APPENDIX A

The Contemporary Theatre

As in the wild confusion of a dream,
Things horrid, bloody, terrible, do pass,
As tho' they pass'd not; nor impress the mind
With the fix'd clearness of reality.
(De Monfort's soliloquy in Joanna
Beillie's De Monfort; IV, i, 377)

Heavens! is all sense of shame and talent gone?
Have we no living Bard of merit? — none?

Abjure the summary of German schools;
Give, as thy last memorial to the age,
One classic drama, and reform the stage.
(Byron, English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,
Lines 576-586)

... in Theatres of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out "Hush"!
(Keats, Hyperion, Book I)

Now to the Drama turn — Oh! motley sight!
What precious scenes the wondering eyes invite:
Puns, and a Prince within a barrel pent,
And Dibdin's nonsense yield complete content.
(Byron, English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,
Lines 560-563)

I

The dramatic writings of the Romantic poets fall into
perspective when we view them against the contemporary background,
especially against the background of the contemporary theatre.
It is a commonplace of criticism that these plays are meant
for the "closet" and unsuitable for stage representation. The
conditions in the contemporary theatre evidently proved inimical to the production of literary drama, and the result was a different kind of play. This particular mode has its obvious limitations and weaknesses, but seen from a different point of view, their weaknesses are also part of their strength or special appeal. The conflict between the theatre and the creative writer is not, however, a unique phenomenon in the early nineteenth century, and we may also pose here the pertinent question whether suitability for stage representation is the only criterion of dramatic worth.

Barring a few Romantic plays, the period neither produced "great drama" nor was drama alive to the social and political issues of the day. There were some feeble attempts only. Thomas Holcroft and Mrs. Elizabeth Inchbald threw cautious hints of radical ideas and social criticism in their plays.¹ The plays of Knowles and Sheil contained some vague references to democratic liberalism.² The theme of Italian independence and liberty is faintly traceable in Milman's Fazio and Mitford's plays of the 1820's³. Sheridan's Pizarro — a phenomenally successful play in its own time — shows some concern with human liberty, but its main attraction was spectacular scenes and operative music. This is strange, considering the scope it provided. Even the French Revolution made no impact on the
contemporary theatre. Leaving aside the performance of Shakespeare's plays, mainly three kinds of plays dominated the stage—poor imitations of Elizabethan plays, the German variety of sensational plays with loud Gothic tone, and translations from the French "melodrame". Native talents were there, but they mostly acted either as hackwriters or surrendered to the despotic managers or star actors. There were some gifted authors, but their works could not rise much above mediocrity for one reason or another. Richard Cumberland's historical play *The Days of Yore* (1796) and George Lillo's domestic tragedy failed to stir up popular enthusiasm. During the close of the century, German plays invaded the English stage. The Austrian August von Kotzebue caught the imagination of the theatre—going public. (His *The Stranger* may be cited as an instance.) His plays were translated for the English stage and there were unacknowledged imitations too. (*Pizarro*, 1799, by Sheridan is known as a poor echo of Kotzebue's *Die Spanier in Peru*.) The impact of Schiller's *Die Räuber* was considerable. Sir Walter Scott fell deeply under the spell of Goethe's *Gota von Berlichingen* (we may refer to his play *The Doom of Deyvorgoil*, 1830). There were hectic attempts by publishers to turn out cheap editions

* For Schiller's impact on Wordsworth and Coleridge, see Chapters Two, Five, and Appendix C.
of Kotzebue, Goethe and Schiller. Benjamin Thompson's *The German Theatre* appeared in innumerable editions. *Faust* and *Don Carlos* were particularly attractive to translators. Sometimes a German play occupied a particular board throughout a season in London.

