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it is perfectly well understood from tradition that it was always so; and if I am required, I think I could make it out to some remote period.

879. Are you aware what salary the Master of the Revels enjoyed at that time, independent of fees?—I cannot tell; I have no idea of that.

880. How far back are there any traces of these fees?—Since the year 1737, which makes it now 95 years.

881. Are you aware whether there was any salary enjoyed by the Master of the Revels independent of fees?—No. If you refer to theatrical history you may probably find that, but I am not aware of it; that is rather a research into antiquity, which may be more entertaining to the curious in dramatics, than necessary for my purpose.

882. When was the salary of examiner of plays established on its present footing?—Ever since the year 1737, when the Act passed. There has been an examiner ever since.

883. What is your salary exclusive of fees?—The examiner's nominal salary is 400*l.* per annum, but the deductions from it (the chief part of them reverting to the government as taxes) are no less than 31*l.* 8*s.* per cent., so that the actual salary is 274*l.* 8*s.* annually, a sum scarcely adequate, without the fees, to the labour of the business as now executed, and the constant residence in or near London.

884. In what way is that 31*l.* 8*s.* levied on your salary?—I have not got the documents, but there are a great many deductions for taxes, and some fees in the different offices, the Exchequer and the Treasury.

885. That does not amount to 31*l.* 8*s.* per cent.?—Yes, 31*l.* 8*s.* per cent. each year. There is a tax which is called wrongly in this instance, the land-tax, but it is levied on my place in the same ratio that the land-tax is levied, although I have no land except in the flower-pots out of my windows; and of the 31*l.* 8*s.*, the chief part goes to the land-tax, as it is called. I forgot exactly to what that amounts; but however the whole deduction is 31*l.* 8*s.* per cent. I have not got the particulars here, but I can furnish them to the Committee if required.

886. Are you sure the land-tax is levied upon the salary, not upon the office?—Clearly.

887. From what department do you receive your salary?—Regularly from the Exchequer, but there is an agent employed; it is a round about way of receiving it; there is some difficulty in the Exchequer about forms, which I do not understand, and there is a gentleman in the Treasury who used to get my salary from the Exchequer, and I received it from him; but it is now altered again, for there have been some regulations made lately as to the Civil List, and it is now paid into the Lord Chamberlain's office.

888. Does Mr. Mash charge any per-centage upon your salary?—No, certainly not; I do not suppose Mr. Mash does. The other day I had the honour to be lieutenant of the yeoman of the guard, and I received my salary constantly from the Lord Chamberlain's office, and you gave the man, who was a porter, or who sent you notice that your money was ready, a shilling every quarter.

889. Can you furnish the Committee with the items of the deduction?—I have them not in my pocket or my head, but I will send them.

890. There is a return ordered from your office of the number of plays examined by you?—That is now made out; I sent it the other day. It is a list of the plays examined by me, and licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, from the year 1829 to the present year inclusive. It is prepared in the Lord Chamberlain's office, and if not delivered in already, it will be immediately.

891. Do you know what the fees received by you last year for examining plays amount to?—I do not know. The year before last the number of plays was 111, which makes it double that number of guineas.

892. You do not receive any fee upon anything that is not licensed?—Certainly not.

893. Suppose a poor author should bring you a very excellent work, and he should represent that this fee was more than he could conveniently pay?—I hope I should not be deficient in charitable feelings on such an occasion, besides my *esprit du corps* in favour of dramatists.

894. But you certainly would not in such a case at all impede the granting of the licence on account of not receiving the fee?—No, surely not; God forbid that I should! If I met with any person to whom two guineas was an object, I should certainly withhold the claim, but in general I ought to have my fees. I think

Dr. Johnson



Dr. Johnson mentions somewhere in his *Life of Addison*, that Addison was very scrupulous as to his fees; he would not give them up to his friends, and the reason was, because two guineas were very little to them individually, but made a great difference to him in the aggregate.

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895. You do not receive more than 400*l.* a year after all deductions?—I may have made at times nearly 500*l.* It is somewhat ameliorated since the Frenchmen came. Whenever there are more theatres there is more emolument, and therefore, in point of dry and sheer interest, I ought to argue stoutly for there being 20 theatres in London, but my conscience will not permit me to say that; I believe there are too many already.

896. Have you received 200*l.* in fees in any year?—Yes.

897. Three hundred pounds?—No, I think not.

898. Are lectures in astronomy subject to your examination?—I think every thing on the stage ought to be. The Duke of Montrose thought so, and astronomical lectures were licensed at that time.

899. Have they been licensed since?—I do not believe anybody has been talking to us about the stars lately.

900. Are Mathews's entertainments licensed?—Yes, certainly. The last part, the *Monopolylogue*, as he calls it, is a farce, or (I beg his pardon) a comedy. It is a regular dramatic piece, but he acts all the characters himself.

901. That is licensed?—Yes.

902. It is submitted to your examination?—Yes.

903. Are oratorios licensed?—Yes; in the Duke of Montrose's time they were, and I think ought to be now; not for the sake of the fees.

904. Why?—Because I think they may be immoral things.

905. Immoral oratorios?—Yes; it sounds like a contradiction, but it is so. If you read the *Biographia Dramatica*, you will find there is one mentioned as scandalously immoral.

906. Did not Mr. Hawes resist the Lord Chamberlain, in the case of Joseph and his Brethren?—Yes; a licence was granted to him, and he would not pay for it, and he placarded me in his advertisements.

907. Was the licence refused or granted?—The licence was granted, and he would not pay the fee, but he placarded me and blackguarded me, and that set me, at five minutes leisure I had, upon calculating the amount. He said if the precedent were admitted, God knows what expense future oratorio makers and undertakers would be subjected to. I calculated what it would be, and I believe it amounted altogether to no more than four guineas in two or three years.

908. Did you prohibit his playing it?—No; he played it and chuckled at his triumph, and sung and roared away. His oratorio went on; he had his licence, and I had not my two guineas.

909. Was the performance withdrawn?—No, it took place.

910. Then it appears dramatic performances do take place without paying the fees?—Highway robberies do take place, but they are contrary to law.

911. Where is the law for your taking fees; do you find it in the Act of Parliament?—No; they are the fees prescriptively claimed for 95 years.

912. But you cannot prove yourself they were paid 95 years ago?—No; we have no means to prove anything but records or tradition relative to the time of William the Conqueror.

913. Where are your records?—They will be found in the Lord Chamberlain's office. I beg Mr. Mash may be asked about that.

914. Mr. Mash stated he knew nothing of your fees, or of the power under which you exacted them?—So I understand.

915. Do you consider it to rest upon custom?—It is a prescriptive right.

916. There is no written law upon the subject?—No; the common law is not written law.

917. Is the amount mentioned in your appointment?—No; I only go by what has been paid time out mind.

918. Have you any table of fees in your office?—That is a question for Mr. Mash to answer: I suppose prescription would be tantamount to a law.

919. From what source have you derived your information that these fees are prescriptive?—From my inquiries at every theatre when I had my appointment. Depend upon it, had I exacted more than my predecessors in office had asked, the theatres would have told me fast enough that I asked too much.



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920. It is not said you have exacted too much; but is there any authority for their being asked?—Yes; when I was manager at the Haymarket, I paid Mr. Larpent two guineas over and over again.

921. There is nothing but a custom from which you can ascertain the amount?—No.

922. Can you ascertain the amount in the time of Charles 2?—That was in the time of the Master of the Revels; this Act of Parliament passed in the time of George 2.

923. But there were fees paid before the Act of Parliament?—There were fees paid to the Master of Revels, and Cibber and he had a dispute about it.

924. If he received fees, that would be a precedent for you?—Very well; the Master of the Revels did receive fees.

925. Can you prove that the Master of the Revels received fees so far back as the time of Charles 2?—Yes; I have no written document, I have only history and records to go by. Colley Cibber, who was contemporary with the Master of the Revels, gives an account of having paid his fees, and at last disputes the point with him; but it is stated that they had paid them, and that long before this Act was passed.

926. Then you can trace the existence of the custom as far back as that time?—Yes, on the authority of Colley Cibber. In his Apology for his Life, chapter 8, you will find a long account of the Master of the Revels having received fees.

927. Is there not also an account of those fees being disputed?—They were disputed, because his authority altogether was disputed.

928. Cibber is no authority in point of law?—I do not know where you will get law so far back. "In the eighth chapter of an 'Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber,' we are told there was good reason to suppose that the Master of the Revels had usurped a control which he did not legally possess; and we also learn, that having usurped it, he then grossly abused it. The law lately passed, says Cibber, by which the power of licensing plays, &c. is given to a proper person, is a strong presumption that no law had ever given that power to any such person before."

929. Can you prove that fees were paid to the Master of the Revels so far back as the time of Charles 1, for Mr. Malone mentions that?—I shall be much obliged to any gentleman who will put me in the way of proving so difficult a thing; how can we prove it, except from records, or tradition?

930. Mr. Malone quotes those records; are you aware he quotes the accounts of Sir Henry Herbert?—The Master of the Revels pretended to have power he did not possess; and Cibber says, it was under that pretence he got his fees. Now the power is vested by Act of Parliament in the Lord Chamberlain.

931. Cibber does not speak only of his fees?—No.

932. Have you not a copy of your appointment?—I was told it must remain in the Treasury, and there it is.

933. Can you state to the Committee what provincial theatres are favoured by your protection?—All that have a right to act the whole round of the drama, which power they obtain thus: in places remote from London, so many miles from the King's residence, and so on in provincial towns, there are certain theatres which the magistrates have the power to license for 60 days, with certain intervals between those 60 days.

934. For what purpose?—For the purpose of acting the whole round of the drama; but if those theatres, so licensed by the magistrates, produce plays which have not been licensed in London, or which are totally new, they are subject, like the London theatres, to the control of the Lord Chamberlain.

