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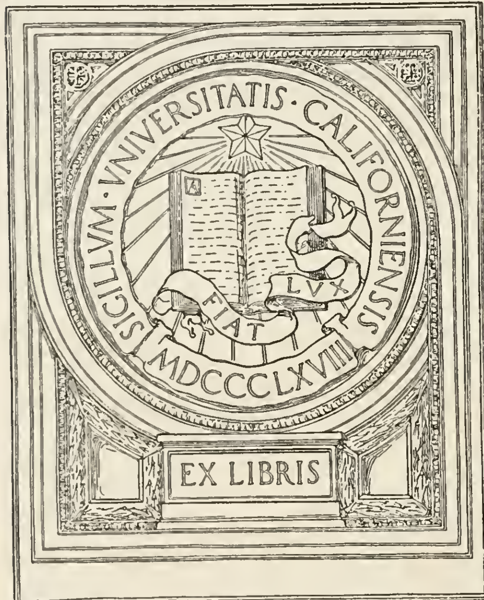

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LONDON THEATRES.

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EARLY
LONDON THEATRES.

[In the Fields.]

BY

T. FAIRMAN ORDISH, F.S.A.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS.

Have we not houses of purpose built with great charges for the maintenance of them, and that without the liberties, as who shall say, there, let them say what they will, we will play.'

JOHN STOCKWOOD'S SERMON, 1578.

LONDON :
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1894.

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To the Memory of

JAMES ORCHARD HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS

AND

WILLIAM RENDLE.

PREFACE.

THE late J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, whose life-long labours in Shakespearean and Elizabethan literature made his opinion of the greatest importance, was struck with my attempt, in the pages of the *Antiquary*, to cast the story of the Shakespeare stage into a narrative of the playhouses; and he urged me to bring my work to completion in a book on the subject. The present volume represents the first half of the fulfilment of a promise which I made to him.

It may suffice here to briefly indicate what appear to be points of novelty. The view put forward as to the origin of the playhouse—and the intimate relation between that origin and the fact that the earliest playhouses were erected 'in the Fields' outside the town—is perhaps the most important of these. The account of the official war which was waged over the playhouses between

the Corporation and the Privy Council, although drawn from printed records, is new as a narrative, and fresh as a contribution to history. The chief point of novelty, with regard to the theatres on the south side of the river, is seen in the treatment of Newington Butts, in the chapter on 'The Surrey Side,' and in that on 'Newington Butts and the Rose.' The upshot is practically to rescue from oblivion another of the old playhouses.

At one time the theatres with which this book is concerned had but a vague existence in history. The only playhouses that had a definite and tangible existence were the Globe and the Blackfriars, and these had attained their conspicuous place owing to the enthusiastic investigation inspired by the name of Shakespeare. This was the condition of the subject when the Variorum Shakespeare was published in 1821, in the Prolegomena of which Malone's 'History of the Stage' was republished. A few lines would suffice to cover all that there is told of the playhouses whose history has been compressed into this volume — The Theatre, the Curtain, Newington Butts, the Rose, the Hope, the Swan. The account of these theatres published by Collier about ten years later certainly added to the proportions of their history; but all his work has become deservedly discredited owing to his inveterate habit of loose and inaccurate statement. It is to the late Halliwell-Phillipps that we owe the

recovery of the history of The Theatre and of the Curtain ; and prompted and assisted by him, and generously encouraged and helped also by Dr. Furnivall, the late Mr. Rendle made some extremely valuable additions to our knowledge of the Bankside and the playhouses there. With regard to the work of the late J. Payne Collier—his 'History of Dramatic Poetry and Annals of the Stage,' in 3 vols.—it is unfortunately necessary to state in plain terms that it is quite unreliable (although it was reissued so recently as 1879). I have had occasion in the following pages to expose some characteristic ways in which he has misled students of this subject, but only when such exposure has been necessary to the point concerned. If the present volume and its successor on the urban theatres are justified at all, they should take the place, at least, of that portion of Collier's work which he called 'Annals of the Stage.'

With regard to the vexed question of 'Paris Garden Theatre,' it will be seen that the evidence on which I chiefly rely is furnished in the maps which are included in this volume. But the way in which Collier is primarily responsible for the myth is exposed in the chapter on 'The Amphitheatres,' and the grounds for bestowing upon the Bear-Garden and Hope various references and facts which hitherto have been ascribed to the supposed amphitheatre in Paris Garden manor

are fully disclosed in the last two chapters of my book. The conclusion arrived at offers a contrast to the resuscitation of Newington Butts in a previous chapter; for an examination of the evidence leaves nothing tangible in support of the existence of either an amphitheatre or playhouse within the manor of Paris Garden before the date of the Swan.

A considerable stir was made in the year 1888 by the publication of a pamphlet by Dr. Gaedertz, containing a drawing of the Swan Theatre, copied from the papers of one De Witt, who apparently visited this theatre in or about the year 1596. It was natural that some excitement should have been caused by so interesting a discovery; but at this date it may be permissible to observe that the inevitable result of the discussion was to distort the significance of the find, and to magnify its real importance. There were those in England who, like the learned Doctor in Germany, took occasion to travel very widely over the subject generally, making the Swan, for the time being, the centre of interest, as aforetime the Globe had been the shining orb, around which the other playhouses glimmered in fitful obscurity. In the present volume the discovery takes its place in the general history of the Swan, and the effect is to restore it to its proper proportions and perspective. It will be seen that it forms a picturesque addition to the

subject, but that it really contributes very little to the stock of information already possessed. This volume deals only with the theatres which were in existence at the time of De Witt's visit, and this circumstance not only adds something of homogeneity to the book, but also offers the best means for estimating the true nature of the contribution made to the subject by this interesting notice of the Elizabethan stage. The Globe was of later date, and although it was one of the theatres 'in the fields,' I have reserved it for a subsequent volume, where it will be treated in connection with Blackfriars Theatre, with whose history it is inextricably bound up.

My thanks are hereby tendered to Dr. F. J. Furnivall for permission to reproduce the Norden Map, given in his edition of Harrison's 'England' (New Shakspere Society), which answered the purposes of this book better than the version of the map in Norden's 'Middlesex,' which was at hand. It will be seen that other publications, brought out under the inspiring influence of Dr. Furnivall, have been laid under contribution (including Mr. Rendle's account of the Bankside theatres), and that many a useful note has been furnished from these sources. I have been very scrupulous in making acknowledgments and giving references throughout the ensuing pages; there remains one instance of indebtedness which is too

general to be acknowledged in this way, and I gladly therefore introduce it here. I allude to an interesting article in the *Builder* by Mr. H. W. Brewer, which suggested the brief description of some features of monastic London on pp. 2-4. With regard to what is said on p. 200 concerning the lease of the Rose Theatre, I perceived too late that my puzzlement as to the dual lesseeship of Pope and Henslowe had induced an equal incertitude of expression. This I have endeavoured to correct in a note on p. 283.

In conclusion, I have to point out that the subject of this volume is described in the title-page, and that I have not been tempted to wander in the fields of the literary drama ; that is to say, my subject is the stage and theatrical history, not the history of plays or dramatic literature, except when I have found that my subject seems to throw some fresh light on these. Within its limits, I hope this history will be found not unworthy of the subject, or of the devotion of those to whose memory it is dedicated.

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Reproduced from the Plan
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N IN BRAUN AND HOGENBERG'S
rum, 1572.

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LONDON THEATRES.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE THE PLAYHOUSES.

ELIZABETH had been reigning eighteen years when the first theatre was built in London, and when she came to the throne it wanted a year to complete the quarter of a century from the Reformation. Taking the year 1536 as the date of the dissolution of the London monasteries and religious houses, and 1576 as the date of the building of the first theatre, we have a period of forty years in which a great change was made in the aspect of London, and in which a great advance was made by the English drama. The change is typified in the fact that the first London theatre was erected on a part of the site of a suppressed religious establishment.

It will serve to place the London theatres in perspective if we glance beyond them into the

London which knew them not. The map* which is prefixed to this book indicates the extent of the city at that time. The map is probably taken from an older one, because it shows St. Paul's with the spire, which was destroyed in 1561. We may regard it as a plan of London at about the period of the Reformation, and it gives a fairly good idea of monastic London. The religious establishments were not all suppressed at once, and in most cases the fabrics existed for some considerable time after the formal act of dissolution.

There were an extraordinary number of parish churches in the city before the Reformation, but they were in point of size insignificant buildings compared with the churches built by Wren after the Great Fire ; but these small churches in pre-Reformation London were mostly adorned with steeples, and they were rich in art treasures. A Roman prelate who visited London early in Henry VIII.'s reign notes this fact, and he also states that he saw more than a hundred gold shrines in London churches. London was almost encircled by great religious establishments. Beginning at the eastern extremity by the Tower, we have the church and hospital of St. Katherine. The church of this establishment, a noble building with architectural

* Reproduced from the plan of London by Hoefnagel, in Braun and Hogenburg's *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (1572).

features of extreme interest, existed down to the year 1825. Before the Reformation it possessed both cloisters and chapter-house. A little northward stood East Minster, a Cistercian abbey founded by Edward III., and dedicated to 'Our Lady of Grace.' Still further north we find the Abbey of St. Clare. This abbey has given the name to the district, which is called The Minories, after the Minoresses of St. Mary of the Order of St. Clare. Further on we come to the extramural parish church of St. Botolph, and close to this church the city gate called Aldgate. Here, just within the wall, we have the Priory of Holy Trinity, Aldgate (or Christchurch), which was founded by the Empress Matilda for the Canons Regular, who also possessed St. Bartholomew's the Great, St. Saviour's, Southwark, and St. Mary's Spital. This Priory of Holy Trinity is said by the old chroniclers not only to have been the most magnificent institution belonging to the order in London, but, with the exception of Westminster, the most superb monastic building in Middlesex.

Further westward we come upon St. Mary's Spital, which gave the name to Spitalfields. It was a monastic hospital, and belonged to the Canons Regular. Close to Bishopsgate was the parish church of St. Botolph, and adjoining it the Priory and Hospital of Our Lady of Bethlehem. To the north-west we have, then, the priories of

St. James and of St. John, Clerkenwell ; then south-westward St. Bartholomew's the Great, of which the monastic remains may be seen to-day, the Charter House, and further westward the house and chapel of the Bishops of Ely.

From this point London stretched westward in a narrow line to Westminster. Along this narrow line we have, first, the monastery of the Black Friars—immediately to the westward of Baynard's Castle, the oldest royal residence in London. This monastery was an immense establishment, including secular buildings and two churches ; it had four gates. When the king was in residence at Baynard's Castle Parliament met in the halls of the monastery. It was here that the Parliament which discussed the validity of Henry's marriage with Catherine of Aragon commenced its sittings. The Fleet River ran into the Thames by the west wall of the monastery ; on the other side of the stream stood the ancient Bridewell, another royal palace. Now, westward, almost adjoining Bridewell Palace, was the monastery of the Whitefriars, or Carmelites. Then, to the west again, there is Westminster Abbey.

To the south, across the river, we have St. Saviour's Church and Priory, and the great palace of the Bishops of Winchester. A little to the eastward was the ancient house belonging to the Priors of Lewes, in Tooley Street. Down by the water's edge, a

little to the east again, we have another great house, belonging to the Abbots of Battle. And across the river is the point from which we started, St. Katherine's by the Tower. Within the city were other great religious houses, as Austin Friars, the Priory of St. Helen, in Bishopsgate, and, chief of all, St. Paul's.

London stretched east and west along the river, which was the chief highway. The ferries and the watermen with their boats for hire were a notable feature of the ancient city. The aspect of the single bridge which spanned the river is too familiar for comment. Beyond the wall on the north was Finsbury Field, and on the south we have the Manor of Paris Garden and the Bankside. These open spaces, north and south, were the playgrounds of ancient London, where archery and bull and bear baiting, and various other rude sports were held ; while the plays were presented in the churches and chapels, or in the neighbourhood of the ancient and sacred wells.

A ready way to realize the conditions of London at this period is to have in mind one of the old Continental towns at the present time, in a country which still retains its allegiance to Rome. Here the Sunday, along with religious duties, has customs that are joyous and pleasure-seeking. All kinds of diversions are sought after, including that of the theatre. So it was in London in the old

time. Religious service on Sunday or saint's day was followed by a miracle-play or mystery, or the people sought the sports and pastimes of Finsbury Field or of the Bankside and Paris Garden. These customs survived the Reformation, and out-lasted the erection of theatres in London. Much of the opposition offered to the theatres on the part of the Corporation of London—concerning which more will be said hereafter—was provoked by the acting of plays on Sunday.

Such was London before the Reformation. Girdled by a succession of religious establishments, the monotony of its streets broken up by priory, monastery and convent; the river gay with wherry and barge and ferry-boat; the ritual of Rome, with its processions and splendour in the churches and chapels, and with its miracle-plays to empty the houses and streets and fill the sacred precincts. Although small when measured from the modern standard, it was a large city when compared with the other cities of the world at that time; and notwithstanding the badness of the roads and the limited means of communication, it was the centre of the nation—the metropolis of England.

In some respects ancient London reflected the nation as a whole more nearly than does the Modern Babylon. The distinction between urban and rural was less defined. The customs and

habits of the people would appear bucolic and rural to the latter-day Cockney. The horses of the citizens grazed in the fields and meadows which lay outside the walls—a distance to be accomplished in a few minutes from any point of the city. There were dairies within the walls, the cows finding pasturage within sight of the gates: John Stow tells us how he fetched milk when a boy from a farm just outside Aldgate. Small as the city was, there were numerous open spaces, and the birds that built their nests in the trees were not limited to London sparrows. The gardens of the citizens were large and cultivated. Most of the trees, plants, shrubs and flowers introduced into this country from foreign parts were grown first in the gardens of London, either in the city or just outside the walls.

London before the Reformation was the capital of 'merry England,' and the life of the dwellers was largely an outdoor one. Westcheap, the great market-place, was covered with booths, wherein merchandise was exposed for sale like a country fair, while opposite the church of St. Mary-le-Bow was a tilting-ground. On Cornhill the exercise of running at the quintain was practised by the youthful citizens, both in summer and winter. Connected with the wells on the north were those picturesque traditional observances which obtained in nearly all parts of the country. Some of those

observances have their place in dramatic history. It was customary in various parts of England, when enacting the pageant of St. George, to select a well as the scene of the performance, and the fact is interesting as showing the pre-Christian religious origin of the drama. Subsequently we find miracle plays were enacted at the wells to the north of London, as Clerkenwell and Skinner's Well.

William Fitzstephen wrote in the reign of Henry II.: 'But London, for the shows upon theatres and comical pastimes, hath holy plays, representations of miracles which holy confessors have wrought, or representations of torments wherein the constancy of martyrs appeared.' We cannot tell what kind of stage is referred to. 'Shows upon theatres' indicates the use of a stage of some kind. There is no indication of the use of a stage at Clerkenwell, but there are various scriptural subjects for which a well would be an appropriate scene. Stow says that the Clerkes' Well (or Clerkenwell) was 'curbed about with hard stone, not far from the west end of Clerkenwell Church, but close without the wall that encloseth it. The said church took the name of the well, and the well took the name of the parish clerks in London, who of old time were accustomed there yearly to assemble, and to play some large history of Holy Scripture. And for example of later time—to wit, in the year 1390, the 14th

of Richard II.—I read the parish clerks of London, on the 18th of July, played interludes at Skinners' Well, near unto Clerkes' Well, which play continued three days together, the king, queen, and nobles being present. Also in the year 1409, the 10th of Henry IV., they played a play at the Skinners' Well, which lasted eight days, and was of matter from the creation of the world. There were to see the same the most part of the nobles and gentles in England. It is curious that Stow twice speaks of these plays as *stage*-plays in another passage where he records their discontinuance in favour of 'comedies, tragedies, interludes, and histories, both true and feigned.'

We may fairly assume that any means used for the presentation of plays in other parts of the country would be known in London; that among the spectators at the Clerkenwell performances would be those who had witnessed the miracle-plays at York, at Coventry, and at Chester. It does not appear, however, that the London players had pageant vehicles. On the other hand, in a description of the performance of miracle-plays at Chester, we obtain a hint which may throw considerable light upon the presentation of plays at Clerkenwell, and indicate the origin of the term '*stage*-play.' The description alluded to is that of Archdeacon Rogers (died 1595), quoted in Sharp's 'Coventry Pageants': 'The maner of

these playes [Whitsun plays at Chester] weare, every company [craft guilds] had his pagiant, or p'te, wch pagiants weare a high scafolde with 2 rowmes, a higher and a lower, upon 4 wheels. In the lower they apparelled themselves, and in the higher rowme they played, beinge all open on the tope, that all behoulders might heare and see them. The places where they played them was in every streete. They begane first at the Abay gates, and when the first pagiante was played it was wheeled to the high crosse before the Mayor, and so to every streete, and soe every streete had a pagiant playinge before them at one time, till all the pagiantes for the daye appoynted weare played, and when one pagiant was neere ended worde was broughte from streete to streete, that soe they might come in place thereof, exceedinge orderlye, and all the streetes have their pagiantes afore them all at one time playeinge togeather; to se w'ch playes was great resorte, *and also scafoldes and stages made in the streetes* in those places where they determined to playe theire pagiantes.' The passage to which it is desired to call special attention is here printed in italics.

It is clear from the testimony of Stow as to the numbers of spectators at the plays at Clerkenwell and Skinners' Well, that unless some disposition of the space was made very few could have heard and seen the plays. Either the performers must

have been raised above the first row of spectators, or, if the performance took place on the ground level, the audience must have been raised at graduated heights in front or around. In any case scaffolds or stages must have been used, and hence the term stage-play. Which arrangement is the more likely? Were the plays acted upon a stage or not? If it could be proved that they were not, we should be right in concluding that the scaffolds or stages erected for the spectators gave rise to the term 'stage-play.' It is possible, on the other hand, that the plays were given on a platform or stage, while scaffolds or stages were also erected for the aristocratic portion of the audience. In the absence of direct evidence, it is impossible to affirm positively for either alternative; but it is possible to construct an answer to the question by analogy and deduction. From this point a short survey will be taken of the traditional dramatic representations in the open air, which will throw considerable light upon the way in which miracle-plays were presented at the ancient wells about London.

The subject is of immediate interest in helping us to understand the nature of the earliest London theatres. Briefly stated, the position is: That the first playhouse in London, inasmuch as it was made in the capital, represented the accumulated experience and skill of the country at large in

respect of play-acting. In addressing ourselves to this thesis, we have to remember that in London itself there is a continuity of tradition in the presentation of plays belonging to it as a locality, and beyond this there are the tributaries of experience which come to it as the centre of the nation.

The map prefixed to this chapter shows on the south of the river two round structures marked respectively the Bull Baiting and the Bear Baiting. The origin and history of these amphitheatres are fully discussed in a later chapter. They are referred to here as showing that the traditional round formation for spectacular purposes, instances of which are found in various parts of the country, was also in existence and use in London before the playhouses. To enter into this question fully would be to travel up the stream of time, past the Roman occupation, to those stone circles in various parts of Britain which have provoked so much learned curiosity. But in this place attention may be directed to the traditional use of existing structures, such as Roman amphitheatres, for the sports and pastimes of the people.

The Roman amphitheatre at Dorchester is an instance. It has always been a public resort, the scene of popular sports and diversions. The Roman amphitheatre at Banbury actually became known as the Bear Garden. The probable analogy here

is very striking. Beesley, in his history of Banbury, has the following passage on the point:

'But the most important remain of the Roman period at Banbury is a castrensian amphitheatre. The Roman people were early debased by the gladiatorial and other shows in the amphitheatres; and on the site of almost every Roman colony there are indications of the existence of such places, either constructed or excavated. In many parts the Roman garrisons contented themselves with castrensian, or camp-like, amphitheatres; in the construction of which they usually chose natural valleys surrounded with hills, in the declivities of which they cut benches, or terraces, from which a view was afforded over the arena. In this island very few such records of the barbarous pleasures of Roman antiquity now remain. The amphitheatre at Banbury is in a field called Berrymoor, adjoining the town, in the right of the turn to Bloxham. It is a semicircular work, open to the north; and is cut in the concave face of a steep hill, the summit of which overlooks the town. The arena measures 134 feet in breadth, and rising above it in the face of the hill are three broad terraces made for the spectators of the combats, which terraces are respectively 25, 39 and 59 feet (measured on the slope) above the arena. These are calculated to afford a view of the sports to more than two thousand persons. This earth-

work is now popularly called the Bear Garden, from the sport of bear-baiting having been subsequently used there. Thomas Busbridge, who was born probably at Banbury about the year 1537, and who certainly lived there in his childhood, and became vicar of the place in 1581, alludes to the common sport of bear-baiting practised in his times' ('Busbridge's Poore Man's Jewell').

There are other amphitheatres which became used in the same way. Upon the afternoon of every Easter Monday the Lord of the Manor of Kirkby in Furness, Lancashire, resorted to the circle (called the Kirk, a circle of 75 feet in diameter, formed by raising a bank of earth and stones), where all his tenants met him, and games of wrestling, dancing, hurling and leaping ensued. The last lord who attended broke his thigh in one of the games.*

Therefore, looking at the amphitheatres on the Surrey side of London, in accordance with the terms of our thesis, we may conclude that we have here a visible evidence of tradition which may have affected both the form in which plays were presented in London before the building of play-houses, and also the form of the play-houses them-

* 'Archæologia,' vol. xxxi., p. 450. The author mentions that, according to local tradition, 'it was a place where their forefathers worshipped.' An illustration accompanies the communication.

selves. The collateral instances in other parts of the country, together with the Roman remains found in the neighbourhood, suggest the possibility of the round formation having been traditional in the locality itself from Roman or earlier times.

We have now to consider the remarkable amphitheatres in which religious plays were acted in Cornwall. The subject is deeply interesting, and of the two principal writers on it—Borlase, and more recently Norris—there can be no doubt that the earlier author adopted the more scientific view of the matter. Norris, indeed, ridicules the idea of these circular structures being of great antiquity, and hints that they were probably made by the pick and spade of the Cornish miner for the purpose of acting the miracle-plays. He elsewhere writes: 'That the rounds did not originate until a comparatively late period appears probable from the fact that they are met with only in the western parts of Cornwall—just those parts to which it might be expected that the use of the Cornish tongue was then limited.' That is to say, he argues from the fact of the miracle-plays being in Cornish, that the rounds were made for the purpose of acting them.

The negative view is here purposely placed first, in order that it may have full weight in controverting as far as truth will permit the view of Borlase, given in his 'Antiquities of Cornwall' (1754):

'Where these stone enclosures are semicircular, and distinguished by seats and benches of like materials, there is no doubt but they were constructed in that form out of regard to and for the convenience of the spectators at plays, games, and festivals. There is a theatre of this kind in Anglesea, resembling a horseshoe, including an area of twenty-two paces diameter, called Bryngwyn (or Supreme Court), with its opening to the west. It lies in a place called Tre'r Drew (or Druid's Town), from whence it may be reasonably conjectured that this kind of structure was used by the Druids.

'There is also one in Mainland (Orkney), from its theatrical or crescent-like form supposed to have been dedicated to the worship of the moon; but perhaps nothing more than one of these ancient theatres.

'But though the theatrical form is best adapted for the instruction and information of the audience, yet (as men cannot be supposed in those illiterate times to have consulted the delight and instruction of the ear as much as the pleasure and entertainment of the eye) it is not so commonly met with among the ancients as the amphitheatrical, which, being more capacious, had generally the preference to the former. In these continued rounds or amphitheatres of stone (not broken as the cirque of stones erect) the Britons did usually assemble

to hear plays acted, to see the sports and games, which upon particular occasions were intended to amuse the people, to quiet and delight them; an institution (among the engines of state) very necessary in all civil societies. These are called with us in Cornwall (where we have great numbers of them) *Plân an guare:* viz., the level place, or plain of sport and pastime. The benches round were generally of turf, as Ovid [Artis Amatoriæ, lib. I.], talking of those ancient places of sport, observes:

> '"In gradibus sedit populus de cespite factis;
> Qualibet hirsutas fronde tegente comas."

'We have one whose benches are of stone, and the most remarkable monument of this kind which I have yet seen; it is near the Church of St. Just, Penwith, now somewhat disfigured by the injudicious repairs of late years; but by the remains it seems to have been a work of more than usual labour and correctness. It was an exact circle, of 126 feet diameter; the perpendicular height of the bank, from the area within, now 7 feet high; but the height from the bottom of the ditch without, 10 feet at present, formerly more. The seats consist of six steps 14 inches wide and 1 foot high, with one on the top of all, where the rampart is about 7 feet wide.

'The plays they acted in these amphitheatres were in the Cornish language; the subjects taken

2

from Scripture history, and called "Guirimir," which Mr. Llhuyd "supposes a corruption of Guari-mirkl, and in the Cornish dialect to signify a miraculous play or interlude. They were composed for begetting in the common people a right

notion of the Scriptures, and were acted in the memory of some not long deceased." In these same cirques also were performed all their athletary exercises, for which the Cornish Britons are still so remarkable; and when any single combat was to be fought on foot to decide any

rivalry of strength or valour, any disputed property or any accusation exhibited by martial challenge, no place was thought so proper as these inclosed cirques.'*

The Rev. George Hadow, Vicar of St. Just, furnished Mr. Norris with a notice of the amphitheatre as it appeared within what may be called our own time: 'This old structure still remains in St. Just Church town, close to the principal inn; the clear outline of the circus is quite apparent, being formed externally by a stone wall of about 4 feet perpendicular height, whilst a green bank slopes inwards; there is now no outside ditch, nor are there any steps. It is the usual resort of all the idle boys of the town to play their games, and a pathway leads right through it from the town to the market-place; no one can pass through that part of the town or go to Cape Cornwall without seeing it, though it has been sadly neglected as regards any repairs.'†

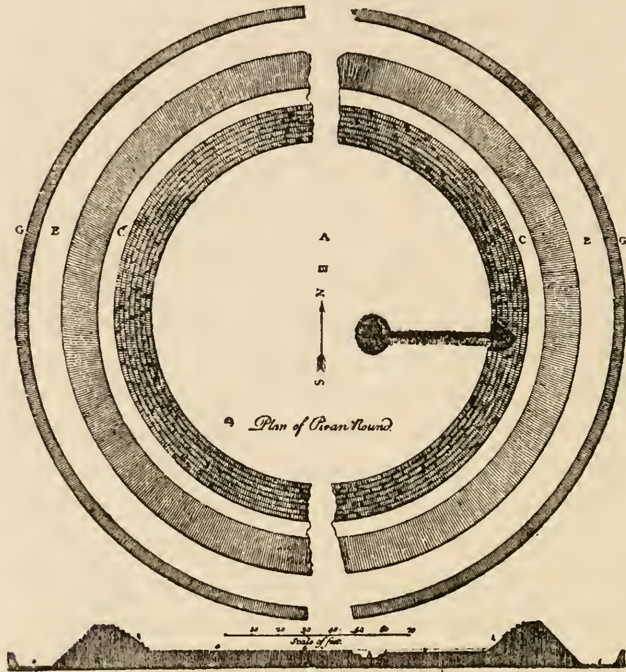
In a subsequent work‡ Borlase refers to the subject again, and describes another round, 'a much larger one of higher mound, fossed on the outside and very regular.' This was the amphi-

* '(Quædam viz., Saxa) Circos claudebant in quibus Gigantes et pugiles duello strenue decertabant.'—Wormius, p. 62.

† Norris, 'Ancient Cornish Drama,' vol. ii., p. 455.

‡ Borlase, 'Natural History of Cornwall,' p. 298.

theatre in the parish of Piran-sand, of which he made a plan, which is here reproduced.



Borlase observes: 'This is a curious and regular work, and is formed with the exactness of a fortification, but the visible benches within, the pit, the trench, and cavity, and the foss having no esplanade beyond it, determine it in its present figure to the uses of an amphitheatre.' The pit, trench, and cavity, he explains as used for scenic effect in

the plays—the pit representing hell or the grave, and the trench and cavity the upper regions or heaven.

There is an interesting notice of the performance of miracle-plays in the Cornish rounds given by Richard Carew in his 'Survey of Cornwall' (1602), and it is possible that Norris's view of the structures was largely influenced by a passage in which Carew writes: 'For representing it [the play] they raise an earthen amphitheatre in some open field.' But Borlase, who was well acquainted with Carew's work, evidently adopted an independent view at first hand, closely inspecting the rounds and carefully planning them. Carew's description of the acting of the play, however, is interesting:

'The Guary miracle—in English a miracle-play—is a kinde of Enterlude, compiled in Cornish out of some Scripture history with that grosseness which accompanied the Romanes *vetus Comedia.* For representing it they raise an earthen Amphitheatre in some open field, having the Diameter of his enclosed playne some 40 or 50 foot. The country people flock from all sides, many miles off, to hear and see it; for they haue therein devils and devices, to delight as well the eye as the eare; the players conne not their parts without booke, but are prompted by one called the ordinary, who followeth at their back with the book in his hand,

and telleth them softly what they must pronounce aloud. Which maner once gaue occasion to a pleasant conceyted gentleman of practising a mery pranke; for he vndertaking (perhaps of set purpose) an acter's roome, was accordingly lessoned (beforehand) by the Ordinary that he must say after him. His turn came. Quoth the Ordinary, "Goe forth, man, and show thyself." The Gentleman steps out upon the stage, and like a bad Clarke in Scripture matters, cleauing more to the letter than the sense, pronounced those words aloud. "Oh" (sayes the fellowe softly in his eare), "you marre all the play." And with this his passion, the Actor makes the Audience in like sort acquainted. Herein the prompter falles to flat rayling and cursing in the bitterest terms he could deuise; which the Gentleman with a set gesture and countenance still soberly related, vntill the Ordinary, driuen at last into a madde rage, was faine to giue ouer all. Which trousse, though it brake off the Enterlude, yet defrauded not the beholders, but dismissed them with a great deale more sport and laughter than 20 such Guaries could haue affoorded.'

In considering these amphitheatres in Cornwall, the main point is the traditional round formation, probably of Celtic or Iberic origin; but something must be said as to the possible derivation from ancient Greece. This part of the country was the

only part in contact with the ancient civilization before the coming of the Romans. There is no doubt whatever that a large trade was carried on with the Cornish mines, tin being procurable nowhere else in Europe at that time, and it is probable that other mines besides tin were worked for the supply of the Mediterranean cities. Borlase is inclined to refer the Cornish custom of wrestling to this source, connecting it with the gymnasia and palæstra of the Greeks; and what is known as the Cornish stone-dance he connects with the dance at Grecian hymeneal solemnities. But the stone circles he ascribes to the Celts, connecting them with the Druids. He was not prepared for those adaptations and accretions which are familiar in folk-lore, else he would probably have suggested that, whatever the mystic origin of the circles, they were adapted for the games of the Phœnician or Greek visitors or immigrants, as they became afterwards modified and adapted to the uses of the miracle-play.

It will be seen that in the absence of direct evidence as to how miracle-plays were presented at Clerkes' Well and at Skinners' Well in London before the playhouses, as related by Stow in his Survey, we are able to form a likely conjecture. There exists a plan of the stage for acting a

morality-play, which shows a circular formation with the use of 'scaffolds.' It is given in Sharp's 'Coventry Mysteries,' and is here reproduced. It

is such an arrangement as Rogers speaks of in a passage already quoted (*ante*, p. 10) as 'scaffolds and stages made in the streets' of Chester for the presentation of the Whitsun plays by the guilds, and certainly helps us to understand the disposi-

tion of space which enabled so many people to witness the plays at Clerkenwell, including king, queen, and nobles (*ante*, pp. 8, 9).

In considering London and the drama before the playhouses, there is evident an inter-connection of characteristics between them. Before the Reformation, with plays presented in the churches and chapels, we have the sanctioned hilarity of a Roman Catholic city. It was the time whence traditions of the joyous celebration of Christmas have come down to us; when king, noble, and even abbot and prior, in their household abdicated in favour of a lord of misrule, or Christmas prince, whose reign extended 'from Allhollen Eve to Candlemas Day.' It was the time when on May Day morning every man would walk beyond the city, in the words of Stow, 'into the sweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds, praising God in their kind;' when the citizens 'brought the summer home' from distances within view of the city, and joining together, the citizens of every parish, or sometimes two or three parishes combining, 'had their several mayings, and did fetch in maypoles with divers warlike shows, with good archers, morris dancers, and other devices for pastime all the day long, and toward evening they had stage-plays and bonfires in the streets.' It

was the time when 'grave citizens' of wealth and repute had great delight in hawking and hunting in the woodland beyond the city; when the youth and manhood habitually practised 'games of defence and wrestlings' in the fields of St. Giles's, in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell, and in the fields of Finsbury. It was the time when the youths of the city were accustomed 'on holy days after evening prayer, at their masters' doors, to exercise their wasters and bucklers; and the maidens, one of them playing on a timbrel, in sight of their masters and dames, to dance for garlands hung athwart the streets.'

It may truly be said that the drama which afterwards flourished in the playhouses of Elizabethan London derived more of force and national character from these popular observances and traditional rites and ceremonies than from the miracle-plays and mysteries which were performed in the churches. Yet these, too, were a very notable feature, and played an important part in the evolution of the theatre and the drama. They led to the performance of religious plays by guilds and companies, and when plays were presented at Clerkenwell by the companies of Parish Clerks and Skinners we may be sure that the division and disposition of space in churches had their due effect upon the arrangement of stage and auditorium, and so ultimately upon the Elizabethan

playhouses. But, on the other hand, it is clear, from the circular formation adopted, that the amphitheatres on the southern side of London, and in other parts of the country where the national sports and pastimes were cultivated, had more effect in determining the configuration of the early London theatres.

There remains for brief consideration the period between the Reformation and the opening of the first playhouse in London. The miracle-play was giving way to the morality-play, which itself gave way to dramatic treatment of history and fable. All over England there were companies of players nominally attached to the households of the great ones of the land ; and it became the custom for these companies to travel under license of their masters, and exercise their art in the neighbouring towns. In the municipal records of this country we find numerous notices of these visits. The company usually waited on the mayor with their license, and after giving him a specimen of their quality, they gave a public performance in the guildhall, after which they were rewarded from the corporation treasury. These performances were often followed by performances given in the inns or inn-yards, when the players' reward was the largess of the guests and visitors.

The inns in and about London became visited in this way very frequently ; and it may be said

that in the history of the London stage the immediate predecessor of the playhouse was the inn-yard. The resemblance of the ancient inn-yards to the interior of theatres, even down to our own time, has been frequently pointed out; but the previous condition of things has been lost sight of. Nor is it known under what stage arrangement the players acted when at home; *i.e.*, at a royal palace or the residence of the master whose 'servants' they were. It is probable that the courtyard was the usual theatre; but we do not know, and these conditions probably told upon the arrangements of the playhouse as much as did the formation of the inn-yards. We have clearer knowledge as to those places of public sport and pastime which became converted to the uses of the drama; and the general view which has been given in this introductory chapter will better lead to a conception of the first London theatre, its conditions and environment, than would those references, more or less vague, to miracle-plays and inn-yards, with which we are perhaps too familiar.

In the year of her accession Elizabeth issued a proclamation for regulation of plays, which was prompted probably by political considerations, for the bias of the Queen was distinctly towards the drama. The object of the proclamation is to prevent plays without license and notice to

authorities ; and the Queen's nobility and gentlemen are enjoined to look to it that her Majesty's pleasure in regard to their servants, being players, be strictly observed. On the authorities—Justices of the Peace, Mayors, Lieutenants of Shires—is cast the responsibility of forbidding and preventing the handling of politics or religion by the players. The proclamation is a clear indication of dramatic activity in the country at the very threshold of Elizabeth's reign.

Alike in London and the provinces, the companies of players under the licenses of their patrons enjoyed the privilege of public playing. But it was a privilege in the exercise of which the local powers were found to be at variance with the class under whose patronage the drama flourished. Around the stage we see the strife between the old order and the new, and the stage was identified with the old. It is not to be doubted that a good deal of idleness and frivolity, and even vice, hung about the stage, which in its constitution under licenses and privileges of courtiers was a part of feudalism ; and when players holding such licenses claimed the right to set up their stages within the city of London, it was discovered that those responsible for the good order and well-being of the city not only resented the intrusion, but asserted their rights, and forbade the stage within the limits of their jurisdiction. It is quite possible that this

strife over public stage-playing hastened the development of the Puritan spirit in London. In 1572 plays were interdicted on the ground of the plague and the risk of spreading the contagion; but it appears that the pretext was eagerly seized upon by the authorities. In 1575 the mayor and corporation formally expelled all players from the city, and this act was probably the immediate cause for the building of the first playhouse, the site chosen being one of the liberties beyond the city boundary. Here, and in similar positions just outside the civic jurisdiction, the playhouses grew up, under the protection of the court, courtiers, and privileged class; while, owing to the near neighbourhood of these playhouses and the powerful patronage which sheltered them, the civic authorities found themselves defeated in a policy which they believed to be for the public good.

What were the public stages put down by the Corporation? There can be no doubt that they were much frequented and were a flourishing institution. They were the theatres of London before the playhouses, erected in connection with some of the principal inns, such as the Cross Keys in Gracious (Gracechurch) Street, the Bull in Bishopsgate Street, and the Belle Savage on Ludgate Hill. What took place when the players were expelled was that they made a public house for plays outside the city. This seems to be the

truth of the matter, although there is a passage in Harrison's 'Chronologie' which has caused some doubt on the point. The passage is as follows :

'1572. Plaies are banished for a time out of London, lest the resort unto them should ingender a plague, or rather disperse it, being already begonne. Would to God these comon plaies were exiled for altogether, as siminaries of impiety, and their theatres pulled downe as no better than houses of bawdrie. It is an evident token of a wicked time, when plaiers waxe so riche that they can build suche houses. As moche I wish also to our comon beare baitings vsed in the sabaothe daies.'*

If the date '1572' were the date of entry of this passage, we might conclude that playhouses must have existed then. But the 'Chronologie' extends from very early times—the first extract relating to this country printed by Mr. Furnivall is dated 1370—down to 1592, the year of Harrison's death ; and therefore the above entry might have been made at any time between 1572 and 1592. Consequently the references to theatres and playhouses were to those erected after the players were banished from the city. Harrison, in recording what took place in 1572, proceeds to comment on what existed at the time of

* Harrison's 'Description of England' (New Shakespeare Society), Part I. (Appendix to Forewords), p. liv. and footnote.

his making the entry. Hence the misapprehension.

In the period immediately preceding the first playhouse there was clearly very great dramatic activity. In 1574 the Queen granted a special license in favour of James Burbage and four fellows of the company of the Earl of Leicester to exhibit all kinds of stage-plays during the Queen's pleasure in any part of England, 'as well for the recreation of her loving subjects as for her own solace and enjoyment.' If in the following year plays were interdicted within the city, we may be certain it meant a large increase of business in the fine and spacious old inns round about the city—at Southwark, Clerkenwell, Holborn, Spitalfields, and Finsbury. In spite of checks and hindrances, the stage constantly increased in popularity, and the provision of places specially for plays and other popular diversions, where players could charge for admission and control the monetary rewards for their skill, would assuredly have come about, even in the absence of the stimulating effect of opposition. It was a most momentous departure in its effect upon the national drama, and succeeding chapters of this book will show how truly it may be said that the building of the first playhouse included the possibility of Shakespeare.

CHAPTER II.

THE THEATRE.

THE first playhouse built in London was aptly named The Theatre. It is greatly to be regretted that no view of the building is known to exist. In considering the significance of the name, we can hardly help being struck with the fact that amphitheatres existed on the Surrey side of the river, which had been generally known as 'rings,' although the term 'amphitheatre' was current in the literature of the time. The question arises, Was the word 'theatre' used as an abbreviation for 'amphitheatre,' or was it used in the sense in which Stow employed it when, in translating Fitzstephen's account of London, he wrote the passage 'London for the shews upon theaters,' etc.* According to that sense, 'theatre'

* *See* Stow's 'Survey,' ed. W. J. Thoms. Collier has a note (Hist. Dram. Poetry i. 11) on the various renderings of the original which have been given. But here the point is not one of translation, but the use by Stow of the word 'theatre' in the sense of 'stage.'

would be equivalent to 'stage,' as in Stubbes' 'Anatomie of Abuses' (1583), 'playes and enterluds on stages and scaffolds.' Or, as a third alternative, did the name denote the fact of the house being dedicated to public shows and exhibitions, in a sense analogous to *The Theatre of God's Judgments*, *i.e.*, the display or demonstration of God's judgments? The existence of amphitheatres, with the fact of the currency of the word 'amphitheatre,' suggests the possibility of some departure in the shape and configuration of the house named The Theatre. On the other hand, all the facts point to the building having been circular: 1. Amphitheatres existed on Bankside. 2. The neighbour of The Theatre, another playhouse called the Curtain, was round. 3. The Theatre was removed to the Bankside, and when reconstructed there, it was a circular building (it did not become octagonal till after it was rebuilt in 1613). Accepting, therefore, the amphitheatral form of The Theatre, what was the significance of the name, if any?

When, nowadays, we use the word 'theatre,' we mean the building; and it might be thought that our discussion of the name The Theatre is a discussion upon no question at all, and that the name was given in the sense in which we apply it. But hardly so, because the building named The Theatre was called a *playhouse*, as all the old theatres continued for a long time to be described.

Accordingly, it would appear that the name was not descriptive of the building, which disposes of one of our alternatives. Was it an abbreviation for 'amphitheatre'? Considering that it *was* an amphitheatre—that is, a double circle or ring, the outer circular space for spectators, the inner for performers—it is possible that the word was merely an abbreviation. But, to come to the remaining alternative, when we consider that the word 'theatre' was in use as equivalent to 'stage,' and that the novelty of The Theatre was that it was a house opened for the performance of stage-plays (alternately with other shows and exhibitions), we need feel little doubt that the name was derived from the stage or platform on which plays were exhibited. The stage was a movable one, and when the house was devoted to the sports and shows and activities of the ring, the stage was removed. A view suggested by a consideration of all the facts is that the stage on which plays were enacted in the open air at Clerkenwell, or afterwards in the inn yards, became known as the theatre, and that the word, as signifying a notable adjunct of the playhouse, was applied to it as a name.

The site chosen for the first playhouse is full of suggestion as to the origin and development of the English stage. It was on the eastern border of the northern playground of London—Finsbury Fields. At the butts in these fields the youth and

manhood of the city practised 'shooting with the bow' on every Sunday, feast-day, and holiday, as enjoined by royal proclamation and civic ordinance. Here, and in the open spaces east and west of Finsbury Fields, the sports of the people were indulged in; some of the games mentioned in a proclamation of Edward III. as discountenanced in favour of archery being throwing of stones, wood, or iron, handball, football, bandy-ball, cambuck, or cockfighting, and 'such like vain plays which have no profit in them.' The corporation held the manor of Finsbury from 1315 to our own time, upon lease from the prebendary of Halliwell and Finsbury, in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul.* It was the drilling-ground of the trained bands of the city, and consequently bears a definite relation to the military history of England. Here it was that the periodical musters and inspections of the city troops were held, and here and in the fields round about were practised those field sports and athletic pastimes which conduced to deeds of valour and hardiment.

The Theatre and its near neighbour, The Curtain, were built 'in that division of the parish of Shoreditch which was known as the Liberty of Halliwell. This liberty, at a later period termed Holywell, derived its name from a sacred (A.S.

