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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

MARY ANN JENSEN is Curator of the William Seymour Theatre Collection, Princeton University Library.

JEANNE E. KROCHALIS is Assistant Professor of English at Pennsylvania State University (New Kensington campus). She is the co-author of The World of Piers Plowman and is currently working on a book on Chaucer manuscripts.

J. MERRILL KNAPP is Professor of Music Emeritus at Princeton University and a former Dean of the College. His main scholarly interests are English 18th-century music, particularly Handel, and the music of Wagner in the 19th century. He is a member of the executive boards of the Halle Handel Society (East Germany) and the Göttingen Handel Society (West Germany). The Magic of Opera (1972) is his most recent book.

WILLISTON R. BENEDICT is a graduate of the Class of 1951. He holds a doctorate from Columbia University and runs an antiquarian bookshop, Trebizond Rare Books, in New York City.

Back of the Green Baize

BY CHARLES BURNHAM
EDITED BY MARY ANN JENSEN

The Winter 1983 issue of The Princeton University Library Chronicle contained a chapter from the manuscript memoirs of Charles Burnham (ca. 1853-1938), who for more than 50 years was a prominent manager in various New York theatres. In that extract, Mr. Burnham reminisced about some of the 19th-century theatres in New York City, buildings which no longer existed by the end of that century.

In a subsequent chapter, published here, Mr. Burnham takes his readers behind the curtains of some 19th-century theatres. His knowledge and experience allow him to relate many of the aspects of staging productions as they were done 100 or so years ago. The anecdotes are his. The bracketed dates and the footnotes have been provided by the editor. The theatre of which Charles Burnham tells belongs to a bygone era; so, unfortunately, does the language he uses.

The theatres of America were for many years laggards in their scenic and costume departments, and it was not until the advent of Charles Fechter

1 English actor-manager (1824-1879).
or the walls of a room by open wings, but were solidly built." Critics not friendly to Fechter claimed that he had in this instance adopted old ideas. Goethe writes that in his youth the French theatre shut in the sides and had real walls for interior scenes.

The first endeavor in this country to give added realism to stage productions was made at the Bowery Theatre in 1840, with the presentation of a spectacle originally produced in England some years previously. The piece was entitled The Battle of Waterloo, and required the services of some fifty horses and two hundred supernumeraries who, the records say, were correctly clothed in authentic uniforms. Together with cannon, artillery, and baggage wagons, it made the most stupendous production this country had known. According to one report, "Its glaring defect was the ill-painted scenery."

Another piece of realism of that day was the first aquatic drama produced in America. The stage had been converted into a huge tank upon which was a full-rigged ship; that vessel sailed down to the footlights, turned, went up the stage and off. The critics of the time felt the scenery was not in keeping with the remainder of the effects. When Wilson Barrett produced Claudian at New York's Star Theatre in 1886, considerable ado was made over the "terrific realism of the earthquake scene." Old-timers deprecated the boast and told of how the same effect had been accomplished much better years earlier at the Bowery, "excepting that the painting of the modern scenery was far superior."

In the endeavor to depict a stage storm—thunder, lightning, roaring wind and all—managers were often put to it to accomplish the task in anything like a realistic manner. When Joseph Jefferson [1829-1905] was playing Rip Van Winkle at the Star Theatre, we tried to improve in realism the storm supposed to be raging when he is driven from his home. We arranged a long wooden chute extending from the scene painter's frame

* In fact, The Battle of Waterloo was the concluding entertainment of an elaborate dramatic and equestrian production at the Bowery, which had recently been remodelled into an amphitheatre. A detailed contemporary notice of the presentation, which opened on November 16th, appears on pp. 546-547 of The Knickerbocker, Vol. XVI, No. 6, December 1840.
* English actor-manager and playwright (1846-1904).
* The Herald, however, reported that the wires which aided the tumbling set pieces during the earthquake scene were plainly visible to the audience.

Engraving of Charles Fechter
William Seymour Theatre Collection
Gift of James S. Van Syckel in memory of Charles S. Van Syckel '86
at the back of the theatre, gradually slanting downward until it reached the stage where it ended in a large wooden box, to which was attached a piece of sheet iron. Down this runway were rolled cannonballs which on their journey produced a noise similar to rolling thunder, and as the ball crashed against the sheet of iron and fell into the box it gave an effect of a crack of lightning. Until then the method had been for a property man to shake a piece of sheet iron that was suspended by a rope from the fly gallery, while an assistant played a tattoo on a bass drum.

When I was in Scotland with J. K. Emmett [ca. 1841-1891] in 1878, the manager of the Edinburgh Theatre told me of how his predecessor had tried to improve on the theatrical method in vogue during his time in presenting a stage storm. He had gone back many years and attempted to revive a system of the early days. The manager directed his carpenter to place wooden ledges here and there along the back of the stage and, obtaining several nine-pound cannonballs, placed them in a wheelbarrow, which a carpenter was instructed to wheel to and fro over the ledges. The experiment was tried the night that King Lear was being presented, and the jolting of the loaded barrow, as it was propelled along its uneven path over the hollow stage, produced a series of rumblings and reverberations that counterfeited most effectively the raging of the tempest in the third act. Unfortunately, however, while the King, in front of the scene, was braving the merciless storm at the back, the carpenter missed his footing, tripped over one of the ledges, and fell down—wheelbarrow, cannonballs, and all. The stage being on a slope, the cannonballs came rolling rapidly and noisily down toward the front, gathering force as they advanced and, overcoming the feeble resistance offered by the scenery, struck it down. Rolling onward, they made their way toward the footlights and the fiddlers, amid the amusement and wonder of the audience, and the amazement and alarm of the Lear of the night. As the nine-pounders advanced toward him and rolled about in all directions, he was compelled to display an activity in avoiding them singularly inappropriate to the age and condition of the character he was impersonating. He was even said to resemble a dancer achieving the terpsichorean feat known as the egg-hornpipe. Presently too, the musicians became alarmed for the safety of themselves and their instruments and deemed it advisable to scale the spiked partition which divided them from the pit, for the cannonballs were upon them, smashing the lamps that formed the footlights and falling heavily into the orchestra. Meanwhile, exposed to the full gaze of the house, the carpenter—the innocent invoker of the storm he had been unable to allay or direct—not at all hurt but exceedingly frightened and bewildered, lay prone beside his empty barrow.

Attempts at realistic effects were no new thing in the theatre, for they had been secured in Italy as far back as 1480. But in the scenic department in America, realism was decidedly lacking. Spectacular effects and costuming came first, but it was a long wait before adequate scenery was provided for each important production. The proprietor of a theatre furnished his house with what was known as a set of "stock scenes," with which he was ready to dress any play from farce to tragedy. These "sets" consisted of a parlor, a kitchen, a prison, a garden, a forest, a landscape, and a street scene.

The scene proper was a single flat canvas furnishing a background to the stage, augmented by "wings" at the sides and canvas borders (painted blue for exterior scenes and a gray or white for interiors) which had to satisfy the requirements of any period. The landscapes were English one night, Italian the next, and American the next. Street scenes were adapted for any city, foreign or local. Palatial establishments of any age had their representation in the one parlor scene, while the street scenes were Paris, or London, or New York, or the street of any other city in the world required by the play of the night. Such a supply of scenery would in the course of a week bedeck a traveling company's performance of Romeo and Juliet, Uncle Tom's Cabin, and The School for Scandal. The press notices following the performance would compliment the players, extol the costumes, but long acquaintance with the scenery made any mention of that superfluous.

Not until the seventies was there any noticeable improvement except in the principal theatres. In these houses artists of exceptional merit were engaged, and for the first time appropriate scenery was seen upon the stage in the United States. For many years controversy persisted amongst the English managers and their critics as to what constituted the proper clothing of a play. "It should always be remembered," said one opponent of too-elaborate detail in scenic investiture, "that the whole interest of
stage enjoyment is found in character and mental action; the rest—scenery, decorations, dresses—should be, as it were, sufficiently 'indicated' so far as not to have anything discordant.'

When Edwin Booth [1833-1893] was directing his theatre at Twenty-third Street, considerable criticism was aimed at the actor-manager as to whether, in his noted Shakespearean revivals, he had permitted the scenic artist and the costumer to rather overlay the scene with their effects, to the injury of the play and actor. Mr. Booth's presentation of *Julius Caesar* at his house created what may well be called a veritable sensation by having the senate-chamber scene in the play an exact copy in every detail of Gérôme's famous painting, *The Death of Caesar*. Nothing approaching it had ever been seen in the theatre.6

Henry Irving [1838-1905] was one of the most extravagant producers in that he wanted everything used in the play to be as real as it was possible to have it. He employed satins and velvets where imitations would have answered. When Edwin Booth was contemplating touring in England, he thought he could depend on good stock scenery such as would do on any American tour. His English manager ridiculed the idea. "Shakespeare," he said, "will not draw a handful of people unless presented as Mr. Irving does. He has been through these towns with the same plays and the Lyceum scenery. The people cannot be expected to patronize anything but an equally good spectacle."

"I argued with my manager," continued Mr. Booth, "but to no purpose. 'They will say that your show is not as handsome as Mr. Irving's and it will be quite useless to attempt it, unless you do it up in equally elegant style.' And Mr. Irving himself, popular and excellent actor as he is, travels through England and carries with him the elegant and elaborate appliances of his home stage in order to satisfy the public demand and to satisfy himself that he is giving the public the same in the provinces he was in London."

6 This production, which opened on Christmas, 1871, was set in the period of Augustus rather than Julius Caesar because Booth felt that Augusterome was more spectacular and therefore more stageworthy. Although its critic praised, even raved about, the "grand and complicated scenery," the "acting of the chief figures," and the production in general, on December 19, 1871, the *New York Times* criticized the drop-curtain at Booth's Theatre: "It is a good thing to show you have height enough above a proscenium to take up your drop bodily without a roller; but it is a better thing to avoid spoiling your climaxes by an insufferable noise. The effect of the close of every act in 'Julius Caesar' is impaired by this, and the old-fashioned roller, if this crashing attrition of the draperies cannot be obviated, would be decidedly preferable."
In those days the pieces of scenery called “flats” were held in place by wooden grooves lowered from what are technically known as the “flies,” [which were] platforms on either side of and some thirty feet above the stage. When the grooves were lowered in place the flats were then pushed on from each side. In a play given at the old Théâtre Francais, on Fourteenth Street, the hero (a poor struggling artist), was supposed to be living in a dilapidated attic room, depicted by a “front scene” of two flats pushed into position. One showed part of a French drawing room, with a mantelpiece and an ornately painted clock fronting a mirror, while the other flat showed half the attic. The hero entered, pale and faint-looking, clasping his hands, rolling his eyes heavenward, and exclaiming: “Heavens! What shall I do? I am starving! I am starving!”

From the gallery came a voice: “Go pawn that clock!”

Sometimes when the grooves were dropped into position they failed to function properly, resulting in the flats falling to the stage. A rather exciting melodrama at one of the Broadway theatres had for one of its scenes a forest-covered hill, set at the rear of the stage. The heroine had been abducted and was being taken to the robber’s lair.

“Wilt’st thou be mine?” hissed the villain—it always seemed to be part of numerous melodramas in those days to have the villain say “wilt’st” and to invariably “hiss” his lines.

“Never,” haughtily replied the captive fair one. “Sooner that yonder hills fall and engulf me in their embrace!”

Again the voice from the gallery: “They’re fallin’ all right, lady!” as the actors turned to see one of the flats slipping from the grooves, the force of air letting it descend gently to the ground.

The stock scenery provided in theatres aside from those of the large cities was of the primitive kind, and when a play like Romeo and Juliet was produced, the scenery furnished for the balcony scene consisted of a flat painted to imitate the exterior of a house with a doorway and at the top a window, in front of which was placed a piece of painted canvas fastened to strips of wood to suggest a balcony rail. Over this shaky structure Juliet was to lean and listen to “love’s sweet tale,” and return the same in kind. This perch was reached from the rear by a ladder held in place by a stagehand, taught by experience to turn his head away so that Juliet might ascend to her love nest without embarrassment, the while she gathered her skirts in one hand and with the aid of the other slowly climbed aloft to the platform back of the window. As Juliet opens the casement come the words: “But soft! what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!”

Juliet, with full knowledge of the frail scenery, knew better than to rely on the strength of the pretended balcony railing. Not infrequently, in the ferment of her acting, Shakespeare’s sweetest heroine was projected into the arms of her lover when the railing gave way beneath her weight.

A moon or sun was supplied by cutting an opening in a blue painted canvas drop, over which was pasted a piece of white muslin; and back of this “orb of night”—or day, as the case might be—was placed a gas jet protected by a wire covering. When a gas jet was not available a stagehand would be posted alongside of the aperture, holding a cheese box with a lighted candle inside the box. John Brougham* once remarked about this makeshift that it probably was the fount whence sprang the story about the man in the moon.

A production of The Count of Monte Cristo, with James O’Neill [1847-1920], was made by John Stetson at his Globe Theatre in Boston during the early eighties. It was highly successful, making a lot of money for the producer and for the star, who later took over the piece under his own management. When presented in Boston, the opening scene represented a castellated prison on a rocky promontory surrounded by the ocean. Now “the vasty deep” in this case consisted of canvas painted to simulate the high seas, and fastened to strips of wood the length of the stage, and some four feet high, placed about three feet apart. From a window of the prison a sack, supposedly containing the body of the hero, was tossed out into the wild and turbulent waters beneath. Unfortunately the sack, when thrown out, landed across one of the painted strips and hung there as if floating on the water. Just then a door of the prison opened and two actors—very bad actors they were—appeared upon the stage, and the first actor (trying to speak in a tragic voice) exclaimed: “It’s a rough night on the water!”

The other, trying to outdo his brother actor, tragically replied: “Aye, and underneath the water, too!”

Came from the gallery the ubiquitous voice: “Never mind. He’s floating.”

* Born in Ireland in 1810, Brougham, a playwright and producer, died in New York City in 1880.
The representation of the sea upon the stage was for many years simulated by the use of a large green cloth shaken by supernumeraries placed in the various entrances on either side of the stage, while beneath the cloth were one or two helpers whose duty consisted of lying on their backs and kicking the cloth, thus supposedly aiding in the imitation. When looking back upon these crude methods, they appear the height of absurdity, yet the auditors seldom allowed such faults—for the stage knew nothing different—to interfere with their enjoyment of the play, though now and then an occasion would arise affecting the visibility of the audience to such an extent as to cause an interruption in the performance. In a play requiring an “ocean,” presented at Niblo’s, the heroine sat by “the sad sea waves” and gently purred, “How calm, how beautiful the bosom of the mighty deep. But oh, what perils lurk beneath!”

At this moment one of the “supers” under the dusty cloth poked his head through an opening and gave vent to a sneeze, which so disconcerted the heroine that she was unable to proceed and the curtain had to be lowered to allow her to recover her equanimity.

Occasionally, instead of using a cloth, strips of wood about four feet in depth and the width of the stage were covered with canvas and painted to resemble water. These were placed some four or five feet apart and spectators in the upper parts of the house could look down on the bare stage between the painted pieces. If a boat were used, it would be pulled across the stage on rollers while the occupants went through the motions of rowing. If anyone were to fall in the water and fail of rescue, according to the plot of the play in which the scene took place the victim would carefully crawl off the stage so that the minimum of auditors might view the undertaking. A melodrama entitled _The World_, which met with considerable success at the Star Theatre, had for its sensational scene a raft containing the shipwrecked characters drifting in mid-ocean. The mimic sea was a combination of cloth and painted canvas which, like the raft, was worked on rollers. So realistic was the motion that the actors taking part in the scene were for some time the victims of seasickness.

But it was not alone the old type of scenery that brought about results far from intended. Great preparations had been made at Booth’s Theatre, noted for its stage equipment, for the presentation of a spectacular drama with scenes laid in Russia.
The announcements had attracted a crowded house and, as the last notes of the opening overture had died away, the familiar clapping of the stage manager’s hands, with its accompanying cry: “Clear the stage! Curtain!” was heard, and the audience settled back in its seats, ready for the evening’s entertainment. The curtain slowly rose until about two feet from the stage when it stuck, remaining in that position some fifteen or twenty minutes. During this delay the audience amused itself by watching the feet of the people on the stage, just visible beneath the curtain. The carpenters ran about as if looking for the cause of the trouble, and the supernumeraries engaged in the opening scene trotted back and forth, their actions much enjoyed. Finally the curtain ascended, and then another wait occurred for the actor who was to speak the opening lines. As if to add to the mishaps, the first words spoken were: “Are we late?”