935. Have any of those theatres ever applied to you for a licence?—Yes.

936. Which?—Several.

937. Can you name one?—Yes, Liverpool.

938. Liverpool is a theatre royal?—Yes, there are some theatres in the country which are so.

939. Liverpool is not licensed by the magistrates?—No.

940. You say theatres licensed by the magistrates have applied to you for a licence?—Yes, some theatres in the circumstances I have stated, as well as patent theatres in the country.

941. What theatre, licensed by the magistrates for the performance of the regular drama, has ever applied to you for a licence to play a new piece; can you name one?—Yes, Brighton.

942. Brighton



942. Brighton is a patent theatre?—Yes, so it is\*; but I am positive several have applied; Norwich, I am not sure that is not a patent theatre.

943. You are certain the theatre licensed by the magistrate has recognised your authority?—Yes, I am confident of it.

944. You are not able to name one?—No.

945. Birmingham is a patent theatre?—Yes.

946. Manchester is the same, and York?—Yes; Coventry is not a patent theatre, and that will answer two questions; for I remember licensing, or rather transmitting a licence, to Coventry, for a piece written by a poor author who had no fees to pay, for I refused to take them.

947. Coventry is not a theatre royal?—No; to the best of my knowledge, certainly not.

948. You are not quite sure about that, are you?—No, these are things I carry on my shelves; my head is not big enough to hold them.

949. Then your opinion is, that no play can be acted anywhere without having previously received the licence of the Lord Chamberlain?—Yes. As to those theatres over the water, they are perfectly lawless; they only act under the common magistrates' licence, which is to license music and dancing; for the Legislature, when it passed the Act of 1737, did not contemplate that the town would get so overgrown as it is, therefore they never thought of those people that have since struck up, who get the common magistrates' licence for music and dancing, and abuse it to the extent you have seen.

950. Do they bring pieces to you to be licensed, or not?—No, they set us at defiance; they are outlawed, or at least lawless.

951. Then have you no remedy?—I suppose I have the same remedy as any common informer; but as I have enough to do as examiner, I do not choose to turn common informer.

952. There is a remedy, if you choose to exercise it?—There is a remedy, and I believe they have tried it by information, but the expense is so great that those whom it concerns do not like to inform any further.

953. What is the penalty?—The penalty, if you act anything unlicensed in a regular theatre, is very heavy indeed, 50*l.* for each time the offence is repeated, upon every person engaged in it, and a forfeiture of the grant by which they have the right of opening the theatre. If I were an informer, I could have shut up all the theatres every night by going strictly into forms.

954. Are you not in the habit not only of licensing dramas, but songs, prologues and epilogues; do they not require a special licence?—Yes, it is so stated in the Act of Parliament; but prologues and epilogues are generally sent with the dramas to which they belong, and they are all lumped in with the drama, unless they are sent afterwards.

955. If any alterations are made, would that require a fresh licence, and would you demand another fee?—Nothing on the stage is to be uttered without licence.

956. You would demand another fee?—Yes, to be sure, if there are material alterations. I do not mean to say if you alter a word or two. They do it *ad libitum*.

957. If a song is licensed for one theatre, is it necessary to be licensed again for another theatre?—No, certainly not; but what is licensed for Drury Lane or Covent Garden they have no right to play at the minor theatres, because the minor theatres are restricted to certain performances, and if under the licence to the patent theatres they perform a species of drama they have no licence to represent, they should not do it.

958. What is a licence for one minor theatre with respect to pieces is a licence for all?—Yes.

959. You say, in the paper which you have given in, that a piece was brought forward at Paris, in which incest, adultery, murder, parricide, &c. formed the groundwork; do you consider you would be perfectly justified in refusing to licence a piece in which those crimes were introduced?—No, not precisely that; let me see how the plot thickens. I should not refuse to licence the murders of Richard III. and so on, but when it comes to such things as human nature and morality shudder at and revolt against.

960. Does

\* The Brighton theatre is found, on reference, to act under an annual licence from the Lord Chamberlain, it being situated in the vicinity of the King's residence.



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960. Does not human nature and morality shudder at Macbeth, if we can suppose morality to shudder?—Yes; but it is a matter of history.

961. Do you mean to say in those cases you would only withhold the licence to those plays which seem to have justified such acts, or do you mean from the mere introduction of the thing?—Exactly; things that seem to any reflecting or dispassionate mind really to justify murder.

962. Either to justify or encourage it?—Yes. We have murders upon the modern stage more frequently than the ancients had.

963. You say incest, adultery, murder, parricide, &c.; are not those crimes the results of the passions upon which the interest of great dramatic performances is founded?—Yes, in some instances.

964. Would you wholly exclude them?—No; nor are they excluded in general. It is only where there is something so shocking as to justify exclusion.

965. Would the mere introduction of anything that is shocking, justify you in censuring or refusing your licence to that performance, or is it only its being introduced in such a manner as to seem to justify or encourage the crime itself; would the mere introduction of it be sufficient?—The reason of suppressing every thing of that sort is, when it may make a bad impression on the people at large. It is impossible to answer so comprehensive a question. It must depend upon the discretionary power of the Lord Chamberlain; and I have already shown how far it is from the wish of the Lord Chamberlain to object.

966. You only refuse your license to such things as tend to justify or encourage crime?—Certainly.

967. Have you any idea of what you should consider politically wrong?—Yes, certainly; anything that may be so allusive to the times as to be applied to the existing moment, and which is likely to be inflammatory.

968. You would think under a Tory administration, anything against the Tories would be wrong, and under a Whig administration, anything against the Whigs?—I should say to the manager, “I do not pretend to interfere, but you had better not allow it for the sake of your theatre, as you will have a row in your theatre.” It was but the other day the word “reform” was mentioned, and I understand there was a hubbub.

969. Where was that?—At all the theatres.

970. In the exercise of your censorship at the present moment, if the word reform should occur, you would strike it out?—No; I should say, “I think you had better omit it; I advise you to do so for your own sakes, or you will have a hubbub.”

971. There was a play of Charles the First you refused to licence?—Yes.

972. Why did you refuse to license that?—Because it amounted to every thing but cutting off the King’s head upon the stage.

973. So does Julius Cæsar?—Yes, but not in that way. If you took the trouble of reading the two plays, you would see the difference. There is a discretionary power in the Lord Chamberlain.

974. Is it all a matter of discretion and caprice?—It is the discretion of the Lord Chamberlain.

975. Or a caprice?—You call it so.

976. Is your appointment for life or at will?—I understood for life, unless I misbehave myself.

977. Has the Lord Chamberlain power to remove you?—I do not know how far the Lord Chamberlain’s power extends, but it has been always considered the next thing to a patent place; it is not a patent place certainly.

978. How does the appointment specify it: is it from year to year?—No.

979. Is it during pleasure?—No, it does not say so.

980. Is there a fresh appointment on every new Lord Chamberlain?—No; there is in every new reign.

981. There is no fresh appointment on the change of Lord Chamberlain?—No, I am turned over to the next.

982. Suppose he did not wish to continue you, could he displace you?—No, I should demur to that; I do not know what power the Lord Chamberlain has to displace me; such a thing was never thought of.

983. Is the Dublin theatre under your protection?—No, there is a Lord Lieutenant there; it is under the control of his household.

984. You are quite sure the Dublin theatre has never paid two guineas to your office?—Quite sure, for there is a sort of Master of the Revels appointed there; they are under control, dependent on the Lord Lieutenant’s regime.

985. Then



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985. Then upon the Dublin stage anything may be performed?—No, I am not acquainted with the sort of administration there, but I understand it to be under the control of persons or a person appointed by the Viceroy of Ireland.

986. They have a licencer of their own?—Yes, they have, as I am told.

987. How is it with regard to Edinburgh?—That is under the Lord Chamberlain of England.

988. England and Scotland?—Yes, all the United Kingdom except Ireland.

989. You stated just now that in those provincial theatres which are licensed by magistrates for the regular drama, in the event of their wishing to act any new piece that may be written in the country, they are obliged to submit it to your inspection, and the only instance you named was Coventry; in what way do you claim that power, as the Act does not give it you?—Yes, there is an Act of Geo. 3.

990. Where do you find the licencer mentioned in that Act?—If you will look in the Act you will find it.

991. Do you mean to say your power is recognised?—Yes, under the Lord Chamberlain.

992. According to your opinion, the only part of England that is not able at this moment to have the regular drama represented, according to the construction you put upon the Act, is Westminster, and 20 miles round it?—No.

993-6. Suppose the inhabitants wish the regular drama played 19 miles out of London, how could they have that done?—You must go further still.

997. Then within Westminster and 20 miles is the only part of England where the regular drama cannot be performed?—If you will have the goodness to refer to the Act, that will give you every information.

998. That only applies to 20 miles beyond Westminster. Is there any place within that 20 miles where there is any possibility of having the regular drama performed?—Not by a magistrate's licence.

999. By what other licence; is it the Lord Chamberlain's?—No; the Lord Chamberlain has no such jurisdiction.

1000. Then how can it be obtained?—By repealing a part of the Act of Parliament, as in the case of the patent theatres.

1001. Then you think an alteration in the law would be of use?—If you want to license those people over the water, to put them on a regular footing, you must, as in the case of the patent theatres, repeal a part of the Act of Parliament, which would give them a patent, or, if you do not like a patent, you may repeal the Act as to the magistrates, and give them a power to license. But however, that goes to legislation, and that is beyond me.

1002. You, as examiner of plays, ought to know something on the subject?—As far as my duty goes, I wish to inform myself as well as I possibly can; and I think I have given *you* some information.

1003. Do not you think it hard upon people who live within 20 miles of Westminster, that they cannot have the regular drama performed?—It is difficult for me to give any opinion as to the hardship.

1004. Is it not an anomaly?—I think it is hard those people over the water are suffered to do what *you* are doing, that they are suffered to go the lengths they are now going.

1005. That is not an answer to the question. The question was, why people who live within 20 miles of London should not have the power of having the legitimate drama performed?—You must ask the Legislature that question.

1006. Do not you think that an anomaly?—It is so; seeing one party is admitted to do this and another not, it is so far anomalous.

