers of the audience at the end of the performance gave rise to what The Examiner described as "a scene to raise, to revive, to give a new zest to play-going."[1] The play formed part of Macready's repertoire, and continued to hold the stage for the greater part of the century. Macready comments on the first night thus:

> Acted Claude Melnotte in Bulwer's play pretty well; the audience felt it very much, and were carried away by it; the play in the acting was completely successful.[2]

Because of the failure of Lytton's last play, The Duchess de la Vallière, The Lady of Lyons was at first presented anonymously, and publication of Lytton's name was further delayed once the play was established as a success after the later

reviews came out. Although the comments were, in general, favourable, the more reactionary of the Tory organs denounced it for subversive politics. The Times talked of "the republican claptraps",[3] while The Morning Post said

> He makes his peasant talk sad stuff . . . such as a manly peasant would never talk, about his natural equality, and so on, with persons of family.[4]

When Lytton's name was finally attached to the play, The Times grew more virulent:

> We had no doubt . . . it was an issue from the mint of which that gentleman is deputy master, for the scribblers of the French Boulevard-Theatres are its real masters. No other school could or would produce such morbid sentimentality, such turbid sansculottism.[5]

However, once the Queen had attended the play with obvious enjoyment, the combination of scandal and royal patronage joined to the initial success ensured the continuance of the play on the stage.

Lytton wrote The Lady of Lyons virtually to order for Macready:

> Were you not Manager, I would not be a second time Dramatist . . . tell me which you prefer, Comedy or Tragedy . . . Whatever subject I select, you may depend on domestic interest and determined concentration up to the close.[6]

The process of composition is marked by constant correspondence with Macready, in which various points are raised, and suggestions made, adopted and rejected.[7] The preface to the play is dedicated to Talfourd, "Whose genius and example have alike contributed/ towards the regeneration/ of/ The National Drama".[8] Lytton's principal concern is to defend himself from the charges

of political subversion, which he does on the grounds of dramatic convenience:

> I was guided, naturally and solely, by the wish to take that period in which the incidents might be rendered most probable, and in which the probationary career of the hero . . . might be sufficiently rapid for dramatic effect, and . . . The early years of the first and most brilliant successes of the French Republic appeared to constitute the only epoch in which these objects could be attained.[9]

His second concern is in accordance with the role of the self-deprecating author, as he apologises for his play as being

> a very slight and trivial performance, and, being written solely for the Stage, may possess but a feeble interest in the closet . . . I was mainly anxious to see whether or not certain critics had truly declared that it was not in my power to attain the art of dramatic construction and theatrical effect . . . it was to the development of the plot and the arrangement of the incidents that I directed my chief attention; -- and I sought to throw whatever belongs to poetry less into the diction and the 'felicity of words' than into the construction of the story, the creation of the characters, and the spirit of the pervading sentiment.[10]

The plot of the play concerns the love of Melnotte, a gardener's son who is nevertheless as cultivated as any gentleman, for Pauline, the proud daughter of a rich merchant who aspires to marry into the nobility, and scorns Melnotte. Two suitors whom Pauline has rejected as not sufficiently noble contrive a scheme to revenge themselves on her: Melnotte is furnished with money and equipage to present himself to Pauline as the Prince of Como and marry her. Melnotte carries off the scheme successfully, but his noble nature revolts from the deception and he confesses his true identity to Pauline immediately afterwards, returns her to her parents and departs

for the wars in Italy. Pauline is torn between her pride and growing love for Melnotte; after a lapse of several years, Melnotte returns, now rich and a colonel, to find Pauline on the point of divorcing him and remarrying in order to save the family fortunes. Melnotte, in disguise, ascertains that Pauline does in fact love him; he reveals himself and is reunited to Pauline. As a wealthy colonel he is now socially acceptable. The setting is post-revolutionary France.

The Lady of Lyons does not imitate neo-Classicism or neo-Elizabethanism directly. It is set in a past remote enough to be romantic without playing on the appeal of antiquity. The subtitle, Love and Pride, however, points to the same kind of simplification at work in Lytton's play as in Virginius and the rest of the serious drama. Melnotte embodies the virtue of love, Pauline the vice of pride, and, as virtue always triumphs, love overcomes pride and brings about the transformation of Pauline and the reunion of the couple. Again, stock characters are agitated in a stock situation: Melnotte is the poor but noble hero, Pauline the beautiful but unperceptive heroine, her rejected suitors the wealthy but evil villains, while Pauline's parents are comic types; the plot deals with the story of how the couple are brought together, estranged and finally reunited, with virtue triumphing over vice. Again, the setting of the play permits visual stage effects and the construction is designed to

provide a good star part in the role of Melnotte. The principal emphasis is ultimately on domestic sentiment in the development of the relationship between Melnotte and Pauline, and in the opportunities offered for the glorification of domestic bliss and sentiment in the depiction of the relationship between Melnotte and his devoted, aged mother.

Lytton's play differs from the other serious plays in the means he uses to infuse his play with an apparent concern with serious issues. The setting does not automatically meet the requirements of serious drama as do the Greece and Rome of Talfourd and Knowles. Instead, Lytton appears to treat serious issues by capitalising on the political aspect. Lytton denied that he introduced the political interest deliberately for its own sake, but his play was considered by some of his contemporaries as a treatment of revolutionary ideals. In the play the political interest functions in a manner identical to Knowles' context of Roman politics and wars; the essentially sentimental nature of both plays is disguised as a discussion of weightier topics.

The language of the play points to the basis on which it is constructed, and by which the emotional appeal is concealed. Lytton uses both prose and blank verse, the blank verse being used at the points where Lytton is concerned to underline a striking situation calling for the expression of some conventionally noble sentiment. Melnotte, for example,

describes his palace, in his persona of the Prince of Como, to Pauline, while miserable that she should love him for his wealth and status rather than for himself:

> A palace lifting to eternal summer
> Its marble walls, from out a glossy bower
> Of coolest foliage musical with birds,
> Whose songs should syllable thy name! At noon
> We'd sit beneath the arching vines, and wonder
> Why Earth could be unhappy, while the Heavens
> Still left us youth and love! We'd have no friends
> That were not lovers; no ambition, save
> To excel them all in love . . .
> . . . . . .
> It is the prince thou lovest, not the man;
> If in the stead of luxury, pomp, and power,
> I had painted poverty, and toil, and care,
> Thou hadst found no honey on my tongue . . .
> (The Lady of Lyons, II, i)

Melnotte returns from the wars to find Pauline about to remarry:

> Why should she keep, thro' years and silent absence,
> The holy tablets of her virgin faith
> True to a traitor's name? Oh, blame her not,
> It were a sharper grief to think her worthless
> Than to be what I am! To-day, -- to-day!
> They said 'to-day!' This day, so wildly welcomed --
> This day, my soul had singled out of time
> And mark'd for bliss! This day! oh, could I see her,
> See her once more, unknown; but hear her voice,
> So that one echo of its music might
> Make ruin less appalling in its silence.
> (The Lady of Lyons, V, i)

Lytton's verse is most reminiscent of the Romantics at their weakest; he has their luxuriance and hysteria without their strength. Lytton's apparently political interest results also from this imitation, for in the same way that he capitalises on the language of the Romantics, so he capitalises on Romantic revolutionary theories and ideals; the result of

the imitation is to lend triviality the appearance of being a large and important issue.