At that the auditors gave vent to audible smiles and the ever-present voice from the gallery replied, as if in answer to the question: “You are tonight.”

Then came a scene in which a number of horses were used. Too late it was found that they had not been properly groomed for their public appearance, with the result that they left the stage in a rather damp state. Again there was a delay while the debris was removed, and in the attendant haste the cleaners failed to throw sand on the wet boards. Immediately following this scene came one representing the ballroom of the Czar’s palace where, before royalty and its followers, was to occur a “Grand Ballet Divertissement,” according to the programme. As the dancers came on, their feet slipped upon the wet boards and soon there were more feet in the air than where they properly belonged. By this time the audience sensed that things were not going just according to plans, and entered into the spirit of the occasion by liberally applauding the various mishaps.

Later came a gathering of the populace to watch the soldiers start on their journey to the hills in pursuit of the robbers who had stolen something from somebody or had abducted a fair maiden, I forget exactly which. The leader of the soldiers, not confident that he knew the hiding place of the robbers, called for a volunteer to lead the way. Standing near the footlights was a drosky to which was attached a horse, a knowing beast. He had a pair of ears that were continually twitching; while one was pointed, the other would droop. At the slightest noise in the audience, he would slowly turn his head in that direction, and an eyelid would drop, giving a sly wink at his auditors, as much as to say: “Keep your eye on me. These people are not the actors they think they are. Watch me!”

When the call was made for a volunteer, the owner of the drosky loudly and proudly proclaimed: “I will go! With my faithful horse, I will show the way!”

He jumped into his vehicle, gave his animal a lash with the whip, and that equine actor, with a drop of the ear and a slow deliberate wink, walked off the stage with the shafts of the drosky, leaving his owner hanging over the dashboard. The hilarity of the evening was reaching a climax, and so interested were the members of the audience that they hardly left their seats lest something untoward might occur and they would not be there to witness.

Came the last scene, the fastnesses of the mountains: the robbers surrounded by the troops, the commanding officer loudly and confidently calling upon the band of villains to surrender, something they heroically refused to do.

“Surrender, or we will shoot you down like dogs!”

“Shoot and be damned!” or words to that effect, came the robber chief’s reply.

“Shoot!”

Snap! Snap! Snap! But not a man fell. Somebody with a rare sense of humor had removed the caps with which the guns had been provided. Consternation pervaded the stage. Laughter resounded in the auditorium. The stentorian voice of the stage manager from the wings was heard above the gale of merriment surging through the house, as he yelled in despair: “Fall, fall, you sons-of-guns, fall!” (Only that was not quite his exact language.)

Sitting the action to the word, the bandits fell without a shot being fired, virtue was triumphant, and the audience departed fully satisfied that they had witnessed the unusual in the theatre.

At one period managers were much given to presenting dramas and spectacles calling for the services of trained animals in the performance. Many gave more thought to securing learned beasts than to having appropriate scenery, those so inclined claiming that the public did not care for elaborate scenery—that, in short, anything would answer so long as it gave some idea of representing something. One thing they did want, said the managers, was action and a lot of it, particularly the realistic kind. Animals, they believed, furnished that. A bad actor could
get a higher salary, if he was fortunate enough to possess an educated beast, than a good actor would receive without one. Especially did this apply to the Bowery theatres, where numerous plays of the kind were given with scenery of an ancient order. Plays were written around animals, an idea followed in later years by a manager who founded a prosperous business by having a lurid picture made depicting some startling scene, and around that sketch having a drama written. In a recent movie, a noted opera singer has been in her film debut by having a trained seal floundering through the scene.

It served to call to mind Ed Thorne, who in a drama in which he was to appear had the assistance of an elephant. The great moment of the play was a scene where Thorne, captured by savages, was tied to a stake and wood, which was to be set afire, was piled around him. At the critical moment, the elephant was to crash onto the stage in advance of rescuing soldiers, loosen the thongs binding the victim of the intended sacrifice, and scatter the firebrands. Rehearsals were perfect, and in order to assure confidence in Thorne, a dummy took his place during the preliminaries, that he might see how good an actor the mammoth beast was.

Came the night of the performance. All went well until the fire scene. There were no scenic effects to distract the attention of the audience. Thorne, bound to the stake, was a bit skeptical to the elephant taking up his cue promptly and correctly. The animal stood in the wings, swaying from side to side, just a-rarin' to go. At the proper moment, as his keeper urged him, he lumbered onto the stage. Thorne, his courage oozing at the last second, "pulled up stakes" and fled the scene amidst the roars of the auditors.

Almost as necessary to many plays as the scenery are the supernumeraries, individually described as "one who plays many parts, and yet obtains applause in none." (I am speaking now of auxiliaries as they were in former times when the theatre was still somewhat in its infancy.) In a way the "supe" is a nonentity, his name never being seen upon the programme and always unknown to his audience. Even the persons he is supposed to represent upon the stage invariably remain anony-

mous. Both as a living or fictitious creature he is denied individuality, and has to be considered collectively, massed with others, and inseparable from his companion figures. He is not so much an actor as part of the decorations—the animated furniture, one might say, of the stage.

While seated in a theatre, watching with intense interest some exciting and absorbing drama, have you ever stopped to think what would happen should the "supers" refuse to appear? Were any member of the company to be taken ill or to decline to act, their part would be quickly filled with a substitute, but the "mob" of the stage requires numbers and careful drilling; in fact many hours of preparation, and an army of supers is not a thing of the moment. The exigency of the dramatic situation at times makes the super the very backbone of a melodrama, a vital necessity in most of Shakespeare's plays, and an important detail in all plays requiring numbers on the stage. What would Coriolanus do without his army, Camille without her guests for the ball-scene, or any of the war dramas without their fighting men?

There is a record of a manager who once endeavored to overcome the need of supers for a performance of Richard III by having the fighting forces entirely represented by a panoplistic host. This innovation was greeted with as much, if not more, derision than fell to the lot of the unfortunate super. The custom of augmenting real mobs with painted ones has not altogether died out with the passing of old customs. For many years, supernumeraries of the theatres were the object of almost constant ridicule by some of the patrons. At many of the so-called "popular price" houses, the galleryites looked upon the super as an hereditary enemy, and considered it their positive duty to audibly instruct, admonish, and criticize them—which they invariably did—to the enjoyment of the auditors in the lower part of the house. When, as often happened, the supers appeared in tights, their tormentors would liken their limbs to those of the classic beauties of the burlesque stage. "Say! You got Lyd Thompson beat a mile!" or "Hey! Bill! Put more stuffin' in 'em!" were frequent interpolations during Richard III when the star was not on the scene; for the galleryites were generally most respectful and considerate of any actor they liked—and they loved them all when the acting was good.

Whenever a play required more than one scene in an act for its unfolding, it was customary to use "front scenes." Often they would represent a furnished room, so that when it became

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8 Lilly Pons, in Dream Too Much, produced for RKO-Radio in 1935.
9 Little is now known of Mr. Thorne, except that he was a son of American actor Charles Robert Thorne, Sr. (1814-1893), and brother to matinee idol Charles Thorne (1840-1889).
necessary to change the scene, a supé was sent upon the stage to carry off the furniture. Immediately upon his appearance, cat-calls, whistling, and abusive remarks would greet the unfortunate individual, while the derisive cry of “Supé! Supé!” would resound throughout the theatre.

Frequently the supers jeopardized the success of many performances in which they were engaged. Once when Charlotte Cushman [1816-1876] was playing Meg Merrilies, her audience was one moment spellbound by her acting, and the next convulsed with laughter at the actions and grotesque manner of the improperly rehearsed supernumeraries who surrounded her in one of the scenes. A combination of the sublime and the ridiculous it was. Formerly, the supernumeraries hardly ever had a proper rehearsal, but while the curtain was down and in some cases before the beginning of the evening’s performance, they were drilled in the duty required of them for the ensuing scene. For the rest, they had to take their cue from their captain as to when they were to exclaim “We will!” or “No, no!” or “Death to the tyrant!” or whatever other ejaculations which a stage mob may be called upon to utter.

The stage mobs of other days generally presented a dumb, stony appearance, arising from the lack of proper training. When the noble hero of the scene scolded his countrymen for their seeming cowardice, and that hero’s friend, in order to soothe his harried feelings, said to him: “Torture them no more! See how they hang their heads!” the general result was that they did not hang their heads but instead gazed with intense interest upon the movements of the actors. In the old type melodrama the persecuted heroine would exclaim, “Unhand me, villains!” before any attempt had been made to touch her by the procrastinating supés. On the other hand, it frequently occurred that a very effective climax, in which a doomed miscreant was to disclose important information requisite to the unravelling of the plot of the play, was considerably shortened of life by the excited mob of “persecuted minions” rushing on the stage and dispatching him before the appointed time.

The supernumeraries were under the charge of a leader known as a “captain,” who was generally a minor member of the company, a performer of very small parts, such as servants, messengers, ringleader of the mob, and similar roles. Upon him

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*In the dramatization of Scott’s novel, Guy Mannering.*

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devolved the task of gathering the men needed to represent soldiers, lords, peasants, a mob, and other specimens of humanity who went to make up the stage "crowd." The management allowed the captain twenty-five cents a performance for each person appearing, he settling with his followers himself. This afforded him an opportunity to add to his exchequer, as many were quite willing to pay for the privilege of going on as a super for the fun of the thing. Later, the amount of the pay was increased to fifty cents which, while it broadened the captain's chance for swelling his bank account, eventually brought about his downfall. He would engage a super, keeping him on for one night, dismissing him the next night without pay, on some trumped-up charge; he would then put another in his place and repeat the transaction, pocketing the money himself. This early racketeering became so notorious that the downtrodden super arose in his might and rebelled. Forming themselves into a sort of union, they selected the most successful theatre where their services were essential, and when the time came to go on the stage, they refused to do so unless they were accorded better treatment. Methods were reformed, and the super responded by becoming a more dignified and useful body.

At one time when Edwin Booth was appearing at the Star Theatre, the audience had to be dismissed owing to the non-appearance of the supers who had been engaged for that evening's performance. Through some error they had been told that they would not be wanted until the next evening and, as it was impossible to give the performance without them, the house was closed. The elder Booth also had troubles with the supers of his time. When playing Richard III at the old Park Theatre in New York, he became so incensed at the stupidity of his supporting army that, sword in hand, he chased the "varlets" out of the theatre through the stage door into the streets. As I have said, the lack of rehearsal given the super was frequently the cause of many a theatrical failure, and many a manager complained they could see no way to rectify the trouble without much expense, and of the impossibility of keeping together any such body of men as might be required.

The handling of a mob scene on the stage was an art in itself, one that needed the help of a master hand. I doubt that any handling of such a matter was ever brought to a finer climax than in the production of Julius Caesar by Edwin Booth at his theatre on Twenty-third Street (a stage picture to which I have

Photograph of Junius Brutus Booth, Sr. (1796-1852), known as "the elder Booth" by his contemporaries
William Seymour Theatre Collection
Gift of the William Seymour family
already referred). In that part of the tragedy where the conspirators strike at Caesar and the vast concourse breaks up in confusion, the picture presented took on the dignity of a great historical scene—it was so skillfully directed. In the forum scene where the mob was addressed by Mark Antony and Brutus, the crowd of supernumeraries were converted into men and women who formed part of the picture and, moved by the words addressed to them, swayed, became turbulent, forming a stage spectacle said by the critics of the day to have excelled in largeness and breadth any previous stage effect in their remembrance. Mr. Booth himself did the entire directing of the mob scenes.

In later years a play in which Wilton Lackaye11 starred had for its great thrill a scene calling for some hundred supers, who were kept up to the point of frenzy they were supposed to exhibit by having an actor pass through the crowd and egg them on in their work.

It was always somewhat of a mystery as to where the supe came from. He had no especial haunt and was mostly obtained by being advertised for. Many were young fellows with time hanging heavily on their hands, seeking the position for the purpose of getting behind the scenes, thus obtaining a closer view of the people of the stage. Others were students who, desirous of witnessing a performance but lacking the necessary funds to see the play from the front of the house, took this means to accomplish their purpose, and incidentally add to their funds; others participated for the purpose of study. The conventional supe was composed of two classes. One, the clerks engaged at other work in the daytime, and the other the idle chap looking for odd jobs and wanting only enough to get a night's lodging and a bite to eat. The latter class were gradually eliminated and their places taken by respectable appearing elderly men unable to find steady work, and young men desirous of adopting the stage as a profession. It would seem as if such a position would afford an excellent stepping-stone for the youthful aspirant in the theatre, yet as a matter of fact but few of our actors have risen from that humble beginning.

The stage, like everything else, has its periods of progression and retrogression, and in the theatre no progression has been more marked than in the matter of the once-despised but in-

11 American actor (1862-1932).
defile, run quickly back of the scene when out of view of the audience, and repeat the operation over and over, until an army sufficiently large enough to justify the call for surrender had been shown. A piece of scenery hid all but the tops of the helmets from the auditors' view. All went well until the "army" in one of its marching periods reached the center of the stage. Suddenly the scenery collapsed, and there stood the paralyzed man in full view of the house, shaking in unison with his broomsticks and helmets to the accompaniment of gales of laughter from the audience.

Before the ballet became an adjunct of the English stage, the supernumerary corps of the theatre depended in a large degree on the services of the women mentioned on the programme as "ladies of the court." After the introduction of the ballet, the term "ladies of the ballet" was conferred on this band of supernumeraries, and was used behind the scenes to designate all the female performers who had no individual prominence in the presentation. The auditors usually understood it to refer solely to the dancers connected with the performance; but the "ladies of the court," the "peasants,"—all the women, in fact—who sang in the choruses, made up the processions, came on as constituents of any and every crowd, came to be known as "ladies of the ballet." In later days they were styled the "chorus" or "extras."

When The Black Crook was first introduced in this country, the management imported some thirty-odd dancers from Paris to form the nucleus, as one critic described it, "of a band of women disporting themselves upon the stage in costumes shocking the sense of decency." Another spoke of them as "home-grown flowers of loveliness." The success of The Black Crook brought on an avalanche of pieces requiring the services of "ladies of the ballet," and there threatened to be a shortage in the market. Many who were opposed to this style of entertain-ment used, as one of their arguments against "the indecent invasion of the stage," that it offered temptations to young girls. "There is an irresistible mania," said one writer, "which appears to possess country girls to run away from their rural homes, trusting to find their first hope of concealment from pursuing parents in the ranks of the latest abomination of the stage, the so-called 'ballet.'"

Augustin Daly, in his newspaper days, had this to say about the ballet: "The public would be considerably surprised to see these young ladies come to rehearsal, and go through their parts as peasants, ladies of society, and so forth, in pretty little bonnets and distracting varieties of muff and tippet. Any one of them who should actually exhibit a desire to act the part allotted to her would be looked upon by her companions as 'stage struck,' or worse still, possessing a desire to rise in her profession. She would be speedily shamed into repressing any attempt at study, and would only be able to assert her self-respect and consequence by feigning utter stupidity, and disregarding all instruction. Never did the Spartan handful exhibit more firmness of resistance than did the ballet in repelling suggestions as to costume, expression of face, movement of limb, etc. Some of them will obstinately refuse to rehearse but, being quick-witted and bright, and treasuring up the instructions of the stage manager or the ballet master, will make extraordinary exertions at night before the public. In this latter case, the neglect to practice together before the attempt usually results in that mixed condition of things on a first performance which distracts the manager and amuses the audience. The spectator is usually struck by the want of animation which makes the happy female peasant on the stage, and the evident want of spirit in the 'guests at the ball.'

"The fact is that the personators of these dumb but important characters are really very lively girls who chat incessantly in the green-room, and are full of spirit when not before the footlights; who go to parties and balls, flirt violently with their beaux, and are, in everyday life, most vivacious creatures; but as all this is nature, and they consider that they are paid to act, they try as hard as they can to earn their pay by a conscientious suppression of the very qualities that would adorn the stage."

"One of the most prominent American playwrights and managers of the 19th century, Daly (1848-1899) began his career at 21 as a drama critic.
“They are also deeply impressed with the fact that playing is business, and that business is the antithesis of all things airy and gamesome.

“Thus the ‘laughing dames of fashion’ are prodigiously glum, and the ‘romping peasants’ are rooted to their spots.