German operas produced a new spell with their novelties on the English audience. Free adaptations and even original German musical compositions of Mozart and Beethoven became very popular at Hay Market, at Drury Lane and the Princess's. Adaptations of German melodrama-cum-opera (a typical instance is Kind's *Der Freischütz* with Weber's music) also charmed the English audience. The German terror school with their ghosts and goblins, fiends and fairies enchanted the English stage for some time. The *Castle Spectre* by M.G. ("Monk") Lewis with its romantic gloom, or *Giselle : or, The Phantom Night Dancers* are the two typical examples. Among a host of other plays that were influenced by German drama, mention may be made of William Godwin's *Antonio : or, The Soldier's Return* (staged on the Drury Lane Board, December 1800) and his *Faulkner* (staged on the Drury Lane Board, December 1807), Charles Lamb's *John Woodvil* (1802) and Andrew Birrell's *Henry and Almeria*. The influence of Shakespeare and other Elizabethan dramatists, however, persisted, and what was produced was a curious mixture of Elizabethan drama and German sensationalism.
England was at that time discovering Germany and was finding the discovery interesting. (Allardyce Nicoll gives quite an exhaustive list of translations, adaptations and works of German dramatists, especially those of Kotzebue, Schiller and Goethe, that influenced the English stage, at least temporarily.) But, gradually, the spell died out. George Dyer, in a note to his "Poetic Sympathies" remarks about Schiller, Kotzebue and Goethe: "yet are these dramatists characterised by a wildness bordering on extravagance, attendant on a stage of half-civilisation." Coleridge's own critique on Maturin's *Bertram* may also be mentioned. Consider the following lines by a contemporary writer, G.T.I. Mathias:

Mark next, how fable, language, fancy flies
To Ghosts, and Beards, and Hopporgollop's cries;
Lo, from the abyss, unmeaning spectres drawn,
The Gothick glass, blue flame, and flick'ring lawn!
Choked with vile weeds, our once proved Avon strays,
When Novels die, and rise again plays:
No Congress props our Drama's failing state,
The modern ultimatus is, "Translate".
Thence sprout the morals of the German School;
The Christian sinks, the Jacobin bears rule.

Consider also the following remarks of Mathias:

The modern production of the German stage, which silly men and women are daily translating, have one general tendency to Jacobinism. Improbable plots, and dull scenes, bombastick [sic] and languid prose alternately, are their least defects. They are too often the licensed vehicles of immorality and licentiousness, particularly in respect of marriage.
However the "superior" critics may have reacted, romance and sensationalism had an irresistible appeal for the contemporary audience, and this explains the vogue of the French melodrama which was influenced by Gothic romance. (Naturally Victor Hugo passed almost unnoticed in this period.) Two popular melodramas of the time were T.J. Dibdin's The Murdered Guest (Royal Coburg, 1818-19) and J.C. Gross's The Purse: or Benevolent Tar (Haymarket, 1794). The former was an adaptation of Lillo's Fatal Curiosity and the latter was a nautical play. The Drury Lane and Covent Garden responded to this popular craze by offering pantomimes or equestrian, Canine, or asinine extravaganzas. Even King John and King Lear were presented as part of a variety entertainment, with extreme spectacular grandeur in a highly "Gothicized" manner. Edward Fitzball's (1792-1873) nautical dramas became very popular. The Floating Beacon (1824) ran for 140 nights and The Pilot (1825) for two hundred nights. J.R. Planché (1796-1880) and Douglas Jerrold (1803-1857) were two other popular dramatists. Black-eyed Susan (1829) by the latter became a great favourite and his experience of nautical adventures made the plays look more exciting. These plays actually were extravaganzas and farces with loose plot-construction. There were also adaptations from the novels of Scott and poor imitations of Shakespeare's plays which brought money to the producers.
The six play-bills for the Drury Lane season, 1800-01, throw light on the theatrical situation in the beginning of the nineteenth century. They show that though Shakespeare's King Lear, Cymbeline and Macbeth were revived, the after-pieces were just either nautical comic operas or Gothic spectacular or hackneyed historical plays of pseudo antiquity. The repeated performances of these cheap after-pieces present indeed a paradox: the audience appreciated the beauty and the tragic richness of Shakespeare's plays but they were equally crazy about the spectacular shows. Popular plays like Powell's Harlequin-Amulet (spectacular pantomime), S. J. Arnold's The Veteran Tar (nautical comic opera), Thomas Holcroft's Deaf and Dumb and The Orphan Protected were the main attractions during 1800-1801 at Drury Lane. Kotzebue's The Stranger and Rowe's Jane Shore were the other favourites. It was an attempt on the part of the "legitimate" theatres to bring back to life a decaying dramatic form, popularly known as "Melodrama" which is particularly differentiated from "Tragedy", in the words of Eric Bentley, by "that notorious device: outrageous coincidence". The Covent Garden theatre staged the first English "Melodrama", Holcroft's Tale of Mystery in 1802. This was a free translation of Guilbert de Pixérécourt's Coeline. In fact, there were numerous adaptations and imitations of Guilbert, including some by George Scribe. But the Gothic characteristics such as
dark, mysterious supernatural happenings mainly appealed to the audience. Spectacular scenes were special features of these plays which invariably ended with the punishment of the villain. M. G. Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (1798) and George Colman's *The Iron Chest* (1796) were highly successful Gothic plays.