* 'Remembrancia,' 274, note.

halig) well or fountain which took its rise in the marshy grounds situated to the west of the High Street leading from Norton Folgate to Shoreditch Church. . . . The lands in which the holy fountain was situated belonged for many generations to the Priory of Holywell.'*

The significance of wells in connection with the drama has already been touched upon in the preceding chapter. The traditionary observances and customs in connection with wells had their origin in times anterior to Christianity, and it is an interesting example of survival when we find the ceremonial of well-worship give place to pageants in honour of Christian saints and to the acting of plays founded on the Biblical story, as in the recorded case of Clerkenwell. We may be certain that there were gatherings of the people on feast-days (re-named and adopted from the heathen cult) at Halliwell as at the other wells in the open country beyond the northern boundary of the city; and if it were recorded that religious plays were acted there, the record would agree with analogous cases. There is no such record; but the significance of a playhouse being erected on the spot is obvious. Again, the neighbourhood of the priory brings another condition which implies the acting of miracle-plays. At Clerken-

* J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, 'Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare,' 6th edit., vol. i., p. 319.

54627

well the companies acted their plays outside the church ; at Holywell was erected the first playhouse within the precincts of the dissolved priory. In the case of The Theatre, therefore, we have in the site chosen for its erection a summary of the elements which contributed to the making of the Elizabethan stage ; in the fields which were the scene of the popular sports and diversions we have that element of shows, of exhibitions of 'activities,' feats of skill, legerdemain, and endurance, which alternated with stage-plays in the programme of the earliest playhouses ; in the well we have an element around which much of the material which went to the making of the national drama was fostered and perpetuated by tradition ; while the priory may represent the element of the miracle-play, or mystery.

After the dissolution of the Priory of Holywell the church was demolished, and the priory itself became converted into private residences. A large portion of the estate was purchased by a certain Henry Webb in 1544, and the moiety of this estate wherein The Theatre was erected in 1576 belonged at this time to Giles Allen. It was from him that James Burbage, of London, joiner, and leading member of the Earl of Leicester's company of players, obtained a lease for twenty-one years, dated April 13, 1576, of houses and land situated between Finsbury Field and the public road

from Bishopsgate to Shoreditch Church. The lease was obtained with the express object of erecting a playhouse, and it contained the condition that if Burbage expended £200 in building he should be entitled to take down the buildings he might erect on the garden or vacant space, and also to an extension of the lease. The subject of the lease included two gardens, four houses, and a large barn.

The boundary of the property on the west is described as 'a bricke wall next unto the fields commonly called Finsbury Fieldes;' while the southern boundary extended from the western side of the lower gate of the priory to Finsbury Fields. Braun and Hogenberg's map prefixed to this book is dated before 1576, but it shows the position of the property leased by Burbage. The exact site is carefully worked out and identified by Halliwell-Phillipps in his 'Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare,' to which the reader is referred for more minute topographical particulars.

All the illustrations derived from the records of various lawsuits confirm Stow's account. Speaking of Holywell Priory, he says: 'The church being pulled downe, many houses have been there builded for the lodgings of noblemen, of straungers borne, and other; and neare thereunto are builded two publique houses for the acting and shewe of comedies, tragedies, and histories for recreation,

whereof the one is called The Courtein and the other The Theatre, both standing on the south-west side towards the Field.'* Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps concludes that The Theatre must have been situated a little to the north of Holywell Lane, and as nearly as possible on the site of what is now Deane's Mews. The ruins of the priory, which were visible in the last century, have now disappeared, but excavations made a few years ago for a railway uncovered the remains of the stonework of one of the ancient entrance doors.

The lower gate of the priory referred to above stood on the north side of Holywell Lane, which led from Shoreditch High Street 'towardes the fieldes along before the gate of the said Pryory.' This gate was on the south of the west end of the priory buildings, and the theatre was erected upon land situated to the north-west of the gate. The land was enclosed, but according to various depositions made in 1602 (see Halliwell-Phillipps' 'Outlines') there was a pathway, or road, into the Fields, the point of difference being as to whether the pathway existed before Burbage's tenancy or no. The existence of this road or path, together with various allusions in the literature of the time, establishes the fact that the chief access to The Theatre was through Finsbury Fields, and

* This important passage in Stow's 'Survey' is further discussed *postea*, p. 44 *et seq.*

Liberty of Holywell Street.

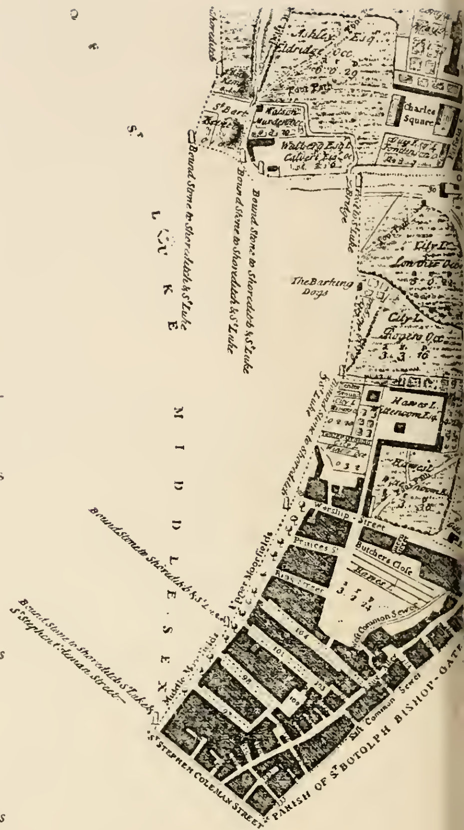
49. Dunkirk Court.
50. Bailey's Court.
51. Fann's Alley.
52. Garrett's Almshouse.
53. Northern Folgate Workhouse.

Holywell High Street.

54. Jane Shore Alley.
55. Bryant's, *alias* Grocer's Alley.
56. Hare Alley.
57. Cock Alley.
58. Dirty Lane.
59. Catlin's Alley.
60. Swan Yard.
61. Hill's Alley.
62. Goddard's Rents.
63. Bryant's Street.
64. Badger's Court.
65. Sugar Loaf Court, *alias* Sherwin's Alley.
66. Unicorn Alley.
67. Magpye Alley.

West Side.

68. King's Head Yard.
69. Legg Alley.
70. Bowl Court.
71. Black Dog Yard.
72. Martin's Rents, *alias* Stocking Frame Alley.
73. Rose Alley.



Section showin
Taken from *An Actual Survey of the Parish of St. L*
Chas

Note.—It will be seen that streets, alleys, etc., in the Liberty of Holywell are given to the numbers.

74. Three Cup Alley,
75. Nicholas Court, *alias* Pinder's Alley.
76. George Yard.
77. Squire's Rents, *alias* Black Swan Alley.

IN HOLYWELL LANE.

78. Red Lyon Court.
79. Blake's Alley
80. King John's Court. Here are the remains of Priory founded for black nuns of the order of St. Benedict.
81. Brewer's Yard.
82. Sugar Loaf Alley.
83. Ginger-bread Alley.
84. Mortar Alley.
85. [Blank.]
86. White Bear Alley.
87. New Inn Yard.
88. Tinker's Alley.
89. Rose Alley.
90. Remains of an Antient Priory.
91. Hand and Pen Alley.
92. Artichoke Alley.
93. Curtain Court (afterwards Gloucester Row, now Gloucester Street).
94. Holywell Court.
95. The well from whence the Liberty derives its name.

In this Liberty are 767 houses.

of Holywell.
oreditch, Middlesex, taken in the year 1745 by Peter
or.
ibered ; in the above list the names of localities in the

Insert between pp. 40, 41, *as a folding sheet* (i.e., *not stitched in centre*).

it is a fact of much interest in the history of The Theatre.

A recital of the facts brings out the significance of the departure made when The Theatre was built: (1) The Corporation held the Manor of Finsbury. (2) The Fields of Finsbury were the northern playground of London. (3) Plays were forbidden in the city. (4) The first playhouse was erected in the immediate neighbourhood of the Fields. A reference to the Braun and Hogenberg map will show that The Theatre occupied a position of easy accessibility from all points of egress on the north. The citizens could walk or ride through Cripplegate or Moorgate into the Fields, and thence to The Theatre; or they could go to the playhouse direct through Bishopsgate without going through the Fields. It was an easy matter for the corporation to banish the players from the city; it needed only unanimity of counsels and the issue of an order to accomplish that. But they could not overcome the love for the drama which had grown up with the development of the national character. The players had arrived at a stage of perfection in their art; the people had become accustomed to the stimulus and pleasure of dramatic representations, and not a mile or so of distance, nor the sense that they were evading the express will of responsible authority; not the roughness displayed by the groundlings, nor the

fact that idle and dissolute characters inevitably haunted the playhouse; not even the real and terrible danger of the plague, could turn the Elizabethan playgoer from the pastime he loved. The erection of The Theatre within view of the city was less defiant than inevitable. It was an outcome, although the city fathers knew it not, of those sports and pastimes which had been cultivated under the sanction and encouragement of the corporation for many generations. The quarrel was with an inevitable development of the national character, and both sides were right. For the negative view of the Puritan much may be said. The dissolution of the monasteries had thrown upon the community a crowd of thriftless persons who had formerly subsisted by an organized system of almsgiving. This was the social question of the Elizabethan age. It led to the introduction of new manufactures, the encouragement of inventors in the hope of increasing employment; it led to the inauguration of our colonial policy; it led to that doubtful benefit, the poor law. But it was the stern and practical view of the social question that solved it; and in that view idleness and waste became identified with 'vain shows and stage-plays.' We in this age are the happy heirs of the combined results of the efforts of both sides in the contest, and it behoves us not to adopt a neutral or indifferent

view, but to see the good of each, which could only have been struck out in conflict.

Some stress has been laid, in the foregoing pages, on the national sports and pastimes in their bearing upon the development of the drama. That is a view which concerns the history of the stage and theatre more nearly than it concerns the literary drama. And it is probably because the history of the drama has invariably been approached from its literary side that it has heretofore been regarded as an importation, rather than as a natural growth in this country. From the literary point of view, indeed, it is an exotic ; all the relics of the earliest dramatic literature are of Roman-ecclesiastical origin ; the very word 'theatre' is Roman. But this view has held the ground so completely that the racial origin of our stage has been unknown, ignored, and overlooked. Yet it is assuredly true that the traditions of the English folk very largely influenced the development of the stage as distinguished from dramatic literature. The word 'play' is Anglo-Saxon : *plega*=a game, sport, frequently used to denote a fight or battle.* The military dance performed by Saxon youth, and described by Tacitus, was a 'play.' Among the compounds of *plega* or *play* we have *plega-gàres*, play of the javelins ; *aesc-plega*, play of spears ; *linden-plega*, play of

* See Skeat's 'Etymological Dictionary,' *sub voce* 'Play.'

shields ; *sweard-plega*, sword-play ; *plege-man*, a play man or player ; *plega-stow*, a play place ; *plega-hùs*, a playhouse.* The Latin *theatrum* gave the name to Burbage's playhouse, and many were the dramas from ancient classical sources enacted therein, but it was a genuine national product.

Perhaps it is significant of the disapproval with which the playhouses were regarded that Stow, in his 'Survey of London,' published in the year 1603, omitted the mention of them which occurs in the first edition of the 'Survey,' 1598.† Alluding to the Priory of Holywell, he wrote: 'The church thereat being pulled down, many houses have been built for the lodgings of noblemen, of strangers born and other.' And there, in the 1603 edition,

* Skeat's 'Etymological Dictionary,' Supplement, *sub voce* 'Playhouse':—'The existence of this word even in A.S. is remarkable. "*Cœlestis theatri*, þæs heofonlícan pleghúses," Mone, Quellen, p. 366.'

Contrast with this the following from 'Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies from the Tenth to the Fifteenth Century,' by Th. Wright, ed. and coll. by R. P. Wülcker, 1884, vol. i., col. 145: *Theatrum* = wafungstede (literally, a place for sights); *Amphitheatrum* = syneweald wafungstede (a circular place for sights). These translations, says the commentator, show that our 'Anglo-Saxon forefathers were not acquainted with the uses of theatres and amphitheatres, and had no words in their language to express them.' And yet, in Vocabulary xi. (eleventh century), the equivalent for *Amphitheatri* is given as *plegstowe* (col. 342).

† See Thoms' edition, p. 158.

the passage ends. In the first edition followed—'And neare thereunto are builded two publique houses for the acting and shewe of comedies, tragedies and histories, for recreation. Whereof one is called the Courtein and the other the Theatre, both standing on the south-west side towards the field.' The passage may have been omitted in 1603 because The Theatre did not exist there at that date, but The Curtain was still there. The original passage in Stow's 'Survey' underwent a further modification, not without significance. The late J. Payne Collier printed the passage as it stands in Stow's MS. (Harl. MSS., No. 538),* as follows: 'And namely, neare adjoyning are builded two houses for the shewe of Activities, comedies, tragedies, and histories for recreation,' the passage concluding in nearly the same words. The variation is that the word 'activities' preceded 'comedies, tragedies and histories' in the passage as it originally stood in MS., while the word was omitted altogether from the first edition; although there is a marginal note: 'Theater and Curtine for Comedies and other shewes,'† of which the word 'shewes' may or may not apply to the 'tragedies and histories' mentioned after the 'comedies.'

* 'History of Dramatic Poetry and Annals of the Stage,' vol. iii., p. 81.

† Stow's 'Survey,' ed. 1598, p. 69.

The 'activities' alluded to were tumbling, vaulting, rope-dancing, etc., and this is by no means the only indication we have that the first playhouse, during the early period of its existence, represented the general amusements of the people. Among the 'shewes' at The Theatre were fencing matches and exhibitions of skill in the art of defence, to which there are several allusions in Elizabethan literature. Londoners had been accustomed from of old-time to displays of fence and sword-play in Finsbury Fields. It was a pastime which—like archery (practised at the butts hard by The Theatre)—had received the special encouragement of the authorities, and the martial citizens would naturally be interested in exhibitions of those refinements of fencing which came hither from the Continent, to be pleasantly mocked by Ben Jonson in his 'Bobadil.'

Among the city records are some interesting notices of fencing at The Theatre. On July 1, 1582, the Earl of Warwick wrote to the lord mayor, aldermen and sheriffs, requesting them to grant a license to his 'servant, John David '(doubtless a member of the earl's company of players) to 'play his provest prize in his science and profession of defence,' at the Bull in Bishopsgate, or in some other convenient place to be assigned within the liberties of the city of London.* On the

* 'Remembrancia,' Analytical Index, p. 351.

following 23rd of the month, the earl wrote again, 'complaining of the treatment and disgrace put upon his servant in not being allowed to play prizes after the publication of his bills.'* And on the following day the lord mayor wrote to the earl, saying 'he had not refused permission for his servant to play his prizes, but had granted him a license, only restraining him from playing in an inn for fear of infection, and had appointed him to play in an open space at the Leadenhall. Not having availed himself of the permission for fourteen days, and the infection increasing, it became necessary to prohibit the assembling of the people to his play within the city, but permission had been given him to perform in the open fields.† The remainder of the letter is printed in full by Halliwell-Phillipps as follows:‡

'I have herein yet further done for your servante what I may, that is, that if he may obteine lawefully to playe at the Theater or other open place out of the Citie, he hath and shall have my permission with his companie drumes and shewe to passe openly throughe the Citie, being not upon the Sondaye, which is as muche as I maye justifie in this season, and for that cause I have with his owne consent apointed him Monday next.' In the following year (April 27, 1583) the lord mayor wrote to one of the justices of the peace, advising

* 'Remembrancia,' Analytical Index, p. 351. † *Ibid.*
‡ 'Outlines,' 6th ed., vol. i., p. 348.

him that certain fencers had set up bills, and intended to play a prize at The Theatre on May Day, which would cause great inconvenience and danger, especially as they desired to pass with pomp through the city. Fearing disorder, and in view of a recent disaster at Paris Garden, when the scaffolds gave away and precipitated the spectators to the ground, resulting in injuries and loss of life, the desired license and permission had been refused, and the mayor appealed to the justices of the county to assist the corporation in preventing the assembly.*

These notices sufficiently establish the use of the theatre as a playhouse in the sense of the Anglo-Saxon *plega-hûs*, and show that the exhibitions of martial prowess and skill which had brought the citizens together on the *plega-stow* of Finsbury had not decayed with the development of a drama which attempted to reflect human character and destiny amid the conditions of a more advanced society. The existence of the playhouse implied a more highly organized celebration of the national plays or games; and the Elizabethan drama grew up amid the ancient and traditional sports and pastimes of the people in an age quick with new ideas and new life. To understand these conditions is to understand why acting-plays written for the old playhouses were so full of

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 352.

action, energy, and varied movement; why military pomp and circumstance so frequently entered into the traffic of the stage; why broadsword, buckler, lance and shield, javelin, rapier, and harquebuse were brought into the dramatist's story. We may be sure the wrestling match in 'As You Like It' was no child's play or stage business, but was watched with critical attention; for it was an element brought into the play from the life of the people, one of the most popular sports. The fight between Macbeth and Macduff must have been a magnificent spectacle. It requires some study on our part to realize what such a climax to a sublime play meant to Englishmen in an Elizabethan playhouse.

In shape The Theatre was round;* it had scaffolds or stages around the arena, as had the amphitheatres on the Bankside;† and, like those structures, it was open at the top to the weather. It was made of wood, and was little more than a circular enclosure. Such an arrangement answered admirably for displays of 'activities,' shows, and fencing. When plays were presented, a movable stage was set up in the arena. The enterprise of Burbage, who built The Theatre, consisted in the simple device of the enclosure, whereby he

* It was one of the 'four amphitheatres' mentioned by De Witt, *circa* 1596. See chapter on the Swan Theatre.

† See illustration, *infra*, chapter on the Amphitheatres.

could charge for admission, in place of the old method of playing in a public place and depending for payment upon the largess of the spectators.

The round formation for purposes of exhibition was, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, traditional in England, and there existed the determining effect of example on the other side of the river. Instead of an earthen amphitheatre in the open, Burbage made a wooden round in the neighbourhood of a city, with tyring-house and other erections for convenience attached. But the stage was still practically out-of-doors, and although the old playhouses underwent some modification in this respect, and became much improved before their suppression, the round formation practically remained.

Simple as was the device which constituted the new departure, its effect was enormous ; nor was the undertaking a small one, and some interest may reasonably be felt in the personal fortunes of the originator of London theatres. James Burbage, who built the theatre, was a player, and some time by trade a joiner of London ; and it is probable that the building was largely due to this combination of callings. He was a leading member of the Earl of Leicester's company, and after it was built this company proceeded to give performances in the theatre under the same style as the Earl of

Leicester's men. But the ownership of the theatre resided in Burbage and his family. The father-in-law of James Burbage advanced the money for the speculation, viz., one thousand marks (£666 13s. 4d.). James Burbage was the builder, and no doubt the architect ; his family were the inheritors of the property.

In spite of the extensive obligations he had entered into, James Burbage retained the legal estate until his death in 1597. The ground landlord, Giles Allen, appears to have been persuaded that Burbage was making a fortune, and thirsted for more rent, while all the time Burbage and his family were borne down by the interest which had to be paid to Burbage's father-in-law, John Braynes. The original lease of 1576 contained the condition that if Burbage within ten years from that date expended the sum of £200 in building on the gardens or vacant space he should be entitled to take down such buildings, and also to an extension of the term to 1607. Accordingly, in 1585 a new lease was prepared, but Giles Allen refused to execute.* Previous to this, in 1579, James Burbage had assigned his Shoreditch estate to one John Hyde, who held it till 1589 ; and perhaps this may have had something to do with

* A minute description of the property was given in this proposed deed. See 'Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare,' 6th edition, i. 322.

Allen's refusal to execute the fresh lease. In that year Hyde surrendered his interest to Cuthbert Burbage (son of James). Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps supposed the assignment to Hyde may have been a security for a loan, and if this conjecture was correct we may conclude that Cuthbert discharged the obligation. The original lease of 1576 was for twenty-one years, and accordingly it expired in 1597. Now ensued a period of trouble and strife for the Burbages in respect of the theatre and other property which constituted their Shoreditch estate, and it was from the depositions in the lawsuit between them and Giles Allen which followed that Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps printed various excerpts, to which the reader is referred for more detailed information.* Negotiations were opened with Allen early in 1597 for an extension of the lease, but James Burbage died before they were completed. According to Allen's statement, he agreed to extend the lease on two conditions, in both of which James Burbage concurred. One was an increase of £10 in the rent, 'in respect of the great proffitt and commoditie which he had made and in time then to come was further likely to make of the Theatre and the other buildings and growndes to him demised ;' the other condition was 'that the said Theatre should continue for a playinge place for the space of five yeares

* 'Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare,' 6th edition, i. 332.

onelie after the expiracion of the first terme and not longer, by reason that the defendant sawe that many inconveniences and abuses did growe thereby, and that after the said five yeares ended it should be converted by the said Jeames Burbage and the complainant [Cuthbert], or one of them, to some other use.' But James Burbage died, and his sons succeeded. The proposed lease was not executed between them and Allen, nor could they 'succeed in obtaining a legal ratification of the additional ten years covenanted to be granted to the lessee, although they were still permitted to remain as tenants.'* These were the conditions, eminently unsatisfactory as they were, under which James Burbage's sons, Cuthbert and Richard, carried on The Theatre for a short period of somewhat less than two years following their father's death. Their ultimate solution of the difficulty involved the close of the history of The Theatre, and may fitly be reserved for the close of this chapter.

It is clear from the proceedings, and even from Allen's expressed intentions, that he was determined to use his power as ground landlord to the utmost, to end the existence of The Theatre. This was precisely what the Corporation of London desired, and it is likely that he was acting under influence brought to bear upon him. When we

* 'Outlines,' etc., vol. i., p. 333.

consider all the difficulties by which the Burbages were beset, the persistent opposition of the civic authorities, the plague, their heavy mortgage, the interest of which could only be borne by the profits of The Theatre, whose end Allen was determined to accomplish, we see how vigorous the popular support must have been to have sustained this theatrical family through so many dangers. But in truth it was not only the support of popular opinion that sustained them ; there seems to be no reason to doubt that the numerous appeals made by the lord mayor and corporation to the lords of the council were met by influential intercessions in favour of the players.

The opposition of the lord mayor was ‘ because those playes doe make assemblies of citizens and their families of whom I have charge ;’ and his solicitude, besides causing him to appeal to the council, led him to engage the Middlesex magistrates in the war upon The Theatre. Among the records in Clerkenwell Sessions House was discovered an indictment of John Braynes and James Burbage, the Latin of which has been thus Englished :*

‘ Middlesex, to wit : The jurors for the Lady

* See '*Athenæum,* No. 3094, Feb. 12, 1887, in a communication which may be safely attributed to Mr. Cordy Jeaffreson, the editor of the valuable ‘ Calendar of Middlesex County Records.’

the Queen present that John Braynes of Shorditche in the county of Middlesex, yeoman, and James Burbage of the same [parish], yeoman, on the 21st day of February in the 22nd year of the reign of Elizabeth, by God's grace Queen of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c., and on divers other days and occasions before and afterwards, brought together and maintained unlawful assemblies of the people to hear and see certain colloquies or interludes called plays or interludes exercised and practised by the same John Braynes and James Burbage and divers other not known persons at a certain place called the Theatre in Hallywell in the aforesaid county. By reason of which unlawful assembly of the people great affrays, assaults, tumults and quasi-insurrections, and divers other misdeeds and enormities, have been then and there done and perpetrated by very many ill-disposed persons, to the great disturbance of the peace of the Lady the Queen and the overthrowing of good order and rule, and to the danger of the lives of divers good subjects of the said Lady the Queen being there, and against the form of the statute in that respect published and provided,' etc.

From this it would appear, as Mr. Jeaffreson pointed out, that in the eye of the law at least Braynes had as much to do with The Theatre as Burbage.

On April 12, 1580, the lord mayor wrote to the lord chancellor, reporting a 'great disorder' at The Theatre on the previous Sunday, which he had taken measures to investigate. He says he thinks it his duty to inform the lord chancellor that the players of plays used at The Theatre and other such places, and tumblers and such-like, are a very superfluous sort of men, and of such faculty as the laws had disallowed, and that the exercise of the plays was a great hindrance to the service of God.* Although provoked by a special occasion, this official document speaks the sense of the whole Puritan opposition, and it is obvious that the opposition was much influenced by the holding of plays on Sunday. This survival from pre-Reformation times, when religious plays were appropriately acted on Sunday, led to hilarious pleasure-making, which in the view of many Protestant and Puritan citizens merited present chastisement from the Almighty. It is small wonder that in that age the mysterious and deadly visitations of the plague should have engendered the habit of regarding earthly ills as sent specially by an all-seeing and all-caring Providence as punishments for individual sins or the godlessness of the community. The citizen was accustomed to those periodical seasons of gloom and sadness, when a sign over the doorway, with the piteous formula

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 350.

'Lord, have mercy upon us!' would warn him from the house of his friend, and his helplessness in the presence of the terrible disease clouded his reason. When, on a Sunday in January, 1583, during a performance at the Bear Garden, the scaffolds gave way, so that many people met their death, the accident was regarded as a punishment direct from the hand of God for the desecration of the Sabbath; and when the plague recurred it was attributed to the gatherings at plays. A great deal of the righteous indignation levelled against the players proceeded from the fact that the cause of the plague was unknown, and could not be discovered.

The lord mayor was frequently in communication with the government in regard to measures to be taken for the stay and prevention of the pestilence. In reply to a special command received from the queen in June, 1580, 'for the preserving of the city from infection,' the lord mayor reports the steps taken to this end, and takes occasion to request the aid of the council 'for the redress of such things as were found dangerous in spreading the infection and otherwise drawing God's wrath and plague upon the city, such as the erecting and frequenting of infamous houses out of the liberties and jurisdiction of the city, the drawing of the people from the service of God and honest exercises, to unchaste plays.'* If the mayor had given

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 330.

more direct expression to his meaning he would probably have said that if her majesty could be induced to command certain courtiers of her council to cancel the licences under which their companies of players acted in the city and neighbourhood, all would be well. In July of the following year the council themselves requested the lord mayor and magistrates of Middlesex to give orders that no plays or interludes be played within the city or liberties; and in September a further communication was addressed to the lord mayor and aldermen on the general measures for the prevention of the plague.* And yet in November the council write again to say: 'As the sickness was almost ceased, and was not likely to increase at this time of the year, in order to relieve the poor players, and to encourage their being in readiness with convenient matters for her highness's solace this next Christmas, they required them forthwith to suffer the players to practise such plays, in such sort, and in the usual places, as they had been accustomed, having careful regard for the continuance of such quiet order as had been before observed.'† In the spring of the following year, 1582, the lords of the council wrote again to the lord mayor, in favour of the players. The object of the communication is to cause the lord mayor to allow plays in the city, so that the companies

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 331. † *Ibid.*, p. 350.

acting at The Theatre are not in question. But it will serve to illustrate the respective attitudes of the council and the city towards each other in this matter if we notice one or two points in this letter, and in the reply of the lord mayor which was sent the following day. My lords think it would not be unfit at that time to allow the players in the city, in respect that her majesty sometimes took delight in those pastimes, and that they might thereby attain more dexterity and perfection in that profession, the better to content her majesty. It is suggested that they be restrained from playing on the Sabbath, and only permitted on the ordinary holidays after evening prayer. If the exercise of the plays should increase the sickness and infection, the lord mayor should communicate to the council. My lords also suggest that the city should 'appoint some proper person to consider and allow such plays only as were fitted to yield honest recreation and no example of evil.' The reply of the mayor is a rehearsal of the inconveniences and perils of the plays, and a request that the council will continue their restraint of plays. Incidentally he shows us that plays in the city were presented in inns, probably the inn-yards: 'Although the players began not their plays till after evening service, yet all the afternoon they took in hearers, and filled the place with such as were thereby absent from Church, and attended to serve God's

enemies in an inn.'* The suggestion as to overlooking the plays would be carried out.

In the spring of the following year (May 3, 1583) the lord mayor addresses the council through Sir Francis Walsingham. He says that for the stay of the plague the court of aldermen had published certain orders which they intended to execute with diligence. 'Among other great inconveniences were the assemblies of people to plays, bear-baiting, fencers, and profane spectacles at The Theatre and Curtain and other like places, to which great multitudes of the worst sort of people resorted.' He points out that the restraints in the city were useless, unless like orders were carried out in the places adjoining beyond the jurisdiction of the city, and requests the council to take steps to redress the danger.† There is no evidence, however, that the council moved in the matter; but Sir Francis Walsingham, who seems to have been a true friend to the players at this critical period, adopted a very diplomatic step in their behalf. This was to bring the name and authority of the queen to bear upon the issue. He caused a selection to be made from the best companies of the best actors of each, and had them enrolled under the Master of the Revels as the queen's company of players; and in the autumn, when the council again addressed the mayor on

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 351. † *Ibid.*, p. 337.

behalf of the players, the communication came in the flattering guise of a direct request from court in favour of her majesty's servants.* On November 26, 1583, the council write to the effect that as the infection within the city had ceased, they desired that 'her majesty's players' might be suffered to play as heretofore, more especially as they were shortly to present some of their doings before her. It would appear that the Earl of Leicester's company, which had been acting at The Theatre, furnished the chief contingent towards the formation of the new royal company ; hence the above request to the mayor was made on behalf of the very men who had so long been a thorn in the side of the city authorities. A few days later, on December 1, 1583, Sir Francis Walsingham wrote to the lord mayor in the name of the council,

* 'Comedians and stage-players of former time were very poore and ignorant in respect of these of this time, but being now growne very skilfull and exquisite Actors for all matters, they were entertained into the service of divers great lords, out of which Companies there were xii. of the best chosen, and at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham they were sworn the Queenes servants, and were allowed wages and liveries as groomes of the chamber : and untill this yeere, 1583, the Queene hadde no players, amongst these xii. players were two rare men, *viz.*, Thomas Wilson for a quicke delicate refined extemporall witte, and Richard Tarleton for a wondrous plentifull pleasant extemporall witt, he was the wonder of his time. He lyeth buryed in Shore-ditch Church.' Stow's 'Annales,' ed. 1615, p. 697.

enforcing the request for permission to the players: 'With regard to the letter of the council on behalf of her majesty's players, which the lord mayor had interpreted to extend only to holidays, and not to other week-days, the council, considering that without frequent exercise of such plays as were to be presented before her majesty her servants could not conveniently satisfy her recreation and their own duty, desired that they should be licensed to perform upon week-days and work-days, at convenient times, between this and Shrovetide (Sundays only excepted).'*

It must have been harassing to the city fathers to receive commands from the queen in council touching the stay of the plague, frequently in terms implying blame or reproach—as when her majesty intimated that she had been compelled to remove her court from the neighbourhood of London in consequence of the spread of the infection—while the measures they persistently recommended were evaded by the council. The fact is, that the question of the plague and the plays revealed a difference between the court and the city which was spreading throughout the country, dividing it into two sides. The favour extended to the players by the court and nobility deepened and accelerated the Puritan development. The Theatre was opened in 1576, and in the

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 352.

following year was published John Northbrooke's 'Treatise against Dicing, Dancing, Plays, and Interludes, with other Idle Pastimes.' There had been previous tracts in the same strain, but this was 'the earliest, separate, and systematic attack,' and it was levelled principally at the players and their patrons. Taken altogether, it is an able performance, abounding with good, sober wisdom; but it is clear the worthy author had got himself thoroughly convinced that the door of a playhouse was equivalent to 'hell-mouth.' The public preference for plays over sermons provoked the good preacher's worst reproaches, and perhaps professional jealousy barbed his invective. The argument of his book is in the form of a dialogue, perhaps to show that the players had no monopoly in this device. The two interlocutors are 'Youth' and 'Age.' At a certain point the former is made to ask: 'Doe you speake against those places also, whiche are made vppe and builded for such playes and enterludes as the *Theatre* and *Curtaine* is, and other such lyke places besides?' And 'Age' replies: 'Yea, truly; for I am persuaded that Satan hath not a more speedie way and fitter schoole to work and teach his desire, to bring men and women into his snare of concupiscence and filthie lustes of wicked whoredome, than those places and plays and theatres are; and therefore necessarie that those places and players shoulde

be forbidden, and dissolved, and put downe by authoritie, as the brothell houses and stewes are.'*

In the following year (August 24, 1578) John Stockwood attacked The Theatre in a sermon preached at Paul's Cross. Speaking of players, he says: 'Have we not houses of purpose, built with great charges for the maintenance of them, and that without the liberties, as who shall say, There, let them say what they will, we will play. I know not how I might, with the godly-learned especially, more discommend the gorgeous playing place erected in the fields, than term it, as they please to have it called, a Theatre.'† In the same sermon he asks: 'Wyll not a fylthye playe wyth the blast of a trumpette sooner call thyther a thousande than an houres tolling of a bell bring to the sermon a hundred?—nay, even heere in the Citie, without it be at this place and some other certaine ordinarie audience, where shall you finde a reasonable company?—whereas if you resorte to the Theatre, the Curtayne, and other places of players in the Citie, you shall on the Lord's Day have these places, with many other that I cannot reckon, so full as possible they can throng.'‡ That the preacher allowed himself some license in

* Northbrooke's 'Treatise,' etc., edited by J. P. Collier for Shakespeare Society, pp. 85, 86.

† Collier, 'History of Dramatic Poetry,' etc., iii. 84.

‡ Halliwell-Phillipps, 'Outlines,' etc., 6th edition, i. 328.

speaking of plays as 'filthy' is shown by his attacking also the books from which the dramatists took their plots—'such filthie books, wherewith this (Saint Paul's) churchyard swarmeth.'

The stage continued to be subject to the attacks of the pulpit, and the state of dread produced by the plague enabled the preachers to work on the fears of the citizens. It must be conceded that those responsible for the performances at The Theatre showed little disposition to disarm attack. Allusion has already been made to the 'great disorder' which occurred there on a Sunday, in April, 1580. There was a disturbance outside The Theatre in June, 1584, described in a letter to Lord Burghley. These disturbances of the peace were probably partly due to the fact that The Theatre, as well as its neighbour the Curtain Playhouse, was often let on hire to other companies, and for other purposes than plays.

We are without information as to the dimensions of The Theatre, but the known facts point to its having been of considerable size, and probably decorative in character. It was built of timber, and therefore the cost of the erection, between £600 and £700, a large sum at that time, suggests size and extent of building. A good deal of the money may have been expended in decoration and accessories: Stockwood termed it a 'gorgeous playing-place.' All the attacks

upon The Theatre, by Puritan divines and the city authorities, show that the public patronage was large and constant. Apparently such a thing as a 'poor house' was unknown at the first London theatre; and assuredly the prices were 'popular.' In Lambarde's 'Perambulation of Kent' we read that none who go to Paris Garden, the Bell Savage or Theatre, 'to beholde beare baiting, interludes or fence play, can account of any pleasant spectacle unlesse they first pay one pennie at the gate, another at the entrie of the scaffolde, and the third for a quiet standing.' This passage has been long familiar in Collier's 'History of Dramatic Poetry,' but in a somewhat characteristic way he slurred over a point of importance. He says, 'We are able to show that it [The Theatre] was in existence in 1576, because it is mentioned by name in Lambarde's "Perambulation of Kent," first published in that year;' and then he gives the passage (not quite correctly). This passage is not in the 1576 edition at all, but occurs in the edition of 1596.* Nash, in his 'Martin's Month's Mind,' 1589, says that better mirth may be had for a penny at The Theatre and Curtain, and any blind playing-house, every day. But the penny only admitted to standing room in the yard or pit, over which there was no roof.

* First pointed out by Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, 'Outlines,' etc., 6th edition, i. 347.

The interior of the house was probably nearly identical with that of the Swan Playhouse (see *postea*). The author of ' Pappe with an Hatchet,' 1589, speaks of twopence as the usual price of admission at The Theatre ; but we know from Lambarde's testimony that this sum admitted to the galleries around. There were also boxes or rooms and seats in the galleries, for which further sums were charged. In the proposed lease to Burbage of 1585, the following provision was made : ' And further that yt shall or maye be lawfull for the sayde Gyles [Allen] and for hys wyfe and familie, upon lawfull request therefore made to the sayde Jeames Burbage, his executors or assignes, to enter or come into the premisses, and their in some one of the upper romes to have such convenient place to sett or stande to se such playes as shal be ther played, freely without anything therefore payeinge, soe that the sayde Gyles, hys wyfe and familie, doe come and take ther places before they shal be taken upp by any others.'*

Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps collected some allusions to plays given at The Theatre in contemporary literature ; *e.g.*, Gosson's ' School of Abuse '—' The Blacksmith's Daughter and Catilins Conspiracies, usually brought in to the Theater ' ; the same author's ' Plays Confuted in Five Actions '—' The

* Halliwell-Phillipps, ' Outlines,' etc., 6th edition, i. 347.

Playe of Playes shewen at the Theater the three and twentieth of Februarie last' (1581–82). In the same work Gosson refers to 'the history of Cæsar and Pompey and the playe of the Fabii' as having been acted at The Theatre about the same time; he also mentions 'that glosing plaie at the Theater which profers you so faire,' but in which there was a 'baudie song of a maide of Kent, and a litle beastly speach of the new strawled roge.' The old play of 'Hamlet,' which preceded Shakespeare's, was acted at The Theatre. Lodge, in his 'Wits Miserie,' 1596, speaks of one who 'looks as pale as the visard of the ghost which cries so miserably at the Theator, like an oister-wife, *Hamlet, revenge*.' Kit Marlowe's noble play, 'Faustus,' was given at The Theatre, as is shown by an allusion in the 'Blacke Booke' (1604): 'He had a head of hayre like one of my divells in Dr. Faustus, when the olde Theatre crackt and frighted the audience.' This was after Shakespeare had left the management of Henslowe, and hence we know that at The Theatre he continued to hear the music of 'Marlowe's mighty line,' which constantly reverberates in his own.

A conspicuous feature of the performances at The Theatre were jigs and drolls and more or less impromptu pleasantries to the accompaniment of tabor and pipe, in which Tarlton, and afterwards Kempe, greatly distinguished themselves.

Tarltons Jests.

Drawne into these three parts.

1 *His Court-witty Iests.*
2 *His sound City Iests.*
3 *His Countrey-pretty Iests.*

Full of delight, Wit, and honest Mirth.

LONDON,
Printed by *I. H.* for *Andrew Crook,* and are to be sold
in *Pauls* Church-yard, at the signe of
the *Beare.* 1638.

FACSIMILE OF TITLE-PAGE OF TARLTON'S 'JESTS.'

The opposition of the city authorities and the invectives of the Puritan preachers were frequently the subject of their satire, and there can be little doubt that these stings and flying arrows of wit helped to embitter the feeling with which The Theatre players were regarded by a slowly increasing number of the citizens. This subject is dealt with more fully in connection with the Curtain playhouse in the succeeding chapter. In June, 1584, in consequence of some disturbances at The Theatre, the lord mayor sent two aldermen to the court to make representations 'for the suppressing and pulling downe of the Theatre and Curten.' The circumstance is described in a letter from Fleetwood to Lord Burghley in the Lansdowne MS.* The aldermen succeeded in persuading all the lords of the council to their views, with the exception of the lord chamberlain and the vice-chancellor ; 'but we obteyned a lettre to suppresse theym all.' Upon the same night, writes Fleetwood, 'I sent for the Quenes players and my lord of Arundel his players, and they all well nighe obeyed the Lordes lettres ;—the chiefest of her Highnes players advised me to send for the owner of the Theater, who was a stubborne fellow, and to bynd him ;—I did so ;—he sent me word that he was my Lord of Hunsden's man, and that he

* Printed by Halliwell-Phillipps, 'Outlines,' 6th edition, i. 349.

wold not comme at me, but he woid in the mornyng ride to my Lord,—then I sent the under-shereff for hym, and he brought him to me, and, at his commyng, he showted me owt very justice; and in the end I shewed hym my Lord his master's hand, and then he was more quiet; but, to die for it, he wold not be bound. And then I mynding to send him to prison, he made sute that he might be bounde to appere at the oier and determiner, the which is to-morowe, where he said that he was suer the court wold not bynd hym, being a counselers man; and so I have graunted his request, where he shal be sure to be bounde, or els ys lyke to do worse.'

The owner of The Theatre here alluded to may have been Burbage, or Braynes, or he may have been Hyde, the assignee of the property. Or for owner, perhaps, we should read lessee or occupier, seeing that the house was frequently let to other companies of players. In the foregoing notices the companies referred to as acting at The Theatre include Lord Leicester's, the Chamberlain's, Lord Warwick's, the Queen's, and perhaps Lord Arundel's.

It was in the following year that Shakespeare came to London, and although we have no information respecting his dramatic career till 1592, it may safely be assumed that the tradition as to his connection with The Theatre soon after his arrival in the metropolis had some foundation in fact.