“To judge from the chattering and frolics behind the scenes, it would be expected that nothing could be more effectively represented by the ballet than a confused and noisy mob. Yet, when the scene demands laughter and boisterous demonstration, they huddle together like timid fawns, and instead of giving unanimous voice to a shout they preserve a scared silence, ludicrously broken by some conscientious little creature exploding in a weak ‘Oh, horror!’ that never fails to set the whole audience in a roar.”

The costumes worn on the stage by the early players consisted mainly of the cast-off garments of the members of royalty before whom the actors were commanded to appear. The records tell us that in 1672 the three leading actors of the day, who were presenting *Henry the Fifth*, wore the coronation suits of the Duke of York, King Charles, and Lord Oxford. Pepys, in his diary, speaks of a play that had to be postponed “for want of Clothes the King had promised them.”

It was a tradition, brought from England to the theatres of this country, that if an actor playing Richard III or some corresponding role wore a costume any part of which had at some time belonged to royalty, there was nothing further to worry about—scenery was looked upon as a secondary concern. One of the stories of the arrival of the elder Booth in this country had to do with his playing the part of Richard III in the actual coronation robes of George IV, which the actor had brought with him “much to the astonishment of the more simple-minded of his audience, who naively inquired whether the sovereigns of Great Britain were really wont to parade the streets of London in such attire.”

Costumes suitable for the dressing of Shakespearean characters were the principal stock-in-trade of the old-time actor, but when it came to a wardrobe suitable to more modern plays, there was a woeful lack of material. Even as late as 1869, minor members of the stock companies were hard put to it to add their wigs and a court costume when required. The presentation of a play at Wallack’s about this time, in which those engaged in the piece did dress properly, called forth this remark from
one of the papers of the day: "We desire to express our gratitude to Mr. Wallack for having finally seen the necessity of having all the actors change their wigs and dresses during the fifteen years which elapse between the prologue and the first act. This is unusual, and it is, consequently, all the more commendable."

It is not to be wondered at that actors of that period were shy of a wardrobe of adequate proportions when one considers the small salaries paid them, however.

The leading players did not have the opportunity afforded nowadays of having someone design their costumes or having a place where they could go and select one. Sometimes costumes were furnished by the management. At other times they were given an idea by the manager or stage director as to how to dress correctly the part they were to play, but it was more often left to their own judgment. This was the case with J. K. Emmett, who was about to make his "starring" debut in New York as a character known as "Fritz." During the rehearsal of the play Emmett knew little of his lines, his time having been taken up with learning new steps in dancing and the songs he was to sing.

"Almost up to the opening night," said Emmett in telling of the incident, "I had not given much attention to the part I was to play. I wanted a costume that I thought would answer for the 'Fritz' I had in mind. I tried everywhere without success, when one day I saw an immigrant entering a beer saloon, and I quickly followed him. I got the barkeeper to one side and told him I wanted the suit the German wore. Well, he got filled up on beer and sold his clothes for a small sum and an old cast-off suit. I got a costume I considered ideal and ever after used it as a model in the various versions of 'Fritz' in which I appeared."

Dion Boucicault [1822-1890], when engaged in rehearsing his play The Shaughraun at Wallack's Thirteenth Street house, entirely forgot to provide himself with a costume for the part he was to enact in the drama, and it was not until he arrived at the theatre on the opening night that his dresser called his attention to the matter. After a moment's thought, Boucicault went to the wardrobe room of the theatre, looked over its contents, selected a velvet jockey cap, a rider's hunting coat, a pair of knee breeches (somewhat the worse for wear) and, borrowing a pair of brogans from the night watchman at the theatre, was
ready for the stage. All of this outfit had seen many years of use, yet Boucicault wore them in the same play for ten years.

On the stage one of the most necessary employees is the property man, upon whose shoulders falls the important task of gathering the properties used in a play, such as books, firearms, stationery—in short, all of the movable articles required in the furnishing of a scene. He must also see that they are properly placed according to instructions from the stage manager. If viands or drinkables are called for, the property man must see that they are ready at hand. Today it is the custom to provide the real thing in cases where food and drink are used. In olden days wine and liquors when served on the stage were composed of cold tea or colored water. Papier-mâché was used to represent food, and it did seem ridiculous to hear an actor in his part say: "How delicious this chicken looks. How appetizing!" and then endeavor to make the carving of the pasteboard fowl seem real. Flowers were formerly made of paper; the interior of a library, showing shelf after shelf of volumes, was in reality nothing but fake bindings painted to represent the real article. It was mirth-provoking to have a character in a courtroom scene pick up a book and, holding it so that the audience could distinguish its title, proceed to say: "And now, Your Honor, I will quote from Blackstone," while the volume he was holding was a city directory.

Property men were often put to it to answer the demands of temperamental stars. One of the stories handed down had to do with a famous singer, Malibran. Once at rehearsal she declared she would not sing her part in the evening unless they would contrive to give her a glass of port at a particularly exhausting point of the performance. The management was astounded, and could hardly conceive how to humor her. It occurred to the property man of the house that in her role she reclined upon a green bank, posing in a sentimental attitude. It suggested a method of meeting the problem by inserting through the floor a tube which was plunged into a goblet of porter, and the great singer, leaning gracefully behind her curls, regaled herself.

Sometimes even the property man rebelled against the demands from these temperamentral outbreaks, as was the case when Richard Mansfield [1854-1907], one of the stage's most persistent complainers, said to the man in charge of the properties at the theatre where he was playing (and where the steam pipes kept up an insistent knocking): "If you don't stop that noise at once, by Heaven, I will have you dismissed!"

"That's the engineer's work, not mine," replied the prop man.

"How dare you answer me back? Out of my way, varlet!" said the redoubtable Richard.

Now this man was a rather husky individual, and feeling that he had been treated harshly by the actor, he confided to one or two of his fellow-workers that after the performance he was going to do a little "Out of my way, varlet!" business himself, by waiting at the stage door and "doing Mansfield up."

It became necessary to smuggle Mansfield out of the front door to prevent the pugnacious property man from carrying out his threat. Mansfield may have been unduly temperamental, but it should be stated that as a character actor he was unequalled and his place on the stage has never been filled.

At one of Sarah Bernhardt's [1844-1923] performances at the Star, the property plot called for a "desk supplied with stationery." Before the rise of the curtain, it had been Madame's custom to look over the scene to see if it was set correctly. In this instance, she found the stationery was just plain paper, and before the actress would allow the curtain to be raised, we had to send to Tiffany's to get the real article, monogram and all. Fortunately it was at a Saturday matinee, so the day was saved.

In a musical play presented at Wallack's some years ago, one of the scenes that always caused considerable merriment was the introduction of the leading character for the first time to the seductive influence of Manhattan cocktails. This stage liquid was concocted with cold tea and a cherry—sometimes the cherry was omitted—and a bottle of this imitation was kept on hand in the property room. One night someone substituted the real article for the imitation, and when the drink was served to the potenteate for whom they were supposed to be expressly made, it dawned upon the actor what had taken place. The directions of the play were for the cocktails to be taken slowly at first and then increasingly faster with each succeeding one until some five had been imbibed. Needless to say, the substitute was consumed to the last drop with accompanying exhilaration on the
part of the drinker, much to the joy of his brother actors standing in the wings, who had been informed of the perpetration of the joke.  

Perishable properties are in stage parlance “anything perishable,” and in some cases these were to be paid for by the visiting attraction. Some years back a certain well-known actress was playing an engagement at the house of a manager whose financial backer she had been for some time, and rumor had it that her liking for this man was the one and only love affair of her life. At the end of the week the actress, through her agent, was handed a bill for “perishable props.” Included on the bill was a charge for “three smoked herring, six cents.” To add to the irony of the matter the theatre was her property, and she had leased it to those in charge for less than she could have obtained elsewhere. Whether it was because a dried herring had been dragged across the trail of love, or whether it was due to rumors of a marriage to a certain other actress of the time, that trifling “prop” disrupted a friendship of long standing and resulted in a withdrawal of financial support that was sadly needed.

An audience assembled for a first night’s performance, where all is brightness and gaiety, little knows what thought and skill and hard work have been taken to provide it with an evening’s pleasure. The result presented is due to careful rehearsing. Given the play, there is then needed one upon whose sagacity depends the selection of the proper people to interpret the author’s ideas, one upon whose intelligence rests the suitable illustration of the play about to be produced. Every movement on the stage, every position taken from one end of the play to the other, must be carefully thought out and as carefully remembered.

It has been truly said that the actor’s power to represent a passion is a gift, not a deliberate artistic effort obtained by study. It is a faculty, to be developed and improved by practice. The author only affords the actor an opportunity to display his powers. The actor who depends solely on the construction of an author is merely a mouthpiece, not an artist, for he should obtain his inspiration as the author gets his: out of his inner self. Even when he is possessed of dramatic instinct, the guiding genius of the director is needed to pilot the art of the actor into the right channel. Many actors of today lack the schooling that belonged and was necessary to an actor in the earlier days of our theatre, and therefore more reliance must be placed upon the director’s ability to inform and assist the actor in the assimilation of the character he is to portray.

Time was when the stage director depended upon the actor to help him in his task. He would give the simpler stage directions, considering it the province of the actor to illustrate, to embody, and to perfect the meaning of the author by judicious additions and by-play. The elder Wallack, who in his time probably guided the minds of more actors than anyone connected with the stage, always followed this course. At the conclusion of his description of the part, he would say: “You must paint the picture.” One of the most popular companies playing on Broadway during the eighties was the “Russell Comedians,” and it was said at the time that they never had more than a skeleton of a plot for a play. Each one was supposed to come on and furnish his own dialogue, which was whipped into shape at rehearsal, the only restriction being that the lines they used must be humorous. Before rehearsal the actors were busy along “the white way,” looking up the latest jokes to fatten their parts.

As students of world drama are aware, the commedia dell’arte was based on this principle: each actor was given his part and the story of which he was a part, and then he improvised his share of the dialogue as the play went on. Great skill in this aspect of a drama was acquired by these early mummers.

Augustin Daly, who in his day had no superior in the directing of a play, once declared that to his way of thinking Dion Bouicault was the best stage director the theatre possessed, especially in the handling of mob scenes. I watched Bouicault once with great interest while he was rehearsing a revival of one of his plays, The Heart of Midlothian. One of the principal scenes of the production depicted an attempt to rescue the heroine of the play from the prison known as “The Tolbooth.” A mob was outside the prison walls endeavoring to set fire to the structure amidst loud cries of “Down with the Tolbooth! Down with the Tolbooth!” from the supposedly infuriated gathering.

One of this “infuriated mob” was a super who kept looking toward the front of the house, and joined in with the crowd in
a delicate, almost feminine voice, as he kept repeating the one line: "Down with the Tolbooth!" It sounded more like an invitation to an afternoon tea. Boucicault stopped the rehearsal and, calling the offending sup to the footlights, said in his peculiar, raspy voice: "Young man, you may become an actor some day—the Lord only knows when. At present you will just imagine yourself remaining here without anything to eat until tomorrow morning, during which time you and I will rehearse this one line all night. Unless you can, instead, imagine that your breakfast and a week's salary are behind that wall and you want to get at them."

Boucicault had the most bitingly sarcastic way of speaking, and he never took pains to conceal it, no matter with whom he was conversing and especially at rehearsal.

A few years ago a certain English producer, [Harley] Granville-Barker [1877-1946], who attended personally to the direction of his productions, had a somewhat unique method of conveying to the actors the fact that he was displeased with their work. Whenever anything that disturbed him happened on the stage, he would throw himself on the floor of the aisle and, after turning himself over two or three times, would arise and proceed with the work in hand. The members of his company soon learned to recognize the danger signals.

Edwin Booth was far from being a model of patience with the actor at rehearsal and was frequently known to leave the stage abruptly in the midst of a rehearsal, turning the duties to the stage manager with the remark, "See if you can instill in that actor's mind some regard for himself, some reverence for his art, some knowledge"—a speech generally delivered so that the offending actor could make no mistake as to whom it was intended. In speaking of stage directors, Mr. Booth was asked whom he considered the best director of his day.

"Henry Irving," he replied. "He possesses the necessary patience, a quality which I must confess, I do not possess. He is despotic on his stage, commanding all points, with an understanding that his will is absolute law, that it is not to be disputed, whether it concerns the entry of a mere messenger who bears a letter or whether it is the reading of an important line by Miss Terry." From first to last he rules his stage with an iron will,

16 One of the most distinguished English actresses of her time, Ellen Terry (1847-1928) frequently played leading lady to Henry Irving between 1878 and 1902.
but as an offset to this he displays a patience that is marvelous. At rehearsal he will sit upon the stage among his players, watching every movement and listening to every word, and instantly stopping anyone—Miss Terry as readily as the messenger—who does not do exactly right. Mr. Irving rises, explains the fault and gives the proper form, and that part of the scene is immediately repeated. As he is very exact as to every detail, and requires its elaboration to a nicety, you can readily imagine that the scene does not reach perfection, but his patience holds out against every test it receives. Over and over again the line is recited, or the bit of action is done, until all is perfected. At his theatre one sees the perfection of stage discipline and in Mr. Irving the perfection of stage patience.”

In former times the actor-manager, who directed his productions as well as took part in them, was more in evidence than in these modern days of the drama. The old-time managers and directors were great sticklers for strict obedience in having their directions followed at rehearsals, and autocratic to a degree in their demands upon the actor.

It is told of Macready,¹⁷ the English rival of Forrest,¹⁸ that at a rehearsal of the banquet scene from Macbeth the minor actor who was cast for the First Murderer, in spite of Macready’s adjurations, persisted in walking to the center of the stage until the tragedian called for the carpenter. He bade him drive a brass-headed nail upon the spot where the actor should stand.

“Now, sir,” said Macready, “Stand upon that nail until I come to you.”

When the night’s performance came, the Murderer entered, walked down the stage and apparently began to search for some object he had dropped. The spectators, surmising something was wrong, began to laugh. From the wings came the voice of Macready, plainly audible: “In Heaven’s name, what are you about?”

Equally audibly replied the actor on the stage: “Looking for that confounded nail of yours.”

The late Charles Frohman¹⁹ was a most indulgent, yet capable director, with a companionable sort of way that gave the actor confidence. He possessed the needed amount of patience which

¹⁷ William Charles Macready (1799-1873).
¹⁸ Edwin Forrest (1806-1872).
¹⁹ American theatrical producer, born in 1860, Charles Frohman died in the sinking of the Lusitania on May 7, 1915.
Booth thought so essential. When explaining to an actor some desired bit of action, he would briefly sketch the point, and then wind up by saying: "You see what I mean, you understand." Thus he left the actor with some of the responsibility of developing his part. While patient at rehearsal, he was wont to display a bit of sarcasm if he failed in receiving a proper response to his instructions. One of the many stories told of C. F., as he was called by his associates, occurred while conducting a rehearsal in which Mrs. Patrick Campbell [1865-1940], the English actress, was engaged. Frohman had suggested a bit of stage business to which the actress took exception. Stepping down to the footlights, she said to the manager seated in the orchestra: "I object to that. You must remember, Mr. Frohman, that I am an artist!"

"All right," retorted the manager. "I will keep your secret. Now, let's get on with the rehearsal."

Directors, like other artists, are temperamental. They have their serious turn of mind, and then again they are human and gifted with an abundant sense of humor. Mary Anderson [1859-1940] and Louis James [1842-1910] were appearing at Pike's Opera House in Cincinnati, in Romeo and Juliet. When in the tomb scene Romeo throws himself upon the supposedly dead body of Juliet, the phial from which he was to obtain his share of poison could not be found. "Where is it?" inquired Romeo.

Juliet, convulsed with laughter, could not reply.

The stage director, an Englishman, was standing in the wings close by. He drawled out: "If I were you, Louis, I would swallow the dagger."

God and Mammon: Prayers and Rents in Princeton MS 126

BY JEANNE E. KROCHALIS

O most kind Jesus, have mercy on me while there is yet time for mercy, and do not damn me in the time of judgment . . . the dead will not praise thee, o good Jesus, nor all who descend into hell. O most loving Jesus, o most desirable Jesus, o most gentle Jesus . . . .

So, towards the end of the turbulent 15th century, an English layman prayed to his Lord. His three prayers were written out in Latin on a small vellum roll, 121 mm wide and 800 mm long. A miniature of the Trinity, flanked by angels bearing instruments of the passion and a kneeling figure of the owner, comes at the end. But fashions of popular piety, and even the language of prayer, were on the brink of change, and in the 16th century the back of the roll was used to list rents or taxes for an unnamed English village.