Lytton managed to repeat his success with Richelieu, first performed at Covent Garden in 1839 with Macready as Richelieu. The play was an immediate success, and was produced throughout the season. It formed part of Macready's repertoire till his retirement, and was revived frequently throughout the rest of the century, the last major London production being Robert Hilton's, at the Strand in 1910. Macready comments thus on the reaction of the first night audience:

> Was called for and very enthusiastically received; gave out the play for every night . . . The success of the play seemed to be unequivocal.[11]

Marston similarly reports

> it was an audience dazzled, almost bewildered by the brilliancy of the achievement, that, on the instant fall of the curtain, burst into a roar of admiration that, wild, craving, unappeasable, pursued like a sea, the retreating actor, and swept him back to the front . . .[12]

Lytton wrote Richelieu, as he did The Lady of Lyons, specifically for Macready, but whereas Macready only influenced the composition of the first play, the composition of Richelieu virtually amounts to a collaboration between Lytton and Macready. The correspondence between Lytton and Macready records the development of the play. First there was the search for a subject which would enable both author and actor to exercise fully their individual capabilities. One letter

by Macready defines both the actor's needs and analyses Lytton's style with considerable penetration:

> I have a dim and confused vision of a plot yielding opportunities for pathetic situations and also for humorous ones. -- I trust you will persist in your adherence to the mixed plot -- I may truly apply to your talent as a dramatic poet a character I find noted as "le veritable" -- "il consiste à composer de manière qu'il y ait dans le même ouvrage, dans la même scène, ce qui fait pleurer ou rire même le peuple, et ce qui fournit aux penseurs un sujet inépuisable de réflexions." It is therefore that I hope you will remain constant to the exercise of a power, which is possessed by no other living author . . .[13]

Lytton first conceived the character of Richelieu as a secondary figure in a romantic comedy, but Macready rejected the idea as being too confusing for the stage. Finally Macready recorded that Lytton "had made out the rough sketch of a play, an historical comedy, on the subject of Richelieu."[14] Although Lytton had written in prose, Macready, with an eye on the serious theatre, insisted on its being poetised. It was only once Lytton had completed the first version of the play, however, that the real work of collaboration began.

Macready saw clearly the flaws in the play, and set to work to forge a successful piece of theatre out of Lytton's material. The correspondence records suggestions by Macready such as "the interest of Mauprat & Julie wants still greater prominence"[15] while Lytton asked Macready if "in the 4th act --[he] can see a way for a closing & pathetic scene between Mauprat, Richelieu & Julie -- the interest will be clenched".[16] Macready still found that the play

> though excellent in parts, is deficient in the important point of continuity of interest . . . I fear the play will not do -- cannot be made effective.[17]

Even after Macready supplied Lytton with a plan for repairing the deficiencies he still felt that the play was "occasionally lengthy. I fear it has not the clinging interest of his present successful play".[18] Lytton despaired, both of the play and of himself as a dramatist, but eventually produced a complete revision, which Macready thought "greatly improved, but still not quite to the point of success".[19] More alterations and cutting followed on Macready's advice, until after a reading of the play before a selected group which included Browning, Macready was able to report an extremely favourable reaction:

> The effect here was <u>decided success</u> . . . the deepest interest was excited among my auditors . . . to you the experiment was MOST GRATIFYING.[20]

Production was decided on, but Lytton continued with cuts, omissions and alterations to the text at Macready's suggestion. Nevertheless, Macready remained dissatisfied with the role of Richelieu even after the play was successfully performed, while Lytton continued revising and expanding the play for publication.

The 1839 first edition of the play is liberally sprinkled with footnotes which quote from Abbé Arnaud, Anquétil, Le Clerc and Voltaire, among others, but the resultant effect is not to bring out the character of Richelieu, but rather to

obscure him behind the mass of information. Lytton, in preparing the play for publication, did not leave the character to speak for himself, but supported practically every point about Richelieu, both factual and psychological, by copious quotation. Richelieu's reference to his play, for example,

> . . . . . When my play
> Was acted to dull tiers of lifeless gapers,
> Who had no soul for poetry, I saw him
> Applaud in the proper places . . . . . .
> (Richelieu, I, ii)

comes with a long footnote, compiled from Arnaud, relating the history of the tragi-comedy Mirame. Personal qualities are given similar evidence: Richelieu's benignity in forgiving his page for his failure to obtain important documents is supported by a footnote describing the affection Richelieu inspired among his servants:

> The fear and the hatred which Richelieu generally inspired were not shared by his dependants and those about his person, who are said 'to have adored him. Ses domestiques le regardaient comme le meilleur des maîtres.' Le Clerc.[21]

Such alterations to the text for publication indicate that Lytton did not feel that the final stage text, once Macready was finished with it, was truly literature as well as theatre. In the preface to the first edition, he implicitly abandons his objective in The Lady of Lyons of writing serious drama which would be both successful on the stage and a work of literature. He distinguishes clearly between the play as acted and the play as read:

> The length of the Play necessarily requires curtailments on the Stage. Many of the passages thus omitted, however immaterial to the audience, must obviously be such as the reader would be least inclined to dispense with -- viz. those which, without being absolutely essential to the business of the Stage, contain either the subtler strokes of character or the more poetical embellishments of description . . . To judge the Author's conception of Richelieu fairly, and to estimate how far it is consistent with historical portraiture, the play must be read.[22]

Contemporary comments on the play focus on the role of Richelieu as interpreted by Macready, but the actor himself was never satisfied with the part, as he was fundamentally at variance with Lytton as to how the character of Richelieu should be shown. Lytton, he felt, had made the character

> particularly difficult by its inconsistency; he has made him resort to low jest, which outrages one's notions of the ideal Cardinal Richelieu, with all his vanity, and suppleness and craft.[23]