And although he was writing and acting for the Bankside and Surrey playhouses between 1592 and 1594, we know that at the latter date he had joined the Chamberlain's Company, which performed at The Theatre and Curtain. It was in December of 1594 that the company gave a performance before the queen at Greenwich Palace, as appears by the entry recorded in the MS. accounts of the treasurer of the chamber, and printed by Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps:* 'To William Kempe, William Shakespeare, and Richard Burbage, servants to the Lord Chamberleyne, upon the Councelles warrant dated at Whitehall xv. to Marcij, 1594, for twoe severall comedies or enterludes shewed by them before her Majestie in Christmas tyme laste paste, viz., upon St. Stephen's daye and Innocentes daye, xiij*li.* vj*s.* viij*d.*, and by waye of her Majesties rewarde, vj*li.* xiij*s.* iiij*d.*, in all xx*li.*'

In 1592 it was feared the London apprentices would create riots on Midsummer night, and the lords of the council ordered that there should be no plays at 'The Theater, Curtayne or other usuall places where the same are commonly used.' And in 1595, the year after the company had performed before the queen at Greenwich, the lord mayor made a strong representation to the council to close all the playhouses resorted to

* 'Outlines,' 6th edition, i. 109.

by Londoners outside his jurisdiction, which had become the rendezvous for 'all masterless men and vagabond persons that haunt the highways.'* Again, in 1597, a further request was made to the council,† and this time with effect, for on the same day, July 28, the privy council issued an order to the Justices of Middlesex for the suppression of The Theatre and other playhouses: 'Her Majestie being informed that there are verie greate disorders committed in the common playhouses, both by lewd matters that are handled on the stages, and by resorte and confluence of bad people, hathe given direction that not onlie no plaies shal be used within London or about the citty, or in any publique place, during this tyme of sommer, but that also those playhouses that are erected and built only for suche purposes shal be plucked downe, namelie the Curtayne and the Theatre nere to Shoreditch, or any other within that county. Theis are therfore in her Majesties name to chardge and commaund you that you take present order there be no more plaies used in any publique place within three myles of the citty untill Alhallontide next, and likewyse that you do send for the owner of the Curtayne, Theatre or anie other common playhouse, and enjoyne them by vertue hereof forthwith to plucke downe quite the stages, galleries and roomes that are made for

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 354. † *Ibid.*

people to stand in, and so to deface the same as they maie not be ymploied agayne to such use, which yf they shall not speedely performe you shall advertyse us, that order maie be taken to see the same don according to her Majesties pleasure and commaundment.'*

We have seen that in 1597 James Burbage died in the midst of negotiations with Giles Allen for a continuation of the lease, and that his heirs and successors, Cuthbert and Richard Burbage, would not agree to the condition imposed by Allen that The Theatre should continue as a playhouse for only five years after the expiration of the existing lease, 1576-1597. After this came the order of the privy council to suppress and pluck down the playhouses. It was, indeed, a troubled year for the Burbages, and although the order of the council was stayed or compromised in some way, for The Theatre was not plucked down and demolished, the family must have felt they were on the verge of ruin. The remedy they finally sought was a desperate one, although not illegitimate. They resolved in the following year to take advantage of the condition in the original lease by which they were empowered (having expended a minimum sum of £200 upon buildings on the estate) to take down and carry away 'all such buildings and other things as should be

* Halliwell-Phillipps, 'Outlines,' etc., 6th edition, i. 330.

builded.' This stipulation was inserted in the proposed lease of 1585. The Burbages engaged one Peter Street, a builder and carpenter, to remove the building, and the work was carried out either in December, 1598, or January, 1599. Allen had himself contemplated demolishing The Theatre and converting the materials to some other use, although his right to do so does not appear. The Burbages anticipated this design, and the doubtful point of their proceedings consisted in the fact that they were acting upon a condition in a lease which was actually expired, although the tenancy continued. This led to the suit Allen *v.* Burbage, 44 Eliz., from the records of which Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps printed several interesting extracts, among them the following narrative of the 'removal' of The Theatre, given by Allen in his bill of complaint against Cuthbert Burbage, who 'unlawfullye combyninge and confederating himselfe with the sayd Richard Burbage and one Peter Streat, William Smyth, and divers other persons, to the number of twelve, to your subject unknowne, did aboute the eight and twentyth daye of December, in the one and fortyth yeere of your Highnes raygne, and sythence your highnes last and generall pardon by the confederacye aforesayd, ryoutouslye assemble themselves together, and then and there armed themselves with dyvers and manye unlawfull and

offensive weapons, as namelye, swordes, daggers, billes, axes, and such like, and soe armed, did then repayre unto the sayd Theater, and then and there, armed as aforesayd, in verye ryotous, outragious, and forcyble manner, and contrarye to the lawes of your highnes realme, attempted to pull downe the sayd Theater; whereuppon divers of your subjectes, servauntes and farmers, then goinge aboute in peaceable manner to procure them to desist from that their unlawfull enterpryse, they the sayd ryotous persons aforesayd, notwithstanding procured then therein, with greate vyolence, not onlye then and there forcyblye and ryotouslye resisting your subjectes, servauntes, and farmers, but also then and there pulling, breaking, and throwing downe the sayd Theater in verye outragious, violent, and riotous sort, to the great disturbance and terrefyeing not onlye of your subjectes sayd servauntes and farmers, but of divers others of your Majesties loving subjectes there neere inhabitinge; and having so done, did then alsoe in most forcible and ryotous manner take and carrye awaye from thence all the wood and timber thereof unto the Bancksyde in the parishe of St. Marye Overyes, and there erected a newe playhowse with the sayd timber and wood.'* That 'newe playhowse' was the famous Globe Theatre, rendered immortal by its association with the greatest of Shakespeare's plays.

* 'Outlines,' etc., 6th edition, i. 334-5.

CHAPTER III.

THE CURTAIN.

THE litigious troubles of the Burbages, by employment given to the scriveners, wrought a benefit to history. Facts relating to The Theatre became embedded in the chronicle of conflicting interests, and lay waiting three hundred years for the zealous research of the late J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps. The career of the Curtain was presumably more peaceful; with the result that we know less about it. As to who built it, the date of its opening, how much it cost —all points on which information has been discovered in respect of The Theatre—we know nothing at all.

That the Curtain was the second playhouse erected in London we infer from the facts: (1) the Burbages distinctly claim that The Theatre was the first playhouse built in England; (2) the names of The Theatre and the Curtain are coupled in allusions shortly after The Theatre was opened,

when no other playhouses but these two were in existence.

It is remarkable that a name of such apparent theatrical significance as the Curtain was not suggested by anything connected with the stage. As will have been gathered in the preceding chapter, the Curtain was erected in the near neighbourhood of The Theatre, within the precinct of the dissolved Priory of Holywell ; the name of the playhouse being derived from the land on which it was erected. This land is mentioned in a lease in the year 1538, shortly after the dissolution of the establishment to which it belonged : ' . . . ac duo stabula et unum fenilem supra edificatum, scituata et existentia extra portas ejusdem nuper monasterii prope pasturam dicte nuper Priorisse vocatam *the Curtene*.'* The gates of the Priory opened into Holywell Lane on the northern side of the road, and consequently, as the ground called the Curtain was outside the gates, it must have been on the southern side of the road. From Stow's description of The Theatre and Curtain, as being near the site of the dissolved priory, and both standing on the south-west side towards the Field, we may conclude that the Curtain playhouse was erected on a part of the ground called the Curtain, which lay near the road—Holywell Lane. Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps discovered, from a deed dated in March, 1581, that the land gave its name

* J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, 'Outlines,' etc., i. 338.

to a house erected upon it—the Curtain House—'all that the house, tenemente or lodge commonlie called the Curtayne, and also that parcell of grounde and close walled and inclosed with a bricke wall on the west and northe partes, and in parte with a mudde wall at the west side or ende towardes the southe, called also the Curtayne Close, sometimes apperteyning to the late Priorie of Halliwell, nowe dissolved.' Curtain House, apparently, was not the playhouse, but both these buildings were erected on the Curtain Close, or estate. 'The church being pulled downe,' says Stow, 'many houses have been there builded for the lodgings of noblemen, of straungers borne, and other'—a statement that is corroborated by some Chancery papers of the year 1591 :—'the grounde there was for the most parte converted firste into garden plottes, and then leasinge the same to divers tenauntes caused them to covenaunt or promise to build uppon the same, by occasion wherof the buildings which are there were for the most parte erected and the rentes encreased.'* The site of the playhouse is marked as Curtain Court in Chassereau's plan of Shoreditch, 1745, a section from which is here given. 'This Court was afterwards called Gloucester Row, and is now known as Gloucester Street.'† The name survives in Curtain Road, Shoreditch.

* Halliwell-Phillipps, 'Outlines,' 6th edition, i. 339.

† *Ibid.*

The two playhouses stood so close together that their names were very frequently coupled in contemporary allusions and descriptions, as in the case of Stow referred to above. Their contiguity is remarkable, and would appear to strengthen the arguments already advanced as to the significance of the site. If it had been a matter of rival theatrical speculations, it might be supposed that the opposing party would have chosen a spot more removed from the house already in possession. But there was no available spot outside the civic jurisdiction equally near the city, and the dramatic predilections of the site have already been indicated. It was probably less a matter of rivalry than a kind of double-barrelled gun aimed at the corporation, in the spirit attributed to the players by Stockwood in his sermon, 'There, let them say what they will, we will play.'

In the last chapter emphasis was given to the fact that these playhouses, The Theatre and Curtain, were erected in the immediate vicinity of Finsbury Fields—the northern recreation ground of the citizens—and stress was laid upon the colouring from ancient sports and pastimes which accrued therefrom in the Elizabethan drama. Before recurring to this subject we may well advert for a moment to the view which has excluded it from its place in the history of the stage, the view, viz., according to which the stage

is regarded as a product of the patronage of the court and aristocracy. That view depends on the fact that the companies pursued their calling under licence of the queen and of various noblemen, chiefly members of the privy council. The fact is indisputable, but it should be balanced by other considerations. In the body politic at that time every individual was bound to be of some definite faculty or status, or else he was classed as a rogue and vagabond. Special cases were met by license or grant of privilege. A man who set up a new industry which he had learnt abroad, would belong to no guild or mystery in respect of a new experiment, and accordingly, to save himself from being an alien from the body politic, he sought a special licence to carry on his work, and take up workmen for the purpose. An inventor sought the same privilege, and as inventions were construed as national benefits, his grant of privilege received the addition of an inhibitory clause against any other persons working the subject of the invention for a given period. There was a devolution of recognition from the crown, or from corporations within their jurisdictions, throughout the body politic, and those who could not bring themselves within that recognition were practically outlaws. These considerations account for the freedom enjoyed by the acting companies, who, although organized nominally as private servants,

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pursued their calling in public. And when they sought the suffrages of the public in public places they distinctly came within the traditional usages of dramatic representation. Those traditional usages have been pointed out in the two preceding chapters. If the round formation for theatrical purposes was originally derived from ancient classic civilization, it was the English folk who, by using the amphitheatres for their traditional observances and pastimes, begot the use of them for miracle plays, from which was derived the circular stage arrangement when plays were presented in the open, and hence the round formation of the playhouses. The playhouses were the outcome of the people, the national life and character, and when they came into the dramatic evolution they provided a point of contact between the highest and lowest. Only in the churches and in the playhouses did all sections of Elizabethan society meet, attracted in both cases by appeals which are felt without respect to social distinctions.

These observations are introduced in reference to the passage from Stow already given, wherein the chronicler says that 'many houses have been builded' for noblemen, foreigners and others within the precinct of the old Holywell Priory, and 'near thereunto are builded two publique houses,' etc., The Theatre and Curtain. To those who hold that our national drama was an exotic

planted in English soil by royal and aristocratic hands, we would point out that the presence of noblemen in the neighbourhood of the playhouses may be used to support their view, and bid them make the best of the argument. The same combination existed in the case of Blackfriars Theatre, as we shall see later on. The liberties appear to have been favourite residential quarters. One may fancy that among the 'strangers born' in the liberty of Holywell may have been some of the continental masters of fence who favoured our shores at this period. The Curtain, as well as The Theatre, was used for fencing matches and exhibitions of sword-play. Herein, again, the process was the same. It was in the playhouses that the broadsword and quarterstaff of the people encountered the rapier and the foil. The worthy citizen in the presence of the scientific play of the lighter weapons might feel abashed, but it was his well-known love for sword-play which begot the exhibitions of the more artistic methods of killing.

The military associations of Finsbury Fields have already been touched upon, a more extended reference to them being reserved for this place. The Artillery Company, which was incorporated by Henry VIII., in 1537, met in the Old Artillery Garden, at the top of Artillery Lane, Bishopsgate. The charter of incorporation instituted 'overseers of the Science of Artyllary, that is to wyt, for

Longbowes, Crossbowes and Handgunnes.' The Statute of 33 Henry VIII. (1541) enacted that all men under 60 should have bows and arrows for shooting. The London citizens practised at the butts in Finsbury Fields. Musters of the trained bands were also held there. Those musters presented no mean spectacle. The city was proud of its army, and frequently showed itself ready not only to muster for the defence of the realm, but to contribute contingents, numbered by thousands, to assist the sovereign in foreign wars.

The patriotic and warlike sentiments of the citizens were conspicuously displayed when the Earl of Essex left London on his expedition for the subjugation of Ireland. Shakespeare's friend and patron, Lord Southampton, was the General of the Horse in the earl's army, and after the departure of the expedition in March, 1599, the poet composed the stirring drama of 'Henry V.,' which was an oblique reflection of the enthusiasm with which the earl was regarded in London, and of the hopeful expectation with which the populace awaited his victorious return. The play was acted at the Curtain, presumably by the Burbage and Shakespeare company, and was exceedingly popular. As this occurred shortly after the removal of that company's playhouse, The Theatre, from Shoreditch, the production of the play at the Curtain may indicate a desire on the part of Shakespeare's

company to retain their hold upon the neighbourhood which they had left. But the martial note which dominates the piece, and the stirring incidents of war which constitute the action, were appropriate to the military associations of the neighbourhood, as well as to the fencing matches frequently held in the playhouse ; and this may have been the reason why the play was produced at the Curtain rather than at the Globe.

The prologue of the play, spoken before each act, throws considerable light upon the Curtain and other Elizabethan playhouses.

In the prologue to the first act the playhouse is compared to a 'cockpit,' and described as a 'wooden O':

> '. . . . . But pardon, gentles all,
> The flat unraised spirits that have dared
> On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object : can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France ? or may we cram
> Within the wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt ?'

The prologue appeals to the imagination of the audience, and proceeds to paint the scenery of the play in words. The address which heralds the second act concludes thus :

> '. . . . . and the scene
> Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton ;
> There is the playhouse now, there must you sit :
> And thence to France shall we convey you safe,

> And bring you back, charming the narrow seas
> To give you gentle pass; for, if we may,
> We'll not offend one stomach with our play,
> But, till the king come forth, and not till then,
> Unto Southampton do we shift our scene.'

The prologue of the third act begins:

> 'Thus with imagined wing our swift scene flies
> In motion of no less celerity
> Than that of thought,'

and the English navy on its way to Harfleur is brought before the mind's eye of the audience. The prologue of the fourth act heralds the great conflict of Agincourt:

> 'And so our scene must to the battle fly;
> Where—O for pity—we shall much disgrace
> With four or five most vile and ragged foils,
> Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous,
> The name of Agincourt. Yet sit and see,
> Minding true things by what their mockeries be.'

It would be idle to apologize for the introduction of these lines on the score of their familiarity; their absence from an account of the old theatres would be a defect. They have frequently done service to those who labour to prove that the old playhouses were absolutely without the aids of scenery; but to those who apprehend the spirit of the play it cannot but appear as a proof of dullness to take these deprecations *au pied de la lettre*. It is a graceful form of apology to exaggerate the defect for which excuse is sought. The Curtain

playhouse, the scene of fencing matches, in which members of the acting companies bore part, was not likely to betray such deficiencies in its armoury as to need apology in the literal sense for its

> 'Four or five most vile and ragged foils
> Right ill-disposed in brand ridiculous.'

The deprecation is evidence rather of the high standard of the audience, than of the shortcomings of the performance.

There is a probable connection between the production of this play and a movement in the destinies of the London theatres which took place at this time. The removal by the Burbages to Southwark a few months previously could not be viewed with indifference by the theatrical proprietors there, Edward Alleyn and Philip Henslowe. The Theatre was removed to the Bankside on or about December 28, 1598; the final quittance being made probably on January 20, 1599, or 1598, according to the old style. We may conclude, perhaps, that the popularity achieved by Shakespeare's 'Henry V.' at the Curtain in the succeeding summer, suggested to these careful, but enterprising men, that they might make a countermove to the north. Accordingly we find that on the following 8th January, 1599-1600, a contract was entered into between Henslowe and Alleyn of the one part and Peter Street, citizen and car-

penter, of London, on the other part, for building a new playhouse near Golden Lane, Cripplegate, which became known as the Fortune. Peter Street, it will be remembered, assisted the Burbages in the removal of The Theatre, and the contract expressly enjoined that the new playhouse should be made in all respects like the Globe.

The untiring opposition offered to the playhouses had apparently been successful in the case of The Theatre ; but in the result increased vitality was thrown into the existence of the Curtain, and the opponents of the stage had the mortification of seeing another theatre rising near Golden Lane. Representations were made to the privy council, and the reply of my lords reads like a death warrant for the Curtain. Under date 22nd June, 1600, they write to the effect that inasmuch as Alleyn's playhouse in Golden Lane was not intended to increase the number of playhouses, but to be in lieu of the Curtain, he should be permitted to complete it.* In the event, the Fortune was completed, and the Curtain continued to exist.

The history of the Curtain before this crisis is naturally associated in some measure with that of The Theatre, and has consequently been touched upon in the preceding chapter.

We have seen that the Curtain was linked with

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 354.

The Theatre in the denunciations of divines and in the appeals addressed to the privy council by the corporation. These attacks culminated in the order of the council for the suppression of the playhouses, in 1597, an order which—like the order in June, 1600, for ending the existence of the Curtain in favour of the Fortune—was happily ineffective.* A final effort to compass the destruction of the Curtain was made in 1601, but the old playhouse again weathered the storm, and continued its long, if chequered career, probably to the closing of the theatres under the Puritan *régime*.

It has been remarked that the players, by their indiscreet ridicule of influential citizens, brought much of this opposition on themselves. This topic has been already discussed in the previous chapter, in connection with The Theatre. But there is evidence that the players at the Curtain, after the removal of The Theatre, carried on the same satirical warfare. In 1601 they especially offended by satirizing some living notabilities, and appeal was made to the Privy Council that the abuse might be stayed. Accordingly, on May 10, 1601, my lords addressed the following letter to 'certain Justices of the Peace in the County of Middlesex: Wee do understand that certaine players, that use to recyte their playes at the Cur-

* *Ante*, p. 73.

taine in Moorefeildes, do represent upon the stage in their interludes the persons of some gent. of good desert and quallity that are yet alive under obscure manner, but yet in such sorte as all the hearers may take notice both of the matter and the persons that are meant thereby. This beinge a thinge very unfitte, offensive and contrary to such direccion as have bin heretofore taken, that no plaies should be openly shewed but such as were first perused and allowed, and that might minister no occasion of offence or scandall, wee do hereby require you that you do forthwith forbidd those players, to whomsoever they appertaine, that do play at the Courtaine in Moorefeildes, to represent any such play, and that you will examine them who made that play and to shew the same unto you, and, as you in your discrecions shall thincke the same unfitte to be publiquely shewed, to forbidd them from henceforth to play the same eyther privately or publiquely; and yf, upon veiwe of the said play, you shall finde the subject so odious and inconvenient as is informed, wee require you to take bond of the cheifest of them to aunswere their rashe and indiscreete dealing before us.'*

In these satirical onslaughts upon the corporation the sympathies of the audience undoubtedly

* MS. Register of the Privy Council. See Halliwell-Phillipps, 'Outlines,' 6th edition, i. 342.

were with the actors. Mr. Stopford Brooke, in a luminous criticism of Shakespeare's 'Richard III.,' objects to the ridicule thrown upon the mayor and corporation in that play, but it will readily be seen that the theatrical history of the time explains it. Mr. Brooke writes:—

'The seventh scene, where Richard is induced to accept the crown as it were by force, is, I think, overdone. So I say is Richard's dissimulation in many passages in the play. It is too gross, too palpable. The scene of Richard between the two bishops is ridiculous, over-sensational; it almost trenches upon farce. It lowers the dignity of English citizens. It exhibits Shakespeare's contempt, it may be said, for the mob, but he has here transferred that contempt from the mob to the mayor and grave burghers of the city; and I wonder the people endured it when it was represented.'*

So far from objecting to these scenes, the audience probably enjoyed them as much as the players. They were 'topical,' as we should say in these days, and if the actors made their worships appear ridiculous on the stage, we may be sure that the playgoers of that time 'endured it' with extreme heartiness.

We may allow that it was indiscreet of the

* Rev. Stopford A. Brooke on 'Richard III.,' N.S.S. Trans. 1880-6, p. 516.

players to lay themselves open to so serious a complaint from their good friends the lords of the privy council. But the provocation was excessive. The unmeasured terms in which the stage was publicly denounced ; the offensive exaggerations thrown out in the white heat of Puritan indignation ; the bitter vituperation with which the actors were pursued from both the pulpit and the press—clearly with the object of stirring up and keeping alive the agitation against the theatres—could not fail to beget resentment and retaliation. Some specimens of these tirades have been given in the account of The Theatre ; one more may be added here, from Stubbes' 'Anatomie of Abuses,' 1583. After alluding to The Theatre and Curtain as 'Venus pallaces,' he writes : 'Doe they not maintaine bawdrie, insinuat foolerie, and renue the remembraunce of Heathen idolatrie? Doe thei not induce whoredome and uncleannesse? Nay, are thei not rather plaine devourers of maidenly virginitie and chastitie? for proofe whereof but marke the flockyng and runnyng to Theaters and Curtens daylie and hourelie, night and daie, tyme and tide, to see playes and enterludes, where suche wanton gestures, such bawdie speeches, suche laughyng and flearyng, suche kissyng and bussyng, suche clippyng and culling, such wincking and glauncing of wanton eyes and the like as is wonderfull to beholde.' No wonder that the sober

citizens opposed the stage ; and no wonder that the players retorted. The gibes came chiefly from the so-called ' clowns,' in extemporal flashes, during their impromptu entertainments known as jigs, or drolls. These men must have possessed great natural wit of the Touchstone order, and much license was allowed them. The chief ' clowns ' at the Curtain were Robert Armin and Richard Tarlton. The former afterwards performed at the Globe. The latter became famous at The Theatre as well as the Curtain, and died before the removal of The Theatre (see *ante*, p. 68).

The wonder, indeed, is not that the audience tolerated the ridicule of the mayor and corporation in ' Richard III.,' but that practically the same people who had roared at the coarse buffooneries of the clowns in the jigs and drolls, were brought to perceive and appreciate those more subtle forms of humour which appeal to us even at the present day. The truth is that the educational influence of Shakespeare upon the public was enormous. When ' Hamlet ' was produced at the Globe, in 1602, he paid a tribute to the memory of Tarlton, in the name of Yorick, the king's jester, after having reproved in a previous scene the excesses and abuse of license by which he and other clowns sometimes marred the effect of plays. If Tarlton's ' Jigge of a Horse-loade of Fooles,' said to have been given at the Curtain in

ridicule of the city authorities,* may be taken in any way to represent the kind of thing which brought about the above letter from the privy council, the discreet fun made of the mayor and aldermen in 'Richard III.' might by contrast almost have been relished by their worships themselves, could they have witnessed it. This they would never have consented to do—in a playhouse. But if her majesty had graciously commanded them to the court to witness the play—that would have been quite different !

The description of The Theatre applies generally to the Curtain. We derive its shape from its being called a cockpit, and alluded to as 'this wooden O ;' and this description shows that it resembled The Theatre, although it is generally supposed to have been smaller than that playhouse. Like The Theatre, it was open to the sky ; spectators were admitted to standing room in the pit at a charge of a penny, while there were galleries and rooms, or boxes, at graduating higher charges. Pickpockets were able to help themselves from the pockets of those who were absorbed in the play, as is shown by the following notice of such an occurrence in 1599 :

'11 March, 42 Eliz.—Recognizance taken before

* One of Mr. Collier's MSS., used in his 'New Facts' regarding the life of Shakespeare. Printed by Halliwell, ed. 'Tarlton's Jests,' Shakespeare Society, pp. xx-xxvi.

Nicholas Collyns, Esq., J.P., of Richard Fletcher, of the city of Norwich, pewterer, in the sum of ten pounds, for the said Richard's appearance at the next General Session of the Peace, to give evidence against William Hankins, "chardged with a purse taken at a play at the Curten with xxvi*s.* vi*d.* in it."'

'19 March, 42 Eliz. — Recognizance . . . for William Hankins, "he being charged with a purse taken at the Curten."'—'Middlesex County Records,' vol. i., 259.

It was in this year that Will Kempe, a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company, danced his famous Morris-dance from London to Norwich, a feat which he celebrated in the following year by the publication of his pamphlet 'Kemps Nine Daies Wonder.' In this book, in describing his stay at Burntwood, he relates that in this town two cut-purses were taken into custody, 'that with two other their companions followed me from London;' when apprehended they made out that they were countenanced by Kempe, whereupon 'the officers bringing them to my inne, I iustly denyed their acquaintance, sauing that I remembered one of them to be a noted cut-purse, such a one as we tye to a poast on our stage, for all people to wonder at, when at a play they are taken pilfering.'*

* 'Kemps Nine Daies Wonder,' ed. Dyce, Camden Society, p. 6.

Kemps nine daies vvonder.

Performed in a daunce from London to Norwich.

Containing the pleasure, paines and kinde entertainment of *William Kemp* betweene *London* and that Citty in his late Morrice.

Wherein is somewhat set downe worth note; to reprooue the slaunders spred of him: many things merry, nothing hurtfull.

Written by himselfe to satisfie his friends.

LONDON
Printed by *E. A.* for *Nicholas Ling*, and are to be solde at his shop at the west doore of Saint Paules Church. 1600.

Facsimile of Title-page of 'Kemps Nine Daies Wonder.

The allusion here is probably to the above depredation by Hankins.

The history of the Curtain may be divided into three parts: 1. The period during which its history was partially linked with that of The Theatre, 1576-1598. 2. The critical period following the removal of The Theatre, when an agitation was got up to abolish it in favour of Edward Alleyn's new playhouse near Golden Lane, the Fortune, 1599-1601, or 1602. 3. The concluding period of its history, from the accession of James I., in 1603, to the end.

The period comprised in the first two of the three divisions mentioned above has been given so far as the facts won from oblivion by latter-day research will admit. Before proceeding with the remaining period, two incidents of extreme interest, which in all probability belong to the story of the Curtain in the first period, but which cannot absolutely be vouched for as proven facts, may be related here. Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps was of opinion (1) that 'Romeo and Juliet' was brought out at the Curtain; and (2) that Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour' was introduced to the public at this playhouse through the intercession of Shakespeare.

The case for the former incident is built on the the following lines from Marston's 'Scourge cf Villanie,' 1598:

'Luscus, what's plaid to-day ? faith, now I know
I set thy lips abroach, from whence doth flow
Naught but pure Iuliat and Romio.
Say, who acts best ? *Drusus* or *Roscio ?*
Now I have him, that nere of ought did speake
But when of playes or Plaiers he did treate.
H'ath made a common-place booke out of plaies,
And speakes in print, at least, what ere he sayes
Is warranted by Curtaine *plaudeties*,
If ere you heard him courting *Lesbia's* eyes;
Say (Curteous Sir), speakes he not mouingly
From out some new pathetique Tragedie ?
He writes, he railes, he iests, he courts, what not,
And all from out his huge, long-scraped stock
Of well-penn'd playes.'*

The question turns on the above words 'Curtaine *plaudeties*.' Do they refer to the Curtain playhouse, or is 'curtaine' a synonym for 'theatrical,' in reference to the curtains of the stage ? The balance of probability is certainly in favour of the reference being to the playhouse. And this general likelihood is supported by facts, which indicate (1) that the chamberlain's company acted at the Curtain as well as The Theatre, and (2) that the reference on the title-page of 'Romeo and Juliet,' ed. 1597 — 'plaid publiquely by the Right Honourable the L. of Hunsdon his Servants'— is to the chamberlain's company under another name.

1. That the chamberlain's company acted at

* Halliwell's 'Illustrations of the Life of Shakespeare,' Pt. i., App. xxvii., p. 121.

the Curtain is supported by the fact that Pope, one of the members of the company, was also a sharer in that establishment ; that Armin, another member of the company, is known to have acted there in 1600, and that the Curtain at this period was one of the homes of the legitimate drama.*

2. That Lord Hunsdon's men were, in fact, the chamberlain's company, is supported by the following entry in the accounts of the treasurer of the chamber to Queen Elizabeth : 'To John Hemynge and George Bryan, servantes to the late Lord Chamberlayne, and now servauntes to the Lorde Hunsdon, upon the Councelles warraunte dated at Whitehall xxj. mo die Decembris, 1596, for five enterludes or playes shewed by them before her majestie on St. Stephen's daye at nighte, the sondaye nighte following, Twelfe Nighte, on St. John's daye, and on Shrove-sunday at nighte laste, the some of xxxiij*li.* vj*s.* viij*d.*, and by waye of her Majestie's rewarde, xxj*li.* xiij*s.* iiij*d.*, in all the some of l*li.*' The lord chamberlain, *i.e.*, Lord Hunsdon, died on July 22nd, 1596, and his son, Lord Hunsdon, was appointed lord chamberlain on April 17th, 1597. 'Romeo and Juliet' was acted

* 'Or if my dispose
Persuade me to a play, Ile to the Rose,
Or Curtaine, one of Plautus comedies,
Or the patheticke Spaniard's tragedies.'
Skialetheia, 1598.

between those dates, when the company was known as the Lord Hunsdon's servants, and Marston's reference to the 'Curtaine plaudeties' is taken as determining that the play was produced at this playhouse. In the second quarto of the play, 1599, the name *Kemp* is prefixed to some of the speeches of Peter.* This correlates with the cut-purse episode at the Curtain noted above, and the probability that Kempe was alluding to it becomes strengthened.

With regard to the other incident: 'Rare Ben's comedy of "Every Man in his Humour" was most likely produced there [*i.e.*, the Curtain] in the year 1598,' writes Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps. The anecdote on which this conjecture was made is given by Rowe thus: 'His (Shakespeare's) acquaintance with Ben Jonson began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good-nature; Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players in order to have it acted, and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natured answer that it would be of no service to their company, when Shakespeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it as

* 'Kemps Nine Daies Wonder,' ed. Dyce, Camden Society, Introd., vi. *note.*

to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the public.' As Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps pointed out, 'the statement that rare Ben was then absolutely new to literature is certainly erroneous, however ignorant the Burbages or their colleagues may have been of his primitive efforts.'

Jonson had been writing for Henslowe, the proprietor of the Rose Theatre, but this connection had been severed owing to Jonson's duel with Gabriel Spencer, which will be further noticed in a subsequent chapter, and at this time Jonson was in a position which rendered the decision on his play one of great moment to him. That Shakespeare and Jonson entertained a great regard for each other, and that Jonson has done honour to his own memory by honouring in beautiful and touching words the friend and rival who died before him, supports the credibility of Rowe's story. So generous a commencement of their intercourse would explain why their rivalry, which was undoubtedly keen, never disturbed their mutual esteem.

The connection of the chamberlain's company with the Curtain becomes interesting when placed in juxtaposition with the other theatres in the hands of the Burbages. From 1596 to 1598 the following playhouses (not necessarily continuously) were in the occupation of the company:

The Theatre, the Curtain, the Blackfriars.

From 1599 to 1602 :

The Globe, the Curtain, the Blackfriars.

The opposition to The Theatre and the difficulty with Giles Allen as to the renewal of the lease in 1597, must be viewed in connection with the establishment of the Blackfriars Theatre by Burbage in 1596. Similarly the opening of the Globe in 1599 must be regarded in its bearing upon the agitation against the Curtain, 1599-1601, and the building of the Fortune Theatre near Cripplegate by Alleyn, 1599-1600. The production at the Curtain of such strong plays as 'Romeo and Juliet' in 1596, 'Every Man in his Humour' in 1598, and 'Henry V.' in 1599, indicates a desire on the part of the Burbages to retain a vigorous hold upon the old playhouse while their ventures at Blackfriars and the Bankside were maturing. In effect, we find that on those new theatres proving successful, the company relinquished its connection with the Curtain.

It is supposed that the Children of the Revels acted at the Blackfriars Theatre, and that while they were in occupation Burbage's company acted only at the Globe ; and to meet the improbability of the Burbages giving place to the eyry of children, it is suggested that the Burbages forsook the Middlesex part of London altogether in the summer months, and acted only at the Globe.

But may not the connection of the chamberlain's company with the Curtain show that the Burbages did not leave the playgoers of London in Middlesex without entertainment beyond that furnished by the children? This point, so far as the present writer is aware, has not hitherto been suggested or discussed.

On the accession of James I. in 1603, the chamberlain's company became distinctively the king's company of players, and henceforth acted only at the Globe and the Blackfriars. But they were succeeded at the Curtain by a company named, after the consort of James, the queen's company; and we may see in this step a decisive answer to those who had been clamouring for the destruction of the old playhouse, and perhaps also the fact points to some arrangement with the premier company. The following is a notice of the authority granted to the new queen's company:

License to Thomas Greene, Chris. Beeston, Thomas Hawood, and six others, servants to the queen, to 'exercise the art and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, histories, interludes, morals, pastorals, stage plays, etc.,' in their 'usual houses called the Curtayne and the Bore's Head,' in Middlesex, or elsewhere, as they may think fit as the plague decreases to thirty per week in London.*

* 'Cal. State Papers,' Domestic Series, 1623-1625, Addenda, James I. This was probably the Boar's Head in

In the following year the lords of the council wrote to the lord mayor and the magistrates of Surrey and Middlesex, desiring them to sanction performances at the Globe, Fortune, and Curtain Theatres.

Malone states that in Heath's Epigrams, 1610, the Curtain is mentioned as being open.

G. Wither, in his 'Abuses Stript and Whipt,' 1613, ridiculing a low class of versifiers, says :*

> 'Base fellows whom mere time
> Hath made sufficient to bring forth a rhyme,
> A Curtain Jig, a libel, or a ballad.'

In 1615 Wentworth Smith's play, called 'Hector of Germany,' was performed at the Curtain by some 'young men of the City.'† Like The Theatre, the Curtain was let out on hire; and it is an interesting reflection upon the civic antagonism to the stage to find the young men of the city giving an amateur performance at the Curtain. In 1617 the Curtain became occupied by the prince's company, and in 'Vox Graculi; or, the Jackdaw's Prognostication for 1623,' it is thus alluded to:

'About this time new plays will be in more

Great Eastcheap—Shakespeare's Boar's Head. Cunningham suggests that Shakespeare chose it because the arms of Burbage, the great actor, were three boars' heads.

* Collier's 'History of Dramatic Poetry,' iii. 88.

† *Ibid.*

request than old, and if company come current to the Bull and Curtain, there will be more money gathered in one afternoon than will be given to Kingsland Spittle in a whole month.'

Malone gives the will of John Underwood, by which he consigns his share in the Curtain, 'situated in or near Hollowey [*i.e.*, Holywell], in the Parish of St. Leonard, London,' to his five children.

The parish registers of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, contain the following entries relative to the Curtain.* Some of the entries refer to inhabitants on the land or in the house called respectively the Curtain Garden and Curtain House, who may or may not have been connected with the theatre; but these cases appear to be distinguished, and the entries followed by the simple word 'Curtain' appear to identify the person with the playhouse. Those entries in which the word 'Curtain' does not appear at all refer to actors or members of their families. From this record we see that James Burbage, 'the first builder of playhouses,' was put to rest in the parish where he built his 'Theatre,' and that his famous son Richard apparently continued to live in the old neighbourhood till his death. The father is described as from Halliwell, the son from Halliwell Street:

* Henry Ellis, 'Parish of St. Leonard, Shoreditch,' 1798.

'Joane Dowle, the wife of Isaac Dowle, buried the 19th of Februarie. Curtayn. 1580.—Oliver Stiddard, the sonne of Thomas Stiddard, bapt. 17 Feb. Curtaine. 1582.—John Aynsworth (the player), Sept. 28, 1582.—Agnes Beal, the daughter of Richard Beal, was baptized June 6. Curtaine. 1583.—Richard Tarrelton was buried the Sep. 3. 1588. Halliwell Street.—Humphrey . . . from the Curtaine Garden buried the 25th of Aprill. Curtaine. 1592.—James Burbege, the sonne of Cuthbert Burbege, buried the 15th Julye, 1597. —James Burbege was buried the 2d of February, 1596, from Halliwell.—Cuthbert Cowlye, the sonne of Richard Cowlye, was baptized the 8th day of May from Allins. 1597.—Richard Cowlye, the sonne of Richard Cowlye, was baptized the 29th of Aprill. Halliwell. 1599.—Eliz. Cowley, wife of Richard, buryed 28 Sep., 1616. H. Street. —Elizabeth Burbedge, the daughter of Cuthbert Burbedge, was baptized the 30th of December, 1602. Halliwell.— Richard Burbadge, Player, was bur. 16 March, 1618-19, Halliwell Street.—Cuthbert Burbadge was buryed the 17th Sep., 1636.—Geo. Wilkins (Poet), Aug. 9th, 1613, buried.— Margery, the daughter of William Bamster, and Jane, his wife, was bur. 31st January, 1639, from the Curtaine House. —John, the sonne of Wm. Hyemarth, and Joane, his wife, was baptized the same day from the Curtaine House. 15th March, 1639.'

The last reference to the Curtain known to Collier and to Halliwell-Phillipps is the above quotation from 'Vox Graculi,' 1623. A later notice (1627) occurs in the 'Middlesex County Records' as follows:

'21 Feb., 3 Charles I.—Recognizances taken before Richard Lowther, Esq., J.P., of Thomas Roades, of White-chappell, yeoman, and William Crosswell, of Shoreditch, ink-horne-maker, in the sum of ten pounds each, and of Richard

Burford, of Whitechappell, yeoman, in the sum of twenty pounds, for the appearance of the said Richard Burford at the next S.P. for Middlesex, "to aunswear the complaint of the inhabitants of Shoreditch for casting six tunn of filth, taken out of common previes, into the common shoare neer the Curtaine Playhouse." Also Recognizances taken on the same day before the same J.P., for the appearance of the aforesaid Thomas Roades, of Whitechappell, yeoman, at the same S.P., to answer to the same complaint of the inhabitants of Shorditch. S.P.R., 5 April, 4 Charles I.'*

There appears to be no reason to doubt that the Curtain continued to exist down to the time of the general suppression of the theatres in 1642-1647. If this may be assumed, we may claim for the Curtain the distinction of the longest existence of any of the old playhouses.

Maitland wrote in his 'History of London,' 1756 (vol. ii., p. 1368), that the ruins of the Priory of Holywell 'are still to be seen in King John's Court in Holywell-lane.' The section from Chassereau's map, 1745 (see *ante*), shows the neighbourhood as it was at the period of Maitland's 'History,' when the site of the playhouse existed as Curtain Court.

* 'Middlesex County Records,' iii. 164.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SURREY SIDE.

WE have now to cross the river and consider the playhouses which grew up in the fields and open spaces on the Surrey side. Pursuing the same method of inquiry which we applied in the case of the Shoreditch theatres, we will first study the *genius loci*, and review the conditions which preceded the building of playhouses.

From the days of Edward the Confessor, when Earl Godwin held the Gildable Manor, Southwark was a focus of stirring life. As a predecessor has remarked :* 'Although Westminster possessed an irresistible attraction to a pious sovereign through the vicinity of a favoured church, Norman kings engrossed in the pleasures of the chase, and constantly embroiled in Continental wars, found the ancient capital of Winchester better adapted for

* Hubert Hall, F.S.A., 'Antiquities of the Exchequer,' p. 8 (Camden Library).

the pursuit of sport as well as for the maintenance of their foreign communications through the proximity of the great mediæval seaport, Southampton.' Indeed, the traffic between London and Winchester and Southampton must have been great, and although ferries across the Thames were numerous, much of it must have passed over the bridge by Southwark. The pilgrims to Canterbury, assembled at the Tabard Inn, furnished Chaucer's immortal portrait-gallery. Eminent prelates had their 'inns,' or town quarters, in the neighbourhood. Carriers' inns, taverns, and hostelries abounded. It was a place of passage, of entertainment, of coming and going, of rest and pleasure after toilsome journeys. In the High Street was a 'Ring,' where bulls were baited by dogs; in the inn-yards were music and performances of comedies, histories, tragedies, and interludes by companies of players. At Paris Garden, within a few minutes' walk, were to be seen the bears and dogs kept for baiting—'the king's pastime.'

The government of the locality for a long period remained uncertain, changing, and ill defined. Men who had infringed the ordinances of the city found refuge in the purlieus of Southwark. The Surrey justices did not exercise their powers in the manner or degree desired by the city, and the corporation sought a remedy in repeated attempts

to extend its jurisdiction southward of the bridge. Appeals for redress were frequently made to the privy council, alike by the corporation and by aggrieved individuals. So late as 1547 an appeal of this kind which directly touches dramatic history was made by Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester. He addresses this appeal to Paget, and writes that he intends to have a solemn dirge and Mass for the late king (Henry VIII.); but the players in Southwark, he complains, say that they also will have 'a solemne playe to trye who shal have most resorte, they in game, or I in earnest'; and the bishop begs for the interference of the protector (Somerset) to prevent this mockery.* This appeal was addressed to the privy council because, practically, the whole of Southwark was at that time vested in the crown.

The nucleus of Southwark was the Gildable Manor, which extended from the dock near the west end of St. Saviour's Church, on the west, to Hay's Wharf on the east, and southward nearly to St. Margaret's Hill.† In the time of Edward the Confessor the manor formed part of the possessions of Earl Godwin, and after the Conquest it became the property of the Earls of Warren and Surrey.‡ In the first year of the reign of

* 'Cal. State Papers, Domestic,' February 5, 1547.

† G. R. Corner, F.S.A., in 'Archæologia,' xxxviii. 39.

‡ *Ibid.*, xxv. 620-622, wherein Corner describes the limits of the manor in detail.

Edward III. (1327) the city made its first step towards obtaining the control of Southwark: 'Upon the citizens' petition to the King in parliament concerning robberies, felonies, etc., where the robbers, felons, etc., fled into Southwark, and could not be attached by the ministers of the City; for prevention in future, the King, with the consent of parliament, granted to the city the said town [vill] of Southwark to hold to them and their successors for ever for a farm, and rent to be paid yearly at the exchequer, at the times due and accustomed. Witness himself at Westminster, the 6th day of March, in the first year of his reign.'*

But this grant did not supersede the right of Earl Warren to appoint a bailiff of his own liberty, which continued to have its own prison, called 'The Cage';† and the manor, which included 'the vill of Southwark,' remained vested in the Plantagenets, successively Earls of Warren and Surrey, until the death of John Plantagenet in 1347.‡ Outside the area of the charter was the King's Manor, at that date the property of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Great Liberty Manor, which belonged to the monastery of Bermondsey.§

* D. Hughson, 'Epitome of the Privileges of London,' 1816, p. 29.

† Corner, 'Archæologia,' xxxviii. 39, 40.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.*, xxv. 621.

In 1377 the citizens petitioned the king for further powers, 'and that the King's marshal should not intermeddle with the part which was gildable.' The petition was refused. In 1397 the Earl of Arundel, who then held the manor, was attainted, and the appointment of the bailiff was exercised by the king.* This shows clearly that the grant of jurisdiction to the city in no way limited the feudal right of the crown. But in the charter granted by the city-loving king, Edward IV., a definite advance was made. It is dated in the second year of his reign (1462), and recites that 'Whereas certain doubts concerning the use of some liberties belonging to the town of Southwark, formerly granted to the citizens by King Edward III.,' the king now grants to the city the said town of Southwark, with all appurtenances; waifs, estrays, treasure-trove, goods and chattels of all traitors, felons, fugitives, and outlaws; all goods disclaimed or found; all escheats and forfeitures, as fully and wholly as the king would have if the town were in his hands. The grant includes also the assize of bread, wine, etc., victuals, and things saleable; the clerkship of the market, with all forfeitures and fines; execution and return of writs to be by officers of the city; 'and that neither the King's clerk of the market nor the sheriff of Surrey do in any respect inter-

* W. Rendle, 'Old Southwark,' p. 7.

meddle therein.'* This grant seems to leave unconveyed nothing of the manorial jurisdiction within 'the town,' *i.e.*, the limits of the Gildable Manor. It establishes a yearly fair, to be held on the 7th, 8th, and 9th days of September, which became subsequently famous as the Lady Fair of Southwark. The king expressly grants 'that the mayor, commonalty, or their deputies may take and arrest felons, thieves, etc., and commit them to Newgate.' The charter sums up in a general grant of all rights appertaining to the town, with all its liberties, 'the rights of the Archbishop of Canterbury only excepted.' At the Dissolution Cranmer parted with these rights to the king (Henry VIII.), and the Canterbury holding became the King's Manor. The Great Liberty Manor, which comprised the property of the Monastery of Bermondsey, also fell into the king's hands, as did the holdings of the Priory of St. Mary Overy and other religious establishments. The 'Liberty of the Manor,' held by Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who married the King's sister, became the king's by exchange in 1535.†

By this process it came about that the Gildable Manor or vill of Southwark was encompassed by the king; but throughout these confiscations, purchases, and exchanges one remarkable excep-

* Hughson, 'Privileges of London,' p. 35.

† Rendle, 'Old Southwark,' p. 3 *et seq.*

tion, full of interest and significance as regards our present subject of inquiry, was made. 'Winchester House and the Bishop of Winchester's Liberty, always known as the Clink, were not interfered with.'* This Liberty became the theatre of playhouses, and will be further considered hereafter.