While regular visitors to Princeton's Department of Rare Books and Special Collections have doubtless seen some of the Library's collection—the largest in America—of Ethiopian prayer rolls, their medieval European counterparts are much less well known.1 Ethiopian prayer rolls are magical; the right combination of prayers and charms, and a picture of the appropriate saint, can protect the bearer from harm and illness. The rolls were often measured to the height of the person to be protected, and then rolled up and worn as amulets. Since they were usually only about seven inches wide, they were easy to wear.

In Western Europe, prayer rolls are decidedly less common. The most popular lay prayer book in the early Middle Ages was the psalter. In the later Middle Ages, literate nobles and even members of the middle classes usually prayed from books of hours, often—like those recently exhibited at the Morgan Library in New York—lavishly illustrated and richly decorated.

Books of hours have been studied, and can often be assigned to specific centers, even to particular artists. They can often be placed quite specifically by the local saints in the calendar that usually prefaces the prayers. They are sometimes mentioned in wills, and handed down through several generations, whose members will use their blank leaves to record births, marriages, and deaths. Princeton MS 116, for instance, records important happenings for a century of owners. And the prayers that they contain are drawn, for the most part, from a standard repertoire.

None of these conditions apply to prayer rolls. Books of hours survive in the thousands, but several years of research on manuscripts written on rolls has yielded under 50 prayer rolls. Since they are usually small—three to seven inches wide, and anywhere from under a foot to three feet long—their chances of survival would be less than that for sturdier, bound books of hours. The amount of discoloration on the outside suggests that they were not usually even cased, though one, made for a layman in the Throckmorton family by his parish priest, contains instructions—like the prayers, in Latin—that it should always be carried about in a purse (deferatur in bursa semper). But this particular prayer roll was specifically for use in church, before and after services. Most rolls contained prayers that could be said anywhere.

A very few lavish prayer rolls survive. King Henry vii's wife Margaret of Anjou had one which probably came from the London atelier of William Abel, and Giangaleazzo Visconti had one, with his arms on it, containing Petrarch's Penitential Psalms. But usually the rolls tell us more about popular than courtly art. The miniature in Princeton MS 126 is of a higher quality than is often found in prayer rolls. It is a pity that neither owner nor artist can be identified. But idiosyncratic production is typical of these manuscripts.

Were they magical? Many carried indulgences. The mononest prayer roll text is the Arma Christi poem, where do- ggerel verses accompany pictures of instruments of the passion and other objects such as the knife of circumcision. The poem usually ends with the promise of pardon for three years for anyone who looks at the pictures daily. A similar kind of prayer roll now at the Beinecke Library at Yale promises those who look at the arms of Christ's passion painted (rather crudely) on the roll, and also say five Paternosters, five Ave Marias, and one creed, a lavish pardon of 32,055 years (Beinecke MS 410). A roll written in French in England in the 14th century promises 40 days of pardon for anyone reciting daily its Fifth Joys of the Virgin, and also promises the protection of St. Robert against all evil devices of one's enemies, death in childbirth, or death without confession. Prayers to Sts. Cyriak and Julitta promised similar protection on a number of rolls, in Latin and in English. British Library MS Harley 43,A.14 listed eight separate protections. The possessor would be saved from sudden death, and from being hurt or slain with a weapon; he would have reasonable goods and health (reasonable is not defined) all his life, and not be overcome by enemies, or imprisoned, or die without the sacraments of the church. Protection was promised from wicked spirits and tribulations and disease, including the plague. But the eighth protection is the most magical of all: a woman in labor was instructed to lay the roll on her womb in order to have a safe delivery. Rolls with the life of St. Margaret were put to similar use, and one with pictures of St. Eloï was used by pregnant women in France as late as the 18th century.

For much information on the illustration in 15th-century English prayer rolls and related manuscripts, I am indebted to Dr. Kathleen Scott.


The manuscript is now Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 7-1935.

The texts of prayers from Harley Rot. 43, A.14, and related prayers from Harley Rot. T.11, Welcombe Medical Library MS 632, and Glaziou MS 95 at the Morgan Library are discussed in Curt Bühler, "Prayers and Charms in Certain Middle English Scrolls," Speculum, 29 (1954), 250-278. The verse life of St. Margaret giving instructions can be

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2 Margaret of Anjou's prayer roll is now Jesus College Oxford MS 124. A black and white postcard of the miniature, showing Queen Margaret kneeling in prayer, is available from the Bodleian Library. The Visconti roll is now Lucerne Centraibibliothek MS 340. It seems to have been a presentation copy from Petrarch to Visconti. It is fully described in Ottavio Besomi, "Codici Petrarcheschi nelle Biblioteca Suissere," Consiglio dei Codici Petrarcheschi, 3 (Padua, 1967), 417-419. Plates showing the decoration and coat of arms are reproduced in F. Novati, "Un esemplare Visconteo dei Psalmo Poenitentiales del Petrarcha," Miscellanea de Studi Storici e Ricerche Critico-Bibliografiche raccolta per cura della società Storica Lombarda (Milan: Hoepli, 1904), pp. 1-14.

3 Edward, Earl of March, owned a prayer roll which can hardly have been very elaborate, since he paid only eight pence for it in 1416. See Kenneth Bruce Macfarlane, The Nobility of Later Medieval England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 246. A lady of the Lancaster-Fleming family owned the crudely decorated but lively prayer roll which is now Pierpont Morgan Library MS 486; the texts are printed by Curt Bühler, "A Middle English Prayer Roll," Modern Language Notes (1957), pp. 555-562.
Princeton MS 126 promises no indulgences or magic protection to whoever reads its three prayers, or contemplates its miniature. The prayers are a mixture of praise and appeal to Jesus, in richly passionate but conventional phrases. They may well be original compositions, since they do not occur in any of the standard indices of prayers, nor are they found in English books of hours or private prayers. The whole manuscript would seem to be an original compilation, made for a particular patron, who wanted prayers specifically to Jesus, combined, oddly, with a miniature of the entire Trinity. The whole manuscript is worthy of close inspection.

The roll is a single membrane, small (4¾ inches by 31½ inches) and carefully laid out. The written space occupies only 82 of the 121 mm width, and the lines for text are ruled 10 mm apart. The result is a rather spacious, easy to read layout. The script itself is a good, not top quality, textura forma, like that used in books of hours and liturgical books, with forked ascenders, highly angular, with a good many hairline finalia. Letter height is a bit uneven (around 4 mm for the body of the letter forms). The scribe occasionally goes outside his carefully ruled right-hand margin, which adds to the effect of irregularity. The decorated initials are gold-filled with an unusually delicate latticework.

Was the manuscript originally supposed to have a miniature? No other surviving prayer roll has a picture at the end, rather than at the top. The ruling continues down the entire membrane, and the miniature is painted over it. Dr. Kathleen Scott has suggested that the texts may have been written in one place, and then the roll taken elsewhere, perhaps to a larger artistic center, to be illustrated.

Who decided on the picture? A single scribe-illustrator or a workshop, producing a roll for sale, would have illustrated the manuscript with a picture that matched the text, perhaps a crucifixion. But the miniature in Princeton MS 126 does not

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found on two rolls at the Wellcome Library, and one at the Morgan. The St. Eloi roll survives only in fragments. See Robert Branner, "Le Rouleau de Saint Eloi," L'Information d'histoire de l'art, 12 (1967), supplement, pp. 55-73.

* Victor Lerouxais, Les Livres d'Heures Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1907; 1-iii and supplement, 1949) lists some prayers close to the three given here (see 1, 163 for the first prayer, and 1, 336-337 for the second), but none are identical. Prayers similar to the third are found in two Bodleian Library manuscripts in Oxford: Lyell 3, fols. 77v-78r, and Gough liturg. 9, fol. 263, and also in Bibliothèque National MS lat. 13296, fol. 189.
Fig. 2. Trinity miniature, French Book of Hours, 1407
Princeton University Art Museum
Gift of Harold K. Hochschild
match the prayers, which mention only Jesus. And, while the separate elements can all be paralleled elsewhere, the combination of a Trinity mercy seat, angels with passion instruments, and a donor appears to be unique.

The miniature (fig. 1) would seem to be English work, in the Franco-Flemish style popular in the late 15th century. The thick, flat color has obscured the original drawing lines, but the color has added many fine black lines, particularly in the draperies. These help in definition, since the color is laid on so thickly it has flaked rather badly in places. One might contrast it with the delicate drawing and clearer color of another Trinity mercy seat at Princeton, done in 1407 and now in the Art Museum (Hochschild gift; fig. 2), or with the smaller version (ca. 1465) in the Carmelite Missal of Nantes, Garrett MS 40, fol. 130v (fig. 3). But the closest comparison is probably the miniature in a Flemish book of hours from later in the 15th century, Garrett MS 53, fol. 82v (fig. 4).

In Princeton MS 126, the Trinity is rather static and formal. God the Father sits enthroned in a pink robe, white-haired and bearded, on an orange ground. His halo has gold rays extending out from it into the ground. On his lap is the crucified Christ; the cross is a subdued grey-brown, and Christ's flesh is considerably less pink than his Father's robe; his loincloth is silvery grey. The dove of the Holy Spirit perches on the Father's shoulder. The group is enclosed in a turquoise blue mandorla, with a black stripe inside it, and gold squiggles on it. This grouping is surrounded by a grey border in which four golden-haired, gold-winged angels can be discerned. They are holding instruments of the passion. The scourge is on the upper left, the pillar of scourging on the lower left; the pincers and hammer are held by the angels on the upper right, and the lance and sponge by the one at the lower right.

Both Trinity mercy seats and instruments of the passion were common motifs, but, as remarked above, the combination is rare. None of the other manuscripts illustrated here, for instance, show the combination. Rather similar angels can indeed be found in the blue border of Garrett MS 135 (fig. 5), where they are in a more usual position, suspended above the altar at a Mass of St. Gregory. In Garrett MS 40, fol. 98r, passion instruments occur without angels, illustrating the preface of the Mass used during Lent. The miniature in Garrett MS 53 (fig. 4) does show angels flanking the Trinity, as does the Art Mu-
seum manuscript (fig. 2), but they are ranks of angels from the courts of heaven. Four angels are uncommon.9

If one contrasts the Trinity in the Princeton prayer roll with that in Garrett MS 53, one is immediately aware of the greater formality of the figures. In Garrett, the dead Christ lies at full length, stretched out across his Father's lap in a posture movingly reminiscent of the Pietà. The Holy Spirit is perched on Christ's shoulder, and his wings brush the Father's beard; physically, as well as spiritually, he joins the two. This miniature is accompanied by a prayer that the penitent's soul, too, might be received by God. The relationship of picture and text is direct and immediate.

What presumably links the static, formal Trinity of Princeton MS 126 to the prayers above it is the figure of the owner, kneeling in prayer at the lower left. He is clad in a long-skirted black robe, with gold fold-lines, and a gold-trimmed collar. He wears a black cap, shaped like a bonnet, and has ruffs at his sleeves. The figure is rather worn, but seems never to have had an identifying scroll, nor is there a space for a coat of arms, so we are at a loss to identify him further. We know only the picture and prayers he chose. Let us look at one of those prayers, in a modern English rendering.

O name of Jesus, sweet name, name of Jesus, delectable name, name of Jesus, comforting name. For what is Jesus but Savior? Therefore, Jesus, for thy name's sake, save me lest I perish; thou, who hast shaped me and redeemed me, do not permit me to be damned, whom thou hast created from nothing.

O good Jesus, let not my iniquity lose me. I beseech thee, o most pious Jesus, do not lose me, whom thy omnipotent goodness hast made. O sweet Jesus, call back what is thine, and cleanse what is alien. O most kind Jesus, have mercy

9 The Trinity mercy seat flanked by four angels, without passion instruments, can be found in a gold enamel clasp at the National Gallery in Washington (Index of Christian Art No. 43 W 27Ca Na C 17.1A), and an ivory recently on exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum in New York (No. 1979.51.19) which, according to Dr. Charles Little of the museum, may be associated with the Medallion Master of ca. 1415-1420. The ivory is pictured in Notable Acquisitions 1979-1980 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum, 1980), p. 29. The only two instances the Index lists of Trinity mercy seats with angels bearing passion instruments are a painting attributed to Melchior Broederland, ca. 1990, and now in Berlin (Index no. Painting 30 B 51 MSd T 1.8.1A), and an ivory in the Maskell collection at the British Museum (Ivory 21 L 84 MB 8.15). It should be borne in mind that the Index has a cutoff date of about 1400. For information from the Index I am grateful to Dr. Adelaide Bennett.
on me while there is yet time for mercy, and do not damn me in the time of judgment. There is usefulness in my blood while I descend to incorruptibility, but the dead will not praise thee, o good Jesus, nor all who descend into hell. O most loving Jesus, o most desirable Jesus, o most gentle Jesus, o most sweet Jesus, O Jesus son of the Virgin Mary, pour forth upon me grace, wisdom, devotion, charity and chastity, that I may most perfectly delight in thee, fear thee, praise thee worthily among all those who delight in thy name, which is Jesus. Amen.

So much for God. What of Mammon? The back of the roll is filled with a list of people, and the amounts they owed or paid. The top of the roll is too worn to be read, even under ultraviolet light, so we must guess what the heading was. The handwriting is definitely later than that on the front, and probably dates from the early to mid 16th century. A later hand has added, at the bottom, the phrase “The Wole Tase,” but the obvious interpretation, “The Wool Tax,” does not appear to fit the amounts given, which look more like rents than taxes.

It has not proved possible to identify the village. The names of the men, and occasionally women, who are listed here look like a collection of the most common English names: Wylyam Robyns, John Pery, Thomas Tomkys, John Pype, Robert Mowsey, Edward Kempsone, John Johnson, Margery Marston, Roger Atkyns, William Mason, Robert Carle. The most expensive property in this village belonged to Edward Kempsone, and was valued at 2s 8d. This property is not described, but the two houses valued at two pence each which he also owned are: “the howse att the over crosse” and “the over howse.” The other chief citizen would seem to have been Thomas Tomkys, who owned land valued at 2s 4d, and three two-penny properties, “the howse att the neither crosse,” “the howse att the colpytt fylde yatte,” and “the howse that Thomas Coke dwellythe in.” Collectively, the most affluent family seems to have been the Perys, who owned 11 pieces of property among them, ranging in value from 18 pence down to two pence. The house which John Pery used as a sheelpoote was valued at four pence. Other multiple owners included Wylyam Robyns, with four houses, and Nicholas Wylkys and John Pype, with two apiece.

William Mason came from a town called Hampton, which unfortunately is far from being an uncommon place name, either on its own or in combination. Nor is the only other entry which might be a town name, though it more probably simply refers to the bridge: “John Celmson for Barys leyse att new-bryche.” Any reader recognizing an ancestral village is urged to communicate with the author or with the Curator of Manuscripts, Princeton University Library, who would be delighted to know more about the provenance of this curious manuscript. At present, we know that it was acquired by Sir Thomas Philippps from a Warwick bookseller, Charles Redfern. Its Phillips number is 26985.

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1 For information and suggestions on the interpretation of the information on the verso of the roll, I am greatly indebted to Dr. Michael Clanchy, Glasgow University.
Some Unpublished Letters of Richard and Cosima Wagner

BY J. MERRILL KNAPP

In this 100th anniversary year of Richard Wagner's death, it seems appropriate that a small tribute to him should be the printing and discussion of several letters from him and his wife which the Princeton University Library has been fortunate enough to acquire recently. In this day of the telephone when the need for extensive written communication seems to be disappearing, it is difficult to conceive of the sheer number of letters prominent 19th-century writers and artistic figures wrote in their lifetimes. Wagner alone is said to have written more than 6,000. His letters are being brought out in a collected edition in the German Democratic Republic. The first four volumes cover the period to 1852 (Wagner was born in 1813), and there are 31 years to go. It is well known that the literature by and about Wagner is enormous. There are 16 volumes of his prose and poetical works alone, and the books and articles concerning him are said to rival in extent those on Napoleon and Abraham Lincoln.