Despite the first night success, Macready was dissatisfied:

> Acted Cardinal Richelieu very nervously; lost my self-possession, and was obliged to use too much effort; it did not satisfy me at all, there were no artist-like touches through the play.[24]

Subsequent revisions, in fact, nearly caused a rift between the author and the actor:

> Bulwer came and altered all we had arranged -- annoying and disconcerting me very much. I struggled for the omission of several passages, but he was triumphant, and therefore no longer so docile as I had hithertofore found him.[25]

Macready recorded in his diary shortly afterwards:

> Two long notes from Bulwer -- with more last words -- and a lengthy criticism on some points of my performance, in which he wishes me to substitute coarse and vulgar attempt at low farcical point in one instance, and melodramatic rant in another for the more delicate shadings of character that I endeavour to give. I have long had surmises about Bulwer's

taste from several things in the comedy of La Vallière -- in the original of The Lady of Lyons and in the original copy of this play. I am sure that his taste is not to be depended on . . .[26]

The audiences, however, felt no such dissatisfaction, as the comments indicate. The newspaper reviews praised Macready's acting and production unrestainedly, althouth Lytton was treated with some hostility, and was denounced for claptrap plot-making, falsification of history, melodrama and bad verse. The audiences were, however, delighted by Macready's acting in the most striking scenes. Lady Pollock, for example, records:

While he threatened the offender with the curse of Rome, his attitude assumed a dignity which was that of an immense power; his voice then gave out great peals of thunder. It was no wonder that his enemies shrank away in terror, and that he stood alone in a charmed circle . . .[27]

Marston provides a very full description of Macready's Richelieu:

Even amidst the interest of this opening scene, the thought of the house escapes to Macready . . . the coming revelation . . . of the actor's powers, is at once foreshadowed by his appearance. How full of individuality are the whitening hair, the face sharpened to the utmost expression of subtlety and keenness, the gait somewhat loose with age, but now quick and impulsive, now slow or suddenly arrested, which seems to give a rhythm to the workings of his brain -- to his swift, contemptuous penetration of the schemes against him, on the one hand, or, on the other, to his suspense, his caution, or his rapid decision . . . Examples of the actor's unrivalled power in familiar touches abounded through the performance. His manner of exposing the strategy of Baradas to De Mauprat blended with contempt an easy penetration, an amused superiority . . . The whole of this first act is rich in these contrasts of feeling and character in which Macready delighted . . . In the second act, the contrast between Richelieu's usual scornful levity in dismissing the schemes of his enemies, and the

composed but grave attention which denotes real peril, was strikingly marked . . . So full of fine variety was his delineation at the close of this second act, as almost to atone for its want of incident . . . The third act gave scope for the excellences already noted, and with yet higher development . . . each new trait seemed to complete and enhance the others . . . Macready carefully avoided the error into which some of his successors have fallen -- that of over-idealizing Richelieu by delivering his patriotic speeches in such tones of exalted devotion as might have befitted Brutus. Macready's apostrophes to France, on the contrary, were given with a self-reference, sometimes fierce in its expression, that showed her triumphs to be part of his own . . . all this caused an excitement which I have rarely seen equalled. It was surpassed, however, by that supreme moment, in the fourth act, when the might of Rome seemed to pass into the sick man's frame, as he sprang up, dominant and terrible, to shield Julie from the King with the aegis of the Church. At this point the vast pit seemed to rock with enthusiasm, as it volleyed its admiration in rounds of thunder . . . But it was not alone by acting, however fine . . . that his triumph over probability was obtained. He had from the beginning of the play so seized every opportunity of identifying his fortunes and life with the greatness of his country, that when the King besought him to live for France, it seemed quite in the order of nature such an adjuration should have magical force . . . The minister's policy -- prompt action, daring, and retribution -- the old man's fondness, the cynic's raillery, the patron's indulgence and humour, -- this brilliant résumé of Richelieu throughout the play was so given, flash after flash, that its various effects seemed simultaneous rather than successive.[28]

Much of the credit for the success of Richelieu must be given to Macready, for his care in staging the play with an eye to maximum stage effect, and to his interpretation of the role which Lytton finally made at least close to the kind of character in which Macready excelled, "yielding opportunities for pathetic situations and also for humorous ones."[29] Lytton's abilities as dramatist were not, finally, sufficient to make the play theatrically effective, and the author was left to rewrite the play to his own satisfaction for public-

ation, in the course of which Richelieu lost its theatrical potentialities.

The plot of Richelieu concerns the conspiracy of a faction of nobles against the Cardinal, through which they intend ultimately to gain power over the king. Richelieu allies himself with de Mauprat, once his enemy, in order to undermine the plot; de Mauprat and Julie, Richelieu's ward, are in love, and Richelieu permits them to marry. The king, however, wants Julie himself, and the couple are estranged through the king's action. De Mauprat misinterprets Richelieu's motive for approving the marriage, and joins the conspiracy. Meanwhile Richelieu has obtained incriminating documents about the plot through a young page, Francois, but these are stolen. De Mauprat comes to kill Richelieu, but on learning the truth about the situation between the king and Julie, he is reconciled, and helps Richelieu to escape instead. Richelieu's death is reported, and the conspirators set to work on the king, but are disturbed by Richelieu's reappearance. Subsequently Richelieu feigns illness; the king, influenced by the flattery of the conspirators, divests Richelieu of his cardinal's office. Without the documents, Richelieu has no proof of the conspiracy; he sets out to demonstrate his indispensibility as a statesman. Ultimately the documents are found, the conspirators confounded, and Richelieu reinstated. De Mauprat and Julie are reconciled with the king's

reluctant approval.