Such was the political condition of Southwark in the time of Henry VIII.; and when, on the death of the king in 1547, Gardiner proposed to hold a solemn dirge and Mass, and appealed to the Privy Council because 'the players in Southwark' proposed for their part to 'have a solemne playe' for the occasion, the bishop was clearly applying to the right authority. An appeal to the mayor and commonalty would have been useless, notwithstanding their charter of Edward IV. Besides, it was a very limited Southwark over which their theoretical jurisdiction extended, and there were inn-yards outside their jurisdiction. Four years later the city, at last, gained its point by the charter of 4 Edward VI.; but before we notice this further let us consider Southwark and the Surrey side after the Reformation—after the dissolution of the religious houses—when evidence that the king was lord paramount existed in every direction.

It was essentially a pleasure resort, especially in

* Rendle, 'Old Southwark,' p. 3 *et seq.*

the summer months. That the May-day games and observances were celebrated we may infer from the place-name, 'Maypole Alley' in the High Street.* Also in the High Street was a bull-ring, where bulls were baited—a very ancient sport.† Such rings existed in a number of English towns, and might be described as larger and stronger cock-pits, which were of later date. The influence of such structures in determining the round shape of the earliest playhouses was considerable, but secondary; the traditional 'ring' entered into dramatic evolution in connection with other forms of 'play' more nearly allied to the drama.‡ As to the genesis of this particular 'ring,' nothing is known; but it may be noted that the Roman

* 'Marshalsea prison was situated exactly opposite Maypole Alley, in the High Street.'—Rendle, 'Old Southwark,' p. 109.

† An indenture, 17 April, 3 Eliz., 1561, corroborates the fact of our bull-ring. Christofer Rolle, of London, gent., sells to George Thompson, of St. George's, Southwark, carpenter, and Johane, his wife, 'all those fourtene tenementes or cotages and gardeyns commonly called the Bulryng, sett, lying, and beyng on the streyte syde, by the alley called the Bullryng, in the Parishe of St. George, in Southwark, that is to saie betweene the mesuage or late inn called the George, nowe in teanure of Rychard Bellamy by lease on the south parte, and the parke there on the west parte, and the landes of the said Christofer Rolle, now called the Pewter Pott in the Hoope, on the north parte, and the Kynge's High Streete, of the Borough of Southwark, on the east parte.'—Rendle, 'Old Southwark,' p. 31, quoting Mr. Halliwell's Notes.

‡ See *ante*, Chap. I., *passim*.

occupation of Southwark was confined within the limits of the Gildable Manor, and the situation is not an unlikely one for a Roman amphitheatre.

Beyond the limits of the Gildable Manor were St. George's Fields and Newington Butts, which themselves constituted a theatre for the pastimes of the people. There was a guild of 'the bretherne and systers of the Church of our Lady of Seynt George the Martyr in Sowthwerke.'* No records of the guild, except the brief from which these words are quoted, have been recovered ; but there is no reason to suppose that the association differed from others which existed in various parts of the country, and the outward and visible sign of these guilds was their annual pageant on St. George's Day, April 23. The pageant consisted of a dramatic representation of the legend of St. George and the Dragon, and there are notices of it both before and after the Reformation.† With the pageants were processions, accompanied by eminent personages of the neighbourhood, from the mayor to the lord-lieutenant. At Southwark the rendezvous would be St. George's Fields, where, in the time of Henry VIII., were butts for practising shooting. The central figure of the pageant,

* Brief given by Halliwell [-Phillipps] in 'Catalogue of Broadsides,' etc., p. 211 ; Rendle, 'Old Southwark,' p. 71.

† These have been brought together in Kelly's 'Notices of Leicester,' pp. 39-57.

St. George of England in complete armour,* amid the military associations of the butts, with the arrows flying to their marks, suggests the germ of some situations in the later historical plays, as, for instance, Henry with his army on French soil before Harfleur or in the field of Agincourt.

In the reign of Henry VIII. several acts were passed for promoting the practice of shooting with the long-bow :

> 'Soon afterwards—that is, in the twenty-ninth year of the same King's reign—the use of cross-bows, under certain restrictions, was permitted, a patent being granted by him to Sir Christopher Morris, master of his ordnance, Anthony Knevyt and Peter Mewtas, gentlemen of his privy chamber, for them to be overseers of the science of artillery, by which was meant long-bows, cross-bows, and hand-guns. Others were appointed to be masters and rulers of the same science, with power to them and their successors to establish a perpetual corporation, called the *Fraternity of St. George*, and to admit such persons as they found to be eligible. The members of this society were also permitted, for pastime sake, to practise shooting at all sorts of marks and butts, and at the game of popinjay and other games, as at fowls and the like, in the city and suburbs of London, as well as in any other convenient places.'†

By the dissolution of the religious houses the system of organized mendicancy, which had obtained in connection with them, was broken down,

* Suits of armour were bequeathed to churches having St. George guilds, for the purpose of the annual celebrations.

† Strutt, 'Sports and Pastimes,' 4to., pp. 44, 45.

and a large number of the mendicants became the 'rogues and vagabonds' of subsequent proclamations and statutes, which sought to frighten and coerce these people out of their habits of vagabondage. In Southwark—which we have seen by petitions of the citizens in the time of Edward III. was in a very lawless state compared with the city—the suppression of the many religious houses of various kinds which existed in the neighbourhood resulted in making the disorganization a great deal worse. Mendicants and unemployed swelled the ranks of habitual idlers. The stews on the Bankside (allowed houses for prostitution under the regulation of the Bishop of Winchester) brought the lawless and profligate to the place from all parts of London. To the west of these between the Liberty of the Bishop of Winchester and Lambeth Marsh, was Paris Garden, where the bears for baiting were kept. The lordship of the king became extended in this direction also, through the dissolution of Bermondsey Monastery, to which the manor belonged. 'By the Act 28 Henry VIII., c. 21, it was given to the king; and by another statute in the same year (ch. 38) the manors of Paris Garden, Hyde, and others were granted to the Queen.'*

Among the ecclesiastical properties surrendered to Henry were the 'inns,' or town residences of

* Coll er, 'History of Dramatic Poetry,' iii. 95, note.

important ecclesiastics. These included the inn and gardens of the Abbot of Battle; the Bishop of Rochester's inn, west of Foul Lane; Abbot of Hyde's, within the Tabard, and the Abbot of Augustine's by the river.* These inns generally are to be distinguished from the public, or carriers', inns.

THE TABARD INN.

But the ancient and famous Tabard combined the characteristics of both classes of inn. It was the property of the Abbot of Hyde, near Winchester, and at the dissolution it was noted in the

* Rendle, 'Old Southwark,' 34.

surrender as 'one hostelry called the Taberd, the Abbot's place, the Abbot's stable, the garden belonging.'* The inn and buildings are represented as one arrow-shot from his majesty's house and park in Southwark.†

One of the last acts of Henry VIII. in connection with Southwark was an attempt to grapple with its social condition, its accumulation of unemployed, of unskilled labour, and of idlers. The following is from the king's proclamation issued 1546:

'For reformation whereof like as his most royall Matie hath thought convenient and doth determyne to vse and ymploie all such ruffyns, Vagabondes, Masterles men, common players, and evill disposed persons to serve his Matie & his Realme in theis his warres in certaine Gallies and other like vesselles whiche his highnes entendeth to arme forth against his enemyes before the first of June next comyng.'‡

If the condition of Southwark before the Reformation seemed to present a good case for extending the jurisdiction of the city, there can be no doubt that the suppression of the ecclesiastical establishments greatly accentuated the case, and, indeed, the above proclamation of Henry the year before his death sufficiently shows this. Strong government, either from the king and council or the corporation was called for by the circumstances, and if Henry had lived the strong

* Rendle, 'Old Southwark,' 55. † *Ibid.*, 56.
‡ Collier, 'History of Dramatic Poetry,' i. 135.

government would doubtless have come from the crown. The strong sovereign died ; the government of a minor with a Protector succeeded ; the opportunity of the city had come at last.

In 1550, by the charter 4 Edward VI., the power of the city in Southwark was secured. It happened, unfortunately, that the players of these years, although their vocation was distinct, became associated, in the eyes of authority generally, with the unemployed and thriftless, the 'rogues and vagabonds' of the proclamation. Consequently the handing over of Southwark to the government of the city resulted in a dislodgment of the players from their customary haunts.

The charter* grants absolutely 'all that our Lordship and Manor of Southwark late pertaining to the late Monastery of Bermondsey'; and it conveys in express terms the various properties which had come into the possession of the crown by the process we have described. The consideration for the grant was a payment of £647 2s. 1d., and the grantees were 'the mayor, commonalty and citizens of London.' The only reservation is seen in the passage following the grant of the Suffolk possessions 'which were late purchased by our dear father Henry the VIIIth, late King of England, of the same Charles, late Duke of

* D. Hughson, 'The Privileges of Southwark,' etc., 1818 (?), p. 10 *et seq.*

Suffolk ; except, nevertheless, always to us, and to our heirs and successors, all that our capital, messuage and mansion house called Southwark Place in Southwark aforesaid, late the Duke of Suffolk's, and all gardens and ground to the same adjoining or appertaining, and all our Park in Southwark aforesaid, and all the messuages and all the buildings and grounds called the Antelope there.'

It was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that the open ground lying along the Bankside at the back of Winchester House and its park was the site of the playhouses on the Surrey side of London. In the charter 4 Edward VI., there is no mention made either of Winchester House, or its park, or of the liberty extending westward, either by way of grant or of exception. And this confirms Mr. Rendle's statement that it did not pass to the crown along with the general surrender of ecclesiastical tenures. Consequently the status or tenure of this tract of ground remained as it was in Henry's reign.

Among the tenements mentioned in the various conveyances in the charter are the Swan, the Mermaid, and the Rose, all three names interesting to us on account of later dramatic associations; but these tenements were in the manor of Southwark, and consequently had no actual connection with the places we are concerned with.

The charter expressly gives the right to 'take and arrest all manner of felons, thieves and other malefactors' found within the area of the grant, and the city officers 'may bring them to our Gaol of Newgate, there to be kept till by process of law they may be delivered.'

In giving the mayor and corporation the right to hold a fair every year for three days, the words are used 'through all the town, borough, parishes and precincts aforesaid'; but this could not apply to the liberty of the Bishop of Winchester, known more generally as the Clink. The conveyance of Southwark to the city was clearly against the wishes of the inhabitants at the time; they would rather have remained answerable to the justices of Surrey. But by the early part of the present century time had accomplished its work, and we find Dr. Hughson addressing an 'Appeal' to the city Corporation in terms of hyperbolical patriotism, which seem to imply that, let come what may, the good people of Southwark will die in behalf of their privileges as citizens of London against the worst that the justices of Surrey may do. In this 'Appeal' Hughson wrote (p. 16), 'that the town and borough of Southwark, and all the parishes and precincts in and through the town and borough,' were under the government of the city; but if at this date (1818) the Clink liberty had not become extinct, all the arguments

which he advances in behalf of the liberty of Southwark as part of the liberty of London (pp. 14-16) would apply with equal force to the liberty of the Clink as distinct from any other jurisdiction.

There is no evidence that plays were immediately suppressed in Southwark as a consequence of the grant of the charter, but they became subject to the same jealous supervision which prevailed in the citv. Apparently the bull-ring in the High Street soon sank under this rigour.* But the edict of 1575, which banished the players from jurisdiction of the mayor, applied, of course, equally to Southwark. The result of the banishment was the theatre at Newington Butts, and the playhouses in the Clink liberty on the Bankside, viz., the Rose, the Swan, the Globe, and the Hope.

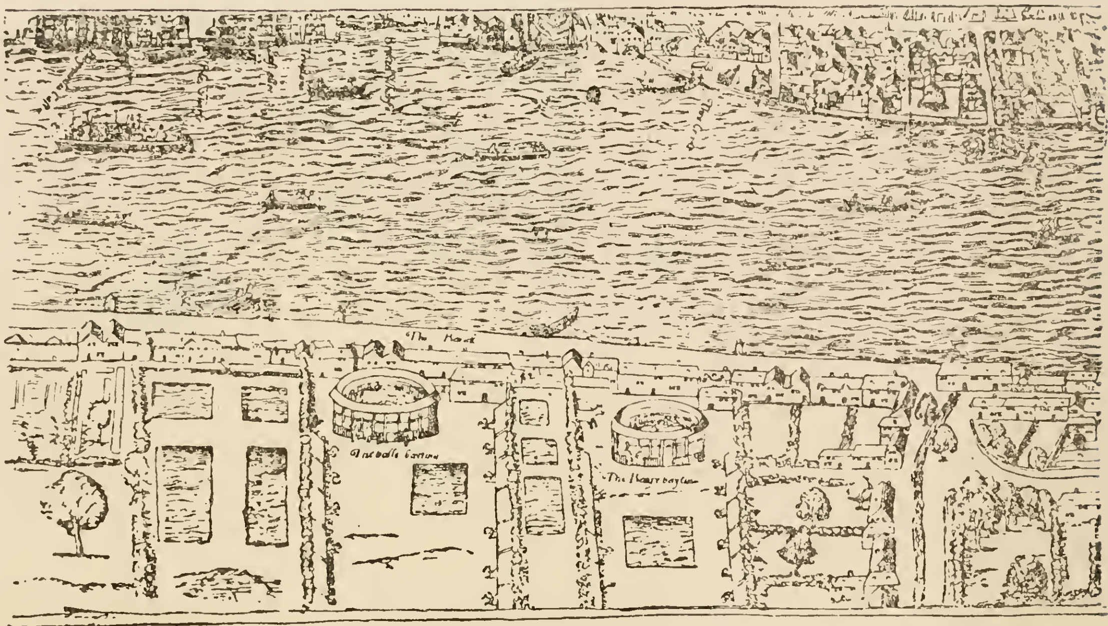
* It was extinct some time before the sale of the property in 1561 (see *ante*, p. 115).

CHAPTER V.

THE AMPHITHEATRES.

THE precursors of the playhouses in the Clink or Winchester liberty on the Bankside were the amphitheatres devoted to baiting sports (see map). Within the political considerations set forth in the preceding chapter, these circuses were an outcome of the associations of the neighbourhood. Before them bull-baiting was carried on at the bull-ring in the High Street, and bear-baiting probably at Paris Garden, to the west of the Clink.

It is a curious point that none of the maps show a similar circus in Paris Garden co-existent with those here shown. That there was such a building has hitherto been accepted upon evidence which does not appear to have been scrutinized. The palpable existence of amphitheatres in the Clink, along with the absence in the maps of such a construction in the neighbouring Paris Garden, was one of the causes of the confusion which formerly



SECTION FROM PLAN OF LONDON AND WESTMINSTER, BY RALPH AGGAS, 1560.

prevailed in dramatic history as to the topography of the district. On the site or thereabouts of the amphitheatres shown in the maps of Aggas and of Braun the 'Bear-house' and 'Bear-garden' of a later date came into existence, and references to baiting at Paris Garden became ascribed to these places. The late Mr. Rendle, by demonstrating the limits of Paris Garden manor and of the Winchester liberty, threw a new light on the subject. It appeared to be unlikely that references would be made distinctly to the bear-baiting in Paris Garden if the bear-baiting in the Clink liberty were meant. But the point is still left in some doubt.

In the first place, the geography of this limited district may not have been generally known with that precision which we discover in legal and official documents which have survived. We must bear in mind the effect of custom, and the use of terms in the ordinary everyday sense, apart from the exactitude of legal definition. Paris Garden stairs was apparently the most important landing-stage, although there were others westward, as well as eastward of this, nearer the bridge. The pleasure-seekers came mostly by water and to Paris Garden stairs, near which were the stews and the Falcon Inn; and there is nothing to show that they distinguished between the Gardens to the right or left of Paris Garden Lane. The origin of the bear-baiting on the Surrey side was undoubtedly in

Paris Garden. But whether an amphitheatre existed there at the date of our maps, and not shown in either of them, is another question. Anybody who has studied early maps is aware that too much reliance must not be placed upon them. But their unanimity on this point is remarkable. None of them show a circus or amphitheatre in Paris Garden. It is not in Norden's map of 1593, the most reliable map of London in the sixteenth century. On the other hand, the successor of such a circus, if it ever existed—viz., the Swan Theatre—is shown in the most reliable and important of the riverside views (as distinct from maps), that of Visscher, of which sections are given later in this book.

The authority for the origin of Paris Garden is the 'Glossographia' of Blount (1681), for which we are indebted to Malone in a note on *Henry VIII.*, act v., scene 3.* Richard II., by proclamation, ordered that the butchers of London should purchase some ground 'juxta domum Roberti de Parys,' for reception of their garbage and entrails of beasts, to the end that the city might not be annoyed thereby. Here we have provision for feeding dogs and bears, and the name 'Paris Garden' is also accounted for. But it is a long time before we hear of bears and baiting, although the lack of record is no doubt accidental.

* Blount's citation (5th edition, p. 473) is Close Roll, 16 Richard II., Dors. ii.

It is not improbable that the sport was introduced from the Continent by some one or other of Richard's foreign favourites.

The next notice is from Collier.* He writes: 'The most ancient notice of Paris Garden as the scene of such amusements [*i.e.*, baiting] that we have met with is in a book of the household expenses of the Earl of Northumberland, where, under date of 17 Henry VIII., it is said that the earl went to Paris Garden to behold the baiting there.

I cannot find this in the Northumberland Household Book. From Collier, however, the statement was repeated by Cunningham in his 'Handbook of London' (1850), *sub voce* 'Paris Garden Theatre,' which he describes as: 'A circus in the manor of Paris Garden, in Southwark, erected for bull and bear baiting as early as 17th Henry VIII.,' etc. This, apparently, is the source of Mr. Rendle's note: '1526. Bears are baited here';† and in another place: 'The earliest notice I have of bear sports on the Bank is about 1526.'‡ The statement reappears in Mr. Wheatley's 'London Past and Present' (1891), founded on Cunningham's handbook.

* 'History of Dramatic Poetry,' etc., iii. 94.

† New Shakspere Society, Harrison's 'Description of England,' ed. Furnivall, Part II., Appendix I., p. iii.

‡ 'Walford's Antiquarian,' viii. 55.

The Northumberland Household Book is a code of the regulations of the earl's castles of Wresill and Lekinfield, in Yorkshire. It is not concerned with the expenditure of the earl away from those places, as at London, for instance, which doubtless he occasionally visited. An entry which may have given rise to the statement as to Paris Garden occurs under the heading of 'Rewardis customable usede yerely to be yeven by my Lorde to strangers, as players, mynstraills,' etc., as follows: 'Item, my Lord usith and accustomyth to gyf yerely the Kynge & the Queenes Barwarde If they have one, When they custom to come into hym yerely . . . vj*s*. viij*d*.'* But this provision, like all the others in the same book, is for home expenditure, as is another entry concerning bear-baiting: 'Item, my Lorde usith and accustomyth to gyfe yerly when his Lordshipe is at home to his Barward when he comyth to my Lord in Cristmas with his Lordshippes Beests for makynge of his Lordschips pastyme the said xij days—xx*s*.'† Collier's statement is the more puzzling from his specifying the date, viz., 17 Henry VIII. The dates given in the Household Book barely reach this. The earliest of the dated entries is

* 'Regulations of the Household of Henry Algernon Percy, Fifth Earl of Northumberland, at his Castles of Wresill and Lekinfield,' ed. T. Percy, Bishop of Dromore (1770), p. 339.

† *Ibid.*, p. 343.

4 Henry VIII., and the latest 17 Henry VIII. The rest of the book is occupied with orders and regulations without date. Among these is the order as to rewards, in which the above memoranda as to bear-wards occur. Apparently Collier derived his date from the last dated bill (on p. 297).

The next notice is also from Collier, date 1544 :

'In 1544 the Duke of Nexara [Nájera] was in England as ambassador from Spain. One of his suite wrote an account of some passages in their travels, and especially during their stay of eight days in London. After speaking of the wild beasts in the Tower, he thus notices the sports at Paris Garden :

'On the other side of the town we have seen seven bears, some of them very large ; they are driven into a circus, where they are confined by a long rope, while large and courageous dogs are let loose upon them as if to be devoured, and a fight takes place. It is not bad sport to witness the conflict. The large bears contend with three or four dogs, and sometimes one is victorious and sometimes the other ; the bears are ferocious and of great strength, and not only defend themselves with their teeth, but hug the dogs so closely with their forelegs, that, if they were not rescued by their masters, they would be suffocated. At the same place a pony is baited, with a monkey on its back, defending itself against the dogs by kicking them ; and the shrieks of the monkey, when he sees the dogs hanging from the ears and neck of the pony, render the scene very laughable.'*

Collier's introduction of Paris Garden in this

* Collier, 'History of Dramatic Poetry,' iii. 93.

way is quite gratuitous. The words of the narrative are, ' In another part of the city we saw seven bears,' etc., and there is no mention of Paris Garden at all. I should have preferred to give Sir F. Madden's version of the Spanish,* but substantially they agree, and the excerpt as it stands is a useful illustration of Collier's method.

The next notice, again from Collier, was derived by him from Pennant : ' In Pennant's " London " the following stanzas are quoted, and are there said to have been written by one Crowley, a poet in the reign of Henry VIII. He was a noted printer, and published in 1550 one-and-thirty epigrams, wherein are briefly touched so many abuses that may and ought to be put away :

> ' What follie is this to keep with danger,
> A great mastive dog, and fowle ouglie bear ;
> And to this end, to see them two fight,
> With terrible tearings, a ful ouglie sight.
> And methinkes those men are most fools of al,
> Whose store of money is but very smal ;
> And yet every Sunday they will surely spend
> One penny or two, the bearward's living to mend.
> At Paris Garden each Sunday, a man shall not fail
> To find two or three hundred for the bearward's vale,
> One halfpenny apiece they use for to give,
> When some have no more in their purses, I believe ;
> Wel, at the last day, their conscience wil declare,
> What the poor ought to have al that they may spare.
> If you therefore give to see a bear fight,
> Be sure God His curse upon you will light !'

This apparently was the source of Mr. Rendle's note : ' 1550. It is noted now, as always, that the

* *Archæologia*, vol. xxiii., 344-357.

great day is Sunday, and that these rude sports pay better than more select entertainments.'*

It will be noticed that there is no mention made in Crowley's lines of an amphitheatre or circus in Paris Garden. The original of this somewhat loosely given reference is, 'One and thyrtie Epigrammes, wherein are bryfely touched so many abuses that maye and ought to be put away. Compiled and imprinted by Robert Crowley, dwellynge in Elye rentes in Holburne. Anno Domini, 1550.' The verses are headed 'Of Bearbaytynge.'† The date renders allusion to the amphitheatre in the Clink liberty quite possible. On the other hand, Paris Garden is distinctly named; although as against that we must allow for the possibility of a custom of alluding to the Clink bear-baiting as Paris Garden, on account of the latter having been so long the home of the bears. If there were any evidence of the public exhibition of bear-baiting in Paris Garden before the amphitheatres shown in our maps, we should infer the existence of a circus. But the evidence of the Northumberland Household Book, the only basis for the supposition, has broken down under examination. The Crowley evidence comes within the period of our amphitheatres.

* New Shakspere Society, Harrison's 'Description of England,' ed. Furnivall, Part II., Appendix I., p. iii.

† 'Select Works of Robert Crowley,' ed. J. M. Cowper: Early English Text Society, 1872.

As to the date of the construction of the amphitheatres we have no record, and our maps are without date. But both Aggas and Braun show St. Paul's with the spire which was destroyed by lightning in 1561; and even admitting the possibility of these maps being founded on earlier ones, or of their having been added to and modified subsequently, the point is unaffected, because if St. Paul's were shown with a spire in a map issued after 1561, this does not prove that the amphitheatres were added after that date, but rather the contrary. I am inclined to associate the construction of the amphitheatres with the establishment of the authority of the city in Southwark. The bull-ring in the High Street, which existed in 1542,* disappeared at some time before 1561, when the site was sold;† and the course of events suggests that the sport was removed to the Bankside, in anticipation or in consequence of the charter 4 Edward VI. It appears in Aggas and in Braun as the 'Bowll-Bayting.' The neighbouring amphitheatre, the 'Beare-Bayting,' appears to have been an offshoot of the garbage place, with its bears, in Paris Garden.

We have, at least, one clear allusion to these amphitheatres, viz., in Machyn's Diary: 'The sam

* Maps and plans of the Duchy of Lancester. See Rendle, 'Old Southwark.'

† See *ante*, p. 115.

day [9th December, 1554] at after-non was a berebeytyn on the Banke syde, and ther the grett blynd bere broke losse, and in ronnyng away he chakt a servyng man by the calff of the lege, and bytt a gret pesse away, and after by the hokyll-bone, that with-in iij. days after he ded.'*

We have now to notice the references to baiting on the Surrey side between the date of the Aggas and Braun maps (which we take to lie between 1560-1572) and the date of Norden, 1593. The evidence of a circus in Paris Garden at this period is much stronger, although in estimating it we must bear in mind the existence of the amphitheatres so near at hand in the Clink liberty, and allow for the inexactness of colloquial allusion: 'John Bradford, the martyr, preaching before Edward VI., showed "the tokens of God's judgment at hand for the contempt of the Gospel, as that certain gentlemen upon the Sabbath day going in a wherry to Paris Garden to the bear-baiting were drowned," etc. ("Two Notable Sermons," etc., 1574).'† 'Going in a wherry to Paris Garden' might possibly be suggested by the usual landing-stage, Paris Garden stairs, and the fact that bears belonging to the king were kept there.

* 'Diary of Henry Machyn,' 1550-1563; Camden Society, 1848, p. 78. Another entry is discussed *post*, Chap. VII.

† H. B. Wheatley, 'London Past and Present,' *sub voce* 'Paris Garden Theatre.'

The public baiting may have been apart, in the Clink liberty, as shown in our maps.

In some particulars given as to the Manor of the Maze, belonging to the Copley family, in St. Olave's, Southwark, 1472-1623,* the following occurs under date 1575: 'Itm., gyven to the master of Paryshe Garden his man for goynge with Thos. Sharples into Barmensy Street to see certen mastyve dogges, appointed by Thomas Brooke so to do.'† This is further evidence of the keeping of the baiting animals in Paris Garden, but it gives no further clue as to the existence of a circus.

We have carefully distinguished between the references to Paris Garden before 1572 and those between 1573 and 1592, because the case for a Paris Garden circus in the latter period is much stronger. The notice which follows is the strongest item in the case. On a Sunday, in 1583, an accident occurred at the baiting, which was looked upon as the Nemesis prophesied by the Puritans, for the desecration of the Sabbath by the baiting sports, and the lord mayor, in a letter to the lord treasurer, informs him of the catastrophe:

'. . . . A great mishap had happened at Paris Gardens by the fall of a scaffold, whereby a great number of people were hurt and some killed. This he attributed to the hand of God on account of the abuse of the Sabbath-day ; and he requested

* 'Collectanea Geneal. et Topog.,' vol. viii., p. 253.

† *Ibid.*, p. 258.

the Lord Treasurer to give order for the redress of such contempt of God's service.'*

The appeal was not without effect, for the lord treasurer replied as follows :

'With reference to the disaster at Paris Gardens, he would bring the matter before the Council and get some general order passed prohibiting such exhibitions. In the meantime he recommended the Lord Mayor, with the advice of the Aldermen, to issue a general order to every ward for the prevention of such profane assemblies on the Sabbath-day.'†

From the 'Godly Exhortation' of John Field, which he published on the occasion of this accident, we learn that the amphitheatre would hold above a thousand people, that the gallery was double and compassed the yard roundabout, and that it was old and rotten. Stow records the accident in his 'Annals' in the following passage :

'The same 13 day of January being Sunday about foure of the clocke in the afternoone, the old and underpropped scaffolds round about the Beare-garden, commonly called Paris Garden, on the south side of ye river of Thamis over against the cittie of London, over-charged with people, fell suddenly downe, whereby to number of eyght persons men and women were slaine, and many others sore hurt and bruised to the shortening of their lives. A friendly warning to such as more delight themselves in the crueltie of beastes than in the workes of mercy, the fruits of a true professed faith, which ought to be the Sabboth dayes exercise.'‡

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 336. † *Ibid.*

‡ Stow's 'Annals,' continued by Howes, 695. An account of the accident is given by Stubbes in his 'Anatomie of Abuses,' see New Shakspere Society reprint, ed. Furnivall, p. 179.

Was this an old and rude construction in Paris Garden iteslf ignored by Aggas in 1560 and Braun in 1572? Was it a circus put up there after 1572? The records of this accident form the strongest item in the evidence for a circus in Paris Garden. If we suppose its existence on this count, we have only to suppose further that it was not rebuilt, and its absence from Norden (1593), the best map of the time, is explained.

This accident, like the plague, was interpreted as a warning against such amusements. The following attempt to invoke the aid of the council —already referred to in a previous chapter dealing with The Theatre—is aimed at the amphitheatres on the Bankside, as well as the playhouses in Shoreditch:

'Letter from the Lord Mayor to Sir Francis Walsingham, Knight:—For the stay of the plague the Court of Aldermen had published certain orders, which they intended to execute with diligence. Among other great inconveniences were the assemblies of people to plays, bear-baiting, fencers, and profane spectacles at The Theatre and Curtain and other like places, to which great multitudes of the worst sort of people resorted. Being beyond the jurisdiction of the City, the restraints in the City were useless, unless like orders were carried out in the places adjoining. He therefore requested the matter might be brought to the notice of the Council, that some steps might be taken to redress the danger.'*

There remains one more reference to be con-

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 337; date May 3, 1583.

sidered. Nash, in his 'Strange Newes' (1592), directed against Gabriel Harvey, says :*

'Oh, it is a pestillent libeller against beggers : he meanes shortly to set foorth a booke cald his Paraphrase upon Paris Garden, wherein he will so tamper with the Interpreter of the Puppits, and betouse Harry of Tame and Great Ned, that Titius shall not upbraid Caius with everie thing and nothing, nor Zoylus anie more flurt at Homer, nor Thersites fling at Agamemnon.'

This appears to be unequivocal ; yet Stow's words, 'Bear Garden, commonly called Paris Garden,' would probably justify our assuming that Nash meant the Bear Garden in the Clink. It is certainly remarkable that while we have these representations of amphitheatres on the Bankside before 1593, with their addenda of ponds, houses, etc., some of the references to baiting at this period should speak of 'Paris Garden.' That we are not the victims of a freak on the part of the cartographers we know from the evidence of John Taylor, the water-poet, taken in a case of disputed title between the king (James I.) and the Bishop of Winchester as to a site in the Clink liberty.† Taylor, at the time of giving this evidence, was seventy-seven years of age, from which we may conclude that he was giving his recollections of the Bankside from about

* 'Strange newes Of the Intercepting certaine Letters, etc. By Tho. Nashe. London, 1592.' Collier's reprint, p. 32.

† 'Exchequer Depositions,' 18 James I. Given by the late W. Rendle in Walford's 'Antiquarian,' No. 44, vol. viii.

the year 1560, the earliest date we have supposed for Aggas's map: 'To the 14th Interr. in the depositions "he saith that he remembereth that the game of beare-bayting hath been kept in fower severall places (viz$^{t.}$) at Mason Steares on the bankside; neere Maid-lane by the corner of the Pyke Garden [these are the two shown in our map]; at the beare garden which was parcell of the possession of William Payne; and the place where they are now kept."' Of the two latter, one was the 'Beare-house' of Norden's map, the other a later building, the Hope Theatre.*

By way of a guide to the puzzling references to Paris Garden, Mr. Wheatley suggests that references to Paris Garden are to Paris Garden Theatre, while Bear Garden references may be to either the Hope or Paris Garden Theatre. But it appears that the formula hardly applies, so far as we have tested it, in regard to the amphitheatres. The second clause of the formula belongs to a later period, and will be referred to in a subsequent chapter.

* Mr. Rendle's observations on the evidence are as follows: 'Nothing can be clearer; the two latter were—the one at the north courtelage in the lane known as the Bear Garden, the other at the south courtelage in the same lane, known as the New Bear Garden, otherwise The Hope. William Payne's place, next the Thames, can be traced back into the possession of John Allen, until it came down to Edward Alleyn, and was sold by him at a large profit to Henslowe; the same for which Morgan Pope, in 1586, paid to the vestry of St. Saviour's 6s. 8d. by the year for tithes.'

Taking the evidence as a whole, it seems to show that we may rely on the maps, and construe the references to baiting at Paris Garden as referring to baiting performances in the amphitheatres shown in the maps of Aggas and of Braun and Hogenberg ; the fact of the animals being kept in Paris Garden perhaps explaining why the sports were spoken of as the Paris Garden baiting. The words of Stow, when recording the accident — 'the scaffolds round about the Bear Garden commonly called Paris Garden' — certainly agree with this conclusion. We may still suppose that there may have been a circus in Paris Garden itself *after* the date of our maps. But on the other hand, when we look at the later Norden map, and find in place of our two amphitheatres only a single 'beare-house,' it is only natural to imagine that the accident of 1583 was the end of one of them, and that the 'beare-house' represents the survivor.

The undoubted existence of these amphitheatres in the liberty of the Bishop of Winchester, immediately after the inclusion of Southwark in the city jurisdiction, is a point of great interest as marking an intermediate stage in the making of the Elizabethan playhouse. Their significance from this point of view has been touched upon in the opening chapter of this book, under the heading 'Before the Playhouses.'

CHAPTER VI.

NEWINGTON BUTTS AND THE ROSE.

THAT the dramatic associations of Newington Butts, indicated in Chapter IV., were continued in the era of playhouses we know from a document—perhaps the most valuable record of the drama in Elizabeth's reign—the Diary of Philip Henslowe, the partner of Edward Alleyn, the actor, who founded Dulwich College, where the MS. is preserved. The Diary was made for business purposes, and without a thought of the historical uses for which we scrutinize and weigh its entries to-day. It has no pretence to chronological order, or to classification of the particulars it gives. On some points it is exasperatingly reticent, and on others it seems to mock us with its unfulfilled indications.

The Diary gives clear evidence of the performance of plays at Newington Butts, but the existence of a playhouse there depends upon inference. The

[The original List is at the foot of the Map.]

Of one of the former 12 Companies is the Lo. Mayer of the Cyte comenly chosen.

a. *Bushops gate streete.*
b. *Papie.*
c. *Alhallowes in the wall.*
d. *S. Taphyns.*
e. *Syluer streete.*
f. *Aldermanburye.*
g. *Barbican.*
h. *Aldersgate streete.*
i *Charterhouse.*
k. *Holborne Conduit.*
l. *Chauncery lane*
m. *Temple barr.*
n. *Holbourn.*
o. *Grayes Inn lane.*
p. *S Androwes.*
q. *Newgate.*
r. *S. Iones.*
s. *S. Nic shambels.*
t. *Cheap syde.*
u. *Bucklers burye.*
w. *Bredestreete.*
x. *The stockes.*
y. *The Exchannge.*
z. *Cornehill*

[No 1 in Map.]

2. *Colmanstreete.*
3. *Bassings hall.*
4. *Hounsditche.*
5. *Leaden hall.*
6. *Gratious streete.*
7. *Heneage house.*
8. *Fanchurche.*
9. *Marke lane*
10. *Minchyn lane.*
11. *Paules.*
12. *Eastcheape.*
13. *Fleetstreete.*
14. *Fetter lane.*
15. *S. Dunstons*
16. *Themes streete.*
17. *London stone.*
18. *Olde Baylye.*
19. *Clerkenwell.*
20. *Winchester house.*
21 *Battle bridge.*
22. *Bermodsey streete,*
Ioannes Norden Anglus descripsit anno 1593.

NORDEN'S

N, 1593.

Insert between pp. 142-143.

evidence consists of the following heading to some entries of receipts at the performances of various plays :

'In the name of God, Amen, beginninge at Newington, my Lord Admeralle and my Lorde Chamberlen men, as foloweth. 1594.'

The chamberlain's company in this joint arrangement was that to which Shakespeare was attached, and this part of the Diary has accordingly received much attention. The unanimity with which, on this evidence, the existence of a theatre at Newington Butts has been inferred is the more remarkable because it seems to rest on the record alone, and not upon a wider induction, such as that attempted in our chapter on 'The Surrey Side.' From one to another the meagre evidence has been repeated, and the existence of a playhouse tacitly accepted by all.

It would be wrong to impute this repetition to mere slavish imitation, because there is an equal probability that it may have proceeded from a general consideration of the evidence of the Diary. The alternative to a playhouse would be an inn-yard, or some spot in the open-air in the neighbourhood of the Butts. In any case, the fact of the performance of plays here, in consequence of the extension of the city authority over Southwark, takes historical precedence over the playhouses (as distinct from the amphitheatres) on the Bankside,

which we know did not exist before 1586, and may not have existed before 1592.* There is a long period—between 1550 and 1586-1592—during which the players, who had been accustomed to entertain the public in the Southwark inn-yards, carried on their performances elsewhere. There is no actual documentary record of this period; but it is the very province of historical criticism to throw light into such dark places. Illumination depends on the use of facts as much as on their number. History has its laws of sequence, of cause and effect, as well as other sciences.

On the Surrey side, after the charter of Edward VI., we have conditions corresponding to those which produced the theatres in the fields on the northern side of London, The Theatre and the Curtain. History is vocal of these, because there were disputes in connection with them, which gave employment to scriveners, whose engrossments have survived the accidents of time. But suppose the reverse of the case. Suppose a playhouse at Newington Butts, with a history similar to that of the Shoreditch theatres; and suppose in place of our history of the Shoreditch theatres a meagre record of the fact of plays performed at Holywell. Then, connecting (1) the banishment of players from the city with (2) the fact of plays

* Evidence of this will be found *infra*.

at Holywell, we should note (3) the significance of the place, (4) the neighbourhood of Finsbury Fields, with its sports and pastimes, and, comparing the conditions, we should perceive the analogy with Newington Butts, and infer the existence of a playhouse.

Now, to leave this illustrative supposition, and taking the case as it stands, we have : (1) Banishment of players from Southwark ; (2) fact of plays at Newington Butts ; (3) significance of the place ; (4) neighbourhood of St. George's Fields, with sports and pastimes ; and, comparing the conditions, we perceive the analogy with The Theatre and the Curtain, and infer the existence of a playhouse. At any rate, we may safely infer that the record in Henslowe's Diary, which has survived the accidents of time, merely indicates, rather than represents, the dramatic history of Newington Butts.

There is one fact which goes heavily against the existence of a playhouse at Newington Butts before 1576, and that is the claim made by the survivors of James Burbage, in reference to The Theatre, that he was the first builder of playhouses. But the intention here is not to prove the existence of a playhouse : it is to show the strong presumption there is of an unrecorded dramatic history in connection with Newington Butts. For the period between 1550 and 1576 there were the conditions for the presentation of pageants, with their

'scaffolds' for the spectators, from which the players could have taken hints. Further, the fact that St. George's Fields and Newington Butts were a holiday resort for Londoners suggests a well-frequented inn, of the type familiar to us, with spacious yard and galleries round. After the establishment of The Theatre and the Curtain, it was probably a calculation as to the likelihood of sufficient profit that determined whether or no there should be a playhouse at Newington Butts.

It is impossible to use a document like Henslowe's Diary aright unless we constantly bear in mind the accidental nature of its existence and preservation. It is a record, but unintentionally so; the period of its commencement had no conscious reference to any starting-point in dramatic history. We must always look beyond it, and away from it, as well as at it. The view hitherto taken of Newington Butts has been limited to the slight indication which the Diary gives, whereas a general view suggests a history before Henslowe came into contact with it at all. Moreover, there is nothing in the Diary itself to neutralize the supposition that it has only a chance or accidental beginning. It is true that the marriage of Alleyn with Henslowe's step-daughter in October, 1592, suggests a reason for starting the book; but, on the other hand, the earliest entries in point of time begin in February, 1592, and there is nothing to show that the partnership between Henslowe and

Alleyn began subsequently to the marriage. The marriage may have come about in consequence of the partnership. If so, the record, if any existed, is lost. In short, the Diary appears to have no significance in its commencement, and may have been preceded by some other book of record.

The dramatic predispositions of Newington Butts have been indicated. There is, outside the Diary of Henslowe, at least one record of plays there, viz., in 1586—the very year Henslowe was contemplating the construction of his Rose Theatre. It is noted in the register of the privy council in that year that their lordships had desired the lord mayor, in pursuance of representations made by him in the matter, to restrain and prohibit plays within the city, 'and that their Lordshippes have taken the like order for the prohibiting of the use of playes at the Theatre and th' other places about Newington out of his charge.'* Again, Howes, in his 'Continuation of Stow's Annals,' 1631, concludes an enumeration of London theatres built during sixty years previous by adding, 'besides one in former time at Newington Buts.' The next point to note is the evidence of Henslowe having lived in the Clink liberty in 1577;† how long he may have lived there

* Halliwell-Phillipps, 'Outlines,' i. 331.

† G. F. Warner's 'Catalogue of MSS. and Muniments of Alleyn's College of God's Gift at Dulwich' (1881), p. 157.

previously we do not know. At a later date he is described as a dyer and citizen of London, and when we first hear of him he may have been carrying on business as a dyer. But from various accounts at the end of the Diary, belonging to the years 1577 and 1578, it appears that he was concerned with the cutting of wood in Ashdown Forest, Sussex, where his father had been, and perhaps was still, master of the game.* The record also includes various advances made on pledges. It is a mere fragmentary record, and there is nothing after 1578 till the book was taken into use for dramatic purposes in 1592.

But these few pawnbroking entries appear to indicate the germ of Henslowe's theatrical enterprise. After 1592, and throughout the Diary, we have memoranda and entries showing that Henslowe stood in the relation of banker to the players. He lays out money for them individually or collectively, as the case may be, and then there are periodical settlements. Midway between the dates 1578 and 1592 he acquired his Little Rose estate in the Clink, viz., in 1585, and two years later he entered into a partnership in respect of a parcel of the ground and a playhouse to be erected thereon.† We do not accurately know when the Rose Theatre was built and first

* Warner's Catalogue of Dulwich MSS., 157.

† *Ibid.*, 233.

used for plays ; but the fact that he contemplated this theatre in 1587 affords some ground for supposing that he was concerned in theatrical affairs when we first hear of him as dwelling in the Clink, and, indeed, the advances on pledges in 1577 and 1578 may have been made to players, and not the first of such transactions in which he was concerned. It is quite possible that between the amphitheatres and the Rose there is a link missing in the history, so far as it has been pieced together by investigation. For the sake of filling the lacuna, let us resort to analogy, and suppose the presentation of plays in inn-yards or in enclosed gardens within the Liberty. If it should transpire hereafter that there are references to performances of plays at the Rose before 1592, I should not myself impugn the evidence of the Diary, but conclude that plays were presented on Henslowe's Rose estate before the construction of the playhouse. His holding consisted of a messuage or tenement with two gardens adjoining.* At this time The Theatre and the Curtain across the water were thriving concerns, and while on the one hand this example may have suggested the playhouse scheme of 1587, probability points to an earlier adoption of the new departure in play-acting on the Surrey side. If there were a playhouse at Newington Butts, this would be the probable

* Warner's Catalogue, p. 231.

period of its origin, and from Henslowe's connection with plays at Newington in 1594 we may infer him as the likely proprietor.