As a reaction to Gothic extremity there cropped up a number of plays in the form of burlesque such as *The Rovers* by Canning. There were successors of Goldsmith and Sheridan too. Mrs. Elizabeth Inchbald's *I'll Tell You What* (1785), Thomas Holcroft's *The Road to Ruin* (1792) and Richard Cumberland's *The Wheel of Fortune* (1795) are three successful examples of social plays. The plays are marked by a play of wit, but the dominant tone is sentimental, and it is this overplus of sentimentality that explains their popularity. The *Dramatist* (1793) by Frederick Reynolds and *Speed the Plough* (1800) by Thomas Morton were two of the many stage successes of the time.

The "poetic" plays of the Romantic poets show a marked departure from the contemporary tradition, but they also retain several features of this tradition. And the connecting link between the two types is provided by what are known as the "Passion Plays" of Joanna Baillie (1762-1851) in which the action is dominated by one particular passion — remorse,
In the period between 1795-1855, some other dramatists are worth mentioning — Beddoes (of *Death's Jest Book* fame), Scott, Lamb, Knowles, Sheil, Maturin, Bulwer, Milman, Mitford, Talfourd, Proctor and Darley: they should at least be credited with rediscovering some old precepts and reapplying them in their plays. Their plays have everything — historical themes, patriotism, liberalism, sentimentalism, moral issues, tangled psychological motivations, melodrama, science, extravaganza, Gothic horror, even some poetry, but what they lacked was the ability to see life as a whole. They could not satisfy the deeper and finer urges of a discriminating audience.

The contemporary theatre Managers sensing the waning of popular enthusiasm had to turn to Italian opera. In fact, the more sophisticated of theatre-goers were already deserting the Drury Lane and Covent Garden and were attracted towards the King's Theatre (destroyed in 1867) to enjoy the "Lyric drama" by Mozart and Rossini. The period between 1824 and 1846 in England has been described by H.B. Baker as the "Golden Age of Opera".

II

One principal factor responsible for the decline in drama in the nineteenth century was the stage Licensing Act of 1737 which permitted only the two patent houses, Drury Lane and...
Covent Garden to stage "legitimate" plays. Dewey Gansel has noted that much before the legal sanction was obtained by other theatres the "unpatented theatres in London and its environs could and did produce the regular drama and there was, evidently, nothing the patent theatres could do about it". Naturally, the scope for progressive expansion or literary refinement was limited. As a result, the non patent theatres — there were seven such theatres in the winter of 1800 — had to satisfy their patrons with cheap farces, even during the French Revolution.

Other factors are pointed out in The Report from the Select Committee on Dramatic Literature: with the Minute of Evidence:

Your committee find that a considerable decline, both in the Literature of the Stage, and the taste of the Public for Theatrical performances, is generally conceded. Among the causes of this decline, in addition to those which have been alleged, and which are out of the province of the Legislature to control, such as the prevailing fashion of late dinner hours, the absence of Royal encouragement, and the supposed indisposition of some Religious Sects to countenance Theatrical Exhibitions, your committee are of opinion, that the uncertain administration of the Laws, the slender encouragement afforded to Literary Talent to devote its labours towards the Stage, and the want of a better legal regulation as regards the number and distribution of Theatres, are to be mainly considered.