It is also a familiar fact that most of Wagner's prose writings (generally in very turgid German) are part propaganda, part elucidation of his theories, and part comment on subjects that have nothing to do with music, such as race, vegetarianism, vivisection, and politics. For this reason, it can be a welcome relief to get a more intimate glimpse of the man through his correspondence, much of which has been saved. Wagner was a prodigious letter writer partly because he spent many of his adult years in exile in Switzerland where he was forced to flee after his participation in the revolutionary uprising in Dresden in 1848-1849. The only way he could keep in touch with friends, colleagues, theatre people, and publishers in Germany was by letter. There are already a goodly number of special collections that have been put together according to addressee—letters to members of his family, to Liszt, the Wesendonks, Nietzsche, Hans von Bülow, and many others, including his "Putzmacherin" (the seamstress who made hangings, furnishings, and clothes for Wagner). Some of these volumes have been translated into English, but many have not, and there are inevitable gaps in all of them. There will probably never be a totally complete edition of Wagner's correspondence because so many letters are still in private hands and may only emerge in auction sales from time to time.

The Princeton acquisitions are not all of equal worth, but they span Wagner's mature years and give a valuable insight into many of his activities. When Cosima's letters are included, the period covered stretches from 1858 to 1901. The first letter, in chronological order, is dated December 5, 1858 from Venice and is written to Franz Dingelstedt, a playwright and theatrical producer in Weimar. (One learns the identity of the addressee either from the auction catalogues—in this case, Sotheby Parke Bernet of June and November 1982—or else from the context of the individual letter.) Most of the envelopes have disappeared, and Wagner had the habit of writing a general salutation, such as "Honored Sir" or "Worthy Friend," and not naming the addressee.

To set the scene for this first letter one must review the events that took place during the summer of 1858 in Zurich at the "Asyl," a cottage on the Otto Wesendonk estate loaned to Wagner so he could finish Tristan. Here occurred the climax of his friendship with Mathilde Wesendonk, who may or may not have been his mistress, but who was certainly an inspiring force in the conception of Tristan. In April, Minna, Wagner's wife, had intercepted a letter between Wagner and Mathilde which had convinced her, rightly or wrongly, that the relationship was adulterous. There was a blow-up; Minna left temporarily in May for a "cure" in Brestenburg but returned in August. The situation then became increasingly difficult for the three parties, and a separation seemed inevitable—not only between Wagner and Minna but between him and the Wesendonks. Minna returned to Germany later in August, and Wagner decided to go to Venice with the hope of finishing Tristan. He took rented quarters in one of the Giustinian palaces on the Grand Canal

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1 I want to thank Margarethe Fitzell and Carolyn Abbate for help in deciphering some of the letters and my colleague, Professor Claudio Spies, for aid with both the original German and an English translation.


3 The original texts of these letters appear on pp. 238-245. In only two instances has a complete translation been given. I have paraphrased the rest.
and during the autumn months made good progress with Act II of Tristan. But, as usual, he soon ran out of money, and by December his financial affairs were desperate. During the summer he had tried to get Breitkopf and Härtel in Germany to publish his Ring scores with no success. He still hoped that Duke Karl Alexander of Weimar would present the original Ring performance. Wagner's friend, Liszt, who was the court Kapellmeister in Weimar, had presented Lohengrin there in 1850.

Franz Dingelstedt, formerly at the Munich Court Theatre from 1850 to 1857, had become the Intendant (general director) of the Weimar theatre in 1857-1858. He soon came into conflict with Liszt because the Duke had urged Dingelstedt to build up theatrical performances, and the opera presumably began to take a secondary position. Wagner's only hope for fees at this time was from performances of Rienzi in Germany. It had been performed in Dresden in August, but other cities turned it down. Wagner and Liszt hoped for Rienzi in Weimar, but they were uncertain about Dingelstedt's support. Even though Dingelstedt had written a spoken prologue for the Weimar Lohengrin of 1850, he had reviewed the opera at the time without great enthusiasm.

Wagner apologizes in this letter for being tardy in answering a previous one from Dingelstedt. He refers to an ailment he has had as being the reason for the delay (a November letter to Liszt tells of a neglected boil on one of his legs that had given him great pain). He also tells Dingelstedt that a score of Rienzi had been sent to Liszt in anticipation of a performance. Yet he then backtracks by saying: "Since then the thought has come to me as to whether a performance of my Rienzi at Weimar can be desirable." He asks Dingelstedt to talk the matter over with Liszt and come to an agreement about the opera.

Wagner's half-hearted attempt to get Rienzi produced can be explained by local conditions in Weimar, which seemed to make a delay inevitable, and the opera's future prospects there dim. When Wagner wrote to Liszt the same day (December 5, 1858), his only concern was the fee for performance. Given Liszt's uncertain position in Weimar, a revival there would be premature, and the opera would become a forced issue. Wagner did not wish to play up to anyone to get his youthful work performed unless its production was more assured.

During the 1850s, Wagner's only source of income, aside from loans from his friends, was performances of his earlier works (Rienzi, Tannhäuser, and Lohengrin), primarily in Germany. For a while it seemed this might be fruitful when Tannhäuser in particular was taken up by several theatres in 1852-1854. But there was no continuing royalty after a first fee for the opera, and further performances guaranteed no income. Also Wagner's notable extravagance soon dissipated whatever came in, and he was in want again and again.

The second letter, dated February 19, 1861, is quite different and on the surface rather unimportant. It concerns a request for tickets for the famous opening of Tannhäuser in Paris in 1861. The request comes from Pauline Garcia-Viardot (1821-1910), one of the best-known singers of the time and the youngest offspring of Manuel Garcia, the famous voice teacher. Garcia's two daughters, Maria and Pauline, achieved great renown in the first half of the 19th century. Maria, who was known under her married name, Malibran, died tragically early in 1836, but Pauline had a long and productive life. In 1840 she married Louis Viardot, a Parisian impresario, writer, and critic. She bore Viardot three children, sang leading roles for Meyerbeer and Berlioz, and helped to launch Gounod, Massenet, and Fauré on their careers. She was an accomplished pianist and was fluent in five languages. The Viardot home in Paris became a distinguished salon, frequented by such people as George Sand and Alfred de Musset; in the 1840s, Turgenev met Pauline, fell in love with her, and spent some time living in her home.

The letter (which is published in French but not in German) indicates that Wagner did not take Pauline's request lightly, even though he had been besieged by other friends for tickets. He is grateful for her interest in Tannhäuser; he says the royal house and ministers in Paris have taken up most of the seats not subscribed for; and everyone at the Opera, from the con-

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troller to the director, was engaged in constant speculation with the tickets. Yet he will "work like a lion" to get her the desired seats. In addition, he tells her Liszt will arrive at the end of the month, and Bülow is on his way. In a postscript, he asks whether she would be interested in the dress rehearsal, and says that he still hopes for the first performance on Monday, the 25th of February (it did not take place until March 13th and the opera was performed only three times because of the notorious opposition of the Jockey Club and others).

Pauline Viardot's letters of this period are themselves most witty and interesting, with drawings to illustrate her comments. In her letters to Julius Rietz, a German cellist and conductor in Leipzig who preferred Bach, Handel, and Mendelssohn to Liszt and Wagner, she sometimes indicates her reactions to Wagner's works. Pauline wrote these letters in a mixture of French and German, alternating at will between the two. She refers to knowing Liszt since she was a child, and in a letter dated March 18, 1859 she tells about a dinner party at which Camille Saint-Saëns played Act 1 of Lohengrin on the piano. Her description was: "What deadly monotony! what wearisome ugliness! how it finally stupefies you and harrows your nerves! It is ugly, it is doleful, it is sadly inflated! what pompous nullity!" Then she says Saint-Saëns played Bach and restored their nerves. On February 6, 1860, she writes: "Wagner stirs up the same musical feuds here as in Germany. Unfortunately, I cannot hear his concerts. . . . The prelude to Lohengrin has created a furor. Even his enemies have to admit it." In May of that year, there was a private reading at Madame Viardot's house of Act II of Tristan und Isolde in honor of Countess Kalerghi. Viardot and Wagner divided the vocal parts and Karl Klindworth, imported from London, was at the piano. Berlioz was the only other person present, and at the conclusion, he praised Wagner's "warmth" of execution but said nothing about the music. It seems Pauline Viardot sight-read the score and Wagner performed in his usual exaggerated manner to bring out what he felt in the music. At the time, Wagner was very complimentary about Madame Viardot's extempore performance, but later in Mein Leben,10 he indirectly blamed her "lukewarm execution"

for the deficiencies of the evening. Viardot herself wrote Rietz on July 25th to say: "How does this Lohengrin sound anyhow? I know how the 2nd Act of Tristan u. Isolde sounds, for I have had the honour of singing it over with Wagner himself!!! . . . but I shall say nothing about that because it could give you too much pleasure." Her reaction to the Paris Tannhäuser, for which she evidently did obtain tickets, was expressed to Rietz:

How does it happen that you did not write me when Tannhäuser was played here? Why did your curiosity to know the real truth not compel you to write me one word, one question? It was the man, above all, who was hissed, far more than the composition. Wagner made himself so detested in advance, by artists and public, that he was treated unjustly, in a revolting manner. They did not wish to hear the music. After that, if they had heard it, they might have hissed just the same! But for all that, Wagner will not have profited by the lesson; he can always boast he was the victim of a cabal.

The third letter is dated June 6, 1863 and was written in Penzing, a suburb of Vienna. It is to Wagner's boyhood friend in Leipzig, Louis Schindelmeisser (1811-1864), a German clarinetist, conductor, and composer, who filled various conducting posts from the 1830s on in different cities of Germany and Austria. He was a younger half-brother of Ludwig Dorn, who had been involved with Wagner back in his Riga days. There are numerous references to Schindelmeisser in Wagner biographies and correspondence going back to that period. At Wiesbaden in 1852, Schindelmeisser was one of the first to give Tannhäuser and Lohengrin when Wagner was in exile. The letters to his old friend are among the most detailed in musical matters that Wagner ever wrote.11 All during his professional life, Schindelmeisser maintained a dogged attachment to Wagner and his music. At this period, he was court Kapellmeister in Darmstadt. Wagner had just returned in the spring of 1863 from a series of successful concerts in Russia and still had the idea of getting Tristan performed in Vienna. In May he moved to a comfortable lodging in Penzing, hired a Bohemian couple to serve his wants (he had accumulated some money in Russia), and settled down

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9 Bayreuther Blätter, xii (1890), 176-177.
11 Wagner's letters to Schindelmeisser were collected in the Bayreuther Blätter of 1904, but this one is not among them.
to enjoy life "rich in optimism and debts." He wanted to finish
Meistersinger but was also constantly on the lookout for oppor-
tunities for performances. His letter to Schindelmeiser shows
that he has received some vague invitations for concert perfo-
rmances of individual pieces from his latest works, but he
particularly would like to get these heard in western Germany
from which he has received no invitation. He thinks of Darm-
stadt, the ducal seat of Hesse, where Schindelmeiser is, and
wonders if he can get an invitation from the Grand Duke through
a Baron von Dalwigk who had previously shown a friendly
interest in Wagner. The composer would like a performance in
September consisting of musical fragments of works not yet
given in the theatre. He requests that the Darmstadt orchestra
be placed at his disposal, and also a tenor, baritone, and bass
as soloists, with perhaps a chorus if necessary. He wants this
performance or performances given at higher prices and the
proceeds handed over to him. He feels the Duke would be
granting a worthwhile service to a native artist of importance
since he (Wagner) has no subvention, pension, or stipend from
elsewhere and needs to be given an opportunity to do further
work. Such a performance could help build Wagner's reputa-
tion and lead to possible productions in the theatre.

The tone of this letter is in contrast to the preceding ones.
His respectful attitude has disappeared. Wagner uses "du" and
is almost presumptuous in his requests to a busy Kapellmeister
with his own productions and concerts to worry about. Un-
doubtedly he thought he could get away with these demands
of an old friend like Schindelmeiser, who might be impressed
by Wagner's growing reputation. For once he thought he was
proceeding from a position of strength (with 12,000 marks in
his pocket), and he could be more peremptory about what he
wanted.

At any rate, nothing apparently happened about Darmstadt,
although Wagner was able to give several concerts that winter
of 1863-1864 in Prague, Karlsruhe, and Breslau. His financial
situation, however, did not improve, and by March 1864 he was
forced to leave Penzing and his comfortable lodging to take
refuge with Frau Wille in Marienfeld. It was there in May that
Wagner was miraculously rescued by 18-year-old King Ludwig

11 of Bavaria, who had ascended the throne in March and was
determined, among his first acts, to get hold of and support
the man who had written Tannhäuser and Lohengrin. Ludwig
had heard the operas performed in 1861 and 1862 and was
entranced as only an adolescent could be. He had also read The
Ring poem (then in print), in the preface of which Wagner had
pleaded for a performance of the quadruple work under festi-
val conditions. Ludwig saw an opportunity for a performance in
Munich and foresaw a great artistic triumph. Subsequent events
leading up to Bayreuth belong to history.

The next Wagner letter was not purchased but given to the
Library through the estate of Richard Korn, Princeton Class of
1928, an American musician and conductor who studied at the
Juilliard and conducted at the New York City Opera in 1945-
1947. Korn was head of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra in
1950 and founded the Orchestra of America in New York,
which he directed from 1959 to 1963. He died in 1981, and
most of his music and papers were willed to the Princeton Uni-
versity Library. Among them is a framed Wagner letter of Au-
gust 5, 1876 written from Bayreuth. There is no way of know-
ing to whom it is addressed from the salutation, which merely reads
"Mein wertlicher Freund." The context shows, however, that the
recipient was a Georg Unger (1837-1887), who was the first
Siegfried in the original Bayreuth production of Das Ring der
Nibelungen in August 1876. Unger, a tenor, sang the role in
both Siegfried and Götterdämmerung, and there is a considerable
amount about him in the letters and accounts of this famous
period in Wagner's life.

The letter itself's dates just before the dress rehearsals of The
Ring cycle (August 6, 7, 8, and 9), which King Ludwig attended
secretly. The actual first performances of Das Rheingold, Die
Walküre, Siegfried, and Götterdämmerung were on August 13, 14,
16, and 17. The letter reveals another facet of Wagner's com-
plex personality—the careful composer and shrewd producer
who attended to every detail of his first Ring performances,
whether it was the staging, the costumes, the orchestra, the

11 Newman, Life of Richard Wagner, III, 204 ff. See also Wagner: A Documentary Study,
compiled and edited by Herbert Barth, Dietrich Mack, and Egon Voss (London: Thames
singing, or the psychological make-up of his artists. Since Siegfried was the hero of *The Ring*, the dramatic and musical elements in his portrayal were of the utmost importance to Wagner.

A somewhat free translation of this entire letter reads as follows:

My worthy friend,

I assure you that you have fulfilled my best expectations with both Siegfrieds: be quite clear about that! You have acquired in the most scrupulous way what I have told you about the character of the role and have become sure and firm with it. The effect of everything is very gratifying. Now I ask you to dismiss any doubts you have about it; and if it is now possible, to keep up (perhaps just a little) the pure voice exercises with which you were able to improve your organ so beneficially last year after a very brief time. These exercises were given in order to free your voice from that admixture of guttural sound, the predominance of which you now might fall back into more than you think.

Do not, however, find any blame in this but continue to maintain the liveliest care in keeping your important performance as pure and accomplished as possible. Moreover, do not let yourself make mistakes about details in particular. You have reason to have complete trust in yourself.

With best greetings of the morning
Bayreuth, 5 Aug. 76. Very faithfully yours
Richard Wagner

If I can still make it possible with Herr Engelhardt, I shall immediately relieve you of Froh; if not, then he can at least substitute for you in the second series of performances and from then on.

Unger was a young Mannheim tenor of great stature who had originally been brought to Bayreuth for some of the smaller roles in *The Ring*: Froh and possibly Loge in *Rheingold.* In the summer of 1875, when more detailed preparations and rehearsals for the 1876 *Ring* were taking place in Bayreuth, there was uncertainty in Wagner's mind about who should take the part of Siegfried. The logical candidate was Albert Niemann (1831-1917), who had been the Tannhäuser in Paris in 1861,
was an accomplished artist, and was also a man of heroic stature. But Niemann, by then one of the foremost tenors in Germany, had been assigned Siegmund in Walküre and had become morose and temperamental because he thought he deserved the role of Siegfried. Wagner, however, wanted somebody younger (Niemann had already proved difficult and disappointing in Paris and was now somewhat past his prime). The man Wagner sought was one who could sing both Siegfried and Götterdämmerung on consecutive nights and have the energy to do both operas effectively.