Now, there are two accounts in the Diary which we must specially discuss. They are the two earliest in date. The first is a record of receipts at the performances of various plays by Lord Strange's company, with the heading, 'In the name of God, Amen, 1591, beginge the 19 of febreary, my lord Stranges men, as foloweth.'* The next is a long account of charges 'layd owt a bowte my play howsse in the yeare of our Lord 1592.'† Hitherto, the assumption has been that the latter must actually have been prior to the former of these accounts, for the reason that the building of the playhouse logically precedes the acting of plays. But facts precede logic in historical matters, and it is possible to show that the first of these accounts is really prior in date. The '1591' against '1592' will not of itself decide the point, because the dates are given according to the old style, and both were actually in 1592. Henslowe was clearly an imperfectly educated man, and he frequently in various parts of his Diary repeats the old year after March 25, sometimes till he gets well into April, when he

* Diary of Philip Henslowe, ed. J. Payne Collier, Shakespeare Society, 1853, pp. 20-28.

† *Ibid.*, 10-16.

changes it to the correct year. His tendency is always in this direction, and we may safely conclude that when he wrote 1592 at the head of his playhouse account it was not 1591. In fact, the date covers the year in the Old Style, March 26, 1592, till March 25 following, and allowing for Henslowe's tendency to forget the alteration of year, the account may actually have been entered in the Diary in April, 1593. But this suggests an important question. Where were Lord Strange's men playing during the period of the account which we find preceded the playhouse account?

The nature of the account implies that they were performing in a theatre. Concurrently, in another place, are entries of payments of fees to the master of the revels in respect of new pieces produced. This indicates Henslowe's position as theatrical manager. What the sums recorded as received at each performance represent we do not exactly know, but the most probable conclusion seems to be that they represent a percentage of the takings for use of properties, rent of the playhouse, and repayments on account of advances made to the players. The alternative is that they represent the total takings, which would be subject to a similar deduction afterwards. In that case, however, we should look for entries of the net amounts separately; but these we do not find.

At what theatre were they playing? If it was not at the Rose we should decide that it was at Newington; and if at Newington, that the nature of the account implies a theatre there.

It seems impossible to associate the 1592 playhouse account with any other house than the Rose. The question is, Was the money spent in repairing, or in building, the playhouse? Another account, dated in Lent, 1595 (from which we may derive the date February, 1596) is headed thus: 'A nott what I have layd owt abowt my playhowsse for payntynge and doinge it abowt wth ealme bordes and other Repracyones.' This was clearly for repair. But the heading of the 1592 account has nothing about repair, and this we must consider with the very great difference of the accounts in respect of length and items. The 1595 account has only 24 items; the 1592 account has at least 120, how many more we cannot say, because the lower part of one of the leaves of the account is torn away.

We have here some ground for supposing that Lord Strange's men did not act at the Rose during the period of their account, February 19 to June 22, 1591, old style. Because, if the playhouse were in existence then, it is most unlikely that performances could have taken place in a house which had fallen in such a condition as to require this extraordinary amount of reparation. Further, if we suppose that

this 1592 account was for repairs, how can we explain the dilapidated condition of the house, which must have been built some time after the deed of partnership in 1587?

There is nothing to show that the deed was carried out. The main provision of the deed so far as Henslowe's partner, a grocer, was concerned, was the holding of a small tenement at the south end of the ground near Maiden Lane and Rose Alley, 'to keepe victualinge in or to putt to any other use.' Besides this, he was to have half the receipts of the playhouse; and he was to pay Henslowe £816 in quarterly instalments of £25 10s. It is a curious arrangement. Perhaps the man died; perhaps Henslowe postponed making the playhouse, or let him have the use of the tenement on some other arrangement. At any rate, we have no evidence of the playhouse having been built, and considering that the deed was for eight and a quarter years, and if carried out would have been in operation at the period of the Diary, which is altogether silent as to Henslowe's partner in the deed, there seems some warrant for supposing that it was not carried out. According to the deed, Henslowe was to have erected the playhouse at his own cost, so that the point is not affected by his expending this money in 1592 without mention of his partner. Yet, on the other hand, such an extensive outlay would bring his partner a benefit

against which we should look for the mention of some receipt.

Further than this, there are some indications in the Diary that the work was in progress while the company were playing. These entries are dated in March, 1591 (*i.e.*, 1592), some time after the company began playing on February 19, and in no way conflict with the reasons above stated for concluding that the playhouse account of 1592 is subsequent to the account of Lord Strange's company.*

It is quite possible that the work on the playhouse was going on all through the year 1592. The collection of the material must itself have taken considerable time. Much of it was supplied by one J. Griggs (variously spelt in the account), and there is in the Diary (p. 52, quite out of place, a blank page having been taken for the purpose) a receipt, or I.O.U., from John Griggs to Henslowe, dated July 13, 1592, which probably had reference to these playhouse transactions.

The conclusion may be stated : That if the 1592 playhouse account were for *repairs*, it is not impossible, but extremely unlikely, that Lord Strange's men were playing at the Rose during the period of the earliest account we meet with in Henslowe's

* Henslowe's Diary, ed. Collier, pp. 15, 16. The entries are dated March 7, 1591 ; March 23, 1591 ; and March 28, 1591. (He invariably forgot to change the year after March 25.)

Diary, February 19 to June 22, 1592. If the playhouse account be not for repairs, but for *building*, then the company must have been performing at some other theatre, and that would be Newington Butts. It is a pity that the point is incapable of absolute proof, because the proof would invest the Newington playhouse with a very interesting, if brief, history, and the Rose would even then be the best recorded theatre of the Elizabethan age.

Baffling and illusive as it is on many important points, Henslowe's Diary furnishes clear information as to the construction of his playhouse, the Rose. The items include a large number of payments to the ironmonger in Southwark at the sign of the Frying-pan, for nails of various kinds duly mentioned. The man who used them was paid 1*s.* 1*d.* a day: 'Itm paid the nailer for iiij days=iiij*s.* 4*d.*' The house was mainly constructed of wood, and the first item in the account is for the purchase of the barge in which it was brought by water. There are many items for wood of various kinds —deal-boards, quarter-boards, inch-boards. The wood and the nails were the chief elements in the building. But there are entries for lime, for mud, for 'chake' and bricks, and for bricklaying. There are payments for laths and for wages to the plasterer. Entries of the various sums paid for workmen's wages are duly made; and as to the roof, there are the payments for rafters and the

various payments to the thatcher which give an account of that. A thatched roof, open to the sky over the yard or pit, as in the case of the other playhouses, and the entry 'Itm pd for a maste,' tells us that above the roof a flag was displayed as a signal for the performances. As to the interior, the entry 'Im pd for xxvj fore powles' may concern the poles for supporting the galleries; and two entries, each for two dozen turned ballusters, may have been for the staircases. As for the stage itself, we have only one entry, but it is interesting: 'Itm pd for payntinge my stage xj*s*.' The actors' dressing room—called a tire (= attire) house in those days, was duly provided, as we learn incidentally from the payment for ceiling the room 'over the tyerhowsse.' This was a room reserved for visitors of position; there was another similar, called 'my lord's rome,' for ceiling which also a payment is recorded. Another adjunct is indicated in the entry, 'Pd for makeinge the penthowsse shed at the tyeringe howsse doore,' including items for old timber, boards and quarters, nails, hinges, bolts, and carpenters' wages.

The entry for painting the stage is the only item for painting in the account. But in the 1595 account for repairs—if we assume that it concerns the same playhouse—there are several entries of payments to 'the paynter.' Henslowe

had probably found that unpainted wood will not resist the weather. The reparations consisted chiefly in fresh woodwork and painting.

Between the 1592 playhouse account and the account of Lord Strange's men referred to above, there is an account which most likely concerned Heuslowe's theatrical affairs, but it is impossible to say in what way. In form and matter it resembles the playhouse account. It is headed, 'A not what I have layd a bowt the howsse which was Hew Daveses, as foloweth. 1593. Looke the next leafe.' On the next leaf the account is continued for further payments, in 1595. The house which was Hugh Davies's: and at the head of the 1595 addendum, 'the howsse which hewe Daves dwelt in laste.' So that it had been a dwelling-house; what was it after this money had been spent on it? The name Hugh Davies occurs later in the Diary, but in connection with nothing that throws any light on this house. It is impossible to explain very clearly the suggestion of dramatic associations which accrues to this account from its place in the diary and in connection with what precedes it and comes after it.

Between the two sections of the account there is an account of payments to the master of the revels. Before it there is the 1592 playhouse account; after it, the account of Lord Strange's company of players The items do not help us.

They are for building materials, wood, tiles, nails, and so on ; and while, on the one hand, a payment for 'setting up the port-hole,' and another for a round pole, seem to almost suggest a playhouse, yet, on the other hand, the chimney and the 'manteltie' (mantelpiece) suggest a dwelling. Possibly it was an inn in connection with the playhouse. It was a usual adjunct ; a survival of the inn-yard performances.

The theatrical events recorded by Henslowe in the account of plays produced by Lord Strange's company, from February 19, 1591 (Old Style) to June 22, 1592, may possibly concern the Rose, but it is apparent from the foregoing discussion that it is more probable that these events belong to the Newington theatre. The group of playwrights in Henslowe's pay included Marlowe and Greene, and Peele and Nash, to mention only the chief; the leading actor of the companies (Lord Strange's and the Lord Admiral's) was Edward Alleyn ; and to these we may add an obscure but useful and worthy fellow, William Shakespeare. The Lord Strange's men began playing on Saturday, February 19, opening with Robert Greene's 'Friar Bacon and Friar Bongay.' On the following day, *Sunday*, a play with an obscure title, but probably George Peele's 'Battle of Alcazar,' was performed. Of other plays that have come down to us Greene's 'Orlando Furioso' was given on the following

day, Monday; and Marlowe's 'Jew of Malta' on February 26.

Then later we have this entry:

'Rd at henery the vj, the 3 of marche 1591 . . . iij^{li} xvj^{s} v^{d}'

Collier's note on this is given below.* The entry has in the margin the letters 'n e,' by which Henslowe distinguished first performances. The letters probably stand for 'new enterlude,' or they may be an abbreviation of 'new' only. It is quite possible that among the many plays mentioned in the years 1592-1593, which are lost to us, there may have been others of which Shakespeare was wholly or partly author. But the success of the play was extraordinary, and may by itself have caused the outburst of jealousy on the part of poor Greene shortly afterwards. Nash in his 'Pierce Penilesse,' which was entered in the registers of the Stationers' Company on August 8, 1592, states that the performances of the play had been witnessed by 'ten thousand spectators

* 'This play, whether by Shakespeare or not, was extremely popular and profitable. It produced Henslowe £1 11s. 0d. for his share on its fourteenth representation. On its performance in 1591, we here see that it brought him £3 16s. 5d. Malone was of opinion that it was the first part of "Henry the Sixth," included among Shakespeare's works; and it is certain that this entry of March 3, 1591, relates to its original production, as Henslowe has put his mark *n e* in the margin.'—Henslowe's Diary, ed. Collier, Shakespeare Society, p. 22.

at least'; and Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps remarks that, 'although this statement may be over-strained, there can be no hesitation in receiving it as a valid testimony to the singular popularity of the new drama.'* The passage from Nash is :

'How would it have joyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that, after he had lyen two hundred yeare in his toomb, he should triumph againe on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least, at severall times, who, in the tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.'

Of the immediate predecessors of Shakespeare, the two chief died tragically very soon after this success. On September 3, 1592, while the theatres were closed on account of the plague, Robert Greene died, and his 'Groat's Worth of Wit,' in which he betrayed his jealous dread of Shakespeare, was—as stated on the title-page—'written before his death, and published at his dying request.' On June 1 following, Marlowe came by his violent death; but his end was hardly more tragic than that of poor Greene, who died in great distress of mind and body, as is evident in his address of the above-mentioned book : 'To those Gentlemen, his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making plaies, R. G. wisheth a better exercise and wisdome to

* 'Outlines of Life of Shakespeare,' 6th ed., i. 86 ; ii. 81, 267.

prevent his extremities.' He addresses three of his comrades in successive appeals without name, but with allusions which would identify them probably to the public at that time. The first to the atheist Marlowe :

'Wonder not, for with thee wil I first begin, thou famous gracer of tragedians, that Greene, who hath said with thee, like the foole in his heart, there is no God, should now give glorie unto His greatnesse ; for penitrating is His power, His hand lies heavie upon me, He hath spoken unto me with a voice of thunder, and I have felt He is a God that can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, His gift, be so blinded, that thou should'st give no glory to the giver ? . . [the appeal concludes with the curiously prophetic words :] I knowe the least of my demerits merit this miserable death ; but wilfull striving against knowne truth exceedeth al the terrors of my soule. Defer not, with me, till this last point of extremitie ; for little knowest thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.'

The passages following this were probably addressed to Nash and Peele ; and it is in the last that his anger against the players breaks out, Shakespeare, Alleyn, and Henslowe being specially aimed at :

'. . . were it not an idolatrous oath, I would sweare by sweet S. George thou art unworthie better hap, sith thou dependest on so meane a stay. Base minded men al three of you, if by my miserie ye be not warned ; for unto none of you, like me, sought those burres to cleave ; those puppits, I meane, that speake from our mouths, those anticks garnished in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they al have beene beholding, is it not like that you to whom they all have beene beholding, shall, were ye in that case that I am

now, be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that, with his *Tyger's heart wrapt in a Player's hide*,* supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is in his owne conceit the only *Shake-scene* in a countrie. O that I might intreate your rare wits to be imployed in more profitable courses, and let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions! I know the best husband of you all will never prove an usurer, and the kindest of them all will never proove a kinde nurse; yet, whilst you may, seeke you better maisters, for it is pittie men of such rare wits should be subject to the pleasures of such rude groomes.†

'In this I might insert two more, that both have writ against these buckram gentlemen; but let their owne works serve to witnesse against their owne wickednesse, if they persever to maintain any more such peasants.† For other new commers, I leave them to the mercie of these painted monsters, who I doubt not, will drive the best minded to despise them; for the rest it skils not though they make a jeast at them.

'. . . Trust not then, I beseech yee, to such weake staies; for they are as changeable in minde as in many attires. . . .'

It is not necessary here to go at length into the vexed question as to the share of Shakespeare in

* 'O, tiger's heart, wrapt in a woman's hide.'—'Henry VI.,' Part III., act i., scene iv.

† Following upon the above obvious allusions to Shakespeare, these references to 'grooms' and 'peasants' seem to point to the rustic from Stratford-on-Avon, whose first occupation in London, according to tradition, was to take charge of the horses of visitors to the Theatre and the Curtain in Shoreditch. I believe these indications have not heretofore been noticed.

the authorship of the three parts of 'Henry VI.' The epilogue to 'Henry V.,' produced later, shows that they were considered to belong to him and his company (the chamberlain's), and they were included by his editors in the folio edition of 1623. The line from the third part, travestied by Greene, is of distinctly Marlowean quality. But Marlowe was the leading playwright throughout Shakespeare's apprenticeship period—1586-1592—and Shakespeare as an actor had been accustomed to declaim 'Marlowe's mighty line.' It is more reasonable to impute the resemblance (by no means confined to this line) to Marlowe's influence, than to conclude, in spite of the indications to the contrary, that Marlowe shared the authorship.

It would seem that Shakespeare himself was impressed by Greene's warnings. He turned his attention to poetry, and dedicated his 'Venus and Adonis' to Lord Southampton (1593), and shortly afterwards he severed his connection with Henslowe and Alleyn. Greene's iteration, 'sith thou dependest on so meane a stay,' and 'trust not, then, I beseech yee, to such weake staies,' may perhaps be compared with Shakespeare's dedication of 'Venus and Adonis': '. . . nor how the worlde will censure me for choosing so strong a proppe to support so weake a burthen.'

The season of Lord Strange's company closed on June 22, 1592, owing to the plague, and re-

opened on the following December 29. In the meantime, doubtless, the work on the Rose had been going forward, and perhaps the account—December 29, 1592, to February 1, 1593*—was for Lord Strange's men at that playhouse. The plague interrupted again, and among the Dulwich MSS. there is an un-dated warrant from the Privy Council, which may possibly refer to this time, rescinding an order whereby they 'did restraine the Lorde Strange his servauntes from playinge at the rose on the banckside and enioyned them to plaie three daies at newington Butts,' and permitting that 'the Rose maie be at libertie without anye restrainte, so longe as yt shalbe free from infection of sicknes.'† Henslowe has no accounts till December 27 following, when the company of the Earl of Sussex played till February 6, 1594,‡ probably at the Rose, but it is impossible to say decisively; it might have been at Newington. This season is especially interesting, on account of the production of Shakespeare's 'Titus and Andronicus' on January 23 for the first time (denoted by the letters 'n e,' as explained above):

'Rd at titus and ondronicus, the 23 of Jeneway 1593 iij[li] viij[s]'

* Henslowe's Diary, ed. Collier, pp. 29, 30.

† Warner's Catalogue, p. 12.

‡ Henslowe's Diary, pp. 31-33.

—the largest sum received since the previous December 29.* The play was repeated on January 28 and on February 6, when the account ends. The next account is headed : 'In the name of God, Amen, beginninge at Easter, 1593, the Quene's men and my lord of Susex to geather.' The 1593 should be 1594, apparently ; this short account extends from April 1 to 8, 1594. It is succeeded by a short account, May 14 to 16, 1594, 'by my lord admirall's men'; and then we come to the account already cited, *ante*, p. 143, with the heading, 'beginninge at Newington, my Lord Admiralle and my Lorde Chamberlen men as foloweth, 1594,' which has served the purpose of a text to the present chapter.

How long did this joint arrangement last? Collier seems to have been misled by too literal an acceptance of the evidence of the Diary. In his Introduction (p. xvii.) he writes : 'On page 35 begins a highly valuable enumeration of all the dramas represented between June 3, 1594, and July 18, 1596, during the whole of which two years and six weeks the Lord Admiral's players were jointly occupying, or possibly playing in combination at, the Newington Theatre with the Lord Chamberlain's servants.' And in a footnote in the Diary itself (p. 60), in reference to a break

* Collier seems to accept Malone's view that this was 'the original "Titus Andronicus" before Shakespeare touched it.' But see Halliwell-Phillipps' 'Outlines,' 6th ed., i. 97

in the continuity of the account—caused by the interposition of entries of another kind, he observes : 'Here, on another leaf, Henslowe continues the long list of plays represented by the Lord Admiral's and the Lord Chamberlain's players at Newington Butts.' Collier dwells on the length of the account, but apparently without entertaining any doubt as to his conclusion upon it. Yet it is not necessary to go outside the evidence in the account to arrive at a quite different conclusion.

1. The account begins June 3. Under the entry for June 13 a line is drawn ; and from that point the amounts received are much larger than from June 3-13.

2. The account is continuous until March 14, in the following year, 1595. After the entry for that day (p. 51) a line is drawn across the page, and the account is resumed on Easter Monday (April 22 ?).

3. There is another break between June 26 and August 25 (p. 55).

4. Another break occurs after the entry for February 27, 1596 (p. 65). The account of receipts at plays is resumed on April 12. Collier's own note on this is : 'This looks like a continuation of the former account, but it begins at the top of a separate page, and there is an interval between the 27th February, 1595-96, and the 10th (*sic*) April, 1596.'

The severance between the companies may have occurred at either of these points.

The absence of a fresh heading counts for little. If the Chamberlain's men left at either of these points, the Admiral's men continued ; there was no break in the production of plays and receipt of profits by Henslowe, the record of which is the object of the account.

Again, in his Introduction (p. xx), Collier remarks : 'It is singular that most of the old plays which our great dramatist is supposed more or less to have employed, and of the stories of which he availed himself, are found in Henslowe's list of this period.' He is speaking of the whole period he had in view—June 3, 1594, to July 18, 1596. He continues : 'Here we find a Titus Andronicus, a Lear, a Hamlet, a Henry V. and a Henry VI., a Buckingham, the old Taming of a Shrew, and several others.' But he does not mention that, of these seven plays, three were produced among the ten performances before the first line of division in the Diary, and that of those, one *was* Shakespeare's play, viz., 'Titus Andronicus' (produced twice), and that the other two are recognisable as possible originals of Shakespeare's dramas—viz., 'Hamlet' and 'Taming of a Shrew'—while the others he mentions are more doubtful. 'Henry V.' was not produced till November 28, 1595, and it is marked as a new play. But the most extra-

ordinary thing is that the other two plays mentioned by Collier — viz., 'Henry VI.' and 'Buckingham'—don't occur in the account at all. So that the feature of the entries which he brings forward to support his conclusion that the chamberlain's men were playing at Newington all this time, when brought to the test, shows the opposite; and the fact that, with the exception of 'Henry V.,' the other plays with the Shakespearean titles occur before the first divisional line after the tenth entry, suggests that it was only during this very short period that the two companies were acting in some joint arrangement. After this line there is no more mention of Shakespeare's play 'Titus Andronicus.'

Further, it may be added that, even if the companies parted at one of the subsequent divisional points, we need not conclude that they were acting all the time at Newington, and leaving the Rose unused and unoccupied. The words of the heading, 'Beginning at Newington,' need not imply continuous acting there throughout the period of the account until we come to a fresh heading. But that was Collier's conclusion.

When the Rose was closed by order, on account of the plague, Henslowe received permission to play at Newington, because, being further away in the fields, there was less danger of infection from the assemblage of people there. It may

have been in consequence of some such order that the chamberlain's men, to save loss of time and money, obtained a similar permission, and made arrangements with Henslowe accordingly. It was, probably, only a temporary arrangement, but a good one for the Burbages, for they took Shakespeare away with them as a member of their company.

There is an almost clear connection between Greene's flurt at the upstart Crow, the dedication of 'Venus and Adonis,' and Shakespeare's joining the lord chamberlain's company. The latter events followed hard upon the first; for although we do not know the actual date of Shakespeare's accession, we know it was before Christmas, 1594, when the company played before the Queen at Greenwich.* This departure in Shakespeare's career has not been considered in connection with the problem of the three parts of 'Henry VI.,' but it seems to throw some light on it. The companies were always jealous over their play-house copies, because the effect of the circulation of a play in print was to lessen its novelty and attraction on the boards. When Shakespeare joined the chamberlain's men, what was done in regard to the plays he had produced under Henslowe? They were the 'Henry VI.' plays and 'Titus Andronicus.' Let us consider the sequence of events.

* See *ante*, p. 72.

The publication of the poem 'Venus and Adonis' in 1593 raised Shakespeare into fame. The Earl of Sussex company began playing, probably at the Rose, on December 27, 1593, and on January 23 following they produced Shakespeare's 'Titus and Andronicus,' the large audience (which we may deduce from Henslowe's entry) having been probably attracted to witness the first performance of a new play by the now famous poet. The play was repeated on January 28 and February 6, when the theatre closed. On this day—February 6—the play was entered on the books of the Stationers' Company by Danter, who subsequently published it. The play had been acted by other companies, those of Earl Derby and Earl Pembroke, as appeared on the title-page, 1594.* Whether Shakespeare or Henslowe leased the acting rights to these companies, we know that Shakespeare promptly secured the exclusive right of the play directly the contract with the Sussex men ended. But a version of what we now call the Second Part of 'Henry VI.' was also published in this year (1594), and a version of what we now call the Third Part of 'Henry VI.' was published shortly after, in 1595. And in 1594 Shakespeare joined the chamberlain's men.

* On the excellent authority of Langbaine. See 'Outlines,' 6th ed., ii. 261. Shakespeare was connected with the Earl of Pembroke's company. See 'Outlines,' i. 215.

It is certainly worth consideration whether the publication of these quartos was not connected, like the publication of 'Titus Andronicus,' with Shakespeare's departure from the Rose and Newington Theatres and the management of Henslowe.

The progression of Shakespeare from this point is on a superior plane. He is the famous poet, consorting with eminent courtiers, writing plays for the company which had an almost official connection with the court of Queen Bess—a connection which became distinct a few years later, when, on the accession of James, the company became 'the King's players.' On the other hand, Henslowe and Alleyn continue to do good business at the Rose until the close of the year 1598, when the chamberlain's company came back from over the water and erected their Globe playhouse on the Bankside. From that point the fortunes of the Rose Theatre decline from their meridian and soon reach zero.

The history of these years may easily be gathered from the Diary. We have page after page of entries similar to those already quoted : the date, received at such and such a play, and the amount. The old manager frequently bungles over the titles of the plays, but for the most part they are decipherable ; a large proportion of those mentioned have not survived, but familiar titles recur fre-

quently, notably those of Kit Marlowe's famous plays, 'Faust' (which generally figures as 'fostes'), the 'Jew of Malta' (which drops from Henslowe's pen as 'the Jew,' or 'the Jew of Maltun'), and 'Tamburlaine' (recognisable as 'tamberlen'). The interest of the Diary, therefore, is largely literary; but there are some curious and interesting items of theatrical interest which may be referred to here.

A few characteristic memoranda will indicate the arrangements for dressing the parts:

> 'Sowld Mr. Richard Jones, player, a manes gowne of peche coler In grayne, the 2 of Septmbr 1594, to be payd by fyve shellenges a weeke imediately folowinge and beginynge as fowloweth.'

The weekly payments were punctually made, and are duly recorded (Diary, p. 66). The players evidently shared the responsibility of the management. They were chargeable for their acting gear. Another sign of the individuality of their position is, that they took boys in apprenticeship to train them as actors. An entry similar to the above occurs on p. 69:

> 'Sowld unto Jeames Donstall, player, the 27 of aguste 1595 a manes gown of purpell coller cloth, faced with conney and layd on the sleves with buttens, for xxxxiij^{s} iiij^{d} to be payd xx^{s} in hand and xxiij^{s} iiij^{d} at mychellmaste next cominge after the datte above written.'

The tireman of the theatre bought apparel; he probably had a supply, and lent the gear to the actors on hire. There is an entry of a sale to him,

Stephen Magelt, or Magett, on the next page, of 'a dublet of fuschen playne and a payer of Venesyones of brade cloth, with ij laces of belement,' which seems cheap at 'xvj^{s}.' Sometimes they bought the stuff and had it made up into apparel afterwards:

'Sowld unto Mr. Jonnes, player, the vj of Maye 1596, ij yardes and iij quarters of brode clothe for eyghtene shelynges, to be payd by iiij^{s} a weacke.'

On the same day the tireman bought 'a clocke [cloak] of sade grene.' On January 2, 1597, Henslowe sold 'unto Thomas Towne, a player, a Blacke clothe clocke layd with sylke lace, for xxvj^{s} viij^{d}.'

The following entry gives a good idea of the business relations between the manager and the Rose company:

'*Lente unto my lord admerall players at severall tymes in Redey money as foloweth.* 1596.

'Lent unto Jeames Donstall for to by thinges for the playe of Valteger - - - - - - v^{li}

'Lent unto marten slater, to bye coper lace and frenge for the play of Valteger, the 28 of novembr 1596 - xxxx^{s}

'Lent unto marten slather, the 29 of novembr 1596 to by for the play of valteger lace and other things - xxv^{s}

'Dd. unto Steven the tyerman, for to delyver unto the company, for to by a head-tier and a Rebato and other thinges, the 3 of Desembr 1596 - - - iij^{li} x^{s}

'Lent unto my sonne [Edward Alleyn] to by the saten dublet with sylver lace - - - - iiij^{li}

'Dd unto my sonne for to by sylcke and other thinges for Guido [a play] - - - - iiij^{li} ix^{s}'

There are other accounts of advances to the company in which the titles of the plays concerned, or the object of expenditure, are not mentioned. Again, there are numerous loans, many of which were made to actors, and often with the details of repayment. Sometimes money is advanced on pledges. Thus Thomas Towne, the player, who bought the black cloth coat mentioned above, borrowed 5s. on a scarf in 1598 (p. 81), and two years later received a similar accommodation (p. 92):

'Lent unto Thomas Towne the 3 of march 1600 upon a gowld Ringe with a greene stone in it the some of xx^s. p^d

'Lent unto Thomas Towne, by my wiffe, the 13 of marche 1601, upon a paire of sylcke stockens, tenne shellens, wch stockens he fetched agayne and payd us not; so he oweth us stylle - - - - - - x^s'

Payments and part-payments and advances to authors for new plays are very numerous. The following specimen brings a famous name before us:

'Lent unto Bengemen Johnson the 3 of desembr 1597, upon a boocke wch he showed the plotte unto the company, which he promysed to dd. unto the company at crystmas next, the some of - - - - - xx^s'

The following memorandum (p. 115) is characteristic of the lives of the old actors:

'Lent unto Mrs. Birde, alles [alias] Borne, the 26 of novembr 1600 in Redye monye, to descarge her husband owt of the Kynges benche when he laye upon my lorde Jeffe

Justes warant [Lord Chief Justice's warrant] for hurtinge of a felowe which browght his wiffe a leatter : some of three powndes I saye - - - - - iijli'

There is an unusually explicit receipt by Michael Drayton, in which the amount agreed upon as the price of the play is mentioned (p. 95):

'I received forty shillinges of Mr. Phillip Hinslowe, in part of vjli, for the playe of Willm Longsword, to be delivered presently, within 2 or three dayes, the xxjth of January 1598.'

These typical entries are taken from the earlier pages. There is a more methodical record for the years 1597-98 (pp. 117-128), in which the various objects of expenditure appear continuously one under another, and afford a very good insight into the work of the Rose Theatre. A specimen is here given :

'*Layd owt for my lord Admeralles meane, as foloweth*, 1597 :

'Pd unto Antony Mondaye and Drayton for the laste payment of the Boocke of mother Readcape, the 3 of Jeneway 1597 the some of - - - - lvs

'Layd owte for coper lace for the littell boye, for a valle for the boye, ageanste the playe of Dido and Eneus, the 3 of Jeneway 1597 - - - - - xxixs

* * * * *

'Lent unto the company the 15 of Jeneway 1597 to bye a boocke of Mr. Dicker [Dekker] called fayeton, fower pounde. I saye lent - - - - - iiijli

* * * * *

'Lent unto Thomas dowton for the company to bye a sewte for phayeton, and ij rebates and j fardengaile, the 26 of Jeneway 1598 the some of three pownde. I saye lent iijli

'Lent unto Thomas Dowton the 28 of Jeneway 1598 to

bye a whitte satten dublette for phayeton, forty shyllenges. I saye lent - - - - - xxxx^s^

'Lent unto the company the 4 of febreary 1598 to disecharge Mr. Dicker owt of the cownter in the powltrey, the some of fortie shillinges. I saye dd to thomas Dowton.'

Dekker in prison in the Counter and the company paying his discharge, so that he may be present at the first performance, probably: this is a pleasing episode on to which we can project our mental vision across three centuries. In a note, Collier makes the likely suggestion that 'Phaeton' was 'The Sun's Darling,' by Ford and Dekker. We can only cull here and there from this account for the sake of some side-light upon Elizabethan theatrical matters. For instance, the following four entries (pp. 120, 121):

'Lent unto Drayton and Cheattell the 13 of marche 1598 in pte paymente of a boocke, wher in is a pte of a weallche man written, which they have promysed to delyver by the xx daye next folowinge I say lent R. [ready] money xxxx^s^

'Lent unto the company to paye Drayton and Dyckers and Chetell ther full payment for the boocke called the famous wares of Henry the fyrste and the prynce of Walles, the some of - - - - - - iiij^li^ v^s^

'Lent at that tyme unto the company for to spend at the Readynge of that boocke at the sonne in new fysh streate v^s^

'Pd unto the carman for caryinge and brygyn of the stufe backe agayne when they played in fleat-streat, pryvat, and then owr stufe was loste - - - - iij^s^'

The 'stuff' of this entry was doubtless the company's wardrobe and properties; the last words of the entry seem to breathe disgust: 'and

then our stuff was lost!'—although I did pay that carman three shillings! But the previous entry furnishes a glimpse of greater interest: the company assembled drinking together at the Sun in New Fish Street, and one of them, or perhaps one of the authors, reading the MS. of the new play! This suggests a similar scene at the Mermaid, with Shakespeare as the central figure.

We can gather from the Diary that the arrangement between Henslowe and the players underwent modification from time to time; or possibly, under the influence of his more cultured son-in-law and partner, the old manager became more careful and explicit in his book-keeping. If we bring these indications into focus, they reveal a good deal of the internal economy of the theatres at that period. In January, 1597, Henslowe adopted a new method of account. The last entry in the old form is:

'22 of Jeneway 1597 Rd. at Jeronymo - xix^{s}'

An example of the new form is:

'Janeway 1597	27	*ne*	Rd at womon hard to please . . .	2	11	06 07 08'

The sums are now given in Arabic numerals, and there is an additional column; but what the figures represent is not apparent, although they probably concern a reckoning between Henslowe and the company. The left-hand column contains not

only the year and month of date, but also marginalia. For instance (p. 91):

'the xj of october begane my lord admerals and my lord Pembrockes men to playe at my howsse, 1597.'

The last entry in this form is October 5, 1597. But the account appears to be continued in a different form elsewhere (p. 102) under the following heading:

'*A Juste acownte of all suche monye as I have Receved of my lord admeralles and my lord of pembrocke men as foloweth begynynge the* 21 *Octobr* 1597.'

The entries give only the date and the lump sum, in this form:

'Rd the 21 of octobr 1597 - - v^{li} j^{s} vj^{d}.'

And the sums are above the previous average, because the manager is now taking toll of two companies instead of one. Whatever the arrangement was, some members of the company held shares:

'*A Juste acownte of the money which I have Receved of Humfreye Jeaffes hallfe sheare, beginynge the* 14 *of Jenewary* 1597 *as foloweth:*

'Rd the 21 of Jenewary 1597 [1598] - - $viij^{s}$'

And so week by week till March 4, 1598, that is seven weeks, and the total is three pounds. That would be six pounds for a full share for seven weeks. The account has this addendum:

'This some was payd backe agayne unto the company of my lord admeralles players the 8 of marche 1598 and the

shared it amongste them : I saye pd backe agayne the some of iij^{li}.

Apparently Ben Jonson took a share, but the arrangement fell through. The following entry occurs in the Diary (p. 80), but is crossed out in the MS. :

'Rd of Bengemenes Johnsones share as foloweth, 1597 : Rd the 28 of July 1597 - - - iij^{s} ix^{d}'

Gabriel Spenser, a prominent actor in the company—whose name will always be linked with that of Ben Jonson, for reasons set forth at a subsequent part of the present chapter—was a shareholder in the Rose Theatre (Diary, p. 98):

'Rd of gabrell Spenser at severall tymes, of his share in the gallereyes, as foloweth, begynynge the 6 of aprell 1598 :

Rd the 6 of aprell 1598 - - -	v^{s} vjd
Rd the 14 of maye 1598 - - -	vij^{s}
Rd the 27 of maye 1598 - - -	iiij^{s}
Rd the 17 of June 1598 - - -	v^{s}
Rd. the 24 of June 1598 - - -	iiij^{s}'

For five weeks, one share in the gallery amounted to 25s. 6d.

Apparently this arrangement with Spenser ceased at this time ; for in the following month we have an account with this heading (Diary, p. 129):

'*Here I Begyne to Receve the wholle gallerys from this daye, beinge the* 29 *of July* 1598.'

The first week's receipts amounted to £10 14*s.* ; and week by week the receipts are recorded to

October 13, 1599 (p. 130), when apparently there was some rearrangement, and the account is continued elsewhere (p. 151), the items overlapping somewhat, under this heading :

'*Here I begane to Receve the galleryes agayne, which they Receved, begynynge at myhellmas weeke, being the* 6 *of octobr* 1599, *as foloweth.*'

The reference 'they received' in this heading is perhaps explained by a memorandum at the close of the previous section of the account (p. 130), as follows: 'Receved with the company of my Lord of notingame men to this place, being the 13 of october, 1599 ; and yt doth apere that I have Received of the deate [debt] which they owe unto me iij hundred fiftie and eyght powndes.' In another place (p. 157) he gives the total outlay made in behalf of the company, £632. The references to the Nottingham men concern the same company—the Admiral's—the position of Lord Admiral being occupied by the Earl of Nottingham at this time.

£358 is the total of the gallery account for forty-four weeks, and Henslowe sets it against the total of advances made for the players. The debt was in respect of various outlays for the company, similar to those already noticed, involving payments to authors, advances for apparel, and miscellaneous expenses. There is a further account under this heading (p. 153):

'*Layde owt for the company of my lord of Notingame men frome the* 26 *of maye* 1599 *as foloweth,* 1599.'

This extends to January 23, 1600-1 (p. 175); continued January 26 (p. 183), though how far the entries from this point concern the Rose is not clear. Henslowe and Alleyn's other theatre, the Fortune, was opened in this year.

The Diary is a troublesome and confusing document: it is not chronological, and leaves which have been torn out of the original here and there may or may not have contained continuations of preceding matter. The above notes, therefore, may be useful for reference, if the reader should wish to pursue inquiry in the record itself. The nature of Henslowe's position as manager of the Rose is tolerably clear. He was the proprietor of the theatre; he financed the companies acting there; he advanced money for purchase of the acting rights of new plays. It was a speculation, he made the outlays at his own risk; but his management was successful and profitable.

After the establishment of the theatres, the companies continued to act under licenses, but the tendency was towards a weakening of their dependence; they remained nominally the servants of their patrons, but tended ever more and more to become actually the servants of the public. They took boys in apprenticeship, and trained them to act female characters; the managers of

the theatres hired players directly on their own account. These were called 'hirelings,' and Stephen Gosson, in his 'School of Abuse,' mentions that they were paid six shillings per week. Henslowe records such hires in his Diary.

'Memdum, that the 27 of Jeuley 1597 I heayred Thomas Hearne with ij pence, for to searve me ij yeares in the qualetie of playenge, for fyve shellynges a weacke for one yeare and vj^{s} viij^{d} for the other yeare, which he hath covenanted hime seallfe to searve me, and not to departe frome my companey tyll this ij yeares be eanded' (p. 256).

There is a similar agreement under date August 6, 1597, by which Richard Jones became bound 'to continew and playe with the companye of my lord Admeralles players,' for three years, 'to playe in my howsse only known by the name of the Rosse, and in no other howsse about London publicke,' and if the theatre should be closed 'then to go for the tyme into the contrey, and after to returne agayne to London.' Four days later William Borne became bound 'to come and playe with my lord Admeralles men at my howsse, called by the name of the Rosse, setewate one the banck,' under a penalty of a hundred marks. There are five other similar agreements, the last being dated April 16, 1599 (1600).

Another entry records a loan of ten shillings to John Helle, the clown, and below the entry there is a record of the bond by which the clown is bound 'to continew with me at my howsse in

playinge till Shrafte tyde,' under a penalty of forty pounds.

A transaction which seems to show that boys were regarded as chattels is recorded thus : 'Bowght my boye Jeames Brystow, of William Augusten, player, the 18 of desembr 1597, for viij[li].'

We have seen above that Gabriel Spenser, one of the Rose players, held a share in the proceeds of the galleries of the theatre in 1598, and also that in the previous year an arrangement for Ben Jonson becoming a shareholder was cancelled. The fatal duel that took place between these two men in 1598 demands some notice here. The position occupied by them at the theatre was not by any means identical. Probably both were players ; but Jonson was also an author, and his status by consequence was similar to that of other authors—Greene, Marlowe and Shakespeare—who were also actors on occasion, if not continuously. We will glance at some entries in the Diary concerning them and their relative position before the duel. An entry of an advance to Ben Jonson on a play he had in hand for the company has already been noticed (*ante*, p. 174). The following entries of a similar nature also occur.

'Lent unto Bengemen Johnson, player, the 28 of July 1597 in Redey money, the some of fower powndes to be payd yt agayne when so ever either I or any for me, demand yt : I saye - - - - - - iiij[li]

'Lent Bengemyne Johnson, the 5 of Jeneway 1597 in Redey mony the some of - - - - v[s]

'Lent unto the company the 18 of aguste 1598, to bye a Boocke called hoote anger sone cowld [Hot Anger soon Cold] of Mr. porter, Mr. cheattell, and bengemen Johnson, in fulle payment, the some of - - - - vij[li]'

To Gabriel Spenser there are loans: March 10 1598, 10s.; March 20, 15s.; April 5, 30s. (Diary, 112). On April 9 he signs a receipt with two other players for a loan of £6. On April 24 he has another small loan of 10s. (p. 114), under the entry of which there is the following:

'Lent unto gabrell spenser the 19 of maye 1598 to bye a plume of feathers, w[ch] his mane bradshawe feched of me, x[s].'

There are other entries with his name; and the receipts on account of his share in the galleries have already been noted (*ante*, p. 179). Enough has been given to show that both he and Jonson were actively engaged in the work of the company in the year of the duel.

At the close of 1597, Edward Alleyn, for reasons unknown to us, discontinued acting; he had accumulated a good deal of money, and in the previous year had invested it, or part of it, in a lease of the parsonage of Firle, in Sussex. The sum he paid for this lease indicates his prosperity, £1,323 6s. 8d. The yearly rent was £31 12s. 4d., the lease being assigned to Alleyn by a Sussex gentleman—Arthur Langworth, of Ringmere, and

also of Broyle, both in Sussex.* Perhaps Alleyn had determined to quit the stage altogether and be a gentleman of limited means ; or he may have 'leafte playinge' to attend to his investment, and also another matter which was exercising Henslowe's mind as well as his own at this time. They had been interested in the baiting sports on the Bankside since 1594, the money invested by them in the concern bringing in a very profitable return. Ralph Bowes, who held the patent of master of Paris Garden, died in 1598, and Alleyn and Henslowe hoped for the reversion of the office. They were not successful ; but these were circumstances of their position while Alleyn was staying with his wife as guests of Arthur Langworth at Broyle, in Sussex, during the summer months of 1598. In one of his letters addressed to Alleyn while he was away on this visit, Henslowe reports the fatality which had befallen their company.† In the course of his letter he says he has considered the words between them as to the bear-garden, and thinks it fit they should both be in London to do what they can ; as for their last talk about Mr. Pascalle (a gentleman server to the queen, and an officer of the lord chamberlain, with whom they had been trying to make interest

* Dulwich Catalogue, 255.

† The letter was printed by Collier, 'Memoirs of Edward Alleyn,' p. 50.

with a view to the patent), Henslowe says he does not forget to send news, but will tell him some 'harde and heavey,' for one of his company, 'that is gabrell,' *i.e.*, Gabriel Spenser, has been 'slayen in Hogesden [*i.e.*, Hoxton] fylldes by the hands of benjemen Jonson, bricklayer.' The letter is dated London, September 26, 1598.

To our ears the word 'bricklayer,' as the qualification of one of the greatest names in English literature, sounds somewhat strange ; but, to their honour, most of the actors had some other calling, which we know—in some instances, at any rate—was not merely nominal. Their styling themselves according to their qualifications in various trades was probably due to the proclamations as to vagabonds and masterless men, and the anxiety of the players to possess a recognised status in law. But if Jonson at this time had been a properly-constituted member of the company his designation in that capacity would have taken precedence, and his qualification would have been 'servant of my Lord Admiral.' If he ceased to be a member of the company, he would revert in style to his former occupation. And there is every reason to suppose that he had left the company. This seems to be at least a plausible explanation of the much-commented-upon 'bricklayer' description of Rare Ben Jonson.

It was in this same month—September, 1598—

that Ben Jonson's comedy, 'Every Man in his Humour,' was brought out by the lord chamberlain's men at the Curtain Theatre,* Shakespeare himself sustaining a part in the representation. The position seems to be this. Jonson had taken his play over to the great rival company—the men of the lord chamberlain—and the irritation that Henslowe and the Rose players may have felt at this was probably emphasized in Henslowe's mind, because at this time he was trying to make interest with the lord chamberlain in respect of the patent for the 'Royal Game of Bears, Bulls, and Mastiff Dogs,' as it was styled. Likely enough, Gabriel Spenser, who was shareholder in Henslowe's theatre, and perhaps favoured by the old manager, went over to Shoreditch, and, meeting Ben Jonson, reproached him, and so produced the quarrel; at any rate, the ascertained facts, when brought together, seem to suggest some such constructive hypothesis.