The plot summary indicates the features of the drama as already noted in Virginius, but in addition Richelieu offers something more in the leading character. The rest of the characters are stereotypes: Julie and de Mauprat are the virtuous young lovers, while the conspirators, who are even more of cardboard creations than Appius or Pauline's rejected suitors, are the embodiments of vice. The plot traces the triumph of virtue over vice, and the final reunion of the estranged couple. The domestic sentiments are strongly emphasised, in the portrayal of the Julie-de Mauprat relationship, and in the delineation of Richelieu's character as father in his relationship with Julie, and his paternal attitude to his servants. Indeed, the Julie-Richelieu relationship is strongly reminiscent of that of Virginius and his daughter. Again, the structure of the play is engineered to emphasise a series of striking scenes permitting the maximum of stage effect, while the setting enables emphasis to be placed on the pageantry and spectacle of the court settings. Lytton's language is one geared to emphasise the pathos and sentimentality; it is rather a mixture of rhetorical and lyrical bombast than markedly modelled on Elizabethan or Romantic verse, and adapts well to the expression of Richelieu's tirades. Richelieu, for example, harangues de Mauprat:

> Thou hast sought nor priest nor shrine; no sackcloth chafed
> Thy delicate flesh. The rosary and the death's-head

> Have not, with pious meditation, purged
> Earth from the carnal gaze. What thou hast not done
> Brief told; what done, a volume! Wild debauch,
> Turbulent riot; for the morn the dice-box --
> Noon claim'd the duel, and the night the wassail;
> These, your most holy, pure preparatives
> For death and judgment . . . . . .
> (Richelieu, I, ii)

He addresses Julie and de Mauprat thus, after permitting their marriage:

> . . . . . Thou shalt seek
> Temple and priest right soon; the morrow's sun
> Shall see across these barren thresholds pass
> The fairest bride in Paris. Go, my children;
> Even I loved once. Be lovers while ye may!
> How is it with you, sir? You bear it bravely;
> You know, it asks the courage of a lion.
> (Richelieu, I, ii)

After he appears to recover his strength miraculously on being reinstated as Chancellor, Richelieu has this speech:

> . . . . . in one moment there did pass
> Into this wither'd frame the might of France.
> My own dear France, I have thee yet -- I have saved thee!
> I clasp thee still! It was thy voice that called me
> Back from the tomb. What mistress like our country?
> (Richelieu, V, ii)

The context of the play, of politics and intrigue in France, is more relevant in Richelieu than in the other serious plays. Here, the political interest is fundamental to the delineation of the character of Richelieu, and in this character, the play achieves more than a reworking of stock types and situations, relying on sentiment and spectacle, and dressed up to appear as literature. Everything in the play is subordinated to the character of Richelieu, but this transpires rather from the performance of the play than from the text. The play, as it is written, attempts to focus

attention on the conspirators and the young lovers, but the play is only successful when Richelieu is on stage. The character is drawn with great attention to sentimental and pathetic potentialities, both in the delineation of his domestic side and of his pretence in the last act of being a sick old man whose powers are being stripped from him. Richelieu, in addition, has a dry humour and sarcasm, and a vitality totally lacking in Lytton's Melnotte. Macready, rather than Lytton, must be accredited with the creation of the character, for, despite his estimation of Lytton's dramatic abilities, quoted above, it is through his influence and understanding of theatrical effect that both pathos and humour are combined in Richelieu to create a strong figure who holds the play together. Such a dominant character is absent in Virginius, Ion, and The Lady of Lyons. In these plays, and in the rest of the serious drama, the central character is a totally sentimental creation, and any humour or relief from sentimentality is provided by situations generated by peripheral characters, as in the incipient satire in the portrayal of Pauline's parents and their social aspirations. In Richelieu both the sentiment and the strength of the play are rooted in the dramatic situation as developed through the leading character.

While the contemporary commentaries on the earlier serious plays, which are deliberately based on imitation of older models, emphasise their achievement as being in accor-

dance with the contemporary conception of what should constitute great drama, the plays themselves suggest that their success and appeal to the audience was produced by totally different characteristics: the emphasis on sentiment, theatrical effect and spectacle, which is duly noted by the reviewers but not by critics concerned with serious drama. With Richelieu, attention is focused on the presentation of the chief character, and the commentaries discuss those aspects of the play which were the cause of its positive appeal, rather than discussing, as in the criticisms of Virginius, those negative aspects on which the intellectual, but not the public, appeal was based. In the popular drama, no attempts were made to estimate the plays as great drama; nor were the authors of the popular plays obliged to supply a facade of seriousness to conceal the character of their plays.

## CHAPTER FIVE

Jerrold's Black-Ey'd Susan was first produced at the Surrey in 1829, with T. P. Cooke as the hero, William. The play was so successful that it was transferred to Covent Garden, and was performed frequently during the eighteen thirties. It continued to be revived throughout the century, and even in 1896 it was enthusiastically received. Of the 1896 production at the Adelphi, The Theatre reviewer wrote that the story

> is so true, so pathetic, and so human, as to render its appeal to the emotions perennially irresistible. That even the most hardened playgoer could witness the parting of William and Susan with dry eyes we do not believe.[1]

Revivals of the play were staged in London as recently as 1950 and 1967.

Jerrold's intention in writing Black Ey'd Susan was not to gain himself a reputation as a serious dramatist or to write great drama, but to give the public a play which would be theatrically successful and financially profitable. Hence he does not preface his play with a discussion of dramatic objectives, and he was well aware of the scornful attitude of the critics and writers concerned with the serious drama towards the popular theatre. "If you'd pass for somebody, you must sneer at a play . . ."[2] he wrote, commenting on the low status of the popular theatre. The play received none of the

kind of critical attention lavished on a Virginius or an Ion; such comments as were written testify to the way in which the play and its hero seized the popular imagination. The Atheneum reported thus:

> All London went over the water . . . and Cooke became a personage in society . . . Covent Garden borrowed the play and engaged the actor . . . A hackney cab carried the triumphant William in his blue jacket and white trousers from the Obelisk to Bow Street, and Mayfair maidens wept over the stirring situations and laughed over the searching dialogue which had moved, an hour before, the laughter and tears of the Borough. On the three hundredth night of representation the walls of the theatre were illuminated, and vast multitudes filled the thoroughfare . . .[3]

Dickens commented on the opening night:

> It was so fresh and vigorous, so manly and gallant, that I felt as if it splashed against my theatre-heated face along with the spray of the breezy sea.[4]

The plot of Black-Ey'd Susan is about a young couple, William, a brave sailor, and Susan, his wife, renowned for her beauty and black eyes. When the play opens, Susan is being threatened with eviction by her landlord; William is at sea. William returns, throws out the landlord, and incidentally captures a band of smugglers, with whom the landlord is associated. Meanwhile, William's captain, to whom William is devoted, has seen Susan and plans to induce her to join him on the ship, unaware at first that she is William's wife. The captain comes on Susan, and forces his attentions on her; William enters and strikes down the captain in his wife's defence, not realising who the captain is. William is than sent for trial for attacking his commanding officer. He is tried and sentenced to death; meanwhile notice has come of his discharge from the navy, but

the letter has fallen into the hands of the landlord, who conceals it. The landlord falls overboard and the letter is found. William is saved from hanging at the last moment, as he was not, in fact, in the navy at the time of the assault. He is reunited with Susan and his contrite captain.