Obviously such a brief summary does not make the whole picture clear. The most important element in the world of theatre is, as ever, the audience, "the drama's patrons". Perhaps the rowdy
audience is a natural feature of the age of industrialisation. The "Plebs" or the "Mob" preferred excess of sentiment, violent emotion, vigorous sensational action, flashing wit and repartee, colourful costume and striking scenery. They were unruly and undisciplined, comprising sailors, cabmen, fishmongers, women of low morality and other low-class people. They frequented the theatres both for business and for pleasure. Discomforts also contributed to the noisy atmosphere in the auditorium. There were wooden backless benches and handless chairs, sold on a first-come, first-served basis. The heat was unbearable. The glare of the uncertain gas lamps disturbed the view. The play started at 7 p.m., and the 9 p.m. visitors, mostly drunken, could buy tickets at half-price. When Potte's The Tailors was revived at Drury Lane in 1805 the military was called to clear the city "snips". The great manager-actor Kemble had to face riot by angry theatre-goers for seventy nights for trying

* Allardyce Nicoll says: "... the spectators in the larger theatres during the first decades of the century were often licentious and debased, while those in the minor play houses were vulgar, unruly and physically obnoxious". (See Nicoll, vol. IV, 1930, pp. 8-11.)

Sometime in January 1818 Keats visited one of those small playhouses and had to leave the place a little after as, in his own words, it was a "dirty hole" (Letters of John Keats, ed. M.B. Forman, 4 edn., London, 1952, p. 405). This was in spite of his admiration for "Kean and Co." Shelley's contempt for the
to raise prices for tickets on the occasion of the reopening of
Covent Garden in 1809. This is known as "O.P. Riots". But
a house cannot withhold performances for an indefinite period,
and Kemble had to yield to the demands for the restoration of
old prices. Not for nothing Scott described the contemporary
audience as "a national nuisance". However, this "national
nuisance" never failed to appreciate Kean as Hamlet or Macready
as Macbeth.) A small section of the elite and the literati
of course patronised the theatre and put up with all the
inconveniences. But the sensationalism of the popular plays
could hardly sustain their interest: they gradually deserted
the "legitimate" theatre and turned towards the King's Theatre
where Mozart's operas set a new trend in dramatic performance.

stage was equally sharp. (See Peacock's Memoirs of Shelley
with Shelley's Letters to Peacock, ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith,
London, 1909, p. 39.) The poet thought that the legitimate theatre
was a "corrupter of principles". (See Newman Ivey White, Shelley,
2 vols., NY, 1940, I, p. 521.) This was in spite of his obsession
with the stage image of Eliza O'Neill. (See also The Theatrical
Public in the Time of Garrick, NY, 1954, and Thomas Love Peacock's
ironical comments in his poem "The Art of Modern Drama".)
Elsewhere we have quoted comments by Wordsworth, Coleridge,
Southey, Byron and others.

In Boaden's Life of Kemble (Vol. II, p. 428), we have also
a glimpse into the vulgar atmosphere of the play houses. An
apple was thrown at Mrs. Siddons on the Covent Garden stage when
she was giving a highly emotional expression to a patriotic
feeling as Volumnia on November 18, 1806. Landor's letter to
Southey may be referred to here also. (U. C. Nagchowdhury,
Nineteenth Century and After, C. IV, 1928, p. 393.)
After and during the wars the theatre houses suffered from economic depression. As the receipts of the houses were declining fast, attempts were made to increase earnings. As a result, the houses were enlarged inartistically and the show time was adjusted according to the conveniences of the working class people. The new Drury Lane Theatre (opened on March 12, 1794) with five tiers could accommodate 3,611 spectators. Covent Garden too was enlarged. (Both Drury Lane and Covent Garden were destroyed in fire — the former in 1809 and the latter in 1808.) The Covent Garden auditorium was 51 ft. by 52 ft.; with four tiers, each containing twenty six boxes. The stage measurement was 68 ft. by 82 ft. This extension precluded subtle nuances in acting and encouraged rhetorical declamation. Leigh Hunt described the Covent Garden Theatre as an "over grown edifice". In the words of Charles Lamb, these theatres were "too large for acting and too small for a bull fight". In a review of Joanna Baillie’s Separation, played at Covent Garden, a critic wrote: "with the assistance of Opera glass we saw it, but not having had an ear-trumpet we cannot with truth assert that we heard more than half of it." Despite these physical inconveniences and limitations several remarkable actors and actresses made their appearance and enlivened the stage — the introduction of the picture frame stage helped them considerably in displaying the subtlety of their art — and the
early nineteenth century is fittingly described as "a golden age of English acting". John Philip Kemble, Edmund Kean, W. C. Macready, J. S. Munden, Joseph Grimaldi, C. J. Mathews, George Frederick Cooke, Robert William Elliston, Bannister, Sarah Siddons, Miss Eliza O' Neill had great histrionic talent; they had to deliver dialogues, however, with powerful throats and lungs. Thus acting tended to be melodramatic. As Alam S. Downer says, the key-note of the romantic style of acting was violence, while the key-note of the "tea-pot style" prevalent in the preceding age was dignity. Charles Lamb described it as "frozen declamatory style". The remark of Mary Russell Mitford, a contemporary dramatist, is worth quoting: "Messrs Kemble & Co. never do converse — they always declaim, and that not in the very best manner; so that between long pauses and unnatural cadences, the audience have nothing for it but to fall asleep and dream of Shakespeare."