We will now turn to the interesting details of the encounter which were discovered by Mr. John Cordy Jeaffreson during his work of reducing into a calendar the mass of documents comprising the Middlesex Sessions Rolls. He communicated his find to the *Athenæum*, accompanied by some admirable editorial comment; and in the ensuing account here given these communications and sub-

* Halliwell-Phillipps' 'Outlines,' i. 154-156; 339, 340.

sequent criticisms have been freely drawn upon.* In communicating his discovery to the *Athenæum*, Mr. Jeaffreson pointed out that besides giving us the indictment on which Ben Jonson was arraigned in the Justice Hall of the Old Bailey at the gaol-delivery of Newgate made in October, 1598, the document gives us, immediately over its first mention of the culprit, a brief minute of the prime incidents and chief consequences of the arraignment.

'It was the usual practice [he says] of the Middlesex Clerk of the Peace thus to put on every important indictment brief notes, or a single brief note of any matters or matter to be held in remembrance respecting the facts of the case. From such notes one learns whether prisoners put themselves "Guilty," or pleaded innocence; whether, in either case, they pleaded their clerical privilege; whether they were sentenced to the gallows, the pillory, or the cart's tail. In short the note is a brief history of the course of events after arraignment, even as the indictment itself is a brief history of the case up to the time of arraignment.'

The document is in Latin, but here we have space only for the English version supplied with the Latin by Mr. Jeaffreson, the *précis* heading being printed in italics :

* *Athenæum*, No. 3045, March 6, 1886, pp. 337, 338 ; No. 3048, March 27, 1886, pp. 432, 433 ; a communication from Dr. Nicholson, No. 3060, June 19, 1886, pp. 823, 824 ; note by Mr. Daniel, No. 3061, June 26, 1886, p. 856.

'*He confesses the indictment, asks for the book, reads like a clerk, is marked with the letter T, and is delivered according to the statute, etc.*

'Middlesex :—The jurors for the Lady the Queen present, that Benjamin Johnson, late of London, yeoman, on the 22nd day of September, in the fortieth year of the reign of our Lady Elizabeth by God's grace Queen of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., with force of arms, etc., made an attack against and upon a certain Gabriel Spencer, being in God's and the said Lady the Queen's peace, at Shordiche in the aforesaid county of Middlesex, in the Fields there, and with a certain sword of iron and steel called a Rapiour, of the price of three shillings, which he then and there had and held drawn in his right hand, feloniously and wilfully beat and struck the same Gabriel, giving then and there to the same Gabriel Spencer with the aforesaid sword a mortal wound of the depth of six inches and of the breadth of one inch in and upon the right side of the same Gabriel, of which mortal blow the same Gabriel Spencer at Shordiche aforesaid, in the aforesaid county, in the aforesaid Fields, then and there died instantly. And thus the aforesaid jurors say upon their oath, that the aforesaid Benjamin Johnson, at Shorediche aforesaid, in the aforesaid county of Middlesex, and in the aforesaid Fields, in the year and day aforesaid, feloniously and wilfully killed and slew the aforesaid Gabriel Spencer, against the peace of the said Lady the Queen, etc.'

Mr. Jeaffreson truly remarks, 'There is something grimly fantastic in the notion of so good a scholar as Ben Jonson "asking for the book," in order to prove himself capable of reading his "neck-verse"—something grotesquely horrible in the thought that, but for benefit of clergy, so bright a genius would have been hung at Tyburn

like any unlettered rascal convicted of having stolen a horse or stabbed an enemy in the back.'

Mr. Jeaffreson shows that, in cases where felons possessed no chattels, it was the practice of the clerk of the peace to note the fact ; and the silence as to chattels therefore implies forfeiture, so that Ben Jonson, although he escaped death, was an absolutely ruined man. He went forth into the world a beggar, with the ignominious 'Tyburn T' branded on the brawn of his left thumb. Mr. Jeaffreson closes his valuable communication with the following suggestive query : 'Did Ben Jonson cut out the "litera T," or burn it out of his flesh? or was it still faintly visible in the old spot when he was placed in the coffin that was borne in honour to Westminster Abbey?'

Dr. Nicholson and Mr. Daniel subsequently pointed out in the *Athenæum* some passages from Dekker's 'Satiromastix ; or, The Untrussing of the Humorous Poet,' in which allusion is made to this episode in Jonson's career.* The references are, as furnished by Dr. Nicholson, to Hawkins's edition of 'Satiromastix.' Dekker's character of Horace is intended as a reflection of Ben Jonson. (*a*) Tucca to Horace (p. 159) : 'Art not famous enough yet, my mad Horastratus, for killing a

* Ben Jonson himself has the following allusion to neck-verse several years later, in his 'Bartholomew Fair' (1614), Act i., scene iv. : 'I am no clerk, I scorn to be sav'd by my book, i' faith I'll hang first.'

player?' (*b*) Asinius to Horace (p. 107): 'Answer! As God judge me, ningle, for thy wit thou mayst answer any Justice of Peace in England, I warrant. Thou writ'st in a most goodly hand, too—I like that; and read'st as legibly as some that have been saved by their neck-verse.' (*c*) Tucca, speaking to Horace, or Jonson (p. 168): 'The best verse that ever I knew him hack out was his white [*i.e.*, his clearing] neck-verse.' And before this (p. 119) he says to Horace: 'Hold, hold up thy hand; I've seen the day thou didst not scorn to hold up thy golls,' the allusion here being to the custom of that time of a prisoner at the bar holding up his hand while his arraignment was read. (*d*) Tucca, after Horace has been tossed in a blanket, says (p. 152): 'Thou art the true-arraigned poet, and shouldst have been hanged, but for one of these part-takers, these charitable copper-lac'd Christians, that fetcht thee out of purgatory.' Dr. Nicholson points out that the play contains no charge on which it could even have been supposed that Horace would have been hanged, and the allusion to Jonson's felony seems to be quite clear. Jonson's part in this controversy with Dekker appeared in his 'Poetaster,' in which two of the *dramatis personæ* are 'Horace' and 'Pantilius Tucca.' Both performances were published in 4to. in 1602. That Jonson was saved by the intervention of a friend, a player, may be inferred from the speech last noted—(*d*). Collier noticed

this in his Introduction (p. xx) to the 'Memoirs of Actors' (Shakespeare Society), with the suggestion that the intercessor was Shakespeare. It was a random shot, but probably hit the mark; because a later and more exact student, Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, worked out the production of Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour' as having been at the Curtain Theatre, Shoreditch, in this same month, 1598; and the good office rendered by Shakespeare—to whom, according to the tradition, the acceptance of the play was due—indicates that the friendship between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson had begun. That it was warm, cemented by favours and kindness, we can gather from Shakespeare's general sentiments upon friendship in his 'Sonnets,' and from the express testimony left on record by Ben Jonson himself. There may have been true gratitude in some of Jonson's expressions in reference to Shakespeare: witness the dedication of his lines to Shakespeare in the prolegomena of the first folio edition of the plays, 1623—'To the memory of my beloved, the author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us;' and the following manly and touching tribute which occurs among his *obiter dicta* many years later:

'*De Shakespeare nostrat. I remember*, the Players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penn'd), hee never blotted out line.

My answer hath beene, would he had blotted a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justifie mine owne candor, (for I lov'd the man, and doe honour his memory (on this side idolatry) as much as any.) Hee was (indeed) honest, and of an open, and free nature ; had an excellent *Phantsie ;* brave notions, and gentle expressions : wherein hee flow'd with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stop'd : *Sufflaminandus erat ;* as *Augustus* said of *Haterius.* His wit was in his owne power ; would the rule of it had beene so too. Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter : As when hee said in the person of *Cæsar,* one speaking to him ; *Cæsar, thou dost me wrong.* Hee replyed : *Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause :* and such like ; which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices, with his vertues. There was ever more in him to be praysed, then to be pardoned.'*

In the absence of direct proof, we can safely say that the 'part-taker,' the 'charitable copper-lac'd Christian,' who 'fetcht' Jonson 'out of purgatory,' was his friend William Shakespeare. This allusion to copper-lace is interesting to students of the Diary of Henslowe. His Memoranda relating to the purchase of copper lace for the players are remarkably numerous and the amounts are large.

It is not a little curious that Mr. Jeaffreson discovered also among the Middlesex MSS. a coroner's 'inquisition,' by which it appears that

* 'Timber ; or, Discoveries ; made upon men and matter : By Ben : Iohnson. London, Printed MDCXLI.,' pp. 97, 98.

Gabriel Spenser himself, two years previously, had slain a man in the same parish, and presumably had escaped death as a felonious clerk, reading his neck-verse and sustaining the branding of the 'Tyburn T' in his hand. This discovery comes so absurdly apt as a solatium to sensitive Jonson devotees that, remembering Mr. Jeaffreson's cleverness in improvising letters in the diction of the period—as related in his interesting 'Recollections'—one almost entertains a passing wonder if he be not indulging in a clever joke! But the circumstances do not admit of such a supposition for a moment, and students of the drama are under obligation to Mr. Jeaffreson for publishing his valuable discovery.

The inquisition, in the original Latin as well as in English, will be found in the *Athenæum*.* The following summary of the facts is quoted from the introductory remarks :

'On the 3rd of December, in Elizabeth's thirty-ninth regnal year, (1596 A.D.), something more than a year and nine months before the fatal duel in Shoreditch, Gabriel Spencer, of London, yeoman, was in the dwelling-house (probably also in the shop) of Richard Easte, of the parish of St. Leonard, in Shoreditch, barber, when he had a quarrel with a certain James Feake. How the quarrel arose does not appear. But it is on the record that it was a quarrel in which there was an interchange of insulting and abusive speech between James Feake and Gabriel Spencer. Angry

* No. 3048, March 27, 1886, pp. 432, 433.

at something Gabriel Spencer said to him, James Feake caught up a copper candlestick, worth sixpence, and seemed to be on the point of throwing it at his adversary when the latter took prompt and extreme measures of self-defence. Armed with a sword worth five shillings, Gabriel Spencer, without drawing his weapon, lunged at the man who had raised the copper candlestick, and with the sword *and* scabbard struck James Feake between the ball and brow of his right eye, giving him a wound that reached the brain. The affair was over in a trice. James Feake dropped the candlestick, and three days later died of the blow thus given him. Of course there was a coroner's inquest, with a verdict of homicide.'

In the case of Jonson the coroner's inquisition has perished, and we have only the form of indictment at the Old Bailey. In the case of Spenser the converse has happened—the indictment has perished, while the inquisition has survived. But, owing to the similarity of circumstances, the inquisition in Spenser's case practically supplies what is missing to complete the record of Ben Jonson's felony. Undoubtedly Jonson's turpitude is much lightened by his appearing in the light of a Nemesis upon the quarrelsome and felonious Gabriel.

At the close of this year, the chamberlain's company established their Globe playhouse on the Bankside ; and it is now for us to briefly consider the history of the Rose Theatre from that point.

Notwithstanding the presence of the chamberlain's men in the neighbourhood, Henslowe

continued his disbursements in behalf of the players of the admiral, the Earl of Nottingham, at the Rose, without any apparent diminution during the year 1599. After the entry for October 13, there was a reckoning up, recorded by Henslowe in these words :

'Reckned with the company of my lorde the Earlle of nottingames men to this place, and I have layd owt for them the some of vj hundred and thirtie two powndes, and they have payd unto me of this deathe [debt] iij hundred and fiftie and eyghte powndes, to this daye, being the 13 of October, 1599.'

Then the record of expenditure continues. The entries in the Diary tend to become more methodical as time goes on, revealing, among other things, that payments to authors by Henslowe for new plays were expressly made in behalf of the company, who, therefore, became the owners of the plays. In July, 1600, there is another reckoning with the company, in the form of an acknowledgment by the players of the amount of their indebtedness, as follows (p. 172) :

'So that the full some of all the debtes which we owe Mr. Henshlowe this xth of July, 1600, cometh to just the some of three hundred powndes . . . . ccc^{li}

'Which some of three hundred poundes we whose names are hereunder written doe acknowledge our dewe debt, and doe promyse payment.'

Then follow the signatures of eleven actors, being sharers of the company, exclusive of hire-

lings who were paid a weekly stipend, and boys employed under the principal actors. A few entries above, the following entry occurs :

'Lent unto Thomas Dowton, the 5 of June, 1600, to bye a sewt for his boye in the playe of cuped and siches [Cupid and Psyche] the some of . . . . . xxxx[s]

By this time Henslowe and Alleyn had replied to the move of the chamberlain's men southward by making a counter-move northward, and were building their Fortune playhouse in Golden Lane, Cripplegate. We learn (p. 181) that 'my Lord of Pembrockes men' began playing at the Rose on October 18, 1600, but the receipts of only two performances are recorded, and the amounts are very small. Perhaps the admiral's men had gone to the Fortune. The contract for building that theatre bears date the previous 8th of January, and it is therefore not impossible that it may have been opened in the autumn.

Henslowe now had to pay the master of the revels a fee of £3 a month ; and unless the receipts at the Rose were satisfactory, we can understand he would close it, in order to escape the liability. The payment of fees recorded (p. 179) for October and November, 1599, and January, February, April, and May, 1600, were probably for the Rose. But the payments of July and August, 1601 (p. 181), are expressly for the Fortune.

It is possible that the admiral's men continued to play at the Rose as well as the Fortune, and the account beginning January 26, 1600 (*i.e.* 1601) (pp. 183-190) may refer to both houses. But while mention of the Fortune occurs, there is nothing as to the Rose; the account continues with intermission till March, 1603. In the meantime, Henslowe had arranged with the players of the Earl of Worcester to occupy the Rose. His account with this company (Diary, pp. 236-251), begins August 17, 1602, and ends March 16, 1603. The sums expended and advanced amount to 140*li.* 1*s.* At the end of the account there is a written acknowledgment of this liability, expressed plurally, the promise to pay to be signed by all the members of the company, in the form adopted in the case of the admiral's company at a previous date (Diary, p. 172). Whether the business was properly settled up we do not know, as some leaves of the Diary have been cut away at this point. But the company made a fresh start on May 9, 1603, under 'the king's license,' *i.e.*, on the accession of James the Earl of Worcester's company became licensed as the servants of the queen, Anne of Denmark, consort of the new king. However, there is only one entry under this account, and it would seem that since the chamberlain's men had been acting at the Globe the Rose did not pay. But our sympathy with

Alleyn and Henslowe is tempered by the fact that they drew handsome profits from the Bear Garden on the Bankside, while their Fortune playhouse proved a great success, and furnished a large part of the means which enabled Alleyn to build and endow his great charity, the College of God's Gift, at Dulwich.

The account with the Earl of Worcester's company has some interesting indications. One of the early entries is for a supper held when the arrangement with the company was entered into :

'Layd out for the company at the Mermayd, when we weare at our agrement the 21 of aguste 1602, toward our super, the sum of . . . . ix^{s}

The names of William Kempe and John Lowin, who subsequently became ornaments of the Shakespeare-Burbage association, recur in this account. It would seem likely that they went over to the king's (late chamberlain's) men at the Globe, when the queen's (late Worcester's) company left the Rose. In this year Henslowe tried to dispose of the lease of the Rose, as we learn from the following entry in his Diary (p. 235) :

'Memorandum, that the 25 of June, 1603, I talked with Mr. Pope, at the scryveners shope wher he liffe, consernynge the tackynge of the Lease of the Littell Roose, and he showed me a wrytynge betwext the parishe and hime seallfe, which was to pay twenty pownd a yeare Rent, and to bestowe a hundred marckes upon billdinge, which I sayd I wold rather pulle downe the playhowse then I wold do so,

and he beade me do, and sayd he gave me leave and wold beare me owt, for yt wasse in hime to do yt.'

Perhaps this is the source of the following note by Mr. Rendle :* 'Thomas Poope, a principal actor in Shakespeare's plays, appears to have had an agreement with the parish for the place, and to have paid a rent of £20 a year.' If so, the 'writing' spoken of in the above entry in the Diary must have belonged to the time before the estate came into Henslowe's hands; in which case Pope held of either Griffen or Withens, the previous assignees of the lease. How it was that in these circumstances Pope was also under agreement with the vestry is not readily explainable, unless we may suppose that the overlordship of the Bishops of Winchester in the Liberty had descended to the vestry.

The history of the Rose after 1603 is not at all clear, although it seems certain Henslowe discontinued the use of it as a theatre after this date. The building was used apparently for occasional exhibitions of the ruder kind—fighting and sword-play and puppets. The last notice of such is in 1620. The building does not figure in any maps after this date. The name still survives in Rose Alley, which marks the site once occupied by Henslowe's 'playhowsse.'

* Harrison, N. S. Soc., Part II., Appendix I., p. xv.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BEAR-GARDEN AND HOPE THEATRE.

THE 'Beare-howse,' situated near the 'Play-howse,' as shown in Norden's map of 1593, has all the appearance of a playhouse. Whether the building was actually identical with the 'Beare-bayting' amphitheatre shown by Aggas, and by Braun and Hogenberg, it is not possible to decide. Probably not, as these constructions were of a temporary nature, and the span of twenty years between these maps and Norden's admits of, if it does not imply, a rebuilding. But from the point of view of stage history it was a theatre—a place for sights and public amusement, in which it is even possible that dramatic entertainments took place. Subsequently it gave place to a playhouse, the Hope, which afterwards lapsed into a bear-garden.

In describing the Surrey side in 1598, Stow*

* 'Survey of London,' 1598, p. 331. The passage is unaltered in the 1603 edition : Thom's reprint, p. 151.

tells us that on the west bank—*i.e.*, west of the bridge, in contradistinction to the bank east of the bridge—'there be two bear-gardens, the old and new places, wherein be kept bears, bulls, and other beasts to be baited; as also mastiffs in several kennels nourished to bait them. These bears and other beasts are there baited in plots of ground, scaffolded about for the beholders to stand safe.' He does not mention Paris Garden, and it is impossible now to identify these places precisely; but the new bear-garden may safely be identified with the 'bear-howse' of Norden. This was the place distinguished by Taylor—see *ante*, *sub voce* 'Amphitheatres'—as the 'beare garden which was parcell of the possession of William Payne.'

At what date the bear-baiting amphitheatre, shown by Aggas, became the Bear-house of Norden's map, we are without the means of determining with certainty, but probability points to the period of the accident in 1583, when the old circus fell to pieces. The site—the garden in which both structures existed—was the same, so that under the name Bear-Garden we have a continuous history, which covers the whole subject—a history which for its beginning would take us to a date considerably earlier than that of the first London theatre, while, owing to its resuscitation at the Restoration, the Bear-Garden would link the two main periods of dramatic history, as it serves

to bridge the chasm between the circus and the playhouse.

Among the muniments at Dulwich College is preserved the letters patent of Queen Elizabeth, dated in June, 1573, granting to Raphe Bowes the office of master of 'our games, pastymes and sportes, that is to saie of all and everie our beares bulles and mastyve dogges,' in 'as large and ample manner and forme as Cuthbert Vaughan or Sir Richard Longe deceased.' It may be observed that this recital of ownership suffices to take us back to *post* 1550, the date adopted in a previous chapter as that of the origin of the amphitheatres in the Clink. Before this the king's 'bear-ward' was an officer of the royal household, having his office or headquarters in Paris Garden, where the animals were kept and nourished by the offal of the city of London, in accordance with the proclamation of Richard II. already cited (*supra*, p. 128). The office of royal bear-ward, or master of Paris Garden, became an office of privilege, held by royal letters patent, the profits of the public exhibitions being the rewards or perquisites, in respect of which the grant of the office was made as a favour, and the crown secured the maintenance of the royal game. With this process of evolution the establishment of the Bear-Garden and amphitheatres in the Clink Liberty has an intimate connection, partly of cause, partly of

effect. It seems to be easy of comprehension that the game associated with Paris Garden should continue to be spoken of in the same way after the exhibitions took place on an enlarged scale in the amphitheatres in the Clink.

The lesseeship and managership of the Bear-Garden had no necessary official connection with the mastership of the royal game; but the business connection was a vital one, because it was from the Bear-Garden that the chief emoluments of the office were drawn. The first lessee or manager of the 'Bear-house' was Morgan Pope, under the mastership of Bowes. This can be seen by the letters patent quoted above, that document being endorsed, 'Exemplified at the request of Morgan Pope, merchant, 18 Nov., a° 28' [1585].

Assuming the building of the 'Bear-house' after the destruction of the amphitheatre in 1583, we may conclude that in 1585 Morgan Pope became its first manager, or 'keeper,' as he was called. In the following year he became chargeable to the parish of St. Saviour, as seen in the following entry of the vestry minutes, given by Mr. Rendle: '1586. 28 November: Morgan Pope did agree to pay for tithes unto ye parish for the bear garden, and for the ground adjoining to the same where the dogs are, 6s. 8d. at Christmas next, and so on after at 6s. 8d. by the year.'*

* Harrison's 'Description,' etc., New Shakspere Society, Part II., Appendix I., p. xiv.

The efforts made by Henslowe and Alleyn in 1598 — incidentally referred to in the previous chapter—to obtain the office of master of the royal games was unsuccessful, and the patent passed from Bowes, to Dorington. Under Dorington, Jacob Meade, of whom we shall hear more presently, was 'keeper' of the royal beasts.

We can see in all this an analogy to the constitution of the acting companies; there was a devolution of privilege and a right of confiscation in reserve. By privilege courtiers had companies of players, who by performing in public places perfected themselves in their art, and defrayed the cost of their maintenance. The license they held was the badge of contrôl ; to deprive them of that was to deprive them of the right of playing. All were answerable, mediately or immediately, to the Crown. In the case of the baiting, the privilege was equally real, as the holder of the patent was able to make profit out of the keeper, who drew the receipts from public exhibitions, just as the master of the revels derived a share of profits from the playhouses. Eventually Henslowe and Alleyn obtained the patent of master, but before doing so they acted as keepers, in succession to Meade, under Dorington, and bitterly complained of the hard terms he made with them.*

* 'Dulwich Catalogue,' *passim*. Alleyn and Henslowe paid Dorington £10 a quarter for their commission to bait in public. See 'Catalogue,' p. 67.

In effect, the public supported the amusements of that day, but the principle of overlordship ran throughout the system, and the control exercised was so close as to be only feebly seen in that of the lord chamberlain at the present time.

Apart from the profits of the keepership and mastership of the game, Alleyn became owner of the Bear-Garden itself—the 'Bear-house' of Norden, that is to say. Without access to the notes of the late Mr. Rendle, it is not possible to check his conclusions step by step. But he states (*ante*, p. 140) that William Payne's place—*i.e.*, our 'Bear-house'—can be traced back into the possession of John Allen, until it came down to Edward Alleyn, and was sold by him at a large profit to Henslowe. This latter transaction appears in a general statement by Alleyn which is generally accessible:*

'What the Bear Garden cost me for my owne part in December 1594.

First to Mr. Burnabie - - - - -	200l
Then for the Patent - - - - -	250
Some is	450
I held itt 16 year and R. 160l per annum which is - - - - - - -	960
Sowld itt to my father Hinchloe in Februarie 1610 for - - - - - -	580l'

The receipts of Henslowe as partner in the

* Alleyn Papers, ed. Collier, for Shakespeare Society, pp. xiii., xvii.; and see 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 67, note.

mastership may be gathered from the following entry in his diary:*

Rd at the Bergarden this yeare 1608, begining at chrystmas holedayes, as foloweth:
Rd one mondaye, St Stevens daye - - iiij^{li}
Rd one tewesdaye, St. Johns daye - - vj^{li}
Rd one Wensdaye, being Shilldermas daye - iij^{li} xiij^{s}'

It appears to have been always a part of the entertainment of distinguished foreign visitors to show them the royal beasts, as well those kept in the Tower as the baiting animals. In the time of Henry VIII., the royal bear-ward probably gave performances of baiting in Paris Garden itself—the manor at that time being crown property—and the exhibition witnessed by the Duke of Nájera (discussed *ante*, p. 131) may have been held there. But the conclusion adopted by the present writer is, that after the extension of the civic jurisdiction over the borough of Southwark in 1550, the bull-baiting in the High Street, and the public bear-baiting in Paris Garden proper, were removed to the liberty of the Clink, and took place in the amphitheatres shown in our maps. It is argued in the chapter (*ante*) dealing with those places, that every mention of public performances of baiting between 1550 and 1593—whether alluding to Paris Garden or the Bankside—actually

* Henslowe's Diary, ed. Collier, for Shakespeare Society, p. 269.

refers to the amphitheatres in the Clink. A notice of the baiting in 1554 is given from the Diary of Henry Machyn (*ante*, p. 135). Another notice in the same record occurs under date 1559. Under date May 23, Machyn notes the arrival of ambassadors from France, and on the following day the diarist relates how they were brought from the Bishop of London's palace, where they were lodged, to the court, where there were grand doings for their honour and entertainment. Another entry in the Diary, on May 25, records that the ambassadors were brought to the court with music to dinner, for there was great cheer; 'and after dener,' to quote literally, 'to bear and bull baytyng, and the Quen's grace and the ambassadurs stod in the galere lokyng of the pastym tyll vj at night.' This exhibition probably took place at Whitehall. But on the following day the ambassadors went over to see the baiting on the Bankside. They went from the bishop's palace which was near St. Paul's, to Paul's Wharf, 'and toke barge, and so to Parys Garden, for ther was boyth bare and bull baytyng, and the capten, with a C. of the gard to kepe rowm for them to see the baytyng.'*

This mention of Paris Garden does not deter me from concluding that this entertainment of the

* Diary of Henry Machyn, 1550-1563. Camden Society (1848), pp. 197-198.

ambassadors took place in the amphitheatres shown so clearly by Ralph Aggas (see map, *ante*, p. 126). In his picture, a stately craft—probably the royal barge—is in the river not far from the amphitheatres, going westward. But it will be seen that the above notice from Machyn's Diary cannot warrantably be construed into a record of a visit by her majesty 'to Paris Gardens to see the baiting of bears and bulls,' although that is the way the record has been quoted heretofore.

In 1592 his Highness Frederick, Duke of Wirtemberg, Count Mümppelgart—the 'Cosen Garmombles' and 'Duke de Jamanie' of the 'Merry Wives of Windsor'—paid a visit to the court and realm of England, an account of which was published at Tubingen in 1602. The following notice of a baiting at the 'Bear-howse' of Norden's map is taken from a translation of that work:*

'On the 1st of September his Highness was shown in London the English dogs, of which there were about 120, all kept in the same enclosure, but each in a separate kennel.

'In order to gratify his Highness, and at his desire, two bears and a bull were baited; at such times you can perceive the breed and mettle of the dogs, for although they receive serious injuries from the bears, are caught by the horns of the bull, and tossed into the air so as frequently to fall down again upon the horns, they do not give in, [but fasten on the bull so firmly] that one is obliged to pull them back by the tails and force open their jaws. Four dogs at

* 'England as seen by Foreigners,' by W. B. Rye, pp. 45, 46.

once were set on the bull; they however could not gain any advantage over him, for he so artfully contrived to ward off their attacks that they could not well get at him; on the contrary, the bull served them very scurvily by striking and beating at them.'

In an account of a banquet and entertainment given by James I. to the Constable of Castile at Whitehall Palace on Sunday, August 19, 1604, after a ball, in which Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton, was twice the partner of the queen (Anne), we learn that the royal beasts had been brought over for the occasion: 'All then took their places at the windows of the room which looked out upon a square, where a platform was raised, and a vast crowd had assembled to see the king's bears fight with greyhounds. This afforded great amusement. Presently a bull, tied to the end of a rope, was fiercely baited by dogs. After this certain tumblers came, who danced upon a rope, and performed various feats of agility and skill on horseback.'*

It is significant of contemporary ideas upon the drama that a visitor in 1610 disposes of the theatres thus, in an enumeration of the sights of London: 'The theatres (*Theatra Comœdorum*) in which bears and bulls fight with dogs; also cock-fighting.'†

The bears which at this period used to be baited

* 'England as seen by Foreigners,' by W. B. Rye, pp. 123, 124.

† *Ibid.*, p. 133.

at the 'Beare-house,' 'Old Harry Hunks' and 'Sacarson,' are frequently alluded to in the literature of the time. Master Slender boasted that he had seen Sacarson loose, and derived no mean opinion of his own courage from that fact.* One of Sir John Davys's 'Epigrammes' was as follows :

'Publius, student at the common law,
Oft leaves his books, and for his recreation
To Paris Garden doth himself withdraw,
Where he is ravish't with such delectation
As down amongst the bears and dogs he goes ;
Where, whilst he skipping cries, "To Head ! To Head !"
His satin doublet and his velvet hose
Are all with spittle from above bespread ;
Then he is like his father's country hall
Stinking of dogges, and muted all with hawks.
And rightly too on him this filth doth fall
Which for such filthy sports his books forsakes,
Leaving old Plowden, Dyer, and Brooke alone,
To see old Harry Hunks and Sacarson.'†

In some lines by Henry Peacham, prefixed to Coryat's 'Crudities,' 1611, the following occurs :

'Hunks of the Beare-garden to be feared if he be nigh on.'

---

* 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' Act i., Scene 1. This play contains allusions to events which took place in 1592 ; but the date of its production is uncertain.

† The date of Davys's 'Epigrams' is not known. In Hazlitt's 'Handbook' it is placed between 1596 and 1599. Collier, in his 'Bibliographical Account,' under Marlowe (with whose translations of Ovid the 'Epigrams' were published), states reasons for believing that they were printed not long after Marlowe's death in 1593.

Another favourite bear was named 'Little Bess of Bromley.'* The proximity of the Rose and the Bear-Garden is thus alluded to in Dekker's Satiromastix, in 1602: 'Thou hadst a breath as sweet as the rose that grows by the Bear Garden' —in reference to the inevitable smell from the kennels.

On the accession of James, the patent of master of the royal game was confirmed to Dorington; but in the following year it passed to Sir William Steward, who, however, held it only from July to November, 1604, when it was assigned to Henslowe and Alleyne. The following draft of the patent shows the importance of the position which they had at last achieved, after six years of scheming and waiting:

'Patent from James I. to Philip Henslowe and Edw. Alleyn, of the "office of Cheefe Master, overseer and ruler of our beares, bulls and mastiffe dogges," in as full and ample manner as Sir William Steward, Sir John Darrington [Dorington], and Ralph Bownes, with power, for reasonable prices, "to take up and kepe for our service, pastyme and sporte any mastife dogge or dogges and mastife bitches, beares, bulls, and other meete and convenient for our said service and pastymes," to stay all mastiff dogs and bitches going beyond the seas

* Alleyn Papers, 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 72. At a later date (1638) Taylor the Water-Poet gives a list of 'Names of the Bulls and Bears at the Beare Garden'—four bulls and nineteen bears.

without special warrant, and to bait in any place at their discretion, no other being permitted to do the same without their license and appointment, the fee for the said office to be 10d. a day and 4d. for their deputy; Westminster, 24 Nov., a° 2 [1604]. Endorsed by Edw. Alleyn, "A draft off ye pattent."'*

The patent was not assigned without the payment of a good round sum of money:

'Acquittance from Sir William Steward, knt., to Phil. Henslowe and Edw. Alleyn, esquires, for 450*l.*, for the assignment of a patent of "the Mastership of his Maiesties games of Beeres, Bulls, and Dogges, and the ffees, proffites and appurtenaunce whatsoeuer to the same place or office belonginge"; 28 Nov., 2 Jas. I. [1604]. Signed "Williame Steuarte."'†

A fresh patent was executed in their favour in 1608.‡ As masters of the royal game, they had their office or headquarters in Paris Garden, where dogs were received and kept in readiness for the royal commands; the public exhibitions at the Bear Garden in the Clink Liberty being their own separate concern and speculation.§

* Collier, 'Memoirs of Edward Alleyn,' p. 72; and 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 68.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Date, November 24, 1608. See 'Dulwich Catalogue,' mun. 46, p. 239.

§ See a letter from Henslowe and Alleyne to Christopher Goffe, their deputy ('Dulwich Catalogue,' pp. 69, 70), in which they direct that dogs requisitioned in the country for the king's service should be sent 'up to our offic at pallass garden.'

We have seen that the history of the Rose closed with the year 1603; but Henslowe and Alleyn do not appear to have passively submitted to the success of the Globe. If it had snuffed out the Rose, there was no reason why the Bear-Garden should suffer. Accordingly, we find them in 1606 rebuilding the Bear-Garden.

'Contract of Peter Streete of London, carpenter, with Phil. Henslowe and Edw. Alleyn, of the parish of St. Saviour, Southwark, esquires, for 65*l.*, to pull down "so much of the tymber or carpenters worke of the foreside of the messuage or tenemente called the beare garden, next the river of Thames, in the parishe of St. Savior's aforesaide, as conteyneth in lengthe from outside to outside fyftye and sixe foote of assize and in bredth from outside to outside sixeteene foote of assize," and to rebuild the same with "good new sufficient and sounde tymber of oke"; 2 June, 4 Jas. I., 1606. Signed by a mark. On the back is an acquittance for 10*l.*, dat. 3 June, 1606; and notes of subsequent payments amounting to 40*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*, dat. 17 Sept., 1606—9 Jan., 1606 [7].'*

In the following year, 1607, there is a petition from Henslowe and Alleyn to James I., complaining of the high rate at which they were forced to buy their office from Sir William Steward, of the withdrawal of the license to bait 'one the Sondayes in the afternone after divine service, which was the cheffest meanes and benyfite to the place,' and of their loss of bears in baiting before himself and the King of Denmark, and praying for full liberty of

* 'Memoirs of Edward Alleyn,' p. 78; 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 69.

baiting, as in the time of Queen Elizabeth, with an addition of 2s. 8d. to their daily fee of 1s. 4d., and license to apprehend all vagrants travelling, contrary to the laws, with bulls and bears.*

The following notice of the baiting, from Dekker's 'Work for Armourers,' 1609, shows how wanton the sport had become :

'At length a blind bear was tied to a stake, and instead of baiting him with dogs, a company of creatures that had the shapes of men and faces of Christians (being either colliers, carters, or watermen), took the office of beadles upon them, and whipped Monsieur Hunks till the blood ran down his old shoulders.'

The keepers appear to have had power to demand bears and dogs from their owners in all parts of the country for the purpose of the king's games. Among notices showing this is the following :

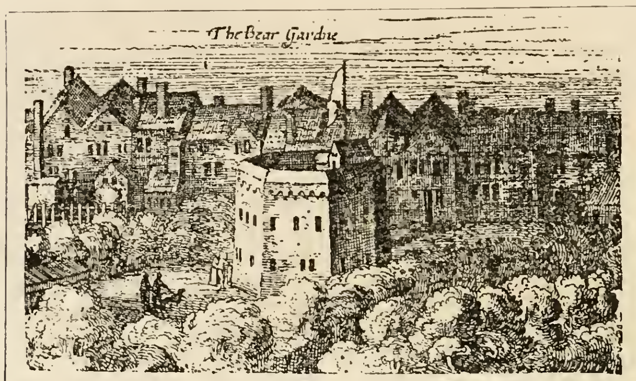
'Warrant from Philip Henslowe "one of the sewers of his highnes [the King's] chamber," and Edward Alleyn, "seruant to the high and mightie prince of Wales," joint masters of the King's game of beares, bulls, &c., by patent dated 24 Nov., 1608, commissioning Thomas Radford to act as their deputy to take up mastiff dogs, bears, and bulls for the King's service, and to bait in any place within his dominions. Dated 11 May, 9 Jas. I., 1611.'†

We now approach the time when the Bear-Garden became the Hope playhouse. In 1613 the

* 'Memoirs of Edward Alleyn,' p. 75 ; 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 70.

† 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 239.

Globe Theatre was burned down, and Henslowe proceeded to convert the Bear Garden (which he had purchased of Edward Alleyne in 1610) into a regular playhouse, doubtless with the object of profiting by the misfortune of his rivals. He associated himself with Jacob Meade, a waterman, and the two entered into an agreement with Gilbert



THE BEAR-GARDEN AND HOPE THEATRE.
(*From Visscher's View of London*, 1616.)

Katherens, carpenter, on August 20, 1613, by which Katherens engaged to convert the Bear-Garden 'game-place, or house where bulls and bears have been usually baited,' into a 'game-place or play-house,' by pulling down the old building and erecting a new one, 'convenient in all things both for players to play in, and for the game of bears and bulls to be baited in same.' The form, width, height, staircases, etc., were to be the same as the

Swan Theatre, on the Bankside: it was to have a tire house, and the stage was to be made in a frame and placed upon tressels, so that it could be removed when 'the game of bears and bulls' was to be exhibited. The heavens, or covering over the stage, was not to have any supports upon the stage, and on the lowermost story there were to be two boxes 'fit and decent for gentlemen to sit in.' The columns were to be turned, no fir was to be used in the lowest story, and the foundation was to be of brick, and to rise at least twelve inches from the ground. The bull-house and stable (tiled and lighted by a louvre or sky-light) were to be capable of holding six bulls and three horses.*

The following is a subsequent notice of this transaction:†

'Articles between Gilbert Katherens and John Browne, of St. Saviour's, Southwark, bricklayer, whereby the latter, for 80*l.*, covenants to make the brickwork of "one Game place or plaie house, a bull house and a stable neere or vppon the place whereon the Game place of the Beare garden now or latlie stoode," which the said Gilbert Katherens was under contract of 29th August to build for Philip Henslowe and Jacob Maide [Meade], the same to be "of as large a compasse and height as the plaie house called the Swan, in the libertie of Parris Garden, in the said parishe of St. Saviour, now ys." Dated 8th Sept., 1613. Signed by J. Browne. Witnesses, Philip Henslowe, Jacob Mede.'

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* Collier, 'Hist. Dram. Poet.,' iii. 99; printed *in extenso* by Malone, 'Shakespeare by Boswell,' iii. 343.

† 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 241.

The Globe was burnt, and before it could be rebuilt there was an excellent chance of gaining the public favour. The prospects of the Hope were bright, and a strong company came to perform at the theatre, under the joint management of Henslowe and Meade. The following is a reference to the agreement entered into :

> 'Articles on the parte and behalfe of Phillipp Henlowe's Esquier, and Jacob Meade, waterman, to be performed touchinge and concerninge the company of players which they have lately raised, the said company being represented by Nathan Feilde. No date [*circ.* 1613].'*

This Field was a manful fellow, who stood up for his profession when it was traduced, as may be seen in a letter among the State Papers.†

Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps printed this address from a contemporary transcript, inscribed 'Feild the Player's Letter to Mr. Sutton, Preacher att St. Mary Overs., 1616.' In the course of this Remonstrance Field wrote :

> 'I beseech you to understand that yow have bene of late pleased, and that many tymes from the Holy Hill of Sion, the pulpitt, a place sanctified and dedicated for the winning not discouraging of soules, have sent forth bitter breathinges against that poore calling it hath pleased the Lord to place me in, that my spirit is moved, the fire is kindled, and I must speake.'‡

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* 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 241.

† 'Cal. S. P., Dom.,' 1611–1618, p. 419.

‡ Halliwell's 'Illustrations of the Life of Shakespeare,' 1874, Pt. i., App. xxiii., p. 115.

The company was styled the Princess Elizabeth's Servants, and one of the plays acted by them was Ben Jonson's 'Bartholomew Fair,' which they performed at the Hope Theatre in 1614. The prologue of this play, entitled 'The Induction on the Stage,' is full of allusions to the new playhouse. It is spoken by the Stage-keeper, the Book-holder and a Scrivener. In the course of the stage-keeper's opening speech, he says: 'But for the whole play, will you ha' the truth on't? (I am looking, lest the poet hear me, or his man, master Broom, behind the arras) it is like to be a very conceited scurvy one in plain English.' And again, referring to the poet: 'He has (sir reverence) kick'd me three or four times about the tiring-house, I thank him, but for offering to put in with my experience. I'll be judg'd by you, gentlemen, now, but for one conceit of mine! would not a fine pump upon the stage ha' done well, for a property now? and a punk set under upon her head, with her stern upward, and ha' been sous'd by my witty young masters o' the Inns o' Court? What think you o' this for a shew, now? he will not hear o' this! I am an ass! I! and yet I kept the stage in master Tarleton's time, I thank my stars! Ho! an' that man had liv'd to have play'd in Bartholomew Fair, you should ha' seen him ha' come in, and ha' been cozened i' the cloth-quarter, so finely! And Adams, the

rogue, ha' leap'd and caper'd upon him, and ha' dealt his vermin about, as though they had cost him nothing. And then a substantial watch to ha' stol'n in upon 'em, and taken 'em away, with mistaking words, as the fashion is in the stage-practice.'

The whole of this speech is full of contemporary allusion, and in the portion quoted the allusions are of theatrical interest. The audience would understand the point of Tarlton's being cozened in the cloth-quarter of the fair, one of the famous Tarlton jests being 'How fiddlers fiddled away Tarlton's apparel.'* This jest relates how a 'cony-catcher' stole Tarlton's apparel while he was entertaining with muskadine two musicians who serenaded him at the Saba Tavern, in Gracious (*i.e.*, Gracechurch) Street. 'The next day this was noised abroad and one in mockage threw him in this theame, he playinge then at the Curtaine.' The theme is cast in doggerel verse, to which Tarlton replies in kind.

Another allusion is an obvious one to Shakespeare's 'Much Ado about Nothing'—'I am an ass! I!' referring to Dogberry, Act iv., Scene 2: 'O that he were here to write me down an ass! But, masters, remember that I am an ass: though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass.' The last sentence, about the 'watch

* 'Tarlton's Jests,' ed. Halliwell, p. 15.

taking 'em away with mistaking words,' puts the object of the allusions beyond doubt.

The Book-holder (*i.e.*, prompter) and the Scrivener enter, and the former says to the Stage-keeper: 'How now? What rare discourse are you fal'n upon? ha? ha' you found any familiars here, that you are so free? What's the business?' The Stage-keeper replies: 'Nothing, but the understanding gentlemen o' the ground here ask'd my judgment.'

This punning allusion to the people who stood in the yard or pit—the cheapest places—is one of many similar to be found in the theatrical literature of the time. Shakespeare's Hamlet, in his incomparable discourse to the players, exclaims, 'O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings!'

The Book-holder replies: 'Your judgment, rascal? for what? sweeping the stage? or gathering up the broken apples for the bears within?' This is so vivid that it almost takes us inside the playhouse. The speaker proceeds: 'Away, rogue! it's come to a fine degree in these spectacles, when such a youth' [he was probably an old man, as he kept the stage in Tarlton's time] as you pretend to a judgment. And yet he may, i' the most o' this matter, i' faith; for the author has writ it just to this meridian, and the scale of the grounded

judgments here, his playfellows in wit' [grounded judgments=groundlings]. 'Gentlemen, not for want of a prologue, but by way of a new one, I am sent out here, with a scrivener, and certain articles drawn out in haste between our author and you.'

The object in view in the composition of 'Bartholomew Fair' was clearly to suit the popular taste of the ordinary frequenters of the Bear-Garden. It is written in a satirical vein throughout. The subject of satire in the 'Induction' is the playhouse, playgoers and players; in the play itself the satire is mainly directed against the Puritans; and if offence were given in the 'Induction,' the playwright secured the sympathy of players and audience alike by the satire in the play. The Book-holder calls upon the Scrivener, who reads the articles of agreement, as follows:

'Articles of agreement indented between the spectators or Hearers at the Hope on the Bankside in the county of Surrey on the one party; and the author of "Bartholomew Fair," in the said place and county on the other party: the one and thirtieth day of October 1614, . . .

'*Imprimis*, It is covenanted and agreed, by and between the parties abovesaid, and the said spectators and hearers, as well the curious and envious as the favourable and judicious, as also the grounded judgments and understandings, do for themselves severally covenant and agree to remain in the places their money or friends have put them in, with patience, for the space of two hours and a half, and somewhat more. In which time the author promiseth to present them by us,

with a new sufficient play, called "Bartholomew Fair," merry, and as full of noise as sport [an allusion to the bear-baiting]: made to delight all and to offend none; provided they have either the wit or the honesty to think well of themselves.

'It is further agreed that every person here have his or their free-will of censure, to like or dislike at their own charge, the author having now departed with his right: it shall be lawful for any man to judge his six pen'worth, his twelve-pen'worth, so to his eighteen pence, two shillings, half a crown, to the value of his place; provided always his place get not above his wit. And if he pay for half a dozen, he may censure for all them too, so that he will undertake that they shall be silent. He shall put in for censures here as they do for lots at the lottery: marry, if he drop but six-pence at the door, and will censure a crownsworth, it is thought there is no conscience or justice in that.

'It is also agreed, that every man here exercise his own judgment, and not censure by contagion, or upon trust, from another's voice, or face, that sits by him, be he never so first in the commission of wit; as also, that he be fixt and settled in his censure, that what he approves or not approves today, he will do the same tomorrow; and if tomorrow, the next day, and so the next week (if need be:) and not to be brought about by any that sits on the bench with him, though they indite and arraign plays daily. . . .'

After referring to the characters that figure in the new play, the 'Induction' proceeds to glance at two other of Shakespeare's plays—the 'Winter's Tale' and the 'Tempest'—thus: 'If there be never a servant-monster i' the fair, . . . nor a nest of antiques, he is loth to make nature afraid in his plays, like those that beget tales, tempests, and such like drolleries, to mix his head with other men's

heels.' These plays of course belonged to the company at the Globe. There may have been some feeling of rivalry in the air, and the thought that the Hope might be the inheritor of the Globe's fame may have vaguely haunted the Lady Elizabeth's servants. This emulation is apparent in the scene of the puppet-play. There is some pleasantry directed at the 'Children,' the boy players, after the manner of Hamlet's allusions to the eyry of children :

'*Cokes.* In good time, sir, I would fain see 'em, I would be glad to drink with the young company ; which is the tiring-house ?

'*Lantern.* Troth, sir, our tiring-house is somewhat little ; we are but beginners yet, pray pardon us ; you cannot go upright in it.

'*Cokes.* No, not now my hat is off ? what would you have done with me, if you had had me feather and all, as I was once to-day ? ha' you none of your pretty impudent boys now, to bring stools, fill tobacco, fetch ale, and beg money, as they have at other houses ? let me see some o' your actors.

'*Little-wit.* Shew him 'em, shew him 'em. Master Lantern, this is a gentleman that is a favourer of the quality.

'*Justice Overdo.* I, the favouring of this licentious quality is the consumption of many a young gentleman ; a pernicious enormity.

'*Cokes.* What, do they live in baskets ?

[*He brings them out in a basket.*

'*Lantern.* They do lie in a basket, sir, they are o' the small players.

'*Cokes.* These be players minors indeed. Do you call these players ?

'*Lantern.* They are actors, sir, and as good as any, none

disprais'd, for dumb shows: indeed, I am the mouth of 'em all.

'*Cokes.* Thy mouth will hold 'em all. I think one taylor would go near to beat all this company with a hand bound behind him.

'*Little-wit.* I, and eat 'em all too, an they were in cake-bread.

'*Cokes.* I thank you for that, master Little-wit, a good jest! which is your Burbage now?

'*Lantern.* What mean you by that, sir?

'*Cokes.* Your best actor, your Field.'

What Burbage had been at the Globe perhaps Field might be at the Hope. The references to the small tiring-house are noteworthy, and may be compared with the Stage-keeper's words in the 'Induction,' to the effect that the poet had kicked him three or four times about the tiring-house. These satiric allusions may point to a deficiency in the green-room accommodation in the new theatre. The conclusion of the 'Induction' contains a direct reference to the Hope Theatre: 'The play shall presently begin. And though the Fair be not kept in the same region, that some here, perhaps, would have it; yet think, that therein the author hath observ'd a special decorum, the place being as dirty as Smithfield, and as stinking every whit.'

The allusion above to 'one taylor who would go near to beat all this company' (of players) 'with a hand bound behind him,' refers to John Taylor the Water-Poet, who shortly before had sustained the fiasco of his wit-combat with Fennor

at the Hope. The story of this absurd affair passed through the printing-presses of the time,* and it reveals an extraordinary scene at this theatre. The particulars are set forth in the preface to 'Taylor's Revenge, or the Rimer William Fennor, firkt, ferrited, and finely fetcht over the coales.'

'Bee it therefore knowne unto all men that I, Iohn Taylor Waterman did agree with William Fennor (who arrogantly and falsely entitles himselfe the Kings Majesties Riming Poet) to answer me at a triall of Wit, on the seuenth of October last 1614 on the Hope Stage on the Bankside, and the said Fennor receiued of mee ten shillings in earnest of his comming to meet me, whereupon I caused 1000 bills to be Printed, and diuulg'd my name 1000 wayes and more, giuing my Friends and diuers of my acquaintance notice of this Bear Garden banquet of dainty conceits; and when the day came that the Play should have been performed, the house being fill'd with a great Audience, who had all spent their monies extraordinarily: then this Companion for an Asse, ran away and left me for a Foole, amongst thousands of critical Censurers, where I was ill thought of by my friends, scorned by my foes, and in conclusion, in a greater puzzell then the blinde Beare in the midst of all her whip-broth: Besides the summe of twenty pounds in money I lost my reputation amongst many and gain'd disgrace in stead of my better expectations,' etc.

Does the sum of £20 represent the money returned at the doors, or does it include the printing? In his verses Taylor rhymes all the particulars, and indulges in unmeasured abuse of

* It also appears in the collected works of John Taylor the Water-Poet, folio, 1630, p. 142 *et seq.*

Fennor. He then describes the scene of the fiasco :

'The house was fil'd with Newters, Foes & Friends
And euery one their money frankly spends.
But when I saw the day away did fade,
And thy look'd-for appearance was not made,
I then stept out, their angers to appease,
But they all raging, like tempestuous seas:
Cry'd out, their expectations were defeated,
And how they all were cony-catched and cheated:
Some laught, some swore, some star'd and stamped and curst
And in confused humors all out-burst.
I (as I could) did stand the desp'rate shock,
And bid the brunt of many dang'rous knock.
For now the stinkards, in their irefull wraths
Bepelted me with Lome, with Stones, and Laths,
One madly sits like bottle-Ale, and hisses,
Another throwes a stone and 'cause he misses,
He yawnes and bawles, and cryes Away, away:
Another cryes out, *Iohn*, begin the Play.

* * * * *

One sweares and stormes, another laughs & smiles,
Another madly would pluck off the tiles.
Some runne to th' doore to get againe their coyne,
And some doe shift and some againe purloine.
One valiantly stept upon the Stage,
And would teare downe the hangings in his rage.

* * * * *

But I (to give the Audience some content)
Began to act what I before had meant:
And first I plaid a *maundering Roguish creature*,
(A part thou couldst have acted well by nature)
Which act did passe, and please, and fild their jawes
With wrinkled laughter, and with good applause.

Then came the players, and they play'd an act,
Which greatly from my action did detract.
For 'tis not possible for any one
To play against a company alone,
And such a company (I'll boldly say)
That better (nor the like) e'er play'd a Play.
In briefe, the Play my action did eclips,
And in a manner seal'd up both my lips.

* * * * *

Eu'n so seem'd I, amidst the guarded troope
Of gold-lac'd Actors. . . .
Twere lesser labour to blow downe Pauls-steeple
Than to appease, or please the raging people.
The play made me as sweet in their opinions
As Tripes well fry'd in Tarr, or Egges with Onions.
I like a beare unto the stake was tide
And what they said or did, I must abide.
A pox upon him for Rogue, sayes one,
And with that word he throwes at me a stone.
A second my estate dothe seeme to pitty
And saies my action's good, my speeches witty.
A third doth screw his chaps awry and mew,
His self conceited wisdome so to shew.'

Fennor wrote a reply to this attack, entitled 'Fennor's Defence, or I am your First Man. Wherein the Waterman John Taylor is dasht sowst and finally fallen into the Thames,'* in the course of which he narrates the following theatrical episode :

'And let me tell thee this to calme thy rage :
I challeng'd Kendall on the Fortune stage ;

* Duly included in the collected edition of Taylor's works !

And he did promise 'fore an Audience,
For to oppose me, note the accidence:
I set up Bills, the people throng'd apace,
With full intention to disgrace, or grace;
The house was full, the trumpets twice had sounded,
And though he came not, I was not confounded,
But stept upon the Stage, and told them this,
My adverse would not come: not one did hisse,
But flung me Theames: I then *extempore*
Did blot his name from out their memorie,
And pleas'd them all, in spight of one to braue me,
Witnesse the ringing Plaudits that they gave me.'

Fennor includes in his rhymes a mock epitaph on his antagonist, in which he says:

'O, had he still kept on the water
And never came upon Theáter,
He might have lived full merrily
And not have died so lowsily.
O 'twas that foolish, scurvie play,
At Hope that took his sence away.'

And Taylor, in his 'A Cast over Water,' etc., 1615, refers to Fennor's performance thus:

'Thou writst a hotch-potch of some forty lines
About my Play at Hope, and my designes,' etc.

Philip Henslowe died on or about January 9, 1615 [1616], and a fresh agreement was executed between the Hope company and Alleyn, as the surviving partner of Henslowe in his theatrical concerns. It is an interesting document, even in the following abridged form:

'Articles of Agreement between Edw. Alleyn, esq., and

Jacob Meade, on the one part, and William Rowley, Robert Pallant, Joseph Taylor, Robert Hamlett [Hamlen?], John Newton, Hugh Ottewell, William Backsted, Thomas Hobbes, Antony Smyth, and William Penn, on the other part, whereby, in discharge of a debt of 400*l.* due by the latter parties to Philip Henslowe, deceased, the said Edward Alleyn covenants to accept the sum of 200*l.*, the same to be paid by daily instalments of a fourth part of the receipts of the whole galleryes of the playe-howse comonly called the Hope . . . or in anye other howse private or publique wherein they shall playe, with the proviso that the said William Rowley and the rest shall be bound to observe all their former articles of agreement with Philip Henshlowe and Jacob Meade; 20 Mar., 1615[6]. Signed by William Rowley, Robert Pallant, etc., the names "Ottewell" and "Backsted" in the body of the document being written "Attwell" and "Barksted." Witnesses, Rob. Daborne, Thos. Foster, Edw. Knight.*

But the prospect of a successful management was destroyed by the stormy and headstrong Meade:

'The players of Phil. Henslowe's company to their "worthy and much respected ffrend Mr. Allen," explaining that they have been driven away from [the Hope on] "the bankes side" by Meade, and requesting an advance of 40*l.* on the security of "a great summe of monie," which they are to receive from the Court [1616?]. Signed by William Rowley, Robert Pallant, Joseph Taylor, John Newton, Robert Hamlen, Hugh Attwell, and Anthony Smyth, the signatures being in this order, except that Pallant's name is on a level with that of Rowley, to the left.'†

Not only did Meade quarrel with the company of players at the Hope, but he fell into a dispute

* 'Mem. of Edw. Alleyn,' p. 127; 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 50.
† Collier, 'Alleyn Papers,' p. 86; 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 51.

with Alleyn also, the story of which may be gathered from the Alleyn Papers in Dulwich College. There are petitions and counter-petitions to the lord chamberlain, and a statement in the hand of Edward Alleyn of matters in dispute between himself and Jacob Meade relative to the leases of the Bear Garden, and 'Ye stock of bears, bulls, doggs, and other things apertayning to ye personell estate of Philip Henslowe nott by hym bequeathed.' The dispute was not finally settled till September 22, 1619.*

It is easily comprehensible why Meade the waterman should have felt moved to join Henslowe in the Hope enterprise. It was to the interest of the watermen generally to increase the attractions of the Bankside; and Meade may have had a profitable understanding with the fellows of his craft on this score. The Company of Watermen, in 1613, when the Globe was destroyed, fearful lest their business should suffer, petitioned his majesty 'that the players might not be permitted to have a playhouse in London or in Middlesex, within four miles of the city on that side of the Thames.' Subsequently Taylor the Water-Poet published a pamphlet justifying this petition, under the title, 'True Cause of the Watermen's Suit concerning Players, and the Reasons that their playing on London Side is

* 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 81.

their [*i.e.*, Watermen's] extreme Hindrance,' in which he states that the theatres on the Bankside in Southwark were once so numerous, and the custom of going thither by water so general, that many thousand watermen were supported by it.

'Afterwards (says Taylor), the players began to play on the Bankside, and to leave playing in London and Middlesex for the most part. Then there went such great concourse of people by water that the small number of watermen remaining at home (the majority being employed in the Spanish war) were not able to carry them, by reason of the court, the tearms, the players, and other employments. So that we were inforced and encouraged, hopeing that this golden stirring would have lasted ever, to take and entertaine men and boyes, which boyes are grown men, and keepers of houses; so that the number of watermen, and those that live and are maintained by them, and by the only labour of the oare and scull, betwixt the bridge of Windsor and Gravesend, cannot be fewer than forty thousand: the cause of the greater halfe of which multitude hath bene the players playing on the Bank-side; for I have known three companies, besides the bear-baiting, at once there; to wit, the Globe, the Rose, and the Swan. . . .

'And now it hath pleased God in this peaceful time that there is no employment at the sea, as it hath bene accustomed, so that all those great numbers of men remaines at home: and the players have all (except the king's men) left their usual residency on the Bankside, and doe play in Middlesex far remote from the Thames; so that every day in the weeke they do draw unto them three or four thousand people, that were used to spend their monies by water. . . .

'His majesties players did exhibit a petition against us, in which they said that our suit was unreasonable, and that we might as justly remove the Exchange, the walkes in Paules, or Moorfields, to the Bankside, for our profits, as to confine them.'

Taylor shows in his pamphlet that he energetically followed up his suit in behalf of his fellow-watermen, the utmost satisfaction obtainable being an oracle from Sir Francis Bacon, 'that so far forth as the public weal was to be regarded before pastimes, or a serviceable decaying multitude before a handful of particular men, or profit before pleasure, so far was our suit to be preferred before theirs' On this the players appealed to the lord chamberlain. A day was appointed for hearing the case before commissioners, but before the day arrived the chief commissioner, Sir Julius Cæsar, was made Master of the Rolls, and the commission was dissolved. The affair appears never to have been decided.

'Some (says Taylor) have reported that I took bribes of the players to let the suit fall, and to that purpose I had a supper of them, at the Cardinal's Hat on the Bankside.'*

The amount of hire for the Thames boats was regulated:

'"Prices of Fares and Passages to be paide to Watermen," printed by John Cawood, "Prynter to the Quene's Majestie:"

'Item, that no whyrymanne with a pare of ores take for his fare from Paules wharfe, Quene hithe, Parishe Garden, or the Blacke Fryers to Westminster or White hal or lyke distaunce to and fro above iij*d*.'

* 'Works of Taylor the Water-Poet,' p. 171, ed. 1633. Malone, 'Shakespeare by Boswell,' iii. 149. See also 'Early Prose and Poetical Works of Taylor the Water-Poet,' London, 1888, p. 203, *et seq.*

In his pamphlet, Taylor confesses that there were many rude, uncivil fellows among the company of watermen, but quaintly argues, 'that all men being vicious, by consequence most vice must be in the greatest companies, but watermen are the greatest company, therefore most abuses must reign among watermen.' He defines the waterman's duty thus: 'To carry the King's liege people carefully and to land them safely, to take his due thankfully without murmuring or doing injury,' which if he do, that waterman may feed upon his labours with a better conscience, and sleep with a quieter spirit, 'than many of our fur-gowned money-mongers that are accounted good commonwealths men.' Taylor makes large admissions, however, and it may be permitted to doubt whether the London cabmen of to-day be not on the whole preferable. 'If a railing knave,' says he, 'do chance to abuse his fare, either in words or deeds, as indeed we have too many such,' why should the whole company be 'scandalized for it'?*

* The watermen are freely satirized in 'Bartholomew Fair' in the puppet-play. 'Tell us, sculler, are you paid?'—'Yes, Goodman Hogrubber o' Pickthatch.'—'How, Hogrubber o' Pickthatch?'—'I, Hogrubber o' Pickthatch. Take you that.' [*The Puppet strikes him over the pate.*] . . . . 'You are knavishly loaden, sculler, take heed where you go.'—'Knave i' your face, goodman rogue.'—'He said knave i' your face, friend.'—'I, sir, I heard him. But there's no talking to these watermen, they will ha' the last word.'

It has frequently been a subject for marvel how Shakespeare obtained that knowledge of sea-life which he displays in 'The Tempest,' and which comes out in such passages as Henry IV.'s invocation to Sleep.

The majority, if not all, of these watermen had been sailors. In his Petitions to the Council, Taylor refers to their services abroad 'in Queen Elizabeth's reign of famous memory'; in the expedition to Portugal with the 'never-to-be-forgotten Earl of Essex'; in the Armada invasion; in the voyages of Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins, Sir Martin Frobisher, and others; in Cadiz action, the Island voyage, in Ireland, in the Low Countries, and in the narrow seas. These were the men who from Whitehall to the Placentia at Greenwich plied their trade as watermen, mixing freely with the sailors at the mouth of the Thames; and their conversations, anecdotes, and experiences passed through the alembic of Shakespeare's imagination. We owe much to these old boatmen.

The Globe was rebuilt in 1614, and his Majesty's players resumed their career of dramatic success in the new playhouse, while the theatrical aspirations at the Hope died away, till the theatre became once more altogether a bear-garden. So it is styled in Visscher's map of 1616, and Collier furnishes a reference to it from Swetnam's 'Arraignment of Women,' 1617: 'If you meane to see the

beare-baiting of women, then trudge to this Bear-Garden apace and get in betimes and view every room where thou mayst best sit for thy own pleasure.' Owing to its having been built as a playhouse, the place offered accommodation for visitors of the superior class, and the Bear-Garden became quite a fashionable resort.

Among the Alleyn Papers there is a curious advertisement of the Bear-Garden, *temp.* James I., written in a large, coarse hand, being probably the original placard exhibited at the entrance of the building. It is as follows :

'Tomorrowe beinge Thursdaie shalbe seen at the Beargardin on the banckside a greate mach plaid by the gamsters of Essex, who hath chalenged all comers whatsoever to plaie v dogges at the single beare for v pounds, and also to wearie a bull dead at the stake ; and for your better content shall have plasent sport with the horse and ape and whiping of the blind beare. Vivat Rex !'*

In Richard Brome's comedy 'The Antipodes' (1638) there is a reference to dancing at the Bear-Garden:

'No, nor you, Sir, in
That action of the legs, I told you of,
Your singles and your doubles—look you—thus—
Like one of the Dancing Masters o' the Bear Garden.'

In the same play an old woman reads out an advertisement similar to the original quoted above,

* 'Dulwich Catalogue,' p. 83; Lysons, 'Environs of London,' i. 91.

whereupon a maid says to her: 'Let me entreat you. Forbear such beastly pastimes: they're satanical;' and the woman replies: 'Take heed, child, what you say: 'tis the King's game.'

Visitations of the plague continued to harass the players. On September 11, 1640, the Council issued an order to the effect that the infection having so much increased in and about London, it is very dangerous to permit any concourse of people to assemble at playhouses or in Paris Garden. It was therefore ordered that the players, both their Majesty's servants and others, as also the keepers of Paris Garden, be commanded to shut up their playhouses, and not to play in them, or any other place within the city or suburbs of London, till the infection cease, and further order be given by the Board.*

In 1642 the impending doom of the Bear-Garden appeared in a Petition presented to the House of Commons against the baiting, and it was ordered that 'the masters of the Bear-Garden, and all other persons who have interest there, be enjoined and required by this House, that for the future they do not permit to be used the game of bear-baiting in these times of great destraction, until this House do give further order therein.'†

The building was figured by Hollar in his

* Cal. S. P., Dom., 1640-41, p. 46.

† Collier, 'Hist. Dram. Poet.,' iii. 100.

view of London in 1647, and a comparison with the representation in Visscher's view of 1616 suggests that it may have undergone reconstruction meanwhile. But Hollar's delineation of the Globe shows a similar variation from Visscher, and we have no record of a third building of the Globe. In Hollar's view there is no sign of anything like these buildings westward in Paris Garden proper, but the perspective makes the buildings crowded there. Ben Jonson, in his 'Execration upon Vulcan,' has a reference to the burning of the Globe in 1613, which supports the view here taken, viz., that the ground in which the Bear Garden stood was colloquially known as Paris Garden :

> 'But others fell, with that conceit, by the ears,
> And cried it was a threat'ning to the bears
> And that accursed ground, the Paris Garden.'*

In John Taylor's 'Bull, Beare, and Horse,' etc. (1638), occurs the line :† 'At Beare Garden, a sweet Rotuntious Colledge;' and it will be observed that Hollar shows a round building. Elsewhere, in the same rhyming performance, Taylor has the following:

> 'And that we have obtained againe the game
> Our Paris Garden Flag proclaimes the same.'

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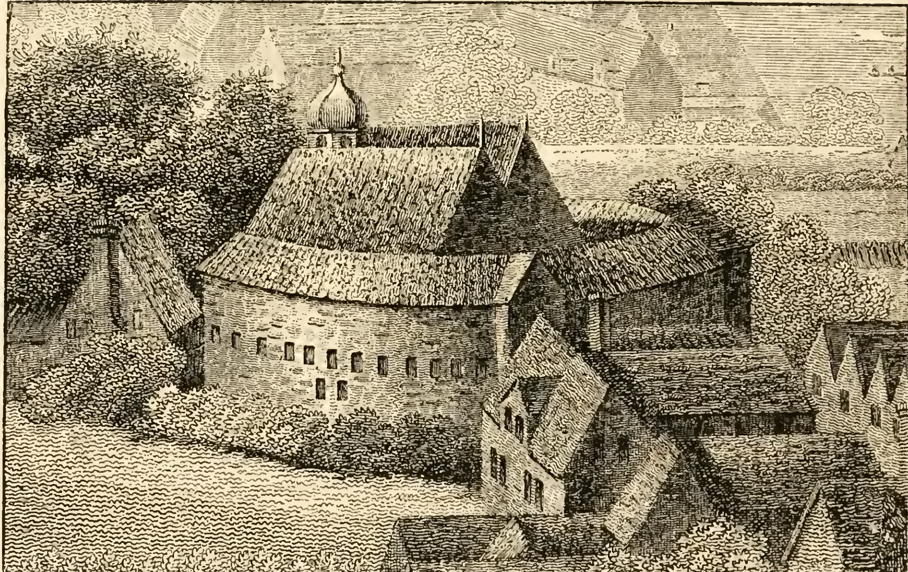
* 'Underwoods': Miscell. Poems, lxi., Gifford's edition of Works, p. 708.

† See his works, Spenser Society, in 5 vols., 1870.



THE HOPE IN 1647.

This seems to be conclusive: 'Paris Garden' here clearly referred to the Hope. The four succeeding lines may be quoted for the sake of what they indicate:

> 'Our Bears and Bulls and Dogs in former state
> The Streets of London do perambulate,
> And honest sport and lawfull merriment
> Shall thrice a week be shew'd to give content.'

The end of the Hope is thus described in Howes' MS. continuation of Stow's 'Survey,' quoted by Cunningham in his 'Handbook of London' (1850):

> 'The Hope on the Bankside, in Southwarke, commonly called the Beare Garden, a playhouse for stage-playes on Mondayes, Wednesdayes, Fridayes, and Saterdayes; and for the Baiting of the Beares on Tuesdayes and Thursdayes, the stage being made to take up and downe when they please. It was built in the year 1610, and now pulled downe to make tennementes by Thomas Walker, a petticoate maker in Cannon Streete, on Tuesday, the 25 day of March, 1656. Seven of Mr. Godfries beares, by the command of Thomas Pride, then hie Sheriefe of Surry, were then shot to death, on Saterday, the 9 day of February, 1655, by a Company of Souldiers.'

In Newcourt's map of London, 1658, the Bear Garden is shown, but no other building of the kind is visible. The Globe is gone, the Swan is gone, and there is no sign of a circus in Paris Garden. At the Restoration the royal game was revived, and in the Diaries of Pepys and Evelyn there are several allusions to it, notably those of

Pepys under the following dates: August 14, 1666; May 27, 1667; September 9, 1667; April 12, 1669.

Among the corporation records there is a letter, under date September 29, 1664, from the Earl of Manchester to the lord mayor and court of aldermen, directing that the ancient provision for feeding the dogs and bears should be revived:

'He had been informed by the master of His Majesty's Game of Bears and Bulls and others, that the Butchers' Company had formerly caused all their offal in Eastcheap and Newgate Market to be conveyed by the beadle of that Company unto two barrow houses, conveniently placed on the river side, for the provision and feeding of the King's Game of Bears, which custom had been interrupted in the late troubles when the Bears were killed. His Majesty's game being now removed to the usual place on the Bankside, by Order of the Council, he recommended the Court of Aldermen to direct the master and wardens of the Butchers' Company to have their offal conveyed as formerly for the feeding of the bears, etc.'*

Cunningham, in his 'Handbook' (1850), says: 'Among the Additional MSS. in the British Museum [No. 5,750] is a warrant of Lord Arlington's, dated March 28, 1676, for payment of 10*l.* "to James Davies Esq. master of his Majesty's Bears, Bulls, and Dogs, for making ready the roomes at the Bear Garden and Bayteing of the Beares before the Spanish Ambassador the 7 January last 1675."'

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 478.

In his 'Annals' Stow speaks of 'the Bear Garden commonly called Paris Garden'; and as late as 1681 we find the following reference: 'Paris Garden is the place on the Thames Bank-side at London where the Bears are kept and baited; and was anciently so called from Robert de Paris,' etc.* Whence we see that the inexactitude of nomenclature in Stow's time had resulted in actual confusion before the end of the seventeenth century.

Mr. Rendle quotes an advertisement from the *Loyal Protestant*, 1682, 'at the Hope on the Bankside being his Majesty's Bear Garden,' etc. But unless the king had purchased the property, this description would not be correct. Perhaps the king esteemed himself rightful owner of the Clink, as we have seen his grandfather disputed with the bishop as to the title of property within the liberty.

The last reference to the Hope shows that it had declined to the point of extinction:

'There is now made at the Bear Garden glass-house, on the Bankside, crown window-glass, much exceeding French glass in all its qualifications, which may be squared into all sizes of sashes for windows and other uses, and may be had at most glaziers in London.'†

* 'Glossographia,' by T. Blount, 5th edition, 1681, p. 473.

† Advertisement from the *Gazette*, June 18, 1691, quoted in *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1818.

THE SURREY SIDE, 1745-50.

Owing to the late survival of the Bear-Garden on the Bankside, the name has flourished in the nomenclature of the district. Not far off was the Dancing Bear's Inn,* where the Commissioners sat in reference to the case of disputed title in the time of James I. ; and where Taylor made those depositions which have proved so helpful in clearing up the mystery as to the amphitheatres and bear-gardens. Another inn was the Blue Beare, abutting on the Thames not far off ; and at a later date Mr. Rendle notes 'Bear-Garden Square,' 'Bear-Garden Foundry,' 'Bear-Garden Stairs,' and 'Bear-Garden Wharf'—places that Dr. Johnson could have heard of when he went on his visits to the Thrales in the neighbourhood. In Rocque's map (*see* section above) the Bear-Garden is marked—a lane running from the Bankside into Maiden Lane, with two bulgings, where stood the two bear-gardens, the old and the new, attested by Taylor, the Water-Poet, in 1621. The spot remains almost the same at the present day. Maiden Lane has become New Park Street, but the old lane still leads from the Bankside ; it is called Bear Gardens, and in it the more southerly of the spaces shown by Rocque still exists, with a public-house in it called the White Bear. In John Taylor's list of the animals at the Bear Garden in 1638 two white bears are included.

* Rendle, in *Walford's Antiquarian*, vol. viii., p. 58.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARIS GARDEN AND THE SWAN.

'But now (to make an end) must be explain'd
How it the name of Paris Garden gain'd :
The name it was from a Royall Boy
(Brave Illions fire-brand, wracke and sacke of Troy).
Paris (King Priam's son), a sucking child,
Was throwne away into the woods so wilde—
There that young Prince was cast to live or perish,
And there a Bear with sucke the babe did cherish ;
And as a rare memoriall of the same
From Paris, Paris Garden hath the name.'

JOHN TAYLOR, the Water-Poet, 'Bull, Beare and Horse,' etc., London, 1638.

THERE can be little doubt that research has placed at our disposal more exact particulars as to the ownership and legal position of Paris Garden than were generally known to the frequenters of that resort of sport and pastime in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Among the city records and elsewhere the pleasure-ground on the south side of the river is vaguely spoken of as

'Paris Gardens.' We find, too, '*Parish* Garden' almost as frequently as 'Paris Garden' or 'Gardens'; and the fantastic origin of the name given in the above lines by John Taylor, the Water-Poet, may have been a playful allusion to what was acknowledged to be a mystery in his time. If this is the case, it is evident that the exactitude arrived at by latter-day research might easily mislead us as to what was connoted by allusions to the locality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The origin of the name Paris Garden, as furnished in Blount's 'Glossographia,' 1685, has been given (*ante*, pp. 128, 242). A plan of the manor of Old Paris Garden, from a survey made in 1627, was communicated to the Society of Antiquaries by the late W. H. Overall, F.S.A., along with some notes on the manor, which are concise and to the point.* 'I find it enjoyed,' he says, 'all manorial rights at a very early period, Courts Baron and Leet being held. In 1113 Robert Marmion gave to the Abbey of Bermondsey an hide of land, called Withiflete, or Widflete, with a mill and other appurtenances in Southwark, Lambeth, Kennington, and Newington. This estate included Paris Gardens, for we find that the Knights Templars held of the Abbey [of Bermondsey] the mills of Widflete, with a certain garden called Paris Garden.'

* *Proceedings, Soc. Antiq.*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 195.

Mr. Rendle states* that the Templars constituted part of Paris Garden as a chapelry, the people crossing the Thames in a barge to worship at the Temple Church until 'the barge was drowned.' It may be remarked on this that Chapel Hall (or Copt Hall) formed part of the manor of Paris Garden. Does this furnish us with the meaning of *Parish* Garden? Probably it does, for elsewhere Mr. Rendle remarks: 'In all the earlier notices I have seen it is Parish Garden; afterwards it is indifferently Parish Garden and Paris Garden.'†

Mr. Overall's next note is that the property was taken from the Knights Templars by Edward II. in 1313, who then granted it to William de Montacute by the name of the manor of Wychyflet, with the mills, etc.

Next in date comes the ordinance by Richard II., in 1392, that the butchers of London are to erect a house on the other side of the river, near the house of Robert de Paris, for the disposal of the city's offal and garbage, which we may conclude was the origin of baiting sports on the Bankside. But it is important to note that Blount, in his citation of this ordinance from the Close Rolls, was pleased to render 'Domum Roberti de Parys' in the sense of house *and garden*, although no

* *Notes and Queries*, 7th series, iii., p. 241 (March 26, 1887).
† *Ibid.*, p. 443 (June 4, 1887).

mention is made of a garden in the roll he quoted. Thus we see that this oft-quoted authority does not, after all, give us the origin of the name Paris Garden, although it does furnish the origin of the baiting.

The manor was named Withiflete, or Widflete, spelt also Wychyflet, as we have seen above ; and in 1625 it was called in the official survey the manor of Old Paris Garden. Let us glance at the intervening period, and see if the few facts suggest anything as to the change in name. Mr. Rendle notes as follows : 'In 1433 John Duke of Bedford became "firmarius" of a certain privileged place, "vocatum Parish Gardyn," for which privileged place he made statutes and ordinances, set out more particularly in Dugdale (vol. vi., ed. 1830). In 1434 it is "molendina de Wideflete cum Gardino vocato Parish-Gardin."'* In a previous note,† Mr. Rendle, after stating that the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem succeeded the Knights Templars as owners of the manor, remarks that under the Duke of Bedford as 'firmarius' the district became a sort of sanctuary or privileged place for any, even debtors, felons, and misdemeanants, so long as they kept the ordinances made by the Duke of Bedford.

Hence we see that, in the reign of Henry VI.,

* *Notes and Queries*, 7th series, iii., p. 443.

† *Ibid.*, p. 241 (March 26, 1887).

Paris Garden, or the western portion of Bankside, was a privileged liberty under the government of the famous Duke of Bedford, as the eastern portion, or the Clink, was a privileged liberty under the government of the Bishop of Winchester.

Another concise note from Mr. Overall's communication brings us into the era of the playhouses. Under Henry VIII. the Knights Hospitallers were deprived, and the king settled the manor as a dower upon Queen Jane Seymour. 'It remained in the crown until July 10, 1578, when Queen Elizabeth exchanged it with Lord Hunsdon, who then granted it to Thomas Cure, the queen's saddler.'* The lordship is thus described: 'The manor-house within the mote, the gate-house, four pastures, one of which is called the Chapel Hall (or Copt Hall), with the rent of the free and copyhold tenants, amounting annually to £8 7s. 8d.' Cure conveyed it to Francis Langley, citizen and draper, October 1, 1589.

Mr. Rendle was of opinion that the name was properly Parish Garden, however it may have become confused into Paris Garden, and I agree with him.† But it also seems to me that the name

* Founder of the almshouses, and the subject of the epitaph in St. Saviour's Church.

† It is called *Parish* Garden in Robert Crowley's 'Vnlawfull Practises of Prelates,' etc., ab. 1584. See Crowley's select works, ed. J. M. Cowper, Early English Text Society, 1872.

lost all particular significance, and was used to describe the locality generally ; that the line of demarcation between the Winchester liberty and Parish Garden was lost sight of ; and that the open ground, made up of gardens and trees, visible in the maps, at the back of the houses fringing the south side of the Thames, became colloquially known as Parish or Paris Garden or Gardens. This, it seems to me, is the true explanation of the alternative phrasing 'Bear Garden, commonly called Paris Garden,' which we meet in Stow, and John Taylor, and others, and of the absence from all the maps of any amphitheatre in Paris Garden proper.

Mr. Wheatley, in that splendid monument of combined industry, 'London Past and Present,' 1891, founded on Peter Cunningham's 'Handbook,' reproduces Cunningham's section with its heading, 'Paris Garden Theatre,' described as 'a circus in the manor of Paris Garden, in Southwark, erected for bull and bear baiting as early as 17 Henry VIII.,' etc., on the authority of the Northumberland Household Book (which we examined and found wanting in our chapter on the Amphitheatres), and giving various particulars which our examination of the evidence has resulted in bestowing upon the Bear-Garden or Hope in the Winchester Liberty. Without an exhaustive analysis of the evidence, it was certainly wise to leave the point as Cunningham left it,

especially as the various communications by Mr. Rendle were in agreement with this. But in a future edition of his valuable work, which I hope may be called for while Mr. Wheatley is yet in the flesh, it is probable that this detail may receive some modification at his hands, for it seems to be pretty clear that the amphitheatre in Paris Garden, not shown in any of the maps, not clearly testified by any evidence, is a 'Mrs. Harris'; and in the words of the immortal Betsy, 'I don't believe there's no sich' thing. Mr. Rendle says: 'Bear Lane, Bear Court, not far from Blackfriars Bridge, would be the old site of circles dedicated to sports in Paris Garden.' But these names may have come from the houses for provisioning the royal beasts, and the headquarters of the master of the royal game, which Henslowe and Alleyn referred to as their office in Pallas (? = Paris) Garden (see *ante*, p. 213).* I feel persuaded that we may trust the unanimity of the maps, and conclude that there was no amphitheatre in Paris Garden after 1550. There may have been some exhibitions of baiting; indeed, in the manor map of 1627 there is a slight indication of a round formation, which is probably meant for flower-beds or a garden laid out, but possibly might point to some

* If not a mis-spelling, there is another possible explanation of the word 'Pallas,' viz., that it was derived from the palace of the Bishops of Winchester on the Bankside.

arrangement for baiting sports. But the Bear-Garden was in the Clink, where it had a continuous existence from the time of Aggas till after the Restoration.

If we may suppose the original meaning of Parish Garden to have had reference to the religious establishment of the Knights Templars across the river, that it was the garden which served the domestic needs of the establishment, and the parish or cure of the Templars, we can understand that after the Reformation the name might lose its sense in sympathy with the pleasure-making associations of the neighbourhood, and by dropping the final letter attain a fine suggestion of adventure and frolic as Paris Gardens. Again, after the Reformation the manor became included in the parish of St. Saviour's ; and before this modification in the name could take place, it is likely that the name Parish Garden became extended generally to the open ground eastward, in the liberty of the Bishop of Winchester, where the amphitheatres and play-houses subsequently grew up. It is perhaps note-worthy in this connection that, in the survey of the manor of Paris Garden, 1625-27, it is called 'the manor of *Old* Paris Garden.'

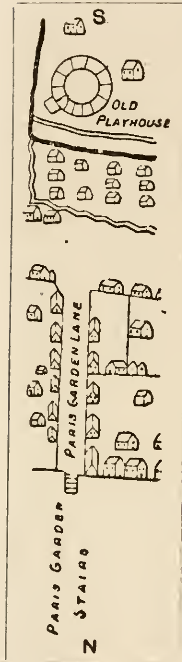
We have seen above that the manor became the property of Francis Langley in 1589. A piquant interest in this man is suggested by the fact that, although he was an eminent citizen, holding office

under the corporation, he became the third builder of Elizabethan playhouses known to us. We discover in the city archives that he was well introduced at court. In 1582 the lords of the council wrote to the lord mayor and aldermen recommending him to the office of one of the alnagers and searchers of cloth ; and a few days later Sir Francis Walsingham—to whom the players were much indebted for frequent acts of kindness, encouragement, and support — backed up the general recommendation of my lords by a special and personal recommendation from himself.* This favour, although it helped Langley to acquire the coveted office, did not avail him a few years later, when, having become possessed of Parish Garden manor, he set about building a playhouse on his property. On November 3, 1594, the lord mayor addressed a letter to the lord treasurer, informing him that Francis Langley, one of the alnagers for the sealing of cloth, intended to erect a new stage or theatre on the Bankside, and praying that the same might be prevented on account of the evils arising therefrom.† The project may have been delayed somewhat, but it was carried out. This new theatre was the Swan. We do not know definitely when it was completed and opened to the public.

The prospects of the speculation were un-

* 'Remembrancia,' p. 277. † *Ibid.*, pp. 353, 354.

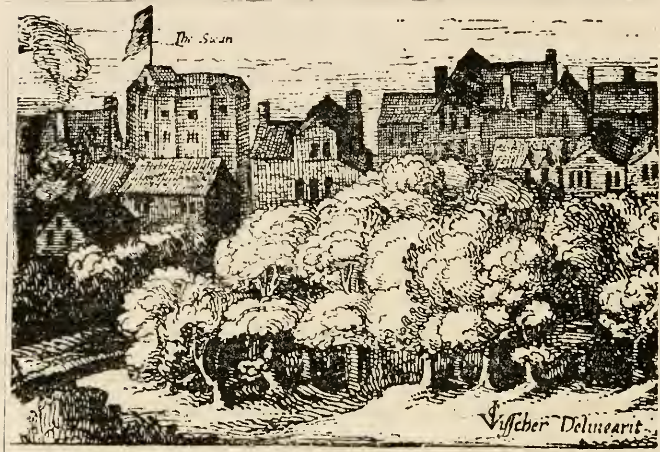
doubtedly good. The numerous landing-stages or stairs all along the river-bank, from old Bargehouse Stairs, at the western limit of Paris Garden manor, to the dock near St. Mary Overy's, towards the bridge, attest the fondness of the Elizabethans for the diversions of the gardens on the Bankside. In summer especially, on fine days, the succession of boats coming across the water from all points of the town, the bustle of the landing-stairs, the gaiety of parties of pleasure-seekers mingled with loud disputes with the scullers, afforded an animated scene in the life of by-gone days, which it is extremely pleasant to recall. On the bank of Paris Garden manor itself there were landing-stairs at distances of about every fifty yards — Bargehouse Stairs, Bull Stairs, Marigold Stairs, Parish Garden Stairs, at the end of Parish Garden Lane, and Falcon Stairs, near the famous Falcon Inn. The visitors were not always bound for the pleasures of the Bankside ; sometimes their errand was some business in the villages or towns within walking distance in Surrey ; and if on pleasure bent, they would frequently, especially in the long



Manor Map, 1627.

summer days, leave the attractions of Paris Gardens behind them, and pass on into St. George's Fields, where they could hear the larks singing, see the cattle browsing, buy fruit and milk at farmhouses near, and picnic on the grass. There must often have been quite a stream of pleasure-makers passing up Paris Garden Lane from the stairs and onward by the road, near which Langley built his Swan Theatre, into the fields beyond. If the pole with its flag were hoisted to show that a play was toward at the theatre, many would turn aside to witness it ; or so, at least, Langley might reasonably have anticipated. As the western end of the bank was so popular as a landing-place, he may also have calculated that many would visit his playhouse instead of turning eastward to look at the pike in their ponds, or to see the baiting at the Bear-house, or to visit the Rose Theatre. All that we know of the Bankside in Elizabeth's time tends to show that it became ever increasingly popular as a pleasure-resort ; and as its star waxed, that of the northern playground at Finsbury waned. The little trip across the water—so dear to the English nature—with the little spice of adventure and added excitement, was probably at the bottom of this development of popular favour. Humanly speaking, there can be no doubt Langley was wise in his generation, and showed judgment in his

venture ; but that uncertain element which we call chance, or luck, or the caprice of fate—the demon of the incalculable—mocked his anticipations and jeered his worldly wisdom. The prize that attracted him attracted others also, and brought him as rivals the finest of all the acting companies,



THE SWAN THEATRE.
From Visscher's View of London, 1616.

who eclipsed him as well as Henslowe and Alleyn, and became ' the Glory of the Bank.'

It is possible to reconstruct the old Swan Theatre from the particulars we obtain in the contract for building the Hope, which was to be made in all respects like the Swan, aided by the details supplied in the account in Henslowe's Diary for the building of his ' play-howsse,' the

Rose, and another contract for building the Fortune. Taking the Hope contract of 1613,* and divesting it of all the legal verbiage, the following features of construction, common to the Hope and the Swan, are revealed :

The contractor, Katherens, is to take down the existing structure, and to build in its place another 'game-house or plaie-house,' fit for players to play in, and for the game of bears and bulls. There is to be provided a tyre-house, 'and a frame to be carryed or taken away, and to stande upon tressels' sufficient to bear such a stage. It is agreed 'to builde the same of suche large compasse, forme, wideness, and height as the plaie-house called the Swan in the libertie of Paris Garden.' Particulars of the building are then enumerated, concluding with the reiterated stipulation, 'And the saide playe house or game place to be made in all thinges and in suche forme and fashion as the said play-house called the Swan, the scantling of the tymbers, tyles, and foundations as is aforesaide, without fraud or covin.' The particulars are :

1. Two staircases without and adjoining the playhouse, 'of such largenes and height as the staircases of the said playhouse called the Swan.'

2. Heavens over the stage, to be borne or carried without any posts or supporters to be fixed or set upon the stage; gutters of lead needful for carriage of water that shall fall upon the same.

* Malone, 'Variorum Shakspeare,' iii. 343.

3. Two boxes in the lowermost story, 'fitt and decent for gentlemen to sitt in ; and shall make the partitions betweene the roomes as they are at the saide playhouse called the Swan.'

4. Turned columns upon and over the stage.

5. Principals and forefront of the playhouse to be of oak ; no fir to be used in the lowermost or under stories, except the upright posts on the back part of the said stories ; all binding joists to be of oak.

6. Inner principal posts of first story to be 12 feet high and 10 inches square ; ditto, of middle story, to be 8 inches square ; innermost posts in upper story to be 7 inches square. Other posts in first story to be 8 inches square ; in second, 7 inches square ; in upper, 6 inches square.

7. 'Brest summers' in lowermost story to be 9 inches deep and 7 inches thick, and in middle story to be 8 inches deep and 6 inches thick. Size of the binding joists also given.

8. Foundation of bricks : to be at least 12 inches above ground. Also a louvre or storie over the said house.

9. To 'new tyle with Englishe tyles all the upper roofe of the saide playe house.'

10. Katherens to supply all lime, lears, sand, bricks, tiles, laths, nails.

Although it is not definitely known when the new theatre was first opened, we know that the building was recently completed in 1598. On July 19 of that year the vestry of St. Saviour's, Southwark, ordered :*

'That a petition shall be made to the bodye of the Councel concerning the playhouses in this parish ; wherein the enormities shall be showed that come thereby to the parish, and that in respect thereof they may be dismissed and put down from playing ; and that four or two of the Churchwardens,

* Chalmers (George), 'Farther Account of the Early English Stage,' in 'Variorum Shakspeare,' iii., 452.

&c., shall present the cause with a collector of the Borough-side, and another of the Bankside.'

And Mr. Rendle noted the following from the vestry minutes of St. Saviour's, 1598: 'It is ordered by the vestry that Mr. Langley's new buildings shall be viewed, and that he and others shall be moved for money for the poor in regard to the playhouses and for tithes.'* The 'others' referred to were Henslowe and Alleyn and Meade. At this date, 1598, the existing theatres 'in the fields' were The Theatre and the Curtain to the north, and on the Surrey side, besides Newington Butts, the Rose and the Beare-house, shown in Norden's map of 1593, and the recently opened Swan. These were the theatres described in the 'Itinerary' of Paul Hentzner in 1598:†

'Without the city are some theatres, where English actors represent, almost every day, tragedies and comedies to very numerous audiences; these are concluded with excellent music, variety of dances, and the excessive applause of those that are present.

'Not far from one of these theatres, which are all built of wood, lies the royal barge, close to the river; it has two splendid cabins, beautifully ornamented with glass windows, painting and gilding; it is kept upon dry ground, and sheltered from the weather.

'There is still another place, built in the form of a

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* *Antiquarian Magazine and Bibliographer*, vol. vii., p. 210.

† The original is an 'Itinerary through Germany, England, France and Italy,' by Hentzner, a travelling tutor to a young German nobleman.

theatre, which serves for the baiting of bulls and bears; they are fastened behind, and then worried by great English bull-dogs, but not without great risque to the dogs, from the horns of the one, and the teeth of the other; and it sometimes happens they are killed upon the spot; fresh ones are immediately supplied in the places of those that are wounded or tired. To this entertainment there often follows that of whipping a blinded bear, which is performed by five or six men, standing circularly with whips, which they exercise upon him without any mercy, as he cannot escape from them because of his chain; he defends himself with all his force and skill, throwing down all who come within his reach, and are not active enough to get out of it, and tearing the whips out of their hands and breaking them. At these spectacles and everywhere else the English are constantly smoaking tobacco. . . . In these theatres, fruit, such as apples, pears and nuts, according to season, are carried about to be sold, as well as ale and wine.'*

Travelling became very fashionable in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The literature of European travel at this period is considerable, especially in German and English. The travels of Englishmen recorded by Hakluyt and by Purchas, the personal narratives of Fynes Moryson and Thomas Coryat, afford an excellent panorama of the world and its inhabitants in Shakespeare's time and earlier. One of the essays of Bacon is an instructive homily 'Of Trauaile.' A few years ago, in the pages of the *Antiquary*, the present writer called attention to some entertaining records

* Paul Hentzner's 'Travels in England during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth,' translated by Horace, late Earl of Orford, etc., London, 1797, p. 30.

of the tour performed by young Thomas Cecil, the eldest son of Lord Treasurer Burghley. But it is the recorded impressions of foreigners who visited our shores at that period which are perhaps of chief interest to us, and they afford many a glimpse which helps us to fill up our mental picture of the time. To the studious Germans we are especially indebted in this respect. In 1585, Samuel Kiechel, a merchant of Ulm, in Suabia, in the course of travels which extended over four years, visited England, and in his journal he includes a very interesting account of his sojourn here. Mr. Rye furnishes an account of some published extracts from Kiechel's journal, from which the following is quoted :

'When speaking of the London stage, Kiechel says that there are some peculiar (*sonderbare, i.e., besondere*) houses, which are so constructed that they have about three galleries one above the other. As in all his travels he only mentions the theatres in London, it is probable that there were no regular playhouses elsewhere, or it may be that the rows of seats one above the other appeared remarkable in the eyes of our traveller. It may indeed happen, he continues, that the players take from fifty to sixty dollars [£10 to £12] at a time, particularly if they act anything new, when people have to pay double. And that they perform nearly every day in the week ; notwithstanding plays are forbidden on Friday and Saturday, this prohibition is not observed.'*

If Mr. Rye's surmise that there were no playhouses elsewhere than in England represents what was actually the case, there is no doubt that these

* W. B. Rye, 'England as seen by Foreigners,' p. 88.

buildings would attract the curiosity of foreign visitors. The fame of the London theatres probably spread over the Continent, and Mr. Rye notes that when Charles undertook his romantic journey to Spain, the contemporary account of the royal entry into Madrid on March 23, 1623, informs us that 'in the streets of the passage, divers representations were made of the best comedians, dancers, and men of musicke, to give contentment to the royal paire [Charles and Philip IV.] as they passed by.' The scene is presented in a rare German print in the Grenville Library, which Mr. Rye reproduced in his volume.* This attempt to entertain the prince from the land of playhouses was made on a platform on tressels or supports, with arras or hangings at the back, behind which the performers awaited their turns for entry. It is hardly so ambitious an attempt at stage representation as the pageant vehicles of England at an earlier date.

There is another source from which we may hope that some day further light may be thrown upon the Elizabethan playhouses. Mr. Rye remarks† upon the custom of German travellers carrying with them an album or 'Stammbuch.' The German, writes Mr. Rye, 'producing his little

* W. B. Rye, 'England as seen by Foreigners,' Introduction, p. cx.

† *Ibid.*, pp. xxx., xxxi.

book whenever he came into contact with friends or persons of more or less note, would solicit them to favour him by inscribing on its leaves an autograph or a motto, or by inserting an emblazoned shield of arms, or a sketch.' Mr. Rye adds: 'Many of these interesting volumes—which are usually of an oblong shape and have costly bindings—enshrine autographs of very distinguished persons. The quondam owner of one, Christopher Arnold, professor of history at Nuremberg, visited England in the middle of the seventeenth century, and being in London on November 19, 1651, obtained the autograph of the author of "Paradise Lost"—"Joannes Miltonius."' It would be interesting if the autograph of William Shakespeare were to turn up in a German 'Stammbuch'—but it is dangerous to make these suggestions. Mr. Rye also tells us that 'an album, which belonged to a traveller, Fred. de Botnia, contains beautifully-coloured drawings of James I. and his queen, the Lord Mayor of London and his brethren on horseback, and also the lady mayoress for the time being.' What delight it would cause if a drawing of the famous maker of English plays, by a contemporary German hand, should be discovered in some such record, a portrait that should be an improvement upon the Droeshout engraving, and approximate to those ideals which are reflected in the numerous and

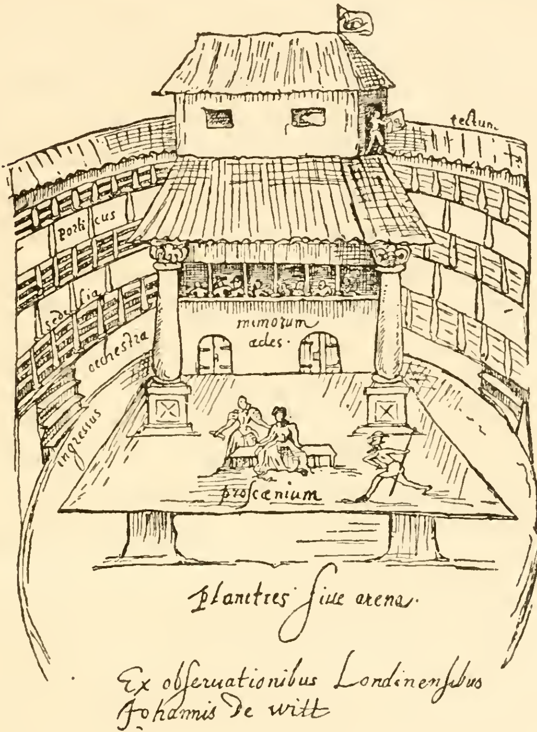
dissimilar portraits of him, so eloquent of all things, so silent about himself! But perhaps it is not wise to suggest these hopes.

By directing attention to this field of possible discovery, Mr. Rye is entitled to some merit as well as responsibility in connection with the important find of a drawing of the Swan Theatre in the University Library of Utrecht. This drawing was reproduced and published in a pamphlet by Dr. Gaedertz in 1888, and attracted considerable notice.* The original MS. volume in which the sketch was found was sent to this country at the instigation of Dr. Furnivall, and deposited in the British Museum under the care of Dr. Garnett, where it was inspected by students of the drama, the present writer sharing in this great privilege. The picture, as given in Dr. Gaedertz's publication, according to my recollection, is larger than the original. The reproduction of it here given is reduced, but the features are perfectly distinct.

As remarked above, our information as to the construction of the Swan has for many years been so complete that it is not difficult to derive a picture in the mind's eye from that material, and this interesting sketch generally agrees with the particulars. Here we see the three galleries

* 'Zur Kenntnis der altenglischen Bühne, etc., Von Karl Theodor Gaedertz. Mit der ersten authentischen innern Ansicht der Schwan-Theaters in London, etc.' Bremen, 1888.

described by Kiechel (*ante*, p. 261), the turned columns, and the removable stage, but the 'heavens over the stage' are not shown (*ante*, p. 257). There are minor points in which the



picture is not in agreement with recorded references to the interior arrangements of Elizabethan playhouses. But we must not exact too much of a sketch of this kind. It is not an original

drawing made in the theatre. It seems to have been copied into Arend van Buchell's commonplace book, perhaps from a letter of his correspondent, John de Witt, or possibly from oral description. The drawing is without date, but Dr. Gaedertz argues that De Witt's visit to London took place in the summer of 1596. Dr. Gaedertz is at pains to account for the traveller's silence as to Shakespeare. He argues that it is impossible that the great dramatist could have been in London, or De Witt would assuredly have mentioned him, and he accounts for Shakespeare's absence by asserting that he was in Stratford.

The death of Shakespeare's son, Hamnet, which occurred in August, 1596, seemed to favour this supposition, and I mentioned this point to the late Halliwell-Phillipps. He, however, after consulting his wonderfully systematized records, said, 'There is not an atom of evidence that Shakespeare was at Stratford in 1596.'*

But how narrowly we must have missed a most interesting notice of Shakespeare! For this was the time, in the summer of 1596, when his fame became vastly increased owing to the production of 'Romeo and Juliet' at the Curtain Theatre. The play bounded into extraordinary popularity;

* It is not necessary to point out the conditions of the period which would account for Shakespeare's absence at the time of his son's death.

and had De Witt been curious to make the famous playwright's acquaintance, he could have found Shakespeare at his lodgings near the Bear Garden on the Bankside.

Dr. Gaedertz mentions that he could not succeed in discovering the diary of De Witt's journey in the original ; the Dutch libraries do not possess it. 'It may be that De Witt took it with him to Rome, where he died, and probably it is still in existence.' If this MS. should ever be discovered, it is possible that further particulars than those recorded by De Witt's friend and correspondent may be made known, and perhaps in that case it may prove that De Witt was not silent about Shakespeare after all. In the meantime, the following is the passage copied by Arend van Buchell, with the sketch of the Swan :

'Amphiteatra Londinij sunt IV visendæ pulcritudinis quæ a diuersis intersignijs diuersa nomina fortiuntur : in ijs varia quotidie scæna populo exhibetur. Horum duo excellentiora vltra Tamisim ad meridiem sita sunt, a suspensis signis Rosa et Cygnus nominata : Alia duo extra vrbem ad septentrionem sunt, viâ quâ itur per Episcopalem portam vulgariter Biscopgat nuncupatam. Est etiam quintum sed dispari et [*sic!*] structura, bestiarum concertationi destinatum, in quo multi vrsi, Tauri, et stupendæ magnitudinis canes, discretis caueis et septis aluntur, qui ad pugnam adseruantur, iucundissimum hominibus spectaculum præbentes. Theatrorum autem omnium prestantissimum est et amplissimum id cuius intersignium est cygnus (vulgo te theatre off te cijn) quippe quod tres mille homines in sedilibus admittat, constructum ex

coaceruato lapide pyrritide (quorum ingens in Brittannia copia est) ligneis suffultum columnis quæ ob illitum marmoreum colorem, nasutissimos quoque fallere posse[n]t. Cuius quidem forma[m] quod Romani operis vmbram videatur exprimere supra adpinxi).'

The passage would not have presented much difficulty even to Ben Jonson's greater contemporary, who had 'small Latin and less Greek'; but the following readable version* may be usefully appended:

'There are in London four theatres [amphitheatra] of noteworthy beauty, which bear diverse names according to their diverse signs. In them a different action [varia scæna] is daily presented to the people. The two finest of these are situated to the southward beyond the Thames, named, from the signs they display, the Rose and the Swan. Two others are outside the city towards the north, and are approached "per Episcopalem portem"; in the vernacular, "Biscopgate." There is also a fifth, of dissimilar structure, devoted to beast-baiting, wherein many bears, bulls, and dogs of stupendous size are kept in separate dens and cages, which, being pitted against each other, afford men a most delightful [juncundissimum] spectacle. Of all the theatres, however, the largest and most distinguished is that whereof the sign is a swan (commonly called the Swan theatre), since it contains three thousand persons, and is built of a concrete of flint stones (which greatly abound in Britain) and supported by wooden columns, painted in such excellent imitation of marble that it might deceive even the most cunning [nasu-

* Published in a very interesting notice of Dr. Gaedertz's pamphlet by Mr. William Archer in the *Universal Review* for June, 1888.

tissimos]. Since its form seems to approach that of a Roman structure, I have depicted it above.'

In reference to this characterization of the Swan as the largest and most distinguished of the playhouses, it should be remarked that the Globe was not yet in existence. The estimation of its size in terms of accommodation for 3,000 persons is difficult of acceptance ; 300 would probably be nearer the mark. But perhaps undue importance should not be attached to a traveller's statement of that kind, or possibly it was a slip of Van Buchell's in recording his friend's remarks. Another difficult point is the statement that the building was constructed of a concrete of flints. It will have been gathered in the foregoing pages that all the other London playhouses in the fields were made of timber ; Hentzner, writing in 1598, expressly says that the theatres 'are all built of wood' (*ante*, p. 259), and the particulars in the contract (*ante*, pp. 257-258) concern a wooden structure on a brick foundation. However, against this discrepancy we should, perhaps, set the fact that Langley, the builder of the Swan, was a man of superior means and position compared with the other builders and proprietors of playhouses, and, as owner of the Paris Garden Manor, he would perhaps feel interested in having a handsome structure on his estate.

At any rate, these are points scarcely of primary

interest, although they could be put to much critical use if the object were to impugn the record which has been recovered at Utrecht. But the excerpt and the sketch generally agree with our previous knowledge, if they add nothing to it, and perhaps may now be permitted to take their modest place in the history of the stage.*

A more appropriate sign than the Swan for a Thames-side house at that period could hardly be imagined. The secretary of the Duke of Nájera, Spanish Ambassador to this country in 1544, who wrote a narrative of the Duke's visit, speaks in raptures of the Thames, its fine bridge, with the houses on it, and the multitude of swans in the river. 'It is not possible,' he wrote, 'in my opinion, that a more beautiful river should exist in the world; for the city stands on each side of it, and innumerable boats, vessels and other craft are seen moving on the stream. . . . Never did I

* It has been by no intentional omission that I have not referred to Mr. Wheatley's paper on this subject read before the New Shakspere Society. In his 'London Past and Present,' *sub voce* Swan Theatre, he gives a reference to it thus: 'Transactions of the New Shakspere Society, 1887-91, p. 215.' My endeavours to obtain access to this at the British Museum have been vain. The date of my last application was December 2, 1893. Probably before this book is issued the Transactions will have been published. I had not the privilege of hearing Mr. Wheatley's paper; but should the reader desire to pursue inquiry into the subject, I imagine he would find it treated at greater length in Mr. Wheatley's communication.

see a river so thickly covered with swans as this.'*

But although, apparently, its inception was ambitious, the theatrical history of this playhouse is singularly meagre, and suggests disappointed expectations. So far as investigation has recovered them, the events are few, and the account may be briefly rendered.

In emulation of celebrated jesters like Tarleton, the playhouse became employed for wit combats, or trials of extempore versification, as in the case of the Hope Theatre already related. The Swan became used for this purpose by Robert Wilson, who gave a challenge there in 1598, and came off victorious:

> 'As *Antipater Sidonius* was famous for extemporall verse in Greeke, and *Ouid* for his *Quicquid conabar dicere versus erat:* so was our *Tarleton*, of whome Doctour *Case*, that learned physitian, thus speaketh in the seuenth Booke, & seuenteenth chapter of his Politikes: *Aristoteles suum Theodoretum laudauit quendam peritum Tragœdiarum actorem; Cicero suum Roscium: nos Angli Tarletonum, in cuius voce & vultu omnes iocosi affectus, in cuius cerebroso capite lepidæ facetiæ habitant.* And so is now our wittie *Wilson*, who, for learning and extemporall witte in this facultie, is without compare or compeere, as to his great and eternall commendations he manifested in his chalenge at the Swanne on the Banke-side.'†

* 'Archæologia,' xxiii. 355.

† Francis Meres, 'Palladis Tamia,' London, 1598, 8vo., fol., 285-286; *see* also New Shakspere Society Allusion Books, part i., ed. Ingleby, 1874, p. 164.

The house was used, apparently, from the first more for sports of the ring than for stage-plays. Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps communicated the following note to Mr. Rendle : ' In a letter to the Justices of Surrey in 1600, Peter Bromville is recommended from the Court to their favour ; he is known to the French King for his great skill in feats of activities ; he has exhibited the same before the Queen, and wishing to appear in some public place, " has chosen the Swann, in Old Paris Garden, being the house of Francis Langley." '

In Dekker's 'Satiromastix,' 1602, the following reference shows that Ben Jonson played at the Swan, the character of Horace being intended for Jonson, as already referred to in a previous chapter :

> ' *Tucca.* Thou hast been at the Paris Garden, hast not ?
> *Horace.* Yes, captain ; I ha' played Zulziman there.'

William Fennor, whose failure to meet Taylor for the trial of wit at the Hope has been described in the chapter on that theatre, produced a spectacular play at the Swan, 1603, entitled 'England's Joy,' and designed to illustrate the glories of Elizabeth's reign. John Taylor, the water-poet, when at issue with Fennor after the Hope fiasco, refers to his antagonist's former performance in some lines headed 'My Defence against thy Offence,' in his 'A Cast over Water,' etc., 1615 :

'Thou bragst what fame thou got'st upon the stage.
Indeed, thou set'st the people in a rage
In playing *England's Joy*, that euery man
Did iudge it worse then that was done at Swan.
. . . .
To all your costs he will his wits employ
To play the second part of England's Joy.
. . . .
Vpon S. Georges day last, sir, you gaue
To eight Knights of the Garter (like a knaue,
Eight manuscripts (or Books) all fairelie writ,
Informing them, they were your mother wit:
And you compil'd them; then were you regarded,
And for another's wit was well rewarded.
All this is true, and this I dare maintaine,
The matter came from out a learned braine:
And poore old *Vennor*, that plaine dealing man,
Who acted England's Joy first at the Swan,
Paid eight crowns for the writing of these things,
Besides the couers, and the silken strings,' etc.

Besides the production of Middleton's play, 'A Chaste Maid in Cheapside,' at this theatre, Mr. Rendle noted that in 1604, at a contest for a prize at the Swan, one Turner was thrust in the eye and killed. In 1611 Moll, the Roaring Drab, is told how a knight, seeing the last new play at the Swan, lost his purse with seven angels in it.

Malone, on the authority of Sir H. Herbert's office-book, states that after 1620 both the Rose and the Swan were only employed occasionally for fencers and gladiators. The wide disparity of taste in that period is well illustrated in the history of the playhouses. It was natural to the

18

age, and not to be quarrelled with ; but it must have been trying to dramatic artists working for their livelihood. In 'The Tempest,' when Trinculo encounters Caliban, he exclaims :

> 'What have we here ? a man or a fish ? dead or alive ? A fish : he smells like a fish ; a very ancient and fish-like smell : a kind of not of the newest Poor-John. A strange fish ! Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver : there would this monster make a man ; any strange beast there makes a man ; when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.'

Yet those who sought other objects included the stage among the beguilers of cash, as in Farley's complaint when he could not raise sufficient to carry out his designs upon St. Paul's:

> 'To see a strange out-landish Fowle,
> A quaint Baboon, an Ape, an Owle,
> A dancing Beare, a Gyants bone,
> A foolish Injin move alone,
> A Morris-dance, a Puppit play,
> Mad Tom to sing a Roundelay,
> A woman dancing on a Rope,
> Bull-baiting also at the Hope ;
> A Rimers Jests, a Juglers Cheats,
> A Tumbler shewing cunning feats,
> Or Players acting on the Stage,
> There goes the bounty of our Age ;
> But unto any pious motion
> There's little coine, and less devotion.'*

* Henry Farley, 'St. Paules Church : her bill for the Parliament,' 1621, 4to.

The last reference to the Swan is in a pamphlet by Shakerly Marmyon, published in 1632, called 'Holland's Leaguer,' in which the following recommendation of 'Holland's Leaguer' (a disreputable house) occurs: 'There are pleasant walks and a concourse of strangers. Three famous amphitheatres can be seen from the turret; one, the continent of the world [*i.e.*, the Globe], to which half the year [*i.e.*, in summer] a world of beauties and of brave spirits resort—a building of excellent Hope for players, wild beasts and gladiators—and one other, that the lady of the leaguer, or fortress, could almost shake hands with, now fallen to decay, and, like a dying swanne [*i.e.*, the Swan playhouse], hangs her head and sings her own dirge.' The pamphlet has an amusing illustration, in which perspective is so far subordinated that the beholder sees not only the elevation of the building, but also the garden at the back, where the lady of the Leaguer is receiving a seventeenth-century gallant, who is making her a very proper bow.

The Surrey side was a favourite place of residence with the players and playwrights of that great period. On the Bankside dwelt famous Ned Alleyn and shrewd Philip Henslowe, and several of the actors in the plays they produced; near the Bear Garden dwelt Shakespeare; in Paris Garden some of the actors for whom Shakespeare

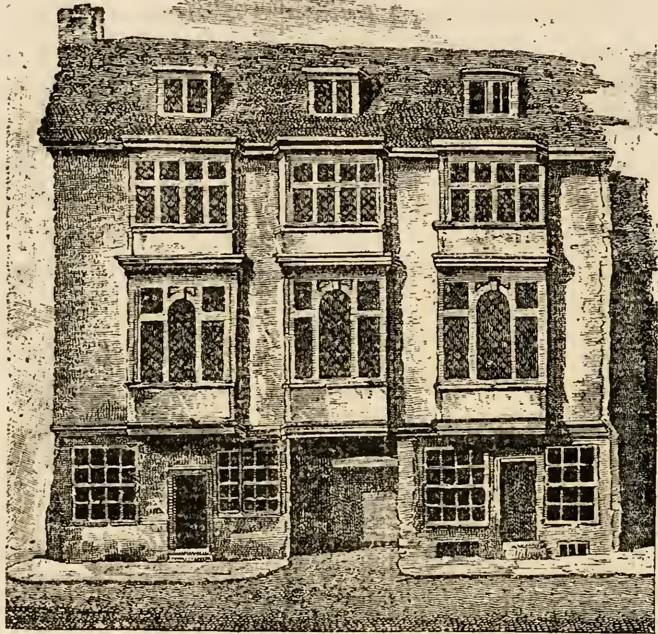
wrote plays.* Landing at the favourite landing-stage, Paris Garden Stairs, and passing up Paris Garden Lane, there, on the left, was the famous Falcon Inn, where these men of the playhouse assembled, 'the abstract and brief chronicles of the time,' and wit passed with the cup, and jest, and flashes of merriment set the table in a roar. The traditions of this vivid life, and the scenes where it was enacted, had not become effaced from the neighbourhood when Samuel Johnson made the acquaintance of the Thrales in Southwark in 1765, and composed in the same year his famous preface to the Shakespeare plays. In attempting to recall the past, it may assist us if we fix our eyes on the mid-distance. We can imagine Dr. Johnson taking a pensive strcll

* Mr. Rendle noted the following from the Token-books of St. Saviour's: '"1596. Mayster Pope has four new built houses in Mayster Langley's ground [Thomas Pope is in the list of principal actors in Shakespeare's plays, folio edition, 1623].—1602. Mr. Langley's New Rents near the Playhouse [many such entries].—1621. Near the Playhouse, Paris Garden, John Lowen et Ux., Joane Lowen, servants [Lowen also appears among the actors in the Shakespeare Folio].—1623. Near the Playhouse, Mr. Doctor Gilbourne, Mistres Leake, John Lowen [Leake is of the great brewer family. A Samuel Gilburne is in the Shakespeare list of players. In the margin by these names is 'Mill-bridge, close to the Swan'].—1627. Near the Playhouse, Robert Nashe, Peter Hemynges, Mr. John Lowen, Widowe Phillipps, Mr. Leake."'

through the neighbourhood while it was yet a suburb, as shown in Rocque's map a few pages back; the names of lanes and alleys and living tradition could have guided him to the sites of the playhouses; he could have taken his ease in the Falcon Inn, and meditated upon its departed glories. But if he did this, he told us nothing about it. He may have mused the majestic periods of his preface amid these associations, but his quest was not the same as ours. He was concerned in the resuscitation of a literary interest in Shakespeare. We in our turn—perhaps in unconscious sympathy with the spirit of scientific curiosity which marks our era—seek to understand the conditions amid which our glorious dramatic literature came into being.

The Falcon had probably altered considerably in Johnson's time, but in 1666 it may have remained unchanged. The house next door to the inn, Mr. Meymott states, in his book on Paris Garden Manor, privately printed for the copyholders, 'was for some time the residence of Sir Christopher Wren, so that while he was superintending the erection of St. Paul's Cathedral, he could view at a distance across the river the progress of his work.' Another note from the same source probably describes the Falcon as it was when Dr. Johnson may have seen it: 'The front of it projected quite out of the line of the other

houses thereabouts, and faced towards Gravel Lane. It had two large gateways, and was a place of considerable business, and from it coaches left (in tolerably modern days, I mean) for various parts of Surrey, Kent, and Sussex.' A view of it



THE FALCON INN AS IT APPEARED ABOUT THE YEAR 1819.

as it appeared in 1819 is here reproduced; but as only one gateway is visible, we must suppose that some modification had taken place, or that the other gateway was at the side or at the rear of the building. Unfortunately it has long ceased to exist.

If to-day we take a walk up Shoreditch High Street and, a few steps beyond the Standard Theatre, turn leftward into Holywell Lane, it is strange to reflect that in this unlovely neighbourhood stood once the ancient priory, and near by the playhouses 'in the fields.' Not a vestige of the old order remains; but there are the names. We pass up Holywell Lane and under a railway bridge; on our right is King John's Court, where remains of Holywell Priory were yet standing when Chassereau made his plan (see *ante*, p. 40). Within a few paces of us, somewhere in the labyrinth of bricks and mortar, is the site of The Theatre, the first English playhouse.* We return into Holywell Lane, and pass on till we enter the Curtain Road. Before us is Scrutton Street, and the Curtain Road runs right and left of us. Turning to the left, we pass nine doors, and arrive at Hewett Street, formerly Gloucester Street; in Chassereau's time it was Curtain Court, and here stood the Curtain playhouse, where Romeo and

* My inquiries repeatedly made on the spot have not enabled me to locate Deane's Mews, which, according to Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, covered the site of the playhouse. The Great Eastern Railway has sliced off the right-hand portion of the precinct shown by Chassereau. Along by the railway is a road leading into a street named New Inn Yard, numbered 87 in Chassereau's plan, and still existing. To the left of this way are passages and spaces which correspond pretty nearly to the configuration shown by Chassereau in 1745.

Juliet burst out of the heaven of invention upon the Elizabethan consciousness.* Hereabout lived and worked those generations of players whose last record exists in the parish church of St. Leonard hard by, as we saw in a former chapter. Hereabout, where the earth is covered with buildings and the streets echo with traffic, were the fields in which Shakespeare's contemporary, the botanist Gerard, culled specimens which he described in his 'Herbal.' Here it was he discovered a new kind of crowfoot, similar to the ordinary plant, 'saving that his leaves are fatter, thicker, and greener, and his small twiggie stalkes stand upright, otherwise it is like ; of which kinde it chanced that, walking in the fielde next unto the Theater by London, in company of a worshipful marchant named master Nicholas Lete, I found one of this kind there with double flowers, which before that time I had not seene' ('Herbal,' 1597, p. 804). The playhouses and the fields are no more, but the names,

* The street remains a *cul de sac*. On the left-hand side is a block of artisans' dwellings called Mackaye's Buildings, and just beyond a palatial pile called Great Eastern Street Buildings, with railings and a gate separating these dwellings and the forecourt from the street. It is, of course, impossible to locate the site of the playhouse with certainty, but most likely it was at the end of the court, and it pleases me to believe, as I look through the iron railings at the end of the public way, that I am looking upon the ground where the Curtain stood 'in the fields.'

some of them, survive, and in the church of St. James, opposite what was once known as Curtain Court, there is a memorial of the *genius loci* in the shape of a coloured glass window with a representation of Shakespeare.* Leading out of Curtain Road is Motley Street, which, whatever its origin, is appropriate to these associations; and at the farther end of Curtain Road we come upon Hoxton Street, recalling 'Hoggesdoñ Feildes,' where Shakespeare's friend, Ben Jonson, slew Gabriel Spenser, the player.

Now, if we retrace our steps, and, turning

* On the occasion of my first visit to the spot, a local inhabitant, who had lived there man and boy for twenty-six years, had never heard of Deane's Mews, but spontaneously pointed to the trees which overhang the pavement in front of St. James' Church (the only trees in the neighbourhood) as marking the site of 'Shakespeare's first theatre.' The church is about fifty years old. It stands on an old burial ground, and some of the old grave-stones line the way to the church door; the oldest inscription decipherable is dated 1785. The Shakespeare window is over the west door. It is very handsome, and represents the bard sitting, with various lines from the moralizings of Jacques interweaved with the ornamental design around the figure. Underneath is a tablet thus inscribed:

This memorial window,
the gift of Stanley Cooper, F.R. Hist.S.,
was unveiled by
The Right Hon. John Staples, F.S.A.,
Lord Mayor of London, May 14th, 1886,
Being the tercentenary of the Poet's
arrival in London.
Alfred Buss, B.A., Vicar.

southward along Bishopsgate Street and Gracechurch Street (in Shakespeare's time it was 'Gracious Street,' and here was the Saba tavern where the 'fiddlers fiddled away Tarlton's apparel'), and cross London Bridge, there, on our right hand, between us and Blackfriars Bridge, we see a mass of wharves and warehouses and dwellings. Yet that is Bankside, still so called; and there it was, amid foliage and garden-walks, that the playhouses 'in the fields' on the Surrey side, the Rose, the Globe, the Hope, once raised their flags, and yonder by Blackfriars Bridge was Paris Garden and the Swan Theatre. Not a vestige left, except the names, and they nearly all survive.

We descend some steps by St. Saviour's Church, which itself takes us back to the time of the Bankside playhouses, and beyond them to the era of monasteries and priories. In this church many theatrical worthies were laid to rest. On Thursday, December 31, 1607, Edmund Shakespeare, aged 28, a player, brother of the great poet, was buried in the church of St. Saviour, 'with a forenoone knell of the great bell.' In the same year the burial of Laurence Fletcher was registered; about seven years later, in 1615, Mr. Philip Henslowe is buried 'in the chancell, with an afternoon knell of the great bell.' Ten years later John Fletcher, and thirteen years afterwards

Philip Massinger, also found sepulture in these precincts. Recalling these memories, we pass under the railway bridge, and walk through Borough Market and emerge upon a thoroughfare. In front of us is Park Street, a survival from the Park of the Bishops of Winchester, in whose liberty the playhouses were ; this street takes a northward bend towards the river, and on our left is Barclay's Brewery, covering the site of the Globe. Beyond the brewery we come upon New Park Street, stretching westward at right angles from Park Street. From this point Park Street becomes Bank End and leads us to a riverside road called Bankside, the corner house being an ancient inn called the Blue Anchor. Now, connecting New Park Street and Bankside as we pass westward, we find a series of alleys ; first there is Horse-Shoe Alley, with the Windmill tavern at the corner in New Park Street, and on Bankside, opposite the alley, on the river-bank, a board thus inscribed :

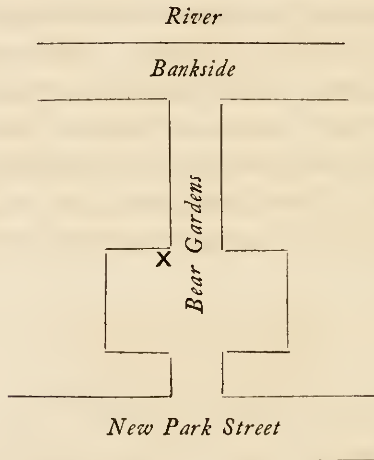
Horse-Shoe Alley Stairs.
This ancient landing-place
Closed by order of the
St. Saviour's District Board of Works.

A little further west is Rose Alley, marking the site of Henslowe's theatre, and just a little further on Bear Gardens. So near together are these alleys, that we recall Dekker's caustic allusion

in his Satiromastix, 'Thou hast a breath sweet as the Rose that grows by the Bear Garden.' We see in Rose Alley, at the corner of New Park Street, a definition of Henslowe's estate in the following inscription:

'Fifteen feet six inches from the face of this stone and from thence one hundred and fifty-five feet three inches northward is the property of the parish of St. Mildred, Bread Street, in the City of London.'*

In Bear Gardens we find something which looks like a palpable vestige of the Hope Theatre. This the printer may enable us to show more or less approximately, with a series of lines:



* The will of Thomasyn Symonds, who bequeathed the property to St. Mildred's parish in 1553, describes it as 'the little Roose with two gardeyns in the Parishe of Seyntt Margarett's in Southwark, now Seynt Savy^r^.' In 1574 the

The rectangular formation in Bear Gardens may very possibly indicate the exact site of the Hope. At the corner marked with a X there is a public-house called the White Bear. Returning to Bankside, and continuing westward, we pass Emerson Street, Cardinal Cap Alley, a very small opening and narrow way, nearly opposite St. Paul's (it was at the 'Cardinal's Hat' that John Taylor was said to have supped with the King's players, *ante*, p. 233), Moss Alley, Pike Gardens (the Pike Garden and its ponds are shown in the section from Aggas's map, *ante*, p. 126), then Love Lane (possibly a sarcastic allusion to the Stews, which were near this spot), then at the end of Bankside we emerge upon Holland Street, which recalls Holland's Leaguer and the Swan Theatre, so near that the lady of the Leaguer could almost shake hands with it.

From this point it is possible to locate the

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trustees let the property to William Griffen for thirty-one years at £7 per annum. This lease in 1579 was assigned to Robert Withens, who in 1584 assigned it to Henslowe. In some way, apparently, another person named Pope was concerned in the holding (see *ante*, p. 199). This is a detail which has puzzled me; but it seems most probable that Pope had secured an agreement with the trustees or vestry of St. Mildred's in view of the pending expiry of the lease, and that the transaction recorded by Henslowe in his Diary did not concern the vestry of St. Saviour's as suggested (*ante*, p. 200).

ancient landmarks. Holland Street extends before us as far as Blackfriars railway bridge—this we will call the north base of the street; it also gives off two branches or forks on our left: the first or more eastward branch leading, by Sumner Street, into Southwark Street, the second leading into the same thoroughfare further west. Now, in the north base of the street, opposite the eastward branch, is Falcon Draw Dock, in the occupation of Messrs. James Newton and Sons. The Falcon Inn stood on the other side of the way between the two forks of Holland Street on the ground now covered by Epps's Cocoa Works. A few steps further west than Falcon Dock we come to Messrs. Rennie's Albion Ironworks, nearly opposite the westward fork of Holland Street. These works extend to the railway bridge, and Messrs. Rennie's wharf probably covers the site of the ancient Paris Garden Stairs. Under our feet, in the form of a sewer, is perhaps the last vestige of the ancient time. The manor of Paris Garden was almost, if not quite, completely circumscribed by a stream; this has been partly diverted, and is now incorporated in the drainage of the district. But in the old time this part of the stream, close adjoining Paris Garden Lane, was known as the 'Pudding Mill Stream,' so called from a mill which stood hereabout, and was used for draining the marshy

ground in the way you may see at work in the fen country to-day. Mr. Meymott thought that Pudding Mill Stream may have been of some importance. 'I have heard mention,' he wrote in 1881, 'of salmon being at one time angled for and caught in it,' and he cites a lease in the copyholders' archives, wherein 'the reservation of "fishing," "fishing-places," and so on is included.' The sewer which now represents the stream runs underground, and the outflow into the river is between Messrs. Rennie's wharf and Falcon Dock.* The ancient landing-stage appertaining to the Falcon Inn, and known as Falcon Stairs, survives in the Falcon Dock or wharf.

We can readily make our way from the north base of Holland Street into Blackfriars Road by a subway which goes under the railway bridge; or we can describe the circuit of Holland Street and reach that thoroughfare by Southwark Street. The only interesting landmark in the eastward

* This may be verified in a way which I have found a pleasant task, viz., by taking a boat from the boat-house on the west side of Blackfriars Bridge, and rowing along Bankside after ebb-tide. With the old maps to help us it is easy to recall the aspect of the river as it was when John Taylor, the water-poet, and his fellows earned their livelihood by carrying the sovereign's lieges to and from the various landing-stages. Identifying the sites by landmarks as we row along, we can tell exactly where the playhouses elevated their poles and flags.

fork is visible from where we are in the north base of Holland Street. There it is, opposite Falcon Dock—a public-house, the Castle, which Mr. Meymott identified as occupying the site of an ancient inn, contemporary with the famous Falcon.

If we find our way into Southwark Street by the east fork of Holland Street, we see before us, across the road, Gravel Lane, which existed in Elizabethan times, and is figured in Rocque's map. The Falcon Inn faced towards this lane, and must have backed towards Holland Street; the picture of it (p. 278) indicates that the inn covered a large space. But the westward fork of Holland Street is the more interesting: it leads us past Christchurch Parochial Schools, next to which stands a delightfully old-world cottage, and just beyond are Hopton's alms-houses, quaint and picturesque, with grass and trees in the quadrangle around which the houses stand. A few steps bring us into Southwark Street, and across the way we see Bear Lane, a name that probably survives from the time when the Royal Game had its headquarters and office in Paris Garden. We pass under the railway bridge, and enter Blackfriars Road and look around for the site of the Swan Theatre. The ancient way south, into St. George's Fields, has been diverted westward a few yards, and the

road now runs over the site of the old playhouse. A glance at the manor map (*ante*, p. 254) will enable us to estimate the distance from the river, a few feet south of Southwark Street and Stamford Street, and the same map also suggests that the railway covers the ancient Paris Garden lane.

Opposite the Castle in Holland Street were two other hostelries—The Next Boat and The Beggars' Bush. The 'next boat' to Blackfriars and the Middlesex shore : a choice of stairs for taking ship — Falcon Stairs, Paris Garden Stairs, and, further west a few yards, Bull Stairs and Old Barge House Stairs. Of these names all exist to-day, except Paris Garden Stairs ; and if we cross the river homewards, by Blackfriars Bridge, we are traversing, within a few feet, the line of the ancient ferry, in the wake of Elizabethan playgoers, at a distance of three centuries.

If, however, from this point we extend our perambulation to Newington Butts, we shall find at the end of Blackfriars Road, by St. George's Circus, the Surrey Theatre. Turning leftward up the London Road we arrive at Newington Butts, and a few yards before us in New Kent Road is the Elephant and Castle Theatre. Not in the fields, these transpontine theatres, but they represent the dramatic traditions of St. George's Fields, and the Butts, as the Standard Theatre in Shoreditch may be said to represent a continuity from

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the 'early London theatres in the fields.' Nor is it only in our time that polite playgoers have indulged in satirical allusions to the suburban theatres. In Field's 'A Woman is a Weathercock' (1612) Sir Abraham repeats to himself some lines he had addressed to his mistress, two of which run thus:

> 'I die, I sigh, thou precious stony jewel!
> Wearing of silk, why art thou so cruel?'

On which Pendant, who overhears him, ejaculates aside:

> 'Oh, Newington conceit! and quieting eke.'

Elsewhere in this book reasons have been carefully stated for the belief that it was at Newington Butts that Shakespeare's earliest dramatic efforts were produced; and perhaps the fact that 'Titus and Andronicus' was written for this meridian may help to explain those crude and coarse features of the play which have exercised the patience of critics who expect a universal excellence throughout our great poet's work, overlooking the fact that he was a working dramatist with a keen apprehension of the tastes and inclinations of his audience.

Leaving Newington Butts by Newington Causeway, we can complete the circle of our perambulation by passing up Borough High Street to London Bridge. In the High Street on our left we pass Great Suffolk Street, where stood the

palace of the Dukes of Suffolk (*ante*, p. 113). On the right, near St. George's Church, we pass King Street, a memorial of the time when Henry VIII. was lord of the manor of Southwark (*ante*, p. 121).

A few steps further and we come to the Tabard Inn, a very modern erection, it is true, but the ancient sign hangs over the pavement in the old-time style, the Tabard coat painted on the one side, and the words 'Rebuilt 1875' on the reverse. A court by the side of the inn enables us to look upon the site of the ancient hostelry, and ruefully compare it with its former picturesque aspect (*ante*, p. 119).

Just beyond the Tabard is the George, with one side of the inn-yard happily intact, and here the outside galleries call to mind the time when inn-yards were London theatres before the play-houses.

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