The play shares most of the characteristics of the serious drama, in that it is based on stock characters and situations, pathos and sentiment, visual appeal and stage effect, and has a first rate star part in the character of William. T. P. Cooke indeed made his name in the role of William, and spent the rest of his stage career playing similar characters. The play, however, has none of the trappings of serious drama, such as poetic language, nor does it imitate older drama. In addition, Black-Ey'd Susan emphasises several characteristics which are only implicit in the serious drama.

In the serious drama, poetic language is used to emphasise emotional climaxes, but, where the action is sufficiently striking in itself, the poetry is kept to a minimum, as was noted in the scene in Virginius where the father stabs his daughter. Thus in Black-Ey'd Susan the proportion of action without words is significantly increased, and, in the absence of poetic emphasis, striking sentimental effects are emphasised not by words but by a silent tableau. Much of the text is occupied by copious stage direction, dictating the action, for the action is as important as the dialogue in the composition of the play. These are the directions for the fight between

William and the smugglers:

Runs at WILLIAM with a drawn cutlass, who catches his right arm; they struggle round. WILLIAM throws him off, and stands over him. HATCHET on his knee; same time LIEUTENANT PIKE appears inside of door. -- TWO MARINES appear at window. (Black-Ey'd Susan, I, v)

The directions for the tableaux are similarly explicit. At the end of the scene in which William is sentenced to death, the directions run thus:

ADMIRAL and CAPTAINS come forward. -- ADMIRAL shakes hands with WILLIAM, who, overcome, kneels. -- After a momentary struggle, he rises, collects himself, and is escorted from the cabin in the same way that he entered. -- The scene closes. -- Gun fires. (Black-Ey'd Susan, II, ii)

The portions of action and the tableaux are accompanied by music, which in addition to being legally required, is used, again in the absence of poetic effects, to emphasise the situation. Jerrold also includes songs, the play being based on Gay's ballad Sweet William, verses of which are interspersed throughout the play. The ballad functions to emphasise the sentimental nature of the William-Susan relationship; again, the popular drama is striving for the same effects as the serious drama, but using more direct methods.

Black-Ey'd Susan is directed to appeal to pathetic and sentimental emotions, but the emotional effect is strengthened beyond that of the serious drama by introducing an appeal to patriotic sentiments, in the portrayal of William and the other brave and noble sailors who, it is emphasised, fight for the king in defence of the country. The patriotic appeal is as fundamental as the sentimental, and induces an equally

mechanical response in the audience. The peculiar nautical dialect which Jerrold puts in William's mouth keeps William's persona as king's sailor always before the audience:

> Damn it, my top-lights are rather misty! Your honours, I had been three years at sea, and had never looked upon or heard from my wife -- as sweet a little craft as was ever launched. I had come ashore, and I was as lively as a petrel in a storm. I found Susan . . . all her gilt taken by the land-sharks; but yet all taut, with a face as red and rosy as the King's head on the side of a fire-bucket.
> (Black-Ey'd Susan, II, ii)

The nautical dialect imparts to the character of William a strength and an interest beyond that of the appeal of the purely sentimental hero, such as Virginius; it also imparts the interest of novelty to the play, in the absence of a setting in a historical background. The serious plays used their backgrounds to achieve visual interest, but Black-Ey'd Susan is set in present-day England. The scenes are set in, for example, A Street in Deal and the Interior of Susan's Cottage. Jerrold, however, manages to introduce visual novelties and spectacle through his nautical setting, for the cast of sailors calls for stage costumes not as lacking in interest as the setting would suggest, and opportunity is created for using more striking scenery by introducing scenes set on the ship; for example, The Gun-room of William's ship. Thus, despite the domestic and contemporary setting, Jerrold's characters are as much in fancy-dress as Knowles' or Lytton's, and are placed in settings equally exotic.

As the serious drama makes a gesture towards treating

important issues, in, for example, the background of political unrest in Virginius, so does the popular drama, but in harmony with the contemporary background of Black-Ey'd Susan, it is a contemporary issue that is used, in the depiction of the situation of the evil landlord about to evict the helpless girl. As in the serious drama, the issue is not important in the play, and remains part of the background while the dramatist gets on with the business of developing the sentimental aspects.

Thus Black-Ey'd Susan shares many of the characteristics of the serious drama, but in addition to getting rid of the dead wood of neo-Elizabethanism, the play uses more direct and more successful methods to achieve the same objectives. Horne wrote of Virginius:

> the pit and galleries and even much of the boxes are only perplexed with the lictors and the Decemviri, and the strange garments of the actors.[5]

The popular drama removed the perplexity and emphasised those aspects the public enjoyed most.

The other successful popular dramas have similar characteristics to Black-Ey'd Susan, but peculiar to the eighteen thirties is the vogue for nautical settings. The notable successes of the decade included Fitzball's The Floating Beacon, the hero of which nightly declared the sentiment

> There never yet was a true Englishman that thought of his own danger, when he could save another in the hour of distress.[6]

to the thunderous applause of the audience. Nautical subject matter included piracy, shipwreck, smuggling, combat with the

enemy, the activities of Cornish wreckers, and a broad variety of material only loosely related to the sea. Fitzball's The Floating Beacon and Tom Cringle and Buckstone's The Dream at Sea contain villains who prey on the shipwrecked, while Dibdin Pitt's The Eddystone Elf is about a monster dwelling in the Eddystone Light. By comparison, Jerrold's play is very muted; in The Press Gang and The Mutiny at the Nore he again wrote successful nautical plays, but neither successful to the degree of Black-Ey'd Susan. Haines My Poll and My Partner Joe came closest to rivalling Jerrold's play, but Haines is rather a master of exaggerated effects than the relatively straightforward effects of Jerrold. Haines, indeed, exhibits considerable ingenuity in using virtually all the resources of the popular theatre to achieve the maximum of emotional and spectacular effect, and while Jerrold's play demonstrates the virtues of the popular theatre in comparison to the serious, Haines' play shows the dangers to which excess could lead.