When he heard the singers in the summer of 1875, Wagner became interested in Unger as a possibility for Siegfried, seeing something latent in him he wanted. He was almost ideal as a stage figure, but his vocal production was faulty (later letters speak of a throat constriction with a peculiar palatal sound). Wagner persuaded Julius Hey, a Munich voice teacher whom he greatly respected, to take on Unger that summer and winter of 1875-1876 to remedy this defect. Unger had to break a Düsseldorf theatre contract which resulted in a lawsuit, but Wagner undertook the defence of the suit and also raised the necessary money for Unger’s subsistence and study. Wagner not only wanted to change Unger’s vocal technique but also develop him as an actor by improving his inflection, gesture, and movement. Hey later said: “The sixty-two year old Wagner not only made clear to Unger every passage of the Siegfried score, in regard to meaning, mood, vocal technique, and plasticity in the treatment of the text, but also endeavoured to influence his entire character, so as to bring Unger into closer harmony with that of ‘the hero without fear.’” Wagner, for instance, directed Hey to get Unger to visit art galleries in Munich so he could enlarge his horizons. By June 1876, Unger’s progress was so significant he was given the Siegfried role for the festival. The postscript of this letter shows that during rehearsals and through the opening he was also singing Froh in Rheingold. There were two more complete performances of The Ring that August in Bayreuth; and Engelhardt, a young tenor, did substitute for Unger as Froh in Rheingold, a switch that necessitated an extra stage rehearsal.

Wagner continued his interest in Unger after the first festival, making arrangements for further study with Hey in Munich so Unger could not only sing Siegfried but Tristan and Tannhäuser. Deficits, however, from the 1876 festival made a second Ring impossible for Bayreuth in 1877, and Wagner directed his energies towards a possible Ring in Leipzig in 1878. In the meantime, he had given concerts in London in the summer of 1877 with some of his Bayreuth Ring singers. Unger happened to cancel a number of appearances there because of hoarseness or “tenoritis,” and Wagner’s enthusiasm for him waned. He even tried to get him replaced with another tenor for the 1878 performance in Leipzig.

The last Wagner letter was acquired in 1957 by the Princeton University Library. Like the previous Unger letter, it is addressed to one of Wagner’s Bayreuth singers, Emil Scaria, and is dated December 7, 1874. Scaria, a fine bass from the Vienna opera, was originally scheduled to sing Hagen in the first Ring performance. He had been of great assistance to Wagner in recommending Amalie Materna, his colleague at Vienna, as a possible dramatic soprano. Since in 1874 Wagner was still searching for a good Brunnhilde, Materna turned out to be the answer to his prayer. She was chosen to sing the role in the 1876 Bayreuth festival and did so to Wagner’s great satisfaction. Scaria had come to Bayreuth in the summer of 1874 and was already known as part of the male cast for The Ring, although Wagner had turned him over to Hans Richter for further coaching in the “Wagnerian style” of singing. At this date, Wagner had not fully completed Götterdämmerung (the only Ring opera in which Hagen appears), and it was not until November 1874 that he finally finished Act III. So the first paragraph of this December letter refers to sending Scaria the completed score of Acts II and III as soon as possible.

Then Wagner goes on to say he is planning to come to Vienna about the end of February 1875 in order to give a series of concerts which will consist of excerpts from Siegfried and Götterdämmerung not yet heard publicly. He has promised his Bayreuth Letters of Richard Wagner, ed. Caroline Kerr (Reprint; New York: Vienna House, 1972), p. 214.

16 See footnote 15.
17 Carl F. Glasenapp, Das Leben Richard Wagners (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1907), v. 299.
18 Carl F. Glasenapp, Das Leben Richard Wagners (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1907), v. 299.
reuth committee to do this to raise money for the new Festspielhaus since there is doubt about its being completed without more funds. He prefers these Vienna excerpts to be orchestral interludes rather than “song scenes” but will, if necessary, give monologue portions of the operas. He suggests to Scaria Hagen's monologue in Act I of Götterdämmerung if he can find a proper beginning and end to it in the music.

Lastly he worries that Frau Materna might wear her voice out by singing too many repertory operas during the Vienna season. She has the quality he is seeking, and if he were a Meyerbeer (that is, had unlimited power as Meyerbeer had with the Paris Opéra), he would remove her immediately from the theatre and save her strength for greater things.

Later that spring in Vienna, there was a concert conducted by Wagner at which Scaria sang Hagen's “Watch on the Rhine” from Act I of Götterdämmerung (mentioned as a possibility in the letter), along with other excerpts from the last two Ring operas. Wagner's relationship with Scaria began to get stormy, however, in January 1876, when Scaria, who was evidently deep in debt, asked a payment of 7,500 marks for August 1876, in addition to 250 marks for each day he spent in Bayreuth during July. Since all the singers had agreed to participate in The Ring for less than their usual fee or for nothing at all in order to get the giant work produced, Scaria's demands was clearly impossible for Wagner, not only because of the amount involved but because of the effect such a concession would have on the other singers. To Wagner's intense annoyance, Scaria had to be dropped from the cast.

After the 1876 Ring in Bayreuth, Wagner happened to hear Scaria do Wotan in a performance of Walküre in Berlin in 1881 and was greatly reconciled to him. This reconciliation resulted in Scaria's taking the part of Gurnemanz in the first Parsifal at Bayreuth in 1882 and even assuming responsibility for the production in 1884 after Wagner's death. Scaria's later career was marred by illness and brain damage, however, manifested in spells of complete forgetfulness during opera performances in Vienna and elsewhere. He died in July 1886.

The other set of letters is by Cosima Wagner (1837-1930) but only one is in her hand, the rest being dictated to others (possibly her daughters). There are five of them dating from 1874 to 1901; three are in German and two in French, Cosima's native language. The first letter is dated October 25, 1874, and is addressed on a surviving envelope simply to “Monsieur Franz Servais à Weimar.” It is merely in one sentence and thanks Servais for sending the Wagners some books. There is an amusing postscript, correcting the street address Servais (a Belgian musician from a well-known musical family in Brussels) gave in his previous letter to them. Cosima says their street is “Damm allée [in French, “digue,” meaning dam or bank]” and not “Damen [women] allée,” which, she states, is compromising!

The second letter (in German) is to a Dr. F. Geisinger concerning a concert “im Kroll'schen Lokale.” There was a Kroll'schen Theatre in Berlin, but it is difficult to know what the context of the letter is. The third, to an unknown addressee (but clearly from the salutation, “theurer Freund,” to someone personally close), is a few sentences of thanks for a gift or visit which Cosima reciprocates by sending back a picture and conveying warm regards from herself and her children.

The fourth letter (in French) is the longest of the five and the most important. It is dated March 16, 1894 and is addressed to Maurice Kufferath in Brussels. Kufferath (1852-1919) was well known at the time as a Belgian cellist and writer on music, pupil of one of the Servais family. He wrote several interesting monographs on Wagner's operas for Belgian newspapers and periodicals and translated a number of Wagner's prose works into French. He was appointed director of the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels in 1900, and it was there the first performance in French of The Ring took place.

Cosima, who jealously guarded the Bayreuth tradition and her husband's reputation after his death (she survived him by many years, living until the age of 92), not only helped to perpetuate the festivals but also edited the famous Mein Leben, omitting or changing anything derogatory. This letter shows how closely she kept track of what might pertain to Wagner's life and music.

I cannot tell you how much I was touched by your speaking to me about my son and about the impression he made in Brussels. I thank you from the bottom of my heart and want to tell you the emotion your sympathetic understanding caused me to feel before this manifestation of a talent, which becomes a support for our cause.

You have given me great pleasure, sir, in telling me your
intention of translating the three volumes of letters to my father and to Uhlig, Fischer, and Heine, and I accept your proposition with great satisfaction.

I pray you not to insist on replacing the initials with names. And, if I am not mistaken, French publicity is always distinguished from others by its delicate discretion. I remember that M. Doudan's letters and those of Prosper Mérimée contained a number of initials [alphabetical letters], and it seems to me that in a correspondence as eminent as that in question, it is important to set the strictest example relating to all personal questions.

I look forward to the work that you have promised me, and I know in advance with what interest I shall read it, because M. de Wolzogen has told me about it. I have asked him to write you on the subject of the second appendix which concerns the cuts he has told me about. I believe that M. Levi is mistaken about the way in which these cuts have been indicated. In 1865 (six years after Tristan was finished), there was never any question of a single cut during the work of producing Tristan for the theatre. In 1875 in Berlin, one concession was made for Niemann. That is all. The production in Munich took place four years later (1879) in a very short space of time; the result of the incident that was reported to you convinces me that Tristan could not nor ever should be given under ordinary theatrical conditions but ought to be reserved for exceptional occasions.

Let us not make too much of this; [my remarks] have not been directed to [the score] but much more to the whole production as presented in the theatre of today, where pedantic solemnity would be out of place.

Finally, never, never, has the Tristan instrumentation been found heavy; and if the orchestration of Parsifal is different, the reason for this belongs exclusively to the subject at hand and the themes it suggests. Each of the operas, from Flying Dutchman to Parsifal, has its own special scoring, just the way the poems each have their own language. The mystery of the creation of a great work of art does not allow for this kind of outside interference. And, if Tristan had been found heavy, it would have been scored again. In the same way, if the musical cuts had been indicated for any other reason than the inevitable imperfec-

tion of every production in the ordinary theatre, they would have been written into the score.

I believe that I owe you this correction. When I see M. Levi, I shall tell him that he has been mistaken in his opinion of the incident. Please see in this letter the value I attach to your work, and accept, sir, my warmest regards.

C. Wagner

The reference in the first paragraph to her son, Siegfried (1869-1930), probably indicates that he had just conducted a concert in Brussels.28 Siegfried at the time of this letter was 25 and just two years before had become assistant conductor at Bayreuth. He had originally thought of architecture as a career but had turned to music. He eventually (1906) became general director at Bayreuth and with his mother was one of the chief promoters of the festival into the early 20th century. Siegfried also composed a number of operas, the text and music of which he wrote himself.

Cosima's request for Kufferath to use initials instead of full names in his translations of letters may seem quaint to contemporary readers, but it is quite consistent with her attitude that privacy must be protected. Just how the cuts in Tristan came into question (whether by a written or verbal communication from Hermann Levi, one of Wagner's original conductors at Bayreuth) is uncertain. At any rate, in Cosima's remarks about this common practice in the opera house, we hear Wagner himself speaking. The same is true for her remarks about the scoring in Tristan and the vehemence with which she eloquently defends the differences between all the Wagnerian operas. These paragraphs are particularly interesting not because there is anything unusual about a composer or his alter ego defending the integrity of a work, but because they demonstrate the consistency with which the Wagner family guarded their tradition.

The last letter, to an unknown addressee (December 18, 1901), cannot be explained with any surety until more information comes to light about these later years in Bayreuth. Cosima is referring to an essay which seems to concern her son-in-law,

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28 There is a reference to Siegfried Wagner and Brussels in another Cosima Wagner letter. See Cosima Wagner and Houston Stewart Chamberlain: Im Briefwechsel 1888-1908, ed. Paul Pretzsch (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, Jr., 1934), p. 375. She also mentions there a book on Tristan by Kufferath to which she may be referring in paragraph four. Kufferath published a Guide thématique et analytique de Tristan et Isolde (Brussels: Schott Frères, 1894), but it has no appendix or mention of performance cuts.
Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and she reflects on the nature of his personality.\(^4\)

These letters, then, give fascinating glimpses into the lives, times, and activities of these two prominent people—one, the most famous composer of his time; the other, an illegitimate daughter of Franz Liszt, who deserted her legal husband for the tempestuous and difficult Wagner and bore him three illegitimate children. Cosima remained intensely loyal to Wagner through all kinds of adversity and steadfastly kept Wagner’s memory alive for the remainder of her life. The problems of deciphering this correspondence and relating it to the various individuals who can be identified as connected with the principals has meant a worthwhile enterprise for both history and music.

Appendix

Venedig 5 Dezember 58

Hochzuverehrender Herr!

Entschuldigen Sie, dass ich, durch ein sehr empfindliches Leiden an jeder Beschäftigung hindert, erst so spät Ihr letztes wertes Schreiben beantworte.


Mit grösster Hochschätzung und Verehrung
Ihr ergebenster
Richard Wagner

\(^4\) A letter of Chamberlain’s to Cosima Wagner (see Cosima Wagner und Chamberlain Briefwechsel, p. 624) may have something to do with this matter since the letter mentions

Denken Sie sich, hochverehrte Freundin, dass durch einen Zufall der sonderbarsten Art soeben erst Ihr Briefchen vom 16\(^{m}\) mir zu Händen kommt! Ich beele mich Ihnen zu sagen, wie sehr ich Ihnen dankbar dafür bin, dass Sie mir einiges Interesse für die bevorstehende Aufführung des Tannhäuser zeigen! Alles was in meiner Macht und im Gebiete der Möglichkeit steht, werde ich thun um Ihren Wunsch in Bezug auf Plätze zur ersten Aufführung zu erfüllen. Ich habe auf Alles Beschlag gelegt, was nicht abonnirt ist, oder, wie man mir sagt, vom kaiserlichen Haus, den Ministern u.s.w. verlangt wird; man stellt mir unglaublich wenig in Aussicht, viel weniger, als genügend ist, um bei mir eingelaufenen Bestellungen von Freunden, die oft von weit her kommen, zu befriedigen.

Wie ich da zu Stande kommen werde, weiss ich noch nicht, besonders da man mir sagt, dass bei solchen Gelegenheiten Alles, vom Controleur an bis zum Director hinauf mit den Plätzen speculirt.

Doch nehmen Sie meine Versicherung, dass ich wie ein Löwe kämpfen werde, um Ihnen die gewünschten Plätze zu verschaffen.

Liszt soll erst Ende dieses Monates eintreffen; einstweilen ist Bülow bereits vorausgeeilt.—

Nchmahls herzlichsten Dank für Ihre Freundschaft, so unschätzbar

Kann Sie die Generalprobe interessiren??
Wir hoffen für die Aufführung noch auf Montag, 25 Febr.

Ihrem ergebenen
Richard Wagner

221. Penzing
bei
Wien

Lieber Freund!
Ich habe für später einige Einladungen zu Concertaufführungen von Bruchstückn meiner neueren Arbeiten, wie ich sie in Wien und Petersburg zu Gehör brachte, angenommen. Darunter findet sich jedoch noch nichts aus dem westlichen
Deutschland, und ich gestehe, dass ich gern am Rhein einmal
in meiner Art etwas von mir zu Gehör brachte. Ich würde, da
ich namentlich um die Zeit manchen neu gewonnenen rus-
sischen Freund dort weiss, Wiesbaden gewählt haben wenn mir
dort vorzüglichere Kräfte zu Gebot stünden. Daher ist der
Wunsch in mir entstanden, meinen Zweck durch die Unter-
stützung Eurer vortrefflichen Kapelle in Darmstadt zu er-
reichen. Somit ersuche ich dich herzlichst, etwa folgende Ein-
richtung freundschaftlich in deine Hand nehmen zu wollen.

Am schmeichelhaftesten für mich und am ehrenvollsten für
beide Theile müsst es mir erscheinen, wenn S.K.H. der
Grossherzog mich selbst zu solch einer Aufführung einladen
wollte.

Durch S. E. des Freiherrn v. Dalwigk, der mich damals bereits
so überraschend liebenswürdig aufnahm, wäre dies, so denke
ich, zu erreichen.

Meine Wünsche waren dann, dass mir durch einen Gross-
herzoglichen Befehl das Orchester, sowie das Gesangpersonal
(soweit ich dessen bedarf) zu einer grossen Musikaufführung
im Darmstädter Hoftheatergebäude, zur Verfügung gestellt
werde. Zeit—Anfang September—wenn etwas früher nicht
möglich sein sollte. Gegenstände der Aufführung: Fragmente
aus meinen neuen Werken, die bisher auf den Theatern noch
nicht gegeben sind. Von Gesangskräften brauch’ ich haupt-
sächlich nur: 1 Tenor, 1 Baryton, 1 Bass—Chor fast gar nicht,
onder nur nach Umständen. Orchester die überwiegende Haupt-
sache.