Pictorial effect was considered as important as declamation, and the devices of painters, designers and costume-makers were more paying than a good plot. A commentator defends these devices in The Theatrical Observer, as late as 1826:

It would be ridiculous to deny that in the present state of the stage pictorial effects are of the first importance; indeed, when called to the aid of poetical imagination, there is no reason why they should not rank high and be essential to the drama.
Consider, in this connection, the impression of a distinguished visitor to Covent Garden — Prince Piickler - Muskau of Germany — in 1826:

At the rising of the curtain a thick mist covers the stage and gradually rolls off. This is remarkably well managed by means of a fine gauze. In the dim light we distinguish a little cottage, the dwelling of a sorceress; in the background a lake surrounded by mountains, some of whose peaks are clothed with snow. All is misty and indistinct; the sun then rises triumphantly, chases the morning dews, and the hut with the village in the distance now appears in perfect outline.

The scripts had to be tailored to the taste of the audience and the role of the "star-actors"; the vanity and selfishness of the actor-managers and the monopoly of certain theatre houses equally contributed to the decline of the drama. "Patents and licences first issued in the 1680's", observes George Steiner, "had now become archaic obstructions". He quotes a relevant "note" by one "reformer" in 1813: "All the success of a Dramatist depends on the taste, caprice, indolence, avarice, or

* "The theatre of the age", rightly observes Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., "was emphatically not a playwright's theatre but an actor's theatre, and the successful playwright was one with the knack of tailoring his piece to the abilities and tastes of players ..." (Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., p. 7.)
jealousy of three individuals, the Managers of the three London theatres." The actor-managers dominated the show; other actors, even some actresses, served as mere foils to the star-actor. These star-actors assumed such power and influence that even well-known poets and authors appeared as humble suppliants before them. Wordsworth and Coleridge dreamt of the contemporary popular actors playing the main roles in their plays. Coleridge for instance, proudly proclaimed — a pathetic case of wish-fulfilment — in the title page of his MS of the fragment *The Triumph of Loyalty* (which was never published in his lifetime and never staged) that the main roles of Earl Henry, Don Curio, Sandoval, the Queen of Navarre were performed respectively by Kemble, C. Kemble, Barrymore, Mrs. Siddons and that the play was "first performed with universal applause at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on Saturday, February the 7th, 1801". Keats too was a victim of this despotism. He wrote a play (in collaboration with Charles Brown) *Otho the Great* in which one role mattered. He also believed that Kean was the only actor who could do his "hot blood character of Ludolph". Shelley too thought that Eliza O'Neill alone could do the role of Beatrice Cenci.* On account of the virtual