My Poll and My Partner Joe was first produced at the Surrey in 1835, with Cooke again in the role of hero. It was extremely successful during the eighteen thirties, but did not enjoy the continued success of Black-Ey'd Susan. The plot concerns Harry Hallyard, a young waterman, who is on the point of marrying Mary Maybud, his sweetheart and the Poll of the title, when, due to the machinations of an evil bailiff he has thwarted, he is pressed into the navy. During his period

of service, in which he shows notable bravery, he is instrumental in defeating a pirate who trades in slaves. The pirate is none other than the bailiff. Harry returns home to discover that Poll has married his best friend Joe, not because she no longer loves Harry, nor because she loves Joe, but because Harry has been reported dead, and his mother, on her death bed, has entreated Poll to marry Joe for security. Joe, however, is killed in an accident almost immediately after Harry's return, and the curtain falls on a curious scene of mixed emotions:

JOE. . . . I'm dying! Harry! Mary!
He pulls their hands together, joins them and dies across them.
HARRY. He is dead! -- Mary!
MARY. Harry! Harry!
They rush into each other's arms, recollect themselves, and kneel in prayer by the side of JOE.
(My Poll and My Partner Joe, III, iv)

My Poll and My Partner Joe makes use of the elements which made Black-Ey'd Susan so successful, but whereas Jerrold's effects are relatively moderate, Haines' are extremely exaggerated. Harry is given a nautical dialect similar to William's, but it is a feeble imitation:

When I landed I could have knelt down, but everyone was looking; my heart kept tittuping -- tittuping, and the tears of a whole lifetime seemed swelled into a large lump just here. So I pressed Mary's lock of hair, with the iron grip of a seaman, to my heart, crowded all sail, and, without seeing a single landmark, made this harbour.
(My Poll and My Partner Joe, III, i)

Harry has none of the vitality of William, and although he is cast in the mould of the brave and patriotic sailor, he is rather a typical sentimental hero, such as Virginius or Melnotte. Even in Virginius and The Lady of Lyons, and more

definitely in Richelieu, however, the plot is firmly focused on the central figure of the hero, and the plays are coherent wholes in that the character and action fit together, despite the introduction of extraneous material. In Black-Ey'd Susan also, attention is kept firmly on William, in the development of his character as both a courageous sailor and as a sentimental hero, and the plot is both generated by the character of William and directed towards illustrating his character. The character of Harry is completely subservient to the demands of the plot, and in the absence of any particular focal point, the plot becomes a series of gratuitous incidents, loosely joined by the figure of Harry. The incidents are designed to appeal in their own right to the sentimental emotions and the appetite for spectacle.

The proportion of wordless and sensational action is much greater in My Poll and My Partner Joe than in Black-Ey'd Susan; each act contains a spectacular scene, culminating in the blowing up of the pirate fortress. The potentialities of the nautical background are further exploited by Haines, in that whereas Jerrold introduces sailor costumes and shipboard scenes, Haines sends his hero off on a long voyage, in the course of which pirates and slaves are introduced, together with the boarding of another ship and the attack on the pirate fortress, which calls for the scaling of a 300 foot cliff. Haines contrives scenes calculated to appeal to all the sentimental emotions: Harry is shown lamenting his separation

from Poll, and Poll lamenting her separation from Harry; Harry's aged mother is shown bereft of her son; one of the slaves on the pirate ship is torn apart from his wife, and left to lament; Harry's mother dies pathetically; Joe dies pathetically; Poll's marriage to Joe is carefully engineered to delay the final reunion. The vogue for humanitarian interest and social concern is catered for by introducing a bailiff who not only threatens imprisonment and brings about Harry's pressing into the navy, but who also turns out to be a pirate. In addition, he is a pirate who trades in slaves, and much is made of the injustice of slavery:

> let the poor niggers go free upon deck. Dance, you black angels, no more captivity; the British flag flies over your head, and the very rustling of its folds knocks every fetter from the limbs of the poor slave.
> (My Poll and My Partner Joe, II, ii)

Opportunity is also thus created for an appeal to patriotic sentiment.

My Poll and My Partner Joe thus uses the most striking elements of an earlier successful play, but in stringing together these elements in a loose conglomeration, ignores the underlying dramatic continuity of the original. With Haines' play, the popular drama moves very close to the farces, extravaganzas and burlesques of the period, in which no attempt was made to present a coherent play, but a series of loosely connected scenes designed to appeal in themselves, without relating these to the whole, and relying on spectacle, sentiment and humour of the least subtle variety. The rel-

ationship of My Poll and My Partner Joe to Black-Ey'd Susan is virtually identical to that of the serious drama to the Elizabethan and Classical. Both kinds of plays take earlier plays as their models, and imitate these, without reaching either an understanding or a recreation of the dramatic basis of the originals. Knowles used Shakespearean elements to ensure the appeal of his plays to a literary audience, while Haines used Jerrold's play and the nautical vogue in general to ensure that My Poll and My Partner Joe would suit the public taste.

## CHAPTER SIX

The characteristics of serious and popular drama in the eighteen thirties are the same; their effect in the theatre was based on their appeal to the taste for spectacle and the taste for sentiment, with the plays focused on the performance of a popular actor in the leading role. The commentaries on the plays indicate that these were the aspects the audiences in the theatres enjoyed, whether or not a particular play was intended to be popular or serious, although some critics were determined to consider serious plays in terms of the general conceptions as to what should constitute great drama. Such critics ignored the actual characteristics of the plays themselves, as twentieth century treatments of the eighteen thirties drama have done; neither examines the particular nature or achievement of the drama.

The critics concerned with serious drama emphasise the author and the text of the play but, as the reactions of the audiences indicate in their concentration on spectacle, sentiment and the actor's performance, the text of a particular play was not the most important factor in its successful production. The text could and did contribute to stage success, as in the cases of Virginius and The Lady of Lyons, in creating opportunities for spectacle and sentiment, and in providing a star

part, but ultimately the language which the author put into the mouths of his characters is only a subidiary factor in the success of the play as a whole. As My Poll and My Partner Joe and Black-Ey'd Susan indicate, action, tableaux and music are equally, if not more successful in creating theatrical effects. My Poll and My Partner Joe, more so than Black-Ey'd Susan, illustrates the minimal importance of the author's powers of literary expression and dramatic construction, in that although the play lacks coherence and even a central focus on the principal character, a successful stage impact is created through action and emotion in their own right.