1007. Does not the Lord Chamberlain's power extend to where the magistrates' power begins?—No.

1008. They can only give a licence 20 miles out of Westminster?—No.

1009. Then you think the regular drama ought to be confined to the two patent theatres?—I think it would be better for all parties.

1010. Can the Crown by patent licence theatres in Westminster, or within 20 miles?—I believe not. In the present day, although the number of theatres in and about the metropolis has greatly increased, the general taste for play-going is evidently on the wane. Still there should be no restrictions, as the honourable Member for St. Ives says, in the performance of the legitimate drama at every theatre. Now it happens that the restricted Adelphi and Olympic theatres are thriving, while of the two legitimate patent theatres, the lessees of one have lost



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several thousands per annum, and the ruined proprietors of the other are letting their house if they can to the best bidder. If the minor theatres be wise, they would wish for no further latitude than that they now enjoy.

1011. The Committee will not trouble you for any opinion as to the interests of the minor theatres, as they are the best judges of their own affairs. You state that the patent theatres are not flourishing; do you mean that the regular drama is not in a state of prosperity?—If all theatres are to be allowed the performance of the legitimate drama, where are their actors to come from? The two patent theatres have a difficult task in finding a company at each adequate to the performance of the whole round of stage business.

1012. If you say the patent theatres are not flourishing, that is admitting the mere performance of the regular drama is not a source of prosperity?—Certainly; and if two theatres which play the regular drama cannot prosper, there is a worse chance if you license 20 instead of two theatres.

1013. Do you think the legitimate drama can be better performed at Covent Garden or Drury Lane than at the Haymarket or Adelphi?—Yes.

1014. With regard to comedy, do you think legitimate comedy can be better played on the large stage of Covent Garden than in the smaller stage of the Haymarket?—They have a better collective company trained to that style of acting, which is not the style of the minor theatres. The Haymarket theatre can scarcely rank among the minors, as it is licensed for *the whole round* of the drama.

1015. Suppose the company were put upon a smaller stage, would not a comedy appear to as great advantage at the Haymarket as Covent Garden?—I think if theatres are so large that you cannot see and hear, smaller theatres are preferable.

1016. Do you consider that to be the case at Covent Garden?—I am near sighted, and I cannot see so well there certainly.

1017. Can you hear as well?—Whenever I go the managers are very kind, and they have placed me in a private box near the stage, where I hear well enough.

1018. Can those hear who sit in the centre of the house?—I never did sit in the centre of the house.

1019. Which do you prefer as an author?—I should wish everybody to see and hear my play, except those who are inclined to damn it.

1020. Now, as an author, would you like John Bull or the Iron Chest to be played on the Covent Garden stage, or the Haymarket, by as good a company; which stage would do your composition most justice?—I should say, perhaps, one is too large, and the other too small; I am speaking of my own former Haymarket theatre.

1021. With reference to the present theatre?—I have never been in it.

1022. Have you ever been in the Adelphi?—Yes.

1023. Should you prefer Covent Garden or the Adelphi?—I should say the Adelphi was too small.

1024. Which would you prefer?—I have not turned that matter in my mind; the next play I write I will consider of it.

1025. Will you answer the question with reference to the plays you have written; suppose you had the choice of performing John Bull or the Iron Chest at Covent Garden, or the Adelphi, which would you prefer?—I must hesitate about that. If I sent it to the Adelphi, I should wish it on a larger scale than it is at this moment; and with a view to my profits, I should wish it much larger.

1026. But to do justice to your composition and powers as an author, would you choose Covent Garden or the Adelphi?—With a view to merely seeing and hearing, I should perhaps choose a less theatre than Covent Garden, and a larger theatre than the Adelphi; something between them.

1027. Then, except with a view to the better receipts you would get at the larger theatre, you think it would be better performed at a smaller one?—I have not exactly said that.

1028. With a view to the essentials of seeing and hearing, you think a smaller theatre would be preferable?—If it is too large.

1029. Have you ever visited the Coburg?—Yes.

1030. That is a larger stage than the Adelphi?—Yes.

1031. Then, as between Covent Garden and the Coburg, which would you select for the representation of any new piece or old piece of your own?—I think, certainly, the theatres are too large, and I should rather see my play acted at such a sized theatre as the Coburg.

1032. You



1032. You would prefer the Coburg to Covent Garden?—I cannot say which I should prefer; I could not answer the question to myself until I had taken time to reflect upon it.

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1033. Do not you think the size of the theatres compels the managers to seek to amuse the eye rather than the ear, and that it has led to the triumph of scenery rather than of poetry and acting?—They play all sorts of things; a drama is now exceedingly popular, and having a great run, called "The Hunchback," which seeks to please the ear more than the eye.

1034. Is not that an exception, as many such have not been produced of late years, but they have depended more upon scenery and quadrupeds than good acting?—I certainly think the size of the theatres has led them to spectacle and sing-song.

1035. When you said the minor theatres had been flourishing, and therefore you would wish for an alteration in the present system, is not that rather owing to their being able to invade the present law, than to the present law being in full operation?—I cannot enter into that.

1036. Do they at present invade the law as far as the legitimate drama is concerned?—Yes, certainly, they do.

1037. Then that is the reason of their flourishing?—No, I do not know that.

1038. If they only sung and danced, do you think they would flourish?—I am not able to answer that question.

1039. Will you have the goodness to point out the clause in the Act of the 28 Geo. 3, which gives you authority over new pieces produced at provincial theatres?—The clause is—

1040. Where is any power given to you in that clause?—Whatever new play is licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, they have a right to perform, and no other.

1041. They have only a right to perform plays produced in London, which have been licensed by the Lord Chamberlain; but how are they bound to submit to you a new play written in the country?—I think they are. If they are empowered to perform plays which have passed through the strainer of London, *à fortiori*, they may require a licence for themselves. If there is any doubt about it, let the Coventry theatre send up a play to be licensed, and according to your argument, we have only to make out a licence for Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and it is suitable for Coventry.

1042. But you have no original jurisdiction over the provincial theatres?—I have taken things as I have found them, and it is so understood all over the country, and they send up plays to me: it is no innovation or suggestion of mine, I found the practice existing.

1043. That is in the case of theatres royal, but you have not mentioned any provincial theatre licensed by the magistrates which submits to your authority?—I have not my book, but I have mentioned Coventry; and could mention others, but they do not occur to my mind. If the Committee require it, I will send a list.

1044. Do you think performers always adhere to your corrections?—I believe so.

1045. Do you ever take any measures to enforce your correction?—No, I have no ulterior power; if there is any necessity to enforce them, it is the Lord Chamberlain who must do it. If I thought they were going too far, I should certainly represent the case to the Lord Chamberlain, and he would act at his discretion.

1046. You never send anybody to ascertain whether your corrections are observed?—I need not do that; I have enough occupation not to volunteer that; I have plenty of information on the subject.

1047. There is a theatre in the Strand, perhaps you are aware of, which is performing now?—Yes, I think that theatre is performing without any authority whatever.

1048. Does it ever submit plays to your inspection?—Never. I understand they have been sent to from the Lord Chamberlain's office, and told they are going beyond the line, and, as I understand, they have answered they do not think so; and they go on; but that cannot last for ever: the question must be settled one way or the other, I presume.

1049. What means have the Lord Chamberlain's office taken to stop them?—I think the Lord Chamberlain can stop them.

1050. What are they doing in order to stop them?—I cannot say, that is out of my department.



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1051. Do you think the legitimate drama being played at all the minor theatres within the bills of mortality would operate beneficially or otherwise to the drama in general?—If I am asked my private opinion, I am afraid they would injure themselves.

1052. Never mind themselves; what effect would it have on the drama in general, or dramatic literature?—If those who are to conduct the affairs of dramatic literature are to injure themselves, I cannot think dramatic literature itself would be benefited. If all the concerns fail which are to perform the drama, what is to become of dramatic literature itself? It would go to the dogs along with the rest.

1053. What injury do you apprehend would result to the patent theatres if the legitimate drama were allowed to be acted at the minor theatres?—It might draw audiences from one place to another, so that none of them would have audiences sufficient to pay their expenses.

1054. Should not you think it would increase the number of persons who like to go to theatres?—I should doubt it. If people have not a relish for going to two theatres, I do not think that relish would be increased because there are 20.

1055. To what do you attribute the loss of money which every year takes place at Covent Garden and Drury Lane?—I think it is a horrible ruin, there is no doubt.

1056. What is the cause of it?—I do not know; they are extremely industrious, and the cause is from the taste of the town being very much altered, and from a change of habits. For instance, gentlemen of the description I have now the honour of talking to, go to dinner about the time of half-price, and therefore they are not the supporters of theatres; that is the generality; there are some amateurs.

1057. Do you think the theatres should be kept open two hours later?—No; what is to become of your other customers, the tradespeople? if they are to be kept up as long as fashionable people, they would not be able to open their shops in the morning.

1058. Do you think the tradespeople support the theatres?—I think that a great part of the audience consists of visitors to London, people who have come to see the lions, foreigners, and so on.

1059. Do not you think one great cause for their failure is the theatres being too large?—I think there is a redundancy of room, if they cannot fill them.

1060. Will you have the goodness to furnish the Committee with the items of deduction made in your salary?—Yes; I furnished the other day a list of plays.

1061. Will you also state the amount of fees paid to you?—I have stated already the fee was two guineas each. At the end of each season there is the number of plays that have been licensed, which will give the amount of fees; suppose we say 100 plays, that will be enough, as you will see I have received 200 guineas.

Mr. William Dunn, called in; and further Examined.

Mr. William Dunn.

1062. WILL you have the goodness to state to the Committee what you conceive to be the privileges granted to Drury Lane theatre by the Killigrew patent which they possess?—The exclusive right to perform all entertainments of the stage of whatever sort, by the patentees or proprietors of such patent.

1063. Do you mean throughout the year?—Yes.

1064. Where do you find an exclusive power in your patent?—I conceive it is an exclusive power.

1065. You say exclusive right?—Yes, as far as Killigrew's and Davenant's patents go.

1066. Do you mean no other theatre has a right to perform the legitimate drama but Covent Garden and Drury Lane?—Yes, unless another patent should be granted by the King.