Dadurch, dass mir S.K.H. der Grossherzog die bei erhöhten
Preisen stattfindende Einnahme, abzugsfrei allein zu Gebote
stellte, würde es zugleich um einen vaterländischen Künstler
von meiner Bedeutung sich ein rühmungswertes Verdienst er-
erben, da ich auf Fälle dieser Art einzig angewiesen bin, um
mir hinreichende Mittel zur ferneren Arbeitsruhe zu verschaf-
fen, indem ich sonst von keiner Seite eine Subvention, eine
Pension, oder einen Gehalt beziehe; meine neueren drama-
tischen Arbeiten aber der Art sind, dass sie nun nach gegliederten
ersten Aufführungen (welche unter den bestehenden Umständen
grosse Schwierigkeiten haben und daher sich sehr verzögern) auf
weitere Verbreitung auf den Theatern Aussicht haben.

Habe nun die Güte, und nimm dich meines Vorhabens
und meiner Bitte freundschaftlich an, und lass mich bald wissen, ob
ich auf ein günstiges Resultat hoffen darf.

Mit herzlichster Ergebenheit

dein

alter Freund

Richard Wagner


Mein werther Freund!
Ich bezeuge Ihnen, dass Sie mit den beiden Siegfrieden meine
besten Erwartungen erfüllt haben: Seien Sie hierüber ganz klar!
Sie haben sich Alles auf das Genaueste angeeignet was ich Ihnen
über den Charakter der Rolle sagte, sind darin sicher und fest,
und bringen Alles zu einer sehr wohltuenden Wirkung. Nun
bitte ich Sie jeden Zweifel hierüber fahren zu lassen, und—
ennen Ihnen dieser jetzt möglich ist—sich einzig nur noch (viel-
leicht nur ein wenig) mit den reinen Stimmungen zu be-
achtigen, die ja vorm Jahre schon nach der kürzesten Zeit
Ihrer Organ so förderlich gewesen waren, um es von der Beim-
ischung der Kehllate zu befreien, in denen Vorherrschaft Sie
gegenwärtig wieder mehr als Sie glauben dürften zurück ge-
fallen sind.

Ersehen Sie hierhin keinen Tadel, sondern die lebhafteste Sorge,
Ihre so bedeutende Leistung möglichst rein und vollendet zu
wissen. Lassen Sie sich ausserdem auch durch nichts irre machen.
Sie haben Grund zu einem vollen Vertrauen zu sich selbst!

Mit den besten Morgengrüssen

Ihr
treu ergebener

Richard Wagner

Bayreuth
5 Aug. 76.

Kann ich es mit Herr Engelhardt noch möglich machen, so
nehme ich Ihnen schon sofort den 'Froh' wieder ab; wenn nicht,
so tritt er doch mindestens von der 2ten Aufführung an für Sie
ein!

RW


* Bayreuth 7. Dec. 1874

Werther Freund und Genosse!
Den zweiten Act erhalten Sie in 8 Tagen, da mir Correctur-
exemplare davon angekündigt sind. Der dritte Act ist erst zur
Hälfte beim Stechen, doch wird auch er bald fertig sein.

Ich gedenke dann, den Wienern einige Bruchstücke (natürlich nur Orchesterzwischenspiele) aus der Götterdämmerung zum Besten zu geben; es widersteht mir, „Gesangsszenen“ zu geben; höchstens Monologe; finde ich Anfang und Schluss dazu, so würde ich auch Hagen’s Monolog im ersten Act denken; aber noch weiss ich nicht, wie und wo dies anzufangen und zu enden.

Grosse Sorge habe ich für Frau Materna, dass diese sich nicht durch unsinnige Repertoire-Anforderungen abnutzen lasst. Allerdings hat sie das rechte Zeug (—stets bleibe ich Ihnen dankbar!) aber—Mensch ist Mensch und Sänger ist Sänger! Wäre ich ein Meyerbeer, so nähme ich sie sofort vom Theater, um der grossen Sache ihre ganze Kraft zu erhalten.

Nun, für Sie habe ich keine Sorge! Bleiben Sie mir nur treu, dann ist’s gut!

Von Herzen der Ihrige
Richard Wagner

Bayreuth
21ste August 1877

Theuerster Freund,


C. Wagner

Bayreuth
Wahnfried den 20ste Dez. 1888

Monsieur,

J’ai reçu les livres que vous avez eu la bonté de m’envoyer, et c’est en vous en remerciant vivement, que je vous prie de recevoir toutes nos amitiés à mon mari et à moi.

Cosima Wagner

25 Octobre 74.
Bayreuth.

Damm allée pas Damen—allée ce qui est compromettant,
Damm veut dire Digue.

Envelope: Monsieur Franz Servais à Weimar.
In lower left corner: franco

Geehrter Herr Dr Fige,


C. Wagner

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naient nombre de lettres alphabétiques, et il me semble, qu’une correspondance d’un caractère aussi élevé que celle en question, il importe de donner l’exemple de la plus stricte réserve sur toutes les questions personnelles.

J’attends l’ouvrage, que vous voulez bien me promettre, et je sais d’avance, avec quel intérêt je le lirai, car Monsieur de Wolzogen m’en a parlé. Je l’avais prié de vous écrire au sujet du second appendice sur les coupures, qu’il m’a communiqué. Je crois, que Monsieur Levi s’est trompé sur la disposition dans laquelle ces coupures lui ont été indiquées. En 1865 (donc 6 ans après que Tristan eut été terminé) il ne fut durant tout le labeur de la mise en scène de Tristan jamais question d’une seule coupure. En 1875 à Berlin, une concession fut faite à Niemann. Voilà tout. La représentation de Munich eut lieu 4 ans après (1879), donc, dans un espace de temps très rapproché; ce qui ressort de l’incident, que vous avez été rapporté c’est, la conviction, que Tristan ne pouvait ni ne devait être donné dans les conditions ordinaires du théâtre, mais devait être réservé pour des occasions exceptionnelles.

Ne fassons point de sentiments, n’a point été dit par rapport à la partition [sic], mais bien vis à vis d’un ensemble de chose telle que le représente le théâtre actuel, où une solemnité pédante n’est point de mise.

Enfin, jamais, au grand jamais, l’instrumentation de Tristan n’a été trouvée chargée; et si dans Parsifal l’orchestration est autre, cela tient exclusivement au sujet et aux motifs qu’il impliquait. Chacune des œuvres, depuis le Vaisseau fantôme jusqu’à Parsifal a son instrumentation spéciale, de même que chacun des poèmes a un langage propre. Le mystère de la création de chef d’œuvre n’admet point ce genre d’influence extérieure. Et, si Tristan avait été trouvé trop chargé, il eut été instrumenté à nouveau. De même que si des coupures avaient été indiquées par une autre raison, que par l’inévitable défec-tuosité de toutes les représentations sur les théâtres ordinaires [sic], elles eussent été inscrites dans la partition.

J’ai cru vous devoir cette rectification, monsieur. Quand je verrai mon ami, monsieur Levi, je lui dirai qu’il s’est mépris sur le sens de l’incident. Veuillez voir dans cette communication le prix que j’attache d’avance à votre travail, et croyez monsieur à mes sentiments bien distingués.

C. Wagner

Bayreuth

Wahnfried 16 Mars 94.

Envelope addressed to Monsieur Maurice Kufferath, Rue du Congres 2, Bruxelles, with Cosima’s name near the postmark.

*

Hochgeehrter Herr!

Ich möchte nicht verabsäumen, Ihnen für die Weisung, welche Sie der Redaktion Ihres geschätzten Blattes gaben, und für die Aufnahme des Chamberainschen Dementis meinen verbindlichsten Dank auszusprechen.

Der Aufsatz war mir dadurch sehr auffällig, als
1) Chamberains Angriff vornehmlich der Angelegenheit Spahn galt und dies in dem Aufsatz der N. N. gar nicht bemerkt wurde.
2) dass über den Schutz Parsifals allenthalben geschrieben worden ist, ohne dass man auf den Gedanken gekommen wäre, uns damit in Zusammenhang zu bringen.
3) Dass Chamberlain eine so pragnant unabhängige Persönlichkeit ist, dass Niemand, der nicht eine boshafte Absicht damit verbunden, je die Meinung äußern wird, er lasse sich seine Ansichten dictiren und seinen Ton angeben.

(Weil seine Sprache ungebührlich in diesem Aufsatz gewesen ist, so ist das doch kein Grund um ihn mit uns in Verbindung zu bringen. Dies ist auch nirgends sonst geschehen—obgleich der Artikel in der Fackel sich sehr verbreitet hat.)


C. Wagner

Bayreuth

18 Dec. 1901.
A Story Replete with Horror

BY WILLISTON R. BENEDICT

Among the books in the private collection of Mr. Robert H. Taylor, which is now housed in the Firestone Library, is a fine and uncut copy in the original boards of James Hogg's only novel, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner. Hogg (1770-1835) was born into a humble farming family of the Lowlands of Scotland. He taught himself to read and write at an early age, and had the good fortune, at about the age of 30, to be drawn from rural obscurity into Edinburgh's literary society through the aid and encouragement of Sir Walter Scott. Like his mentor, Hogg proved successful at publishing some volumes of poetry before turning to the composition of works of fiction about 1818. By 1824, the date of his novel's publication, he had demonstrated to the Edinburgh "literati" his interest in and vast knowledge of the traditional tales of rural Scotland, which constitute one of the principal sources of his novel.

Hogg's few references, in his other works and in his chiefly unpublished correspondence, to the Justified Sinner provide little information as to his intention in writing it. William Blackwood, Edinburgh's most important publisher of the age, had evidently declined to publish the novel, and it appeared instead under the London imprint of T. N. Longman and his associates in the summer of 1824. Departing from his previous practice, Hogg authorized publication of the book without the inclusion of his name on the title page. In a letter to Blackwood dated 28 June 1824 Hogg wrote, with considerable urgency in his usual hurried manner: "There is one hint I beseech you to remember to give. . . . It is that as some one of our friends are likely to be the first efficient noticers of The Confessions they will not notice them at all as mine but as written by a Glasgow man by all means. . . . This will give excellent and delightful scope and freedom." In the preface to another volume published in 1832, Hogg explained his desire for anonymous authorship: "The next year, 1824, I published The Confessions of a Sinner; but it being a story replete with horror, after I had written it I durst not venture to put my name to it: so it was published anonymously, and of course did not sell very well."

Other comments on the book in Hogg's correspondence are rare. In a letter to Blackwood, probably dated 6 August 1828, he wrote that a certain Mrs. Hughes "insists on the Confessions of a Sinner being republished with my name, as she says it is positively the best story of that frightful kind that ever was written. I think you must buy up the remaining copies [of the 1824 edition] and make an edition of them for a trial." This suggestion resulted in the reprinting in 1828 of the novel under Hogg's name, but with the title altered to The Suicide's Grave. A substantially revised version, expunged of its more sensational passages, was issued in 1837 as The Confessions of a Fanatic. Subsequent editions of the novel utilized the text of 1837 until 1895, when it was at last reprinted with the text of the original 1824 edition fully restored. Another edition containing Hogg's initial version appeared in 1924, with a short but perceptive introduction by T. Earle Welby. But not until an edition was printed in 1947, containing a cogent and more extended analysis of the novel by André Gide, did the Confessions begin to receive the serious attention of scholars of 19th-century Scottish literature. The "bowdlerization" of Hogg's novel throughout the 19th century gives a special importance to its initially published text under Hogg's own supervision.

For the setting of his "story replete with horror" Hogg chose Edinburgh and its environs in the early years of the 18th century. The memory of the terrible period of civil and religious conflict in Scotland during the second half of the 17th century remained vivid in the minds of men and women ca. 1710, as did the powerful influence of Calvinist doctrine. The most inveterate Calvinists were the children of those Cameronians who were the determined opponents of episcopacy and of the doctrine of salvation through the efficacy of good works. The anonymous reviewer of Hogg's novel in London's Literary Gazette (July 1824) shrewdly judged that "the main object of his book . . . seems to be to satirize the excess of that Calvinical or Cameronian doctrine, which rests the salvation of mankind entirely on faith without good works." The novel functions principally as a severe indictment of the self-righteousness of the "just

* Ibid.
Pharisee," and as a fearful warning of the perils of religious mania, which can, as here, lead to a career of homicide. Hogg's presentation of this thesis in the *Confessions* constitutes the subtlest development of it in his works of fiction, and may well comprise its most powerful and original realization in British fiction.

To personify the homicidal "righteous Pharisee" Hogg created as his protagonist Robert Wringhim Colwan. Educated exclusively in the Calvinist tenets of the predestined salvation of a few souls and the damnation of the majority of mankind, Colwan espouses the unique efficacy of faith in one's personal salvation to justify the commission of crimes against those imagined to be personal and ideological enemies. These crimes culminate in a succession of homicides that envelop most of the members of Colwan's immediate family. He is compelled to perpetrate these acts by a mysterious being who, while giving his name as Gil-Martin, embodies most of the attributes traditionally associated by Scottish Calvinists with the Devil. The Cameronians, obsessed by the power and omnipresence of the forces of darkness, ascribed to these invisible entities an almost palpable reality. The Devil was to them the most fascinating and terrifying of imagined supernatural powers, possessing among other gifts the ability to appear and disappear at will and the possibility of assuming the physiognomy and shape of any mortal. Combining the talents of Calvinist minister and Scottish lawyer, Satan is described by one of Hogg's characters as often posing as "a strick believer in a' the truths of Christianity." It is while pretending to be a strict coreligionist of Colwan that Gil-Martin incites him to commit the succession of homicides and to kill himself after his insane acts have been revealed to the authorities. One of Gil-Martin's chief devices of persuasion was the assumption of Colwan's precise appearance, so that the latter seemed to constitute Colwan's "second self." In the *Confessions* this delusion of the "second self" is linked in Colwan's mind with the possibility that his intrinsic self has been possessed by the Devil. In fact it represents a projection into visible form of Colwan's own spiritual pride, worldly ambition, and unresolvable inner conflicts.

While composing his novel during the early 1820s, Hogg was evidently relying upon the current vogue of the "Gothic novel" to assure it a readership readily excited by the terrifying and the improbable in fiction. A powerful revival of interest in German literature, especially of the sensational variety, had followed the publication in London in 1813 of Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*. There ensued numerous translations of and reviews concerning German works of this genre from 1817 through 1828, chiefly by Hogg's fellow Scotsmen Thomas Carlyle and Robert Pearse Gillies. Preoccupation with the supernatural was an inherent theme in this proliferation of publications, some of the most interesting of which employ the idea of the "second self" (or "Doppelgänger") to create an atmosphere of suspense and terror. Hogg's novel appears to be the only extended work of fiction published in the British Isles during the early 19th century to utilize the motif of the "second self" in a manner comparable to such contemporary German authors as E.T.A. Hoffmann and Jean-Paul Richter. The works most resembling Hogg's novel to be translated at this period were Adalbert von Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl* and Hoffmann's sole completed novel, *Die Elixiere des Teufels*. (The latter is unique in contemporary German fiction in linking the "Doppelgänger" theme to a criminally insane protagonist, resembling Hogg's Colwan.)

Can the appearance in 1824 in English translations of *Peter Schlemihl* and *Die Elixiere des Teufels* have materially influenced Hogg's treatment of the "second self" in the *Confessions?* A notice in the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* for April indicates that Hogg's book was already in the press. It remained unpublished, however, until mid-July, when both the *Literary Gazette* and the magazine *John Bull* carried advertisements (on 17 and 18 July respectively) that it had just been published. However, the appearance of Hogg's important anecdote "A Scots Mummy," later incorporated almost verbatim into the novel, in the issue of *Blackwood's Magazine* for August 1823 indicates that Hogg had for many months pondered the composition of his book, and was already preparing readers of that periodical for its subsequent publication. It seems probable, therefore, that Hogg concentrated his efforts on completing the novel during the period from autumn 1822 to spring 1824, and that it was largely completed by April 1824. Information in *John Bull* indicates the prior publication of both of the German novels; the periodical advertised *Peter Schlemihl* as available to the public on 14 March, while the first announcement of Gillies's translation of *Die Elixiere des Teufels* appeared there on 27 June. While the friendship of Hogg and Gillies complicates the problem of the influence of the latter's translation on Hogg's novel,...
one must conclude that it has so far proved impossible to establish any documented influence upon Hogg’s employment of the “second self” in his novel by any contemporary German author.