The authors of Virginius, Ion, and The Lady of Lyons were all acclaimed by their contemporaries as great dramatists, but the most successful of the eighteen thirties plays, Richelieu and Black-Ey'd Susan, were principally the creations of men who did not aspire to be great authors. Macready's abilities as an actor and his understanding of effective stage presentation were important in the successful productions of Virginius, Ion and The Lady of Lyons, and in Richelieu, he virtually wrote his own play and created a work more coherent in dramatic terms than any of the dramatic writers themselves. Virginius and Ion do focus on their central characters, but these are wholly sentimental creations; in The Lady of Lyons, Lytton attempts to introduce satirical material, but as was noted, he does so through perpheral characters, and Melnotte is, from first to

last, a sentimental stereotype. In Richelieu, the chief character has a strength that Melnotte, for example, does not; the elements of the plot are integrated into a unified whole, in that the political context is relevant here, as it is not in Virginius, and the plot of the play and the character of Richelieu develop together. Richelieu is not, as is the leading character of Virginius, a static element on a stereotype situation. Similarly in Black-Ey'd Susan, the chief character has a vitality lacking in the work of Knowles and Talfourd. Jerrold was, himself, significantly, an actor, before he turned to writing for the stage. In writing popular rather than serious drama, he was able to use his understanding of the theatre to create effective plays by using the most direct methods possible, and in T. P. Cooke he found an actor with the ability to make the most of his visual and sentimental effects.

The nature of the drama of the eighteen thirties is thus such as to emphasise the importance of the actor and producer in achieving theatrical success, rather than the author or the play. The study of the eighteen thirties drama should not focus on language or on subject matter; instead of considering the plays in the light of preconceptions about what should constitute drama or literature, which leads to the rejection of eighteen thirties drama as being of any interest in itself, the plays should be considered in terms of their achievement as effective theatre.

## FIRST APPENDIX

### Productions of Shakespeare in the Eighteen Thirties

The relative unimportance of the author and of the text of a play in successful theatrical presentation in the eighteen thirties is further indicated by the nature of the productions of Shakespeare in the period. Lytton praised Macready, as was remarked in chapter two, because through

> the exercise of a taste that was at once gorgeous and severe . . . the genius of Shakespeare [was seen] properly embodied upon the stage . . .[1]

Lytton further maintained "that the ornament was never superior to the work",[2] but the reviews of such productions ignore the particular interpretations of the plays and give sole attention to the extremely elaborate presentations. Shakespeare's plays provided the serious theatre with dramatic works whose literary achievement was unquestioned; the settings in addition provided as much opportunity for spectacle as the most fantastic popular play, and the plots a series of magnificent star parts. By the eighteen thirties the actual texts of Shakespeare's plays were once again being used in the serious theatre, after a considerable period in which only rewritten and grossly distorted versions appeared on the stage. The popular theatre in the eighteen thirties, however, continued to present adaptations of Shakespeare, in which the sentiment and spectacle were retained, but the language and

the intellectual content were dispensed with. Again, however, both the serious and popular theatres were aiming at the same objectives, but while the serious theatre used Shakespeare's texts to conceal the fundamentally visually and emotionally oriented nature of its productions, the popular theatre used more direct methods in abandoning the literary characteristics and openly appealing to those tastes in the audience which it understood.

Macready's stock repertoire included almost all of the most famous of Shakespeare's character's, but he was most noted in the roles of Othello, Macbeth, Shylock and Hamlet. He devoted considerable attention to his interpretations of the characters, as, for example, Hamlet:

> turned over the leaves of Hamlet, about which I felt very doubtful and uneasy. Went to the theater, where I was annoyed to find that my orders and intentions were completely frustrated through the indolence and ignorance of the persons employed; the closet scene which I had intended to be a beautiful effect, was necessarily left in the original state. Rehearsed the play very feebly and unsatisfactorily; in one or two places I proved to myself that I could act the character well if I could only throw myself heartily and naturally into it . . . Rose almost hopeless, nerved myself as I dressed, and acted Hamlet perhaps altogether as well as I have ever done . . . thought of Hamlet; acted Hamlet in parts tolerably well. His advice to the players I never gave so well . . .[3]

Macready, however, understood the theatre too well to rely purely on the central character for success in production, and showed great ingenuity in using the technical resources of the stage for striking scenes. The Examiner critic, indeed, barely noticed Macready in the role of Prospero; instead his attention was concentrated entirely on Miss Faucit in the role

of Ariel, as she

> floated in air across the stage, singing or mocking as she floated -- while a chorus of spirits winged after her higher in the air. Now amidst the terrors of the storm she flamed amazement, now with the gentle descent of a protecting god she hung over the slumbers of Gonzalo . . . The masque is given . . . with beautiful landscapes, brown and blue, such as Titian would have beheld with pleasure.[4]

The emphasis on elaborate production did not always lead Macready to success;economy frequently lead to absurdity, as in the production of Macbeth in which the combination of real and painted figures, intended to give the impression of a vast host of soldiers, failed miserabley and evoked universally contemptuous reactions from the reviewers and audience, who expected only the most sumptuous in such productions. This was in I837; by I838, Macready had placated the public with his production of King Lear. The John Bull reviewer noted:

> forked lightnings now vividly illumine the broad horizon, now faintly coruscating in small and serpent folds, play in the distance; the sheeted elements sweep over the foreground and then leave it in pitchy darkness; and wind and rain howl and rush in "tyranny of the open night".[5]

In extreme cases, not only was the play subservient to the actor, but the actor could and did become subservient to the stage technician, who, equipped with the resources of diorama, hydraulic machinery, storm machinery, the flying ballet, "flowers that grew and expanded from bud to blossom"[6] and effects for supernatural appearances, could achieve more spectacular effects than a single actor. Throughout the eighteen thirties, stage devices were becoming increasingly soph-

isticated; they progressed from the engineering of a disappearance, as recorded by Fitzball in 1835, worked by a slit in the canvas flats, to the theatrical devices of Phelps in his Shakespearean productions in the eighteen forties and the dioramic feats of Charles Kean in the eighteen fifties in his production of Henry VIII, with its grand panoramic procession introduced into the fifth act.

Macready, in the eighteen thirties, did not have available the technical resources of the later actor-managers, but when possible, the costumes and scenery of his Shakespearean productions were immensely spectacular. In his 1839 production of Henry V., he employed Clarkson Stanfield, the most memorable of the scene painters of the time, to provide scenery "for the storming of Harfleur, The Battle of Agincourt, and the View of Southampton with the departure of the fleet".[6] Macready's care in costuming has already been noticed in chapter three, with reference to Virginius.

## SECOND APPENDIX

### Stage Adaptations in the Eighteen Thirties

Adaptations from other works, whether translations of plays from French and German, dramatisations of popular novels or abridged versions of English plays were, in the eighteen thirties, mainly peculiar to the popular theatre. As in the case of adaptations of Shakespeare, the main principle underlying the method of adaptation was simplification of the original in order to create the maximum impact by appealing to the most elementary of tastes for spectacle and sentiment. The point of adopting an already successful work for the stage, instead of writing an original play, was that the adaption would be assured of success before it had even been produced, as it shared the name and reputation of the original. In such productions, the popular theatre demonstrates its characteristic of appealing to public taste by the most direct means possible; the adaptations were as sure to succeed as the imitations of previous popular plays. In adapting works of a greater or lesser degree of complexity, the intellectual content was ignored and the most straightforward elements abstracted; these elements could readily be turned into the usual stereotyped situations created round the stock characters of the popular drama.