* Mary Shelley records that Shelley saw Miss O'Neill "several times" and was "deeply moved". Even the portraiture of Beatrice was influenced by "thoughts" of this young actress, Mary notes, and she was "often in his thoughts as he wrote..." (See Mary Shelley's notes to *The Cenci*). O'Neill's "graceful sweetness, the
monopoly enjoyed by the theatres —— Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and the Theatre Royal in the Hay Market —— the authors had to submit to the dictates of the three managers. French and German dramas, mostly melodramas available in cheap translations, made more attractive by the skill of scene designers and stage mechanics, became a craze, and some gifted authors turned hack writers for these manager-actors. An instance of how a successful dramatist was treated is illustrated by E. Reynolds. The hundredth night performance of Fitzball’s The Pilot was being celebrated by the manager of the Adelphi Theatre: but the dramatist was not invited at all. Sometimes authors had to run from pillar to post and display their wares like street hawkers. Managers had little time to spare for them and often asked them to leave their manuscripts. Authors without recommendations had no hope, and they were paid very low remuneration when their works were accepted. A critic has rightly remarked:

The dramatist soon became little more than a super-numerary in a world in which only the manager could expect to be familiar with the theatre under his direction and with the exigencies of its idiosyncracies.

intense pathos, and sublime vehemence of passion” impressed Shelley so much in one of his reluctant visits to a theatre that his animosity towards the stage was apparently softened at least for the time being. (See Mary Shelley’s Journal, ed. Frederick L. Jones, Norman, Okla., 1947, pp. 64, 72, 92. See also Peacock’s Memoirs of Shelley with Shelley’s Letters to Peacock, ed. H.F.B. Brett-Smith (London, 1909), p. 39.)
Here is another comment:

... continual labour with scanty and uncertain reward; quiescence under open spoliation; satisfaction to see others garner the harvest he has sown; with at least the glorious certainly of that noble indigence lauded by philosophers and practised by the saints — poverty, stark-naked poverty, with grey hairs; an old age exulting in its forlornness.53

Naturally, "he who would otherwise have been a dramatist becomes a novelist".64 This explains, at least partly, the growth of the novel in the nineteenth century. Low-cost printing, larger reading public, advantage of serialization contributed further to this growth.65 That the time was not conducive to the production of literary drama is made clear by Allardyce Nicoll's "Handlist of plays" for the period (1800-1850).66

There are between 10,000 and 12,000 titles, while in the preceding fifty years the total number of plays listed was about 3,200. Hazlitt rightly pointed out that the "age we live in is critical, didactic, paradoxical, romantic, but it is not dramatic".67

* True, Byron was appointed a member of the Drury Lane Management Committee, but, as Edmund Gosse observes, he "had accepted the responsibility as a matter of business affairs, and by no means with the intention of being played tricks upon by the muses". ("The Revival of Poetic Drama", The Atlantic Monthly, Vol.90, p.160.) Except helping Coleridge in the staging of his Remorse, Byron could do nothing or did nothing to improve the contemporary theatrical condition. He himself deplored the
This, then, was the situation in the contemporary theatre—a long desert of barren sands where the acrobatic equestrian melodrama, spectacular aquatic, Gothic "of the skull and cross bones over", buffoonery, harlequinade, rant and cant reigned. The "legitimate drama" of Mitford, Milman, Sheil and Knowles shows a certain vitality, but their plays have little literary value. Hazlitt's comment that Knowles's *Virginius* is the "best acting tragedy on the modern stage" is almost an ironical commentary on the dramatic literature of the period. The success of a few poetic tragedies of the time was due more to the talents of leading actors. Sheill's *The Apostate*, or Knowles's *Virginius*, for instance, earned fame especially on account of Macready who kept it alive after 1820. The struggles of the Romantic poets to rescue the theatre from this degeneration acquire a new significance when seen in this perspective.

misereable condition in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and in his Preface to *Marino Faliero*. We may also refer here to a scholar's sharp innuendo at the contemporary theatrical fare:

Had Shakespeare himself come back to earth to resume his career where he had left off, he would have written little better than Coleridge and Sheridan Knowles, and would have been no more highly esteemed by the theatrical public. (Quoted by Fletcher, p. 142.)

NOTES AND REFERENCES


5. Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Cosi fan tutte*, *Il Flauto Magico* (Die Zauberflöte), and *Don Giovanni* were produced for the first time in England in the decade of the 1810's and 1846. Beethoven's opera *Fidelio* was a popular attraction of the period.