Although he relied for the success of the Confessions upon the popularity of English and German fiction of the supernatural, Hogg introduced important elements into his novel which set it—and his numerous works of shorter fiction—apart from such authors as Ann Radcliffe, “Monk” Lewis, and Charles Robert Maturin. Hogg’s works have as their settings predominantly rural environments, with characters drawn from the Scottish peasantry or lesser landed gentry rather than from the aristocracy or wealthy middle class. Also notable are the frequent use by Hogg’s characters of Scots dialect, in contrast to the more genteel language of “Gothic” romances; a reliance upon prosaic and homely details to enhance the sense of horror; a less inhibited employment of explicit details of physically hideous and morally shocking occurrences; and, above all, a firm and frequently demonstrated conviction that ordinary men and women constantly experience the intervention of the supernatural in their everyday lives. The traditional elements of superstition, communicated orally from generation to generation among the Scottish peasantry, and the long legacy of Scottish Calvinism influenced Hogg’s Confessions and his shorter works of fiction to a considerably greater degree than did the conventions of the “Gothic novel.” These traditional themes included retribution for real or imagined grievances, with supernatural intervention being often employed to reveal past crimes and impose a vengeance (like that directed against Colwan) that human justice could not provide. Linked to this idea is Calvinism’s emphasis upon the punishment of the “unrighteous,” rather than upon their redemption, an emphasis that contributed to the fearful and mysterious ethos of Hogg’s novel. Another element is Hogg’s frequent use of dreams or hallucinations to prove (in Hogg’s words) “in a very forcible manner, a distinct existence of the soul, and its lively and rapid intelligence with... a world of spirits with which it has no acquaintance, when the body is lying dormant, and the same to the soul as if sleeping in death.”

Despite the modest but unflagging success of his previous published volumes of prose fiction, the Confessions proved a complete failure with the reading public of 1824. The enigmatic nature of the book also baffled the four anonymous London reviewers who took the trouble to write about it after its publication. The critic for the Westminster Review (October 1824) dismissed Colwan as an insane fanatic, and Gil-Martin as a “mongrel devil.” The reviewer in the New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal (November 1824) attacked Hogg’s style as “exaggerated and extravagant,” ridiculed the narrative as totally implausible, and denounced the author for his adverse view of Calvinism. On 17 July there appeared in the Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres a much more searching analysis of the novel. The critic found it, although “mystical and extravagant,” nonetheless “curious and interesting, such as we might have expected from Mr. Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, whose [creation] it is.” The reviewer in the British Critic (July 1824) was also perspicacious enough to recognize Hogg as the author. While judging the novel a “most uncouth and unpleasant volume,” he described and even reproduced verbatim many of its incidents in the review, and perceptively linked Hogg’s work—in “machinery” and themes (including that of the “second self”)—to Gillies’s translation of the Elixiere des Teufels. After four reviews, generally adverse in tenor, the commercial failure of Hogg’s novel was assured. As a result of this contemporary neglect, the book enjoys a reputation for scarcity among modern collectors of Scottish and English literature, copies in the original condition of publication (such as the Taylor copy) being exceedingly uncommon.

With the possible exception of one or two of his short tales, nothing in Hogg’s copious body of prose fiction prepares the reader for a book of such psychological subtlety and tension as The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner. It was, in fact, much closer in conception and spirit to certain celebrated works of German Romanticism than to the fiction of Hogg’s own compatriots, including of course the vastly more popular Sir Walter Scott. Hogg’s combination of traditional, theological, supernatural, and psychological motifs in a manner alien to the readers of his own day delayed critical recognition of the literary importance and originality of his work for more than a century.
Library Notes

A FIRST AND SECOND TONGUE

The first European language spoken in America of which we have any certainty was Spanish. And the accelerating size of the Spanish-named population in the United States has made it unquestionably the second language of the nation today. "A First and Second Tongue: Nine Spanish-Speaking Peoples in America," the exhibition in the gallery of the Library from January 14th through April 10th, 1983, set out to suggest the rich diversity of the Spanish peoples who make up that bilingual portion of the country. It outlined their complex historical roots and the great cultural differences these various histories have produced.

Visitors to the gallery found their initial attention demanded by a stunning series of photographs by Douglas Kent Hall of scenes from a recent Matachines dance at the Hispano village of Alcalde in New Mexico. Also helping visually to integrate the exhibition was a calligraphic banner that ran the length of the gallery. The text of the banner was taken from the "Hymn to the Statehood of New Mexico," remembered by an 81-year-old Hispano and painted as a flowing 16th-century inscription by Mark Argetinger.

The nine peoples: Hispanics, Mestizos, Californios, Tejanos, Chicanos, Puerto Ricanos, Cubano-Americanos, Centroamericanos, and Sudamericanos were represented by printed, manuscript, and iconographic materials, ranging from two copies of the first dated (1493) Latin version of the letter in which Columbus informed the Spanish crown of his discoveries to recent periodical issues from Chicano and Puerto Rican presses.

The primary intent of the exhibited materials was to demonstrate that no Spanish speaker in the United States can be easily categorized; that Spanish America is unpredictable. This was forcefully suggested early in the exhibition: the first Spanish spoken deep in the interior of what is now the United States was spoken not by a native Spaniard, but by a North African "Moor"—whether African or Arab we can only guess—the Estevanico who accompanied Cabeza de Vaca across the South-

Views of the Exhibition, "A First and Second Tongue: Nine Spanish-Speaking Peoples in America"
Photographs by John W.H. Simpson
west from 1528 to 1538 and who met his death at Zuñi in New Mexico in 1539.

A public lecture, “Al Norte del Rio Bravo: Life in Mexican America,” by Arturo Madrid was presented on February 9 under the sponsorship of the Friends to complement the exhibition.

—ALFRED L. BUSH
New and Notable

RECENT ACQUISITIONS—MANUSCRIPTS

Pearl Buck

Pearl Buck is well known for her novels on Chinese life, and in particular for The Good Earth. Princeton is fortunate to have a great deal of manuscript material about her, particularly in the extensive John Day Company files (she was married to Richard Walsh, president of John Day) and in the Harold Ober Associates archive. We have now had a large and important gift of files relating to Pearl Buck from the David Lloyd literary agency, given by David Lloyd’s daughter Andrea Lloyd. The gift came in 15 filing drawers.

These files contain the publishing rights for various markets, and include the original contract with John Day to publish The Good Earth. There are hundreds of agreements for publications in well-known languages such as Spanish, Italian, or Japanese; more unusual are the agreements for publications in Braille, Esperanto, Yiddish, Arabic, Anamite, Bulgarian, and 13 Indian languages (among them Bengali, Hindi, Sinaese, Assamese, Tamil, and Telugu). There is a letter from the Danish Ministry of State expressing the desire to publish The Good Earth in the Greenlandic language “for the use of sick persons” (presumably for use in hospitals). There is a letter reporting a Chinese movie of The Good Earth to be shown at the Jong Young Theatre in New York City in 1955, a movie quite unknown to the makers of the authorized MGM movie, and reportedly more closely based on the novel. There are many letters from Pearl Buck herself, some outlining her ideas for new books. She shows a keen interest in the wide influence of her works as reflected in her royalties. On the other hand, she refuses to write for certain non-literary magazines, no matter what their financial lure; and she also offers articles or short pieces for free to certain good causes that she wants to support. She was a hard worker: a letter of July 25, 1949 reports that she will finish her next novel, God's Men, by November 1, and her next John Sedges's (a nom de plume) novel by January 1. She says she can “stop and fill any definite market” demand for short stories at any time.

David Lloyd acted as agent for Pearl Buck until 1957, when she turned to Ober. The Ober archives at Princeton continue the story. We have a wealth of information about all phases of the work of this popular novelist who did so much to shape the average American’s view of China during the thirties and forties and before the Communist takeover. There is much material for research here, and we are grateful to Andrea Lloyd for this extensive donation.

George Washington’s Teenage Stepson

In December we were delighted to receive a George Washington letter as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. William M. Cahn, Jr. ’33, in memory of De Witt Millhauser. It is written in his own hand, and is a much more personal letter than the usual Washington letters one sees of the Revolutionary period. The letter was written on July 27, 1769, 10 years after Washington had married Martha Custis, widow of Daniel Parke Custis, and relates to her son John Parke Custis. Washington’s stepson was now 15, and had been sent the year before to the school in Caroline County, Virginia, run by the Reverend Jonathan Boucher. The Writings of George Washington prints Washington’s letter of inquiry to Boucher, May 30, 1768, after which the arrangements were made. Jacky, as the boy was called, was sent to his new school accompanied by a man servant and two horses. Washington’s ledger has the entry in 1769 “paid Rev. Mr. Boucher for schooling and Board of J. P. Custis, servant, horses, etc. £42-1-11.”

Jonathan Boucher was an Englishman, resident in Virginia since 1757. In 1770, he was appointed rector of St. Anne’s in Annapolis, Maryland, and moved his school there taking with him from Virginia Jacky Custis and one other pupil of the 30 or so enrolled. Despite his association with Washington, Boucher was no revolutionary and increasingly disliked the pre-revolutionary talk of the colonies. A firm loyalist, he and his wife returned to England in 1775 and never came back. In later life he wrote Reminiscences of an American Loyalist: 1738-1789, published by his grandson Jonathan Bouchier [sic] in 1925; these included rather disparaging comments about Washington as he knew him during the four years of Jacky’s schooling. Although many letters between Boucher and Washington have been published, this particular letter is unpublished as far as we know. In it Washington discusses the care of his teenage stepson: he
writes about the cost of feed for Jacky’s horses, comments on a change of servant, and requests the purchase of silver buckles for Jacky’s shoes. He also expresses Mrs. Washington’s typical 18th-century fear of excessive swimming (even on a hot July day).

Mount Vernon
July 27, 1769

Reverend Sir,

By Jacky Custis you will receive the amount of your account to wit £ 42:1:11, for which sum you will please to send me a receipt (when opportunity offers) as vouchers are necessary to pass my accounts by.

I am unable to say whether your charge for his Horses, is high or low, that depending wholly upon the manner of their keeping, of which you only can judge—a horse not in high feeding Winter and Summer, nor constantly used, may be kept in very good order with five or six Barrels of Corn and 1000 Weight of Fodder or less a year; but you will be pleased for the time to come, to charge for this Article, and for his Schooling, proportionate to the expense, and your care and trouble in his Education, and I shall pay it with cheerfulness, as I am more and was for his Improvement than a little paltry saving and am glad to find that his diligence has met with a spur from the alteration of your management of him; and am pleased likewise to hear that his new Servant is like to answer his purpose better than the old.

I have to request the favour of you to get for Jack a pair of Silver shoe and knee buckles of the pattern he chooses, as also a pair of Silver spurs from some of the Silver Smiths in Fredericksburg; and the cost of them shall be paid as soon as I am inform’d thereof—I have further to desire, at the request of Mrs. Washington, that you will restrain Jacky from going too frequently into the water, or staying too long in it when there; as she is apprehensive of bad consequences from either.

We should have been glad to have met with Miss Boucher at the Springs, for which place we shall not set off till

Monday. Our compliments are offered to her and yourself and I am

Rev Sir
Your most obedient servant
G. Washington

To the Rev. Mr. Boucher in Caroline

—JEAN F. PRESTON

RECENT ACQUISITIONS—BOOKS

Dickens, Joyce, and Others

Among the 14 titles that came as a recent gift from Dr. Howard T. Behrman are a rare pamphlet and a special presentation copy.

When James Joyce was 19 and in his last year at University College, Dublin, he submitted an essay to the editor of the new college magazine, St. Stephen’s, protesting the parochialism of the Irish Literary Theatre, founded in 1899. The editor rejected it. Since his close friend Francis Skeffington had suffered the same fate with his essay advocating equal status for women, they decided to publish their work at their own expense. Richard Ellmann, Joyce’s biographer, tells us “they went into Gerard Brothers ... and had 85 copies [of Two Essays] printed, probably in November 1901. The two authors distributed them with the assistance of Stanislaus Joyce, who had the duty of handing one in to George Moore’s maid servant.”

Never one to mince his words, Joyce began his attack with a rude quotation: “No man, said the Nolan, can be a lover of the true or the good unless he abhors the multitude; and the artist, though he may employ the crowd, is very careful to isolate himself.” His brother Stanislaus urged him “to clarify this reference to Giordano Bruno of Nola,” according to Ellmann, “but James replied ‘Laymen should be encouraged to think,’ and fancied that when the students discovered who the Nolan was, they might go on to read some of his work.” His readers had no trouble with the rest of the paragraph. The Irish Literary Theatre, he recalled, was established as “the champion of progress,” at war with “commercialism and vulgarity,” but it had in recent months “surrendered to the popular will” and “must now be considered the property of the rabblement of the most
belated race in Europe.” He pointed a finger at the directors who were “shy of presenting Ibsen, Tolstoy, or Hauptmann, where even Countess Cathleen is pronounced vicious and damnable,” and argued that “dramatists of the second rank, Sudermann, Björnson, and Giacosa, can write very much better plays than the Irish Literary Theatre has staged.” Not by accident Joyce had spent the summer of 1901 translating two of Hauptmann’s plays—Vor Sonnenaufgang and Michael Kramer—with the obvious intent of persuading the directors to present them. He was indignant when he learned in October that they had chosen two hopelessly Irish plays, Douglas Hyde’s Casadh-an-tSugdán and a reworking of an Irish heroic legend, Diarmaid and Grania, by George Moore and W. B. Yeats.

But parochial problems were not Joyce’s only subject. “Meanwhile, what of the artists?” he asks in the middle of his essay. After castigating Yeats and Moore, he defines his position. This at the age of 19: “If an artist courts the favour of the multitude he cannot escape the contagion of its fetishism and deliberate self-deception, and if he joins in a popular movement he does so at his own risk. Therefore the Irish Literary Theatre by its surrender to the trolls has cut itself adrift from the line of advancement. Until he has freed himself from the mean influences about him—sodden enthusiasm and clever insinuation and every flattering influence of vanity and low ambition—no man is an artist at all.” Three years later Joyce would be elaborating this credo in his long autobiographical work, Stephen Hero, which he published in 1914, greatly condensed, as A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. But that is another and a complicated matter. The Library owns, at last, a rare and pristine copy of Joyce’s first “book.”

Charles Dickens’s second book, The Posthumous Papers of The Pickwick Club, made him famous at the age of 24. First published serially under the pseudonym of Boz, these literary sketches were intended merely as a prose accompaniment to caricatures by the popular artist Robert Seymour. But the benevolent Samuel Pickwick captured England’s imagination, and the sketches were gathered into one volume in 1837 with Dickens’s name on the title page. In October 1841 he presented an inscribed copy to his doctor, Frederick Salmon. By that time he had published Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, and The Old Curiosity Shop. Laid in the book is a signed autograph letter which was all that was needed to persuade Dr. Behrman to add this Pickwick to his collection. It reads as follows:
My dear Salmon

I don't wait to beg your acceptance of the enclosed until you formally dismiss me, because I don't want to give any appearance of ceremony to what is a spontaneous and most heartfelt emotion—though a very poor token—of gratitude.

Put these books upon some spare shelf, for my sake—and let it be upon some shelf which has room for all I may write hereafter. Trust me that though they should be a hundred volumes, I will never once forget that row of yours.

I cannot thank you enough for, or tell you how much I feel, your zealous kindness and attention to me, or the skill with which you have (under God) brought me through this distressing illness. I can only say with all the earnestness of which my not-unearnest nature is capable, 'I thank you.'

Believe me, ever
Faithfully and Sincerely yours,
Dickens

Frederick Salmon, Esquire.
You told me once that Mrs. Salmon laughed too much at my books. I hope she will find some passages in the old curiosity shop to make her cry, without making her less happy or less charitable than they found her.

—RICHARD M. LUDWIG
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Explanatory notes by J. Merrill Knapp
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ed. Michael Davitt Bell
The first American novel, written in
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GEORGE CRUIKSHANK: A REVALUATION
ed. Robert L. Patten
258 pp.  44 plates.  1974.  $10.00

ESSAYS ON THE ROSSETTIS
ed. Robert S. Fraser
117 pp.  11 illus.  1972.  $10.00

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON: A CATALOGUE OF
COLLECTIONS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
RARE BOOKS
Alexander D. Wainwright
142 pp.  8 plates.  1971.  $12.50

WILLIAM BLAKE, ENGRAVER
Charles Ryskamp
intro. Geoffrey Keynes
A Descriptive Catalogue of an Exhibition
61 pp.  12 plates.  1969.  $3.50
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