1067. You say only so far as Killigrew's and Davenant's patents go?—Yes, there are only those two patents existing.

1068. Do you mean the Lord Chamberlain has not the power to license another theatre for the performance of the legitimate drama within the city of Westminster?—He has the power.

1069. How do you reconcile that to your exclusive right; your rights are not exclusive if he has the power?—We claim to play all entertainments of the stage under that patent of Killigrew's.

1070. But those are not exclusive rights if the Lord Chamberlain has the power to grant the same right by an annual licence to a minor theatre; in that case, what becomes



becomes of your exclusive right?—With that exception, that the King can grant a patent, or the Lord Chamberlain can grant licences from time to time as he thinks proper.

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1071. Then the Lord Chamberlain is paramount to your patent?—He has licensed the Haymarket, the English Opera, the Olympic, and Mathews's entertainments; but still we complain of the exercise of that power, and have always petitioned against it.

1072. Have you any remedy at law against the Lord Chamberlain for allowing the representation of the legitimate drama; at the Adelphi, for instance?—No, I do not know that we have.

1073. Then, in point of fact, the Lord Chamberlain is totally independent of you?—I apprehend he has the power of granting licences.

1074. You have an exclusive power, but it is at the discretion of the Lord Chamberlain?—Yes, and the King.

1075. Your patent does not prevent the Lord Chamberlain from giving another licence?—No.

1076. Have not you a licence as well as a patent?—We have, for 21 years.

1077. How many of those years are unexpired?—Five; the renewal was in 1816.

1078. Was there not an arrangement made between the Opera House and Drury Lane and Covent Garden, in 1792, with regard to the description of performances?—There was.

1079. Do you conceive the Lord Chamberlain has exceeded his power, or at all violated that agreement?—It was never contemplated at the time that agreement was entered into between those parties that the Lord Chamberlain would have exercised the power he has exercised since.

1080. Then you think he has exceeded his power?—Yes, we conceive so, or we should not have complained of it.

1081. It is rather a breach of understanding than an infringement of your rights?—Yes, both.

1082. Then are the Committee to conclude that the proprietors of the two patent theatres did not know of the power of the Lord Chamberlain as to his being able to grant licences for the performance of the legitimate drama?—No, we only complain of the usage of that power, when he does it to an extent which is an injury to the patent theatres.

1083. Was not there an application made to Parliament in 1809 for a patent for a third theatre, when Drury Lane was burnt down?—There was.

1084. It was refused, was it not?—Yes.

1085. Do you know why?—Because it was conceived the town did not require a third theatre, and it would be the utmost injustice to the two patent theatres, more especially Drury Lane, which was burnt down, and the proprietors were using their utmost exertions to rebuild it.

1086. Will you state the circumstances under which Drury Lane obtained the licence for 21 years, which remains unexpired?—That was obtained for the purpose of rebuilding Drury Lane theatre. The dormant patent, or rather Killigrew's patent, had not been possessed by the proprietors of Drury Lane theatre, who had only paid for that part of it which was Mr. Harris's share. There were other interests still to be paid for; they only possessed 46 shares out of 60, and there remained 14 sixtieths to be purchased. They had not funds at that time to purchase the 14 sixtieths, and therefore Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Whitbread being extremely anxious to go forward with the subscription to rebuild the theatre, applied to the Lord Chamberlain for a renewal of that 21 years' licence, as they could not get subscriptions on the remaining few years which were running on the 21 years' licence then in existence. They got that 21 years' licence renewed, and subsequently paid the balance, to the amount of 9,000*l.*, and possessed themselves of Killigrew's patent entire.

1087. Do you consider that was a good or wise step on the part of the Drury Lane proprietors to possess themselves of Killigrew's patent; do you consider it was a provident purchase?—Yes.

1088. At whose recommendation was it done?—It was in the Opera arrangement, and took place at the particular recommendation of the Prince Regent and the Duke of Bedford, who refused to grant a lease for a term of years unless they purchased Killigrew's patent. He made objections to granting a lease for 103 years until Killigrew's patent was purchased.



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1089. What was it to the Duke of Bedford?—The same necessity existed in the year 1793 (for the purchase of Killigrew's patent for Drury Lane theatre) as existed in the year 1810, when the present theatre was built, by paying the balance, namely, that they should possess that patent which was supposed to run for ever.

1090. What benefit did the theatre derive from the possession of that patent?—As I have stated, the exclusive privilege of playing all entertainments.

1091. Then where was the necessity of the licence?—They had not possession of Killigrew's patent at that time, and therefore they required in the interim to get the 21 years' licence.

1092. Then it was to cover the remaining part of the patent?—Yes.

1093. Was Killigrew's patent purchased after the subscribers had contributed their money for building a theatre?—The first portion of it, 11,900*l.*, was paid in 1793, and 9,000*l.* was paid subsequent to the rebuilding of Drury Lane theatre.

1094. Then the subscriptions were given on the faith of its being purchased?—Yes, the subscriptions came in very slowly, until Mr. Whitbread was able to report they were likely to possess themselves of Killigrew's patent.

1095. What was the arrangement made with the Opera House?—That they should be confined to Italian operas; or rather, Drury Lane and Covent Garden were precluded from playing Italian operas, and the King's theatre was to play only 60 nights in the course of the season.

1096. Where is that specified?—In the Opera arrangement.

1097. Have you a copy of that?—Yes.

[*It was delivered in.*]

1098. At the same time Drury Lane gave up its privilege of acting Italian operas?—Yes, they did, and have continued to desist from acting Italian operas ever since.

1099. Did they consider that a valuable privilege?—A valuable privilege it would have been if they were empowered to do it. They were empowered if they had broken through the arrangement, but they have kept it sacred.

1100. But it was upon the understanding the patent was valid, and the faith of the theatre having the exclusive privilege, that the subscribers continued their money?—Yes, generally; in a great measure it induced the subscribers to go forward.

1101. They put that forward to the public?—It was Mr. Whitbread, in the report.

1102. Was there any prospectus given out to the public with regard to that?—Only in the report drawn out.

1103. Was there any understanding between Drury Lane and the Crown or the Lord Chamberlain at that time?—Not that I am aware of. The Act of Parliament directed that the balance of Killigrew's patent should be paid.

1104. That was the basis of the agreement?—Yes.

1105. Have you got a copy of that agreement, the basis of the present contract?—It is in the Act of Parliament.

1106. Was it not the custom for the Lord Chamberlain to consult the patent theatres whenever an application was made to him for a licence for a single night at a small theatre?—No; it was in Lord Salisbury's time.

1107. That has never been resorted to by the present Lord Chamberlain?—I think when Lord Dartmouth came in he discontinued it.

1108. When you were examined the other day, you stated Mr. Mash received an annuity of 100*l.* from Drury Lane?—Yes.

1109. Are you aware how that originated?—I never knew how it originated, but I always understood it was for the renewal of that licence for 21 years.

1110. For the good will of the Lord Chamberlain's office?—Yes.

1111. Do you consider that a provident or a good bargain?—It was considered improvident by Mr. Whitbread, who intended to discontinue it as soon as the balance of Killigrew's patent was paid, because there was no further necessity for the Lord Chamberlain's licence.

1112. Why should the Lord Chamberlain's office interest itself in whether Killigrew's patent was bought or not?—It made a difference in Mr. Mash's fees every time there was a renewal.

1113. It was an annual licence before?—No, it was for 21 years. About 1709 the first licence commenced.

1114. Then having purchased the patent, you were independent of the Lord Chamberlain's office?—Yes, having purchased Killigrew's patent, we consider ourselves independent.

1115. From



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1115. From whom was it purchased?—From Mr. Harris, Mr. White, and Mr. Martindale; they were the parties.

1116. Do you conceive you can play Italian operas at Drury Lane theatre without the leave of the Lord Chamberlain?—I think we could, under Killigrew's patent.

1117. Do you consider it an infraction of the patent, by German and French operas being played at the King's theatre?—Yes, the agreement has been broken by the Opera House proprietor, inasmuch as they play six nights in a week, and play French and German as well as Italian operas.

1118. You would justify your breach by their breach?—Yes, if we were to break it.

1119. The condition for which you gave up your right of playing Italian operas has not been complied with?—Mr. Taylor was to pay a certain amount of the balance of the patent in consideration of our desisting playing Italian operas.

1120. In whose hands was Davenant's patent at that time?—Covent Garden theatre.

1121. Which was Mr. Harris the manager of?—He was the manager of Covent Garden too; he possessed both the patents.

1122. Then before Drury Lane possessed Killigrew's patent, under what authority did they act?—The 21 years' running licence.

1123. Do you know for how great a length of time the two patents had been held together by Covent Garden theatre; how did it happen they came together, because originally there were two?—I believe the town did not support the two theatres at that time; and they were united in 1620.

1124. Do you happen to know how many years they were united?—No.

1125. What objection have you to Shakspeare, or any of the legitimate dramatic authors, being acted at the minor theatres?—I think to throw open the drama would be destructive of it, inasmuch as there are not performers sufficient in number, nor I believe in the country, for we have no school of actors.

1126. It appearing there are not performers sufficient to play on the large stages, do you not think there are plenty of performers who would play respectably and satisfactorily to the public upon the stages of the minor theatres?—No, I think not; they may play very well for the representation of spectacle and their own pieces; but if you were to play Macbeth at the Coburg theatre, say with Mr. Young in Macbeth, and the other parts filled up with the performers who are in the habit of playing at the Coburg, it would be a miserable representation.

1127. Do you not think, if they were in the habit of playing the legitimate drama, there would be many more people come forward to fill those parts than at present?—No, I think not.

1128. Now, are you not aware that all the great actors of the day have come out at the country theatres?—Many of them; but there is no school in the country now.

1129. Do you not consider these numerous theatres would be so many schools and nurseries for actors, if they played the legitimate drama?—The fact is, that actors are not coming forward.

1130. Then allowing the minor theatres to play the legitimate drama would not hurt you if there were no scholars?—But during the time you are playing the legitimate drama with scholars you very much deteriorate.

1131. May not actors succeed on a small stage in representing the legitimate drama, who would fail at Covent Garden or Drury Lane?—It depends on the powers of voice.

1132. But power of voice and lungs does not always constitute the most eminent actor?—No.

1133. Might not a person who does not possess that power of voice appear to great advantage on a minor stage; at the Haymarket, for instance?—I think at present there are not two companies sufficient to represent a play properly at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, as it ought to be represented; and if you divide them over the whole town, and place one or two at each minor theatre, you would not have the legitimate drama represented so as to be fit to be seen.

1134. Are all your representations at Drury Lane confined to what you conceive to be the legitimate drama?—No; we perform farce and spectacle and pantomime.

1135. What description of representation do you, as treasurer, find the most productive to your theatre, legitimate drama or spectacle?—Our authors have been very deficient in the legitimate drama for some time past.



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1136. Within the last few years have you found spectacles fill your theatre better than the legitimate drama?—Yes, novelty; the old drama certainly is not very attractive.

1137. How many persons can hear well in Drury Lane theatre?—I think almost all the audience, at least three-fourths of the audience.

1138. How many persons does the theatre hold?—I should imagine 3,000 people.

1139. How many does the Haymarket hold?—I am not aware.

1140. About how many?—Perhaps half that number.

1141. Because the legitimate drama has lost its attraction at Drury Lane or Covent Garden, (Shakspeare, for instance,) do you conceive it has lost its attraction at the minor theatres?—I do not think that it has lost its attraction, provided they could get authors to write a good legitimate drama, as in the case of the Hunchback.

1142. We are now speaking of stock-pieces, Shakspeare?—Yes, I think it would be equally unproductive at the Coburg.

1143. What objection have you to allowing the proprietors of the Coburg to play it, if they think proper?—Because they would not only take the old, but they would take the new productions authors might write.

1144. Then you object to their having the new productions more than to their having Shakspeare; you would give Shakspeare up?—Not exactly so.

1145. You would not mind Shakspeare so much as the new productions?—I think if they represented Shakspeare at the minor theatres under the present existing state of the number of actors in the town, it would be very destructive to the regular drama altogether.

1146. Do you think comedy could not be as well represented on a small stage as at Drury Lane or Covent Garden?—On a moderate sized stage it might, certainly.

1147. Better?—I think not; I do not think Covent Garden stage or Drury Lane stage too large.

1148. You think not?—No.

1149. In the centre of the house at Drury Lane or Covent Garden, can the play of the countenance, which in comedy is a great point, be seen at all?—No; but on the other hand, a smaller theatre destroys the illusion.

1150. What illusion do you mean?—The illusion of the scene; if you sit in the stage-box, for instance.

1151. That is with regard to spectacle, or a piece in which pageantry is required; but is that so where no scenery is required?—The same objection does not apply certainly to a coat-and-waistcoat comedy, as we call it, but to a tragedy, because fine scenic effects are to be produced in a tragedy, which can only be produced on a large stage.

1152. That applies to tragedy; a coat-and-waistcoat comedy can be represented as well on a small stage?—Yes, on a moderate sized stage. On a small stage, you have sometimes a very tall actor, which is preposterous.

1153. Do you think legitimate comedy, when given on a small stage, is better given, and more correctly acted?—No, I think not.

1154. I understand you to say three-fourths of the audience hear at Drury Lane; then, by your own admission, you think it one-fourth too large?—That does not follow; I mean, to see and hear perfectly without inconvenience.

1155. Are you not aware one of the first things an actor learns in coming to the stage of Covent Garden or Drury Lane is the art of getting off at the wings, from its being too large?—It may be; it is part of his profession.

1156. Was an idea ever entertained of diminishing Drury Lane theatre?—It has been diminished, to what I conceive to be a reasonable size.

1157. When was that?—In the year 1816.

1158. Do you recollect what was the outlay on that occasion?—£. 22,000. The whole of the interior was pulled down.

1159. How much was it diminished; one-third, or how much?—I think it was brought forward about six feet.

1160. Then, before it was pulled down, it was found inconveniently large?—The proscenium; the construction of it altogether was complained of rather more than the size.

1161. The shape as much as the size?—Yes, the great pillars were taken away from the stage, the proscenium was altered. The formation of the theatre was also a little defective in the sight, in the way in which the range of boxes took place.

1162. What



1162. What do you think the best shape for hearing in a theatre?—I think *Mr. William Dumas* Drury Lane is quite perfect in that respect.

1163. What is the shape?—The horse-shoe.

1164. You consider the horse-shoe shape the best for hearing?—Yes.

1165. You think, if all the plays produced were as good as the Hunchback, the theatres would flourish?—Certainly.

1166. Why did you refuse the Hunchback at Drury Lane?—That was a point of management or mismanagement I am not acquainted with.

1167. What species of representation has been most productive within the last year; which has brought the most money?—It is difficult to say; we had so little of anything that did bring money.

1168. Did the lions draw money?—The lions certainly paid their expenses.

1169. Did any other piece pay the expenses?—A legitimate drama, which was called the Rent-day, was, I think, the most profitable of anything that was played.

1170. The Brigand?—The Brigand is a favourite piece, but it was not new last year; it was played with the Rent-day. The Brigand is what we call an excellent stock-piece.

1171. What is the amount of the sum which now remains due upon Drury Lane theatre; what was the amount of the investment?—About 212,000 *l.*

1172. What portion of that sum remains unpaid?—About 10,000 *l.*

1173. And until that is paid no dividends are received upon that 212,000 *l.*?—None.

1174. Then, according to the present rate, how long will it be before the remaining portion of the debt will be paid off?—About three years, supposing the present rent to go on. A great portion of the debt which now remains is a part of the compensation which was paid to the proprietors for the patent, 40,000 *l.*, which the Sheridan family received for their portion of the patent.

1175. However, it is a debt upon the theatre which you cannot escape from?—Yes; Mr. Tom Sheridan died possessed of a bond of 10,000 *l.*, which was the major part of Mrs. Sheridan's fortune, and enabled her to bring up her talented family as she has done.

1176. In three years' time you expect to pay the dividends?—Yes; provided the theatre is let at its present rental.

1177. How much per cent.?—I should think scarce two per cent. on the capital invested.

1178. You only begin to pay these dividends in three years' time?—That is about the time the 10,000 *l.* will be paid off. At the expiration of the lease the theatre may not be let, and the committee may be obliged to carry it on themselves.

1179. What has been the state of the theatre within the last two or three years; has it been a winning or losing concern?—It has not been a winning concern for the last three years.

1180. Was it before that time?—Before that time there was a season occasionally a winning concern, but generally speaking very unproductive to the lessees; the proprietors receive their rental, but the lessees are bankrupt.

1181. The lessee is a loser this year?—He is a considerable loser this year.

1182. Do you speak of the proprietors or the lessees?—The proprietors receive the rental from the lessee, and the lessee bears the brunt of the loss. The lessee will lose considerably above 10,000 *l.* this year.

1183. You mean to say as to the last agreement about this patent, that it was given you in consideration of the property amounting to more than 200,000 *l.* vested in that theatre?—Yes.

1184. And in consideration of the expenses to which you had been exposed?—Yes; the Act of Parliament particularly directed the balance should be paid of Killigrew's patent.

1185. That Drury Lane should possess it entirely to itself?—Yes.

1186. On account of the money invested in the theatre, you received the indulgence you claimed?—Yes.

1187. You said by the agreement with the Opera House, they were only allowed to play twice a week?—Yes, 60 nights was the number in the course of the season.

1188. Will you point out any part of the agreement which says anything about 60 nights?—It is in the agreement.



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1189. Has not the lessee of Drury Lane theatre, whoever he may be, prohibited his performers in playing at the minor theatres, under a penalty for so doing?—No, the articles all run so.

1190. Are they not, in the articles with the manager, prohibited from engaging in a minor theatre?—They cannot go to any theatre without special permission.

1191. Did not the manager of Drury Lane close the theatre 20 days before the usual time?—It was some time before the usual time; but the performers generally have permission to go to a minor theatre when they ask it.

Mr. George Bolwell Davidge, called in; and Examined.

Mr.  
G. B. Davidge.

1192. WHAT theatre are you proprietor of?—The Coburg theatre.

1193. How are you licensed?—By the 25 Geo. 2.

1194. By the magistrates?—Yes.

1195. What is the nature of your licence?—Music and dancing.

1196. What construction do you put upon music and dancing?—I generally apply the construction of the Act of Parliament itself, which says music, dancing, and other entertainments of the like kind.

1197. Do you conform to that Act by giving to the public nothing but music and dancing?—Certainly not.

1198. Then, what construction do you put upon "other entertainments?"—I conceive it is a very comprehensive question, which has never yet been decided, what the words "other entertainments of the like kind" might imply.

1199. Do you include Shakspeare's plays?—I am aware there is an Act of Parliament which declares that should not be the case, but it has gone on from management to management to represent plays of that description, and I have fallen into the same course which other managers have adopted before, without pretending to the legality of it.

1200. You have given Shakspeare's plays on your stage?—Yes, repeatedly.

1201. Do you find them attract as much as your musical and dancing entertainments?—Considerably more. I am induced to think that the style of entertainment given in the minor theatres some 20 or 25 years ago, and which was popular at that time, would not be tolerated by the play-going public now.

1202. What description of representations were those?—Pantomime, and excessively loose rhymes to the jingle of a piano-forte; frequently recitative, or the language spoken in rhyme; horrible doggrel or jingle, which the public now would scout.

1203. Do you not think that species of entertainment tended to deteriorate the public taste?—Decidedly so.

1204. What part of the town do your audiences come from?—I conceive from the west end of the town and the city of London.

1205. Are they persons in the habit of going to the large theatres?—Decidedly; the theatre has been patronised by most of the royal family, and noblemen and gentlemen attached to theatricals.

1206. Are you one of the persons who signed a petition to Parliament to repeal the different laws affecting the theatres?—Yes.

1207. What is it you complain of with respect to the law relating to theatres?—I complain that it is so obscure that nobody can understand it; I also complain of the law because it is badly administered, inasmuch as individuals for their own purposes have the power of selecting persons for persecution; and the law is not so generally applied as to prosecute other persons who are equally infringing it.

1208. Who are those persons who have selected others?—I was selected, I conceive, by the proprietors of Drury Lane theatre. A prosecution was brought against me by Mr. Dunn, the treasurer, for representing Douglas and Richard the Third.

1209. Who were the performers who represented those characters; who represented Richard the Third?—I am not aware; not at that time any performer of great eminence.

1210. What was the result of that prosecution?—I was convicted.

1211. In what penalty?—Two sums of 50 *l.*, which I paid.

1212. Where were you convicted?—At the assizes of the county of Surrey: it was tried at Guildford.

1213. Have you ever repeated these representations since?—Frequently.

1214. Have you been prosecuted or informed against since?—I have received notice of prosecution, but I have continued to do so and shall until the subject is set



at rest; for on the day I was prosecuted, and for years before and since, those performances were continued at the other minor theatres, the proprietors of Covent Garden and Drury Lane not interfering.

1215. What object had the proprietors of Covent Garden and Drury Lane in selecting you?—Because they knew I was able to pay the penalty.

1216. Because you were a man of substance?—I suppose so.

1217. Why have not they persevered in their informations?—They did in their informations against the West London theatre.

1218. But against yourself?—I am not aware why they have not gone against me individually, except that the evidence which came out on the trial was not so complimentary as they wished to their judgment or their feelings; and I am rather induced to think they were not anxious to come before the public in the same way again.

1219. Did they not prosecute the Queen's theatre in Tottenham-street?—Not at that time, but afterwards.

1220. You think that prosecution excited the indignation of the public against them?—It did.

1221. Would not that do them harm in their theatres?—I should think not in a pecuniary light, but at least the public would judge for themselves whether it was an act of oppression or not.

1222. Did any of the performers at your theatre who acted Shakspeare belong to the great theatres?—Yes, a number of them; Mr. Dowton, Mr. Kean, Mr. Booth, and very many other actors; Mr. George Bennett.

1223. Was there a proper supply of performers there already to act those parts?—Certainly.

1224. You think there would be no difficulty in getting a sufficient number of people who are able and willing to act the legitimate drama?—Certainly not; I conceive I could produce tragedy, comedy, opera or farce, quite as perfectly at the Coburg theatre as it could be done at Covent Garden or Drury Lane.

1225. Then you wish the monopoly to be thrown open?—Not entirely; I conceive the patent theatres should in some measure be protected, and in fact theatres generally. I do not think it should go on in that sweeping way which it is imagined is intended. I conceive if plays produced at the patent theatres or minor theatres in London or out of London were the property of those persons producing them for at least 21 years, the effect would be entirely answered. I do conceive, after the plays have been performed 21 years in the major or minor theatres, if they become public property, the full end would be accomplished.

1226. Do you wish more theatres to exist than exist at present?—I am afraid there are already too many, because on the faith of licences and on the faith of protections large property has been risked on the minor theatres as well as the patent theatres; but smaller theatres are daily springing up, without protection or licence. How far that may be conceived beneficial to the drama, I am not at liberty to give an opinion.

1227. How is an author remunerated at your theatre?—Much in the same way as at the patent theatres. Authors who have been successful in some instances at the patent theatres, are the authors at the minor theatres. The author of the Rent-day, which has been instanced as the most profitable production at Drury Lane, was the author of a number of pieces at the Coburg Theatre.

1228. Do you know what is the general mode of remuneration?—Sometimes a stipulated sum of money; at times I have given 50 *l.*, and at other times 20 *l.*

1229. Has an author any nights?—Not besides.

1230. That is the case sometimes?—Occasionally; at other times the author will receive half-a-guinea or a guinea a night for each night the play is performed.

1231. Is that the whole remuneration; does he retain no right in the play after?—Certainly, the entire copyright.

1232. Then he has no right to any subsequent remuneration at the theatre?—Not any other remuneration beyond the run of the play, when he has received his stipulated sum.

1233. Abroad their rights extend to a very considerable length of time?—I am aware of that; but it is not the case in England.

1234. Has an author a right to any remuneration from country theatres?—No; when once the piece is published, it becomes, according to the present system, (out of London at least,) public property. All persons who can get a copy of the piece play it without advantage to the author or the person who has the copyright.



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1235. In France the author has a right to remuneration from any theatre in France?—From all theatres where the play is performed, and for eight or ten years after his death it goes to his heirs.

1236. Do you happen to know what the law is in Prussia?—I am not aware.

1237. The copyright is worth nothing to him in England?—He has the power of publishing.

1238. What number of spectators does your theatre hold?—Near 4,000. I have received money at the gallery door for 1,800; I have received money at the pit door for 1,130, and I have received money at the box door for 1,200 persons.

1239. On what occasion was it you received money for 1,200 persons at the box door; what was the representation?—I do not remember.

1240. Do you mean on one night?—I have stated the extent, the greatest amount I have received at different parts of the theatre at different times.

1241. What will the theatre hold?—Three hundred and sixty pounds.

1242. Then it will hold above 3,000 persons?—Yes, considerably.

1243. On those occasions did they pay full price?—Yes; on the occasion I am alluding to. On the night the Queen came to the Coburg theatre there was 317*l.* in the house.

1244. Then your house must be larger than Drury Lane?—The pit is considerably larger.

1245. Not the stage?—The stage is larger than Drury Lane.

1246. What is the largest sum you ever gave an author for a new piece?—I do not remember ever having given more than 50 guineas.

1247. Will you name any piece for which you gave that sum?—Yes; George the Third, a drama founded on some of the incidents of the life of George the Third.

1248. Any other?—Yes, the Horatii and Curiatii.

1249. George the Third was prohibited, was it not?—No; I think I played it nine or ten weeks, and the theatre was visited by the different branches of the Government, and they could not see anything obnoxious; but at the next licensing day the magistrates, who held discretionary power, told me they thought such representations injudicious, if not improper, representing sacred characters and the highest personages in the realm.

1250. You are now representing the old piece, Tom Thumb?—They are not sacred characters.

1251. The King and Queen are introduced into that?—King Arthur and Queen Dollalolla.

1252. You leave people to apply them as they please?—Yes; if we find them a piece, we are not compelled to find them comprehension.

1253. You think there is no danger of the magistrates giving you the same hint at the next licensing day as to Tom Thumb?—It is played as it has been played for the last 50 years, without the alteration of a single line.

1254. But the play-bill does not announce it in the usual way?—No, I do not defend that play-bill. It was issued during my absence from town, and I was much annoyed at it on my return, for I conceive managers of theatres have nothing to do with politics or party; they are open to all parties, and they have nothing to do with one party or the other. I must take the onus upon myself, but I do not for a moment defend it.

1255. Does it draw?—As much as Tom Thumb would generally draw.

1256. Not more?—Certainly not.

1257. Why should not you give it as Tom Thumb, without issuing that play-bill?—I think it was unnecessary, if not injudicious.

1258. Why was it continued?—It was stopped on my return to town; it was stopped in the course of a week. In fact, I received a polite communication from Mr. Roe, the magistrate of Bow-street.

1259. And that play-bill has not been issued since your return?—No.

1260. What do you give for the average run of new pieces, melo-dramas, and so forth?—About 20*l.* I should conceive.

1261. Should you have any objection to the Lord Chamberlain having the exclusive privilege of granting licences to all theatres in the neighbourhood of London for the performance of all sorts of things?—I conceive it would be as prejudicial and injurious to the minor theatres as it is already to the major theatres.



Veneris, 22<sup>o</sup> die Junii, 1832.

EDWARD LYTTON BULWER, ESQ. IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. *George Bolwell Davidge*, called in ; and further Examined.

1262. THE last question put to you was this, "Should you have any objection to the Lord Chamberlain licensing theatres in the neighbourhood of Westminster as well as those within Westminster ;" and your answer was, "I conceive it would be as prejudicial and injurious to the minor theatres, as it is already to the major theatres." In what way do you conceive it would be injurious to the major theatres?—I conceive that in many instances the delay that must naturally arise from a play being returned from the Lord Chamberlain would altogether mar the effect of local dramas and complimentary dramas, such as the "Naval Pillar," the "Mouth of the Nile," &c., those patriotic effusions have a very powerful effect on the public.

1263. Why should the Lord Chamberlain wish not to licence those pieces?—I am not alluding to not licensing, but the delay at the Lord Chamberlain's office, which would naturally take place if he had more business to do than he has already. The Act says, "No play shall be performed which has not been sent to the Lord Chamberlain at least 14 days before." Now in very many instances the entire spirit of the piece would evaporate in 14 days, and I conceive that such a delay would be extremely injurious to the minor theatres, as I imagine it has been already to the patent theatres.

1264. The patent theatres have never been obliged to wait 14 days for their licence?—They are obliged by law, for they are not to represent a play which has not lain 14 days in the Lord Chamberlain's office for approval.

1265. They are obliged to place their new plays before the Lord Chamberlain 14 days before representation, but it does not say they may not act them before those 14 days are expired if they receive the licence from the Lord Chamberlain?—If they receive the licence before ; but I have known instances where plays have been delayed,—in the time of the late licencer, Mr. Larpent,—and not produced on the day announced, because the licence had not been returned.

1266. Beyond the 14 days?—Yes.

1267. What will your theatre hold?—I stated at the last day, I thought it would hold between 3,000 and 4,000 persons ; I have since extracted the number exactly. On Friday, 1st August 1828, 1,230 persons paid into the boxes of the Coburg theatre ; on Monday, the 17th December 1824, 1,090 persons paid into the pit ; on Monday, 27th December 1830, 1,512 persons paid into the gallery.

1268. Is that the most that your theatre will hold?—I have no recollection of its ever being beyond that.

1269. That is about 3,800 persons?—Yes.

1270. What class of persons are those which frequent your theatre?—Of course, like the frequenters of all theatres, they are various. On Monday nights I conceive we have the working classes generally, and in the middle of the week we have the better classes, the play-going public generally.

1271. Do the nobility ever attend your theatre?—Yes.

1272. Do they take private boxes?—Yes, and public boxes also.

1273. Have you had many instances of their frequenting your theatre?—Yes, many.

1274. Do you recollect any who have taken boxes?—At the present moment I can scarcely say I remember names.

1275. Has the Lord Chamberlain ever been there?—Mr. Mash very frequently, and the Lord Chamberlain has commanded a performance in the theatre lately.

1276. For a benefit?—For the benefit of Miss Smithson.

1277. Did the Lord Chamberlain attend himself on that occasion?—I am not aware that he attended on that occasion. He has been in the theatre very frequently.

1278. What number of persons do you employ in your theatre, or are dependent on your theatre?—I should suppose there are indirectly and directly dependent at least 500.

1279. Do you know what the census of your parish is?—No ; I regret to say

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I have not got it with me, but I believe the increase in Lambeth parish since 1801 is considerably over 80,000.

1280. Your licence is merely for music and dancing?—Yes, “and other entertainments of the like kind.”

1281. If you were to confine your entertainments to music and dancing, do you suppose the public would be satisfied?—Certainly not.

1282. I have seen the play bill of “Tom Thumb” you issued a short time ago, and the printer’s name is Davidge; is that yourself?—Yes, the bills are printed in the theatre.

1283. You have a press of your own?—Yes.

1284. What occurred on the occasion of your withdrawing that play-bill?—I received a note from Mr. Roe, the sitting magistrate of Bow-street, saying he wished to see me. I called upon him, and he then stated that it had given offence; I said I felt extreme regret, but it had been already suppressed.

1285. It had been suppressed before you received the magistrate’s intimation to suppress it?—Certainly. He then requested me to state why I did not endeavour to gather the bills in. I stated to him that I thought it would excite attention more generally than suffering them to remain where they were, because if the servants of the theatre had gone to shops to collect those bills, some persons would instantly be anxious to keep them, conceiving there was some offensive matter in them. I therefore stated that was my reason, but that I took the earliest opportunity of covering the boards and withdrawing the piece. The piece was not performed on the nights it was announced.

1286. Supposing the present restrictions were taken off the minor theatres with regard to the performances, and more theatres built, do you suppose more men of substance would enter into theatrical speculations than do at present?—No, I think not.

1287. Because it is represented to us that they are men generally of desperate fortunes who embark in theatrical speculations at present?—I think that is too frequently the case. I think if theatres were of greater consequence than even many of them are at the present moment, that men of substance may be induced to embark in them, and that persons who are now frequently mere adventurers setting up new theatres would be deprived of those opportunities. In the first place, I conceive the system of opening theatres where you please, and when you please, injurious to the persons who embark large fortunes in both major theatres and minor theatres.

1288. The system you mean upon which they are now founded?—Yes.

1289. But giving them the legitimate drama, how would that benefit their position or improve their situation?—Is that applied to the theatres which are licensed?

1290. The minor theatres?—Giving them the legitimate drama is a matter more cavilled at than is warranted by any real advantage that might be derived from it. I conceive it is highly necessary that a better style of entertainment should be given by the minor theatres than what they were in the habit of giving the public 20 or 30 years ago; but if the privilege was extended, I conceive the legitimate drama would only be occasionally performed when Covent Garden or Drury Lane were closed, and they could obtain the talent of those actors who were employed at those theatres during the season.

1291. Do you think authors would be anxious, and you would find plenty of authors ready to write for your theatre, if the legitimate drama, which would be their compositions, were permitted to be performed?—Yes; I think there would be a great field for men of talent and genius, if the market were thrown open. Authors would not seek altogether for remuneration, but opportunity for their labours to be fairly exhibited to the public, and afterwards they would seek for that remuneration which at first they would not expect.

1292. With reference to what you said about complimentary pieces, are you not aware that the Lord Chamberlain always gives a licence to complimentary pieces without any delay?—I am not aware of that.

1293. Have you ever been connected with a theatre under the control of the Lord Chamberlain?—I have been.

1294. What theatre?—Both the Haymarket and the Adelphi.

1295. On the occasion of having complimentary pieces there, have you any recollection of any delay being interposed?—I have no recollection of any complimentary pieces being produced at the Haymarket or the Adelphi; but I remember,  
when



when I was at the Adelphi, about twenty years ago, a play being postponed in consequence of Mr. Larpent not having sent the licence.

1296. You are not aware of the consequences, I suppose?—I am not.

1297. Under what control do you propose the minor theatres should be?—Under the magistrates, as at present.

1298. Do you conceive it would be advisable or just to leave any peculiar privileges to the patent theatres, and if so, what are they?—I am induced to suggest this: that no person shall represent in London or Westminster, or in any city, town, borough, &c., any tragedy, comedy, opera, farce, or other entertainment, which has been represented at any theatre within London or Westminster, either a major or minor, for hire, gain or reward, without permission of the author or manager, or other person possessing the copyright of such piece, within the term of 21 years; and after that all pieces shall be considered public property; and all pieces produced within that time from the date of the supposed passing of the Bill shall be the property of the person possessing the copyright; but all dramas which have been produced more than 21 years from the day of the passing of the Bill shall be considered public property, and may be lawfully performed at any theatre in or out of London or Westminster.

1299. That is not an answer to the question.—You asked me how the patent theatres should be protected.

1300. Whether you would leave them any peculiar privileges?—That is a privilege they would possess.

1301. But they would possess that in common with all the theatres?—Yes, no peculiar privileges.

1302. No exclusive privilege?—No.

1303. Then you would put all the theatres on the same footing?—Yes, I conceive that would be of the greatest benefit to the public, and to the art generally.

1304. As to the character of the representations they are to give, and the jurisdiction they are to be under?—Yes.

1305. Suppose another theatre were to be built within a quarter of a mile of your's, would not you consider that a hardship?—I conceive it would be a hardship, but the public would be better enabled to judge between the performances at the one theatre and the other, and that which produced the best performer and the best performances would be the one most likely to flourish.

1306. You would be prepared to enter into competition with it?—I should.

1307. Are you not of opinion that it is absolutely necessary there should be a licencer of all plays performed?—No, I do not consider that would be necessary. Let the magistrates grant licences as they grant them now, and let all persons that do not possess patents or royal grants appear personally before such magistrates annually, as a guarantee for keeping them within the bounds of propriety and morality; and for the wholesome conduct of such places, let the magistrates have the power of granting or refusing licences as they think fit.

1308. Then during the existence of the magistrates' licence you would have no control whatever on the character of the pieces performed at your theatre?—Yes; I conceive the Secretary of State has always the power, through the magistrate of the district where the theatre may be, of prohibiting any representation.

1309. Has he that power now?—Yes.

1310. That could only take place after the performance, when the mischief had been done?—Yes; instances have been known where performances have been prohibited, and the pieces have not been produced.

1311. How can any person be aware of the character of the piece until it has been subjected to the examiner, or has been represented?—Because the title might be offensive. I will give an instance: I remember a dreadful circumstance occurring seven or eight years ago, the murder by Thurtell; and a very indelicate piece was produced or announced at a theatre on the Surrey side of the bridge, and also at the Coburg theatre a French play was announced, the title of which bore some resemblance to the title of the piece about to be produced at another theatre; and we received an intimation that such performances would be considered indelicate, if not highly improper, and both the pieces were stopped, and not produced on the night.

1312. That would not prevent the introduction of any seditious matter into the body of the piece, for it might have a proper title and yet might be unfit for representation?—Decidedly so; but I conceive men of character and men of substance would not be induced to risk the prosperity of their theatre by producing pieces



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that were offensive. Again, I doubt whether the public in these enlightened times would tolerate anything offensive.

1313. You are not speaking with reference to political allusions, for the public would tolerate them, and like them, yet at the same time it would be very improper they should be brought forward on the stage?—I think the public are so capable of judging what is right and what is wrong, that they would not tolerate anything offensive.

1314. Then you would have the only guarantee or security, the good taste of the public?—Certainly.

1315. Have you ever calculated what proportion of the total receipts of your theatre are derived from the gallery, pit and boxes?—I never made such a calculation, but I conceive the statement I gave before will answer that question.

1316. That is merely numerical; I want the total receipts?—Those are nights that I have taken that amount in positive payments.

1317. Will you give the sums?—On Friday, August 1, 1828, twelve hundred and thirty paid into the boxes.

1318. What did they pay at that time?—They paid at that time, which was the time of the reduction, one shilling each.

1319. What is the usual price?—Four shillings.

1320. Supposing 10,000*l.* is the total receipt of your theatre in the season, what proportion of that 10,000*l.* should you expect would be derived from gallery, pit and boxes?—It would be quite impossible to ascertain, because one style of performance would be attractive to the boxes, and that might continue possibly for a month; and another description of performance would be attractive to the gallery.

1321. Could not you strike an average; what I wish to ascertain is this, what part of the house your profits most depend upon?—I conceive the pit.

1322. What is the admission into the pit?—Eighteen-pence now.

1323. Then the class of performances which upon the whole you would be most inclined to produce at your theatre is such as would be most attractive to the pit?—I conceive that the class of performances which has been produced at the Coburg theatre has given general satisfaction to the boxes as well, but I conceive the pit has paid better than either the boxes or gallery.

1324. Then of course it would be the interest of the theatre to attract the pit?—Yes, certainly.

1325. You say the Coburg theatre holds about 3,800 persons; do you happen to know its dimensions?—The theatre is constructed so peculiarly that it would appear a very small theatre. The space, for instance, from the stage to the centre of the boxes is not further than from the stage to the centre of the boxes at the Adelphi theatre.

1326. Is it the horse-shoe shape?—Yes, a wide horse-shoe; the stage itself is particularly deep, but the audience part is so constructed as to hold an immense number of persons without appearing so large as it really is.

1327. Do you happen to know the width of the stage?—The stage, from door to door, the part next to the audience, is about 34 feet 6 inches.

1328. What is the depth of it?—About 92 feet.

1329. Are you aware of the width of Covent Garden and Drury Lane?—I should conceive about that. I should think Drury Lane not so deep as that.

1330. Is your stage as wide as Drury Lane?—I conceive it is.

1331. Is it deeper or not so deep?—I conceive quite as deep, if not deeper.

1332. Is Covent Garden the same?—I am not aware of Covent Garden.

1333. You consider your stage, therefore, as good as the stage of Drury Lane, only with greater advantages for the audience?—Yes, the audience part being much less and the stage quite as large.

1334. And that you hold more people?—It is from the peculiar construction of the theatre; instead of being long, it is wide, and the audience are very near to the stage, instead of being thrown to the distance they are in the large theatres; it is not so lofty either.

1335. Then it is rather a crescent than a horse-shoe?—It is rather a crescent, certainly.

1336. The piece you spoke of upon the subject of the murder, was it licensed?—No.

1337. Do you conceive, if the theatre was full, that almost all the persons can hear well?—I do.

1338. And see well?—Yes.



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1339. The play of the countenance of the actor?—Certainly.  
 1340. In all parts of the theatre?—Yes.  
 1341. Are there any private boxes?—Between 30 and 40.  
 1342. Are there stalls?—No stalls; I have had stalls.  
 1343. Did not you find them answer?—I found them scarcely necessary from the number of private boxes in the theatre.

1344. I think I understood you to say, you would not care, so that the monopoly was thrown entirely open, how many theatres might rise round about you?—No, I did not mean to imply that generally.

1345. I thought you meant that competition would regulate itself, and the good theatres triumph and the bad theatres fail, and therefore it would not be formidable?—Yes, to a certain extent; but I do not think the greater number of theatres there are the more beneficial to those possessing them; I only mean a moderate number of theatres without further competition.

1346. Then you would not like the monopoly to be entirely thrown open?—That is a matter I have not considered beyond my previous statement.

1347. Would you have the law restrict the number of theatres?—I think it would not be just, because the population might increase, and it would be necessary to increase the number of theatres, but I think that should be regulated by the increase of population.

1348. Do you think there are as many theatres now as are necessary?—More; they are injudiciously situated; I think there are parts of the town where theatres might be opened.

1349. What parts of the town?—In George-street, Westminster, I think such a theatre as Madame Vestris's would be very profitable to any person who might open it.

1350. Would not that subtract from the audiences of the Surrey theatres, or the theatres in Westminster?—I think not; because the persons who go to the theatres as they are situated now would probably not cross the bridge.

1351. Then you would not wish the thing to be wholly unrestricted?—Certainly not.

1352. Do you consider the present law, especially as regards the Lord Chamberlain, to be administered partially or impartially?—I conceive it is partial.

1353. Will you state any instance?—I conceive the refusing to license Miss Mitford's last play of Charles the First was partial.

1354. Partial to whom?—I conceive, if it had been an author generally known to the town, they would not have dared to refuse the licence.

1355. You mean the judgment was not with reference to the piece but to the author?—Certainly, I imply both as to the author and to the subject.

1356. Do you know of any other instance with respect to the licensing of plays except Charles the First?—The "Alasco" of Shee.

1357. What object could the Lord Chamberlain have in refusing to license Miss Mitford's play?—It is impossible I can define the object.

1358. You say the author was the cause of it?—I think if Miss Mitford had been better known to the public than she is, with all her excellence, the deputy licencer would scarcely have dared to refuse to license the play.

1359. You consider, then, it operates in some degree of partiality with regard to the licensing of plays; do you consider there is any degree of partiality in the prosecution of theatres?—Certainly. I have stated, at the time all the minor theatres in London were performing the regular drama, I was selected for prosecution.

1360. There is a distinction between the increase of population and the increase of theatrical population; and it has been urged, that although the population has increased, the theatrical population has not increased, but decreased, and various causes have been assigned for that; what in your judgment are the causes of that decrease?—I conceive dramatic entertainments are not so essential an amusement as they were 30 or 40 years ago. I conceive they are not so fashionable as 40 years ago; they were patronized by the King, who was in the habit of visiting the theatres at least once in a week, and it became necessary, or at least fashionable, that the Court should be followed to the theatres. As the King ceased to visit them, so they generally decreased in their popularity. I conceive that the lateness of dinner hours is another very great injury to the theatres.

1361. Do you consider that the decrease of the theatrical population arises in any degree from the monopoly of the great theatres?—No, I do not.



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1362. Do you mean by the word "fashion," that sort of opinion which proceeds from the better educated classes?—Yes.

1363. Do you not suppose that a fashion for going to the theatres might be produced by better pleasing the well-educated and higher classes of society?—Certainly I do. Still I am not induced to believe the managers of the patent theatres are entirely to blame for the present degraded state of the drama. I conceive, if the managers of the patent theatres could have obtained full houses by such performances as *John Bull*, and what we call generally coat-and-waistcoat comedies, they never would have had recourse to spectacle; but I conceive they were compelled, by the falling off in the public in going to these entertainments, to give them some of a different description.

1364. There is no doubt at the minor theatres now there are occasionally representations which, if they do not offend one's taste, offend one's judgment; do you not suppose that might be remedied, if the legitimate drama were entirely free and unrestrained, and if the proprietors of the minor theatres were subject to no prosecution: if they felt their capital was free and they might embark it safely, do you not suppose, if there was bad taste in one theatre, it would be corrected by another, and the public would obtain that better representation which competition produces?—Certainly. I am induced to think it would be impossible to draw a reflecting audience to witness the loose performances that were given in the theatres some 20 or 30 years ago.

1365. Then you consider, if the monopoly were broken up, and the theatres were thrown open, so far from being inundated with bad performances, it is more likely the performances now exhibited at the minor theatres would be improved?—Most decidedly.

1366. You had some little hesitation about how far the monopoly should be thrown open; do you consider it would be quite safe to leave it to the inhabitants of the parish: if the majority of the inhabitants of the parish were to sign a requisition, and to send that to the magistrates, and it were compulsory on the magistrates, upon such a requisition, to grant a licence, do you think the power of licensing would be fairly exercised, if it was at the discretion of the magistrates to shut up the theatre if the performances were bad?—I conceive the magistrates should possess a discretionary power of licensing.

1367. You think they should in all cases possess a discretionary power?—Yes.

1368. And that it should not be left to the majority of the inhabitants?—Certainly not.

1369. You say you have acted the legitimate drama occasionally?—Yes.

1370. Do you think upon the whole it is as popular as the illegitimate drama?—Quite, or more so.

1371. Do you find the pit is as well filled on those nights?—Quite as well, if not better.

1372. With respect to the patent theatres, you conceive they have some right to indemnification?—Yes.

1373. Do you know of any plan by which that indemnification might be drawn from the minor theatres, if they were to possess more privileges than at present?—I never turned my attention to that.

1374. Have you seen a plan that was accidentally thrown out, taxing the small theatres when they performed the legitimate drama, and appropriating the proceeds of that tax to the great theatres; what do you think of that?—I consider that would be neither a benefit to the large theatres nor to the small.

1375. In short, there is no plan by which indemnification could come to the large theatres from the small?—I conceive not.

1376. On those nights when you performed the legitimate drama at your theatre did you have what you call "stars"?—Very frequently.

1377. Usually?—No, not usually.

1378. Did you ever perform it without?—Frequently without.

1379. But generally with?—Frequently with.

1380. Do you suppose in a theatre of moderate size, a play like *Julius Cæsar* or *Coriolanus*, could be properly performed without losing its effect upon the audience?—I consider it might be better performed. I conceive that acting does not consist in all you can hear, but a very great effect may be produced by seeing the working of the countenance. One of the greatest actors of the day, it is necessary you should be near to discover all his excellence, Mr. Kean. I conceive that if Mr. Kean were playing



playing Brutus, in Julius Cæsar, a great portion of that excellence would be lost to the public by their not having the advantage of seeing the countenance of the great actor.

1381. In granting a licence, if the magistrates exercise a discretion in granting a licence to a minor theatre, would you propose that the proprietors should enter into any pecuniary security for the preservation of order, and the absence of any political allusions in the performance?—I should not consider that necessary, as the proprietor of the theatre would take all precaution, knowing the licence of the theatre depended upon his conduct.

1382. Although you might safely entrust the audience with the care of preserving the theatre from licentiousness, would you entrust it to the audience to preserve the performances from political allusions, as political allusions appear to be much more popular to the frequenters of the theatres than any licentiousness?—I am induced to think it would never be to the benefit of any theatre to meddle with political matters generally, because what you might derive from the representation of plays which might give pleasure to one party, you would lose by giving offence to the other.

1383. When you spoke of the size of the theatre with reference to the play of Julius Cæsar, did you mean the part in which the audience sit, not the stage?—Certainly not.

1384. You conceive a stage equal to your own in size would be necessary for the proper representation of such a play as Julius Cæsar?—Certainly.

1385. I understand you to say your theatre holds as many people as Drury Lane?—Certainly.

1386. And the stage is as large?—Yes.

1387. How do you account for the falling off in the taste of the public; you said that theatres were not so much in fault for the degradation of the drama; but how do you account for the falling off in the taste of the public with regard to coat-and-waistcoat performances?—I conceive the cause to be, that the drama has ceased to be a fashionable or essential amusement; I stated, at the time the drama was patronized by George the Third, it was fashionable.

1388. You gave as a reason the change in the fashion of the Court, but besides that, you said there was a falling off in the taste of the public, which could not be ascribed entirely to managers of theatres?—It is impossible to account directly for the falling off, except the two reasons I have assigned; first the distaste on the part of the Court, and next the late hours of dining, which have increased within the last 40 years. Some years ago it would be three o'clock, and now it is seven or eight.

1389. Would it be to the interest of any theatre to follow the hours of the fashionable world?—It would be quite impossible, because