10. Ibid., pp. 61-2.


12. See Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., p. 84 and note.


15. See Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., p. 84n and plate 12.

16. Ibid., p. 84 and note.

17. Ibid., note.

18. Ibid., note.


20. See Phyllis Hartnoll, op. cit., p. 447. See also Nicoll, op. cit., p. 81.


23. See Ibid., pp. 124-54 and notes.


26. See "Introductory Discourse" in the first volume of Joanna Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* ("A Series of Plays: In which it is attempted to delineate the stronger Passions of the Mind. Each Passion being the Subject of A Tragedy And A Comedy"), (London, 1798), pp. 257-58.

27. See Fletcher, pp. 122-63. Fletcher thinks that Knowles's plays lack "philosophical core: they were written for the day, not for all time". See Ibid., pp. 144-45. This is true about most of the plays of the period.

28. Ibid., p. 22.


30. Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., p. 85. See also Fletcher, pp. 31-2.


32. Quoted by Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., *op.cit.*, p. 85n. The Parliamentary Committee, formed by 1832, was to inquire into the decline of the drama. It was Edward Lytton Bulwer who had introduced in Parliament on May 31, 1832 a motion to form this select committee.
"Dramas' laws, the Drama's patrons give, / And those who live to please, must please to live".

(From Johnson's address at the opening of Drury Lane).


See Ernest Watson, pp. 9-11.


See Ernest Watson, pp. 80-6.

Fletcher, p. 22.

See Ernest Watson, p. 144. Allardyce Nicoll describes this history of financial crisis as a tale of "disaster and despair". See Nicoll, IV, p. 23.

The Annual Register, April 30, 1794. See also Rowell, p. 6.


Leigh Hunt, p. 50.


   For the introduction of picture frame stage see U. C.

47. A number of reminiscences and histories give accounts of
    the major actors and actresses of the London stage of the
    period. Mention may be made of C. H. Herford, *Sketch of the
    History of the English Drama* (to 1843) (Cambridge, 1881);
    H. B. Baker, *The London Stage* (London, 1904); "A View of
    the English Stage", *Complete Works of William Hazlitt*,
    21 vols., ed. F. P. Howe (London and Toronto, 1933), V; James
    1825); James Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons* (2 vols.,
    1827); Barry Cornwall, *The Life of Edmund Kean* (2 vols.,
    1835); Macready’s Reminiscences... ed. Sir Fredrick
    Pollock (2 vols., 1875); Oxberry's Dramatic Biography,
    and Histrionic Anecdotes (1825-27) etc.

48. See, A. S. Downer, "Players and Painted Stage: Nineteenth


50. *Letters of Mary Russell Mitford*, Selected by R. Brimley
    Johnson (1925), p. 80.
52. Quoted by Ernest Watson, p. 93.
53. Quoted by Rowell, p. 21.
54. George Steiner, op. cit., p. 111.
55. The following works show how the actors and managers
gained upperhand: Leslie H. Meeks, Sheridan Knowles and
the Theatre of his Time (Bloomington, Ind., 1933), (New
York, 1835), p. 59; Charles H. Shattuck, (ed), Bulwer and
Macready: A Chronicle of the Early Victorian Theatre
(Urbana, 1958), p. 5; The Diaries of William Charles
Macready, ed. William Toynbee, 2 vols., (New York, 1912),
I, p. 246.
57. See Bernice Slote, Keats and the Dramatic Principle
58. See the works mentioned in reference no. 55.
59. See Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., pp. 125-28 for specific
instances.
60. Ernest Reynolds, Early Victorian Drama, 1880-1870
(Cambridge, 1936), p. 34.
I have referred to the struggles of Wordsworth, Coleridge
and Southey for getting their plays accepted by the
managers and actors of well-known theatres in chapters
one, two, five, six and eight.

Fletcher, p. 26. See also U.C. Nagchowdhury, op. cit.,
p. 396.

Quoted by Nicoll, vol. IV, p. 57.

Edward Bulwer Lytton (Caxtonia, 1864), p. 310.

George Steiner, op. cit., p. 118.

See Nicoll, IV, pp. 245-644.

Hazlitt, Collected Works, ed. Waller and Glover, (1903),
vol. VIII, p. 415.

William Archer, Old Drama and the New (1923), p. 32.


See Charles H. Shattuck, Bulwer and Macready: A
Chronicle of the Early Victorian Theatre (Urbana 1958),
pp. 4-6.