Scott, Dickens and Shakespeare were frequently adapted for the stage in the eighteen thirties; Shakespearean plays were reduced to their barest elements. The Life and Death of King Richard II; or, Wat Tyler and Jack Straw (1834), was indebted partly to Shakespeare, as was King Lear and his Daughters Queer (1830) and a host of extremely successful similar Shakespearean reworkings. Scott's novels, with their romantic settings, stock characters and innumerable adventures provided an almost inexhaustable supply for the adaptors. Numerous versions of all the Waverly novels appeared in the eighteen thirties theatres, but none ever did more for Scott than reduce his work to utter banality; Scott's peculiar strength in depicting the background and culture of Scotland was not in harmony with the taste of the audiences.

The discovery of Scott as a potential dramatic source turned the attention of the adaptors to the whole field of fiction, and the work of Dickens naturally came to dominate these adaptations. Pickwick Papers alone spawned, within a year of its publication, The Peregrinations of Pickwick, The Pickwick Club, Pickwick, Sam Weller, Sam Weller's Tour, The Pickwickians and Mr. Weller's Watch, while Dickens' other novels of the eighteen thirties, Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby, underwent similar treatment. Much of Dickens' work is constructed on a melodramatic basis, and this was easily recast in play form, but as in the case of Scott, the unique aspects of Dickens' work, particularly his capacity for del-

ineating character in a few phrases, vanished completely.

## NOTES

### Chapter One

[1]G. D. Klingopulus, "The Literary Scene", in B. Ford, ed., The Pelican Guide to English Literature (Harmondsworth, 1958), IV, 115 - 116.

[2]Allardyce Nicoll, A History of English Drama 1660 - 1900 (Cambridge, 1955), IV.

[3]E. Reynolds, Early Victorian Drama (New York, 1965).

### Chapter Two

[1]E. Fitzball, Thirty-Five Years of a Dramatic Author's Life (London, 1859), I, 116.

[2]Quoted in M. Booth, ed., English Plays of the Nineteenth Century (Oxford, 1969), I, 14.

[3]G. H. Lewes, "On the Decline of the Drama", in A. R. Kaminsky, ed., Literary Criticism of George Henry Lewes (Nebraska, 1964), p. 146.

[4]J. Cooke, The Stage (London, 1840), p. 5.

[5]Ibid., p. 12.

[6]R. H. Horne, "An Essay on Tragic Influence", Preface to "Gregory VII" (London, 1840), p. xvi.

[7]Lewes, loc.cit.

[8]F. Pollock, ed., Macready's Reminiscences, and Selections from his Diaries and Letters (New York, 1875), pp. 633 - 634.

[9]Ibid., p. 641.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Quoted in Booth, op.cit., I, i.

[12]Quoted in Reynolds, op.cit., p. 103.

[13]Fitzball, op.cit., II, 24.

[14]Ibid., II, 81 - 82.

[15]Quoted in Booth, op.cit., I, 20.

[16]W. Marston, Our Recent Actors (London, 1888), II, 88 - 89.

[17]R. H. Horne, A New Spirit of the Age (London, 1844), II, 90 - 94.

[18]Quoted in Booth, op.cit., I, 23.

## Chapter Three

[1]Pollock, op.cit., p. 152.

[2]Ibid., p. 154.

[3]Ibid., pp. 150 - 151.

[4]Quoted in Booth, op.cit., I, 76.

[5]C. Rice, The London Theatre in the Eighteen-Thirties (London, 1950), p. 9

[6]Horne, A New Spirit of the Age, II, 87.

[7]Marston, op.cit., I, 36.

[8]Ibid., II, 125 - 126.

[9]Quoted in Pollock, op.cit., p. 152

[10]Quoted in ibid.

[11]Quoted in ibid.

[12]Ibid., p. 372.

[13]T. Talfourd, Preface to Ion (London, 1836), p. ii.

[14]Horne, A New Spirit of the Age, II, 181.

[15]Pollock, op.cit., p. 373.

## Chapter Four

[1]Quoted in L. Ashley, ed., Nineteenth-Century British Drama (Illinois, 1957), p. 140.

[2]Pollock, op.cit., p. 423.

[3]Quoted in C. H. Shattuck, ed., Bulwer and Macready (Urbana, 1958), p. 72.

[4]Quoted in ibid.

[5]Quoted in ibid., p. 74.

[6]Quoted in ibid., p, 57.

[7]Recorded in ibid., pp. 79 - 131.

[8]Bulwer-Lytton, Preface to "The Lady of Lyons", in Ashley, op.cit., p. 142.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 144.

[11]Pollock, op.cit., p. 452.

[12]Marston, op.cit., I, 53.

[13]Quoted in Shatt uck, op.cit., p. 82.

[14]Quoted in ibid., p. 90.

[15]Quoted in ibid., p. 92.

[16]Quoted in ibid.

[17]Quoted in ibid., pp. 93 - 94.

[18]Quoted in ibid., p. 95

[19]Quoted in ibid., p. 103.

[20]Quoted in ibid., p. 107.

21 Bulwer-Lytton, Richelieu (London, 1839), p.22

22 Bulwer-Lytton, Preface to ibid., p.iv.

23 Quoted in Shattuck, op.cit., p.119.

24 Quoted in ibid., p.126.

25 Quoted in ibid.

26 Quoted in ibid., p.127.

27 Lady Pollock, Macready As I Knew Him (New York, 1884), pp. 128-129.

28 Marston, op.cit., I, 37-53.

29 Quoted in Shattuck, op.cit., p. 82.

## Chapter Five

1 Quoted in Booth, op.cit., I, 155-156.

2 Quoted in Ashley, op.cit., p. 104.

3 Quoted in ibid.

4 Quoted in ibid.

5 Horne, A New Spirit of the Age, II, 87.

## First Appendix

1 Quoted in Pollock, op.cit., p. 634

2 Quoted in ibid.

3 Pollock, ibid., p. 441.

4 Quoted in W. Archer, William Charles Macready (London, 1890), p. 119.

5 Quoted in Reynolds, op.cit., p. 43.

6 Pollock, op.cit., p. 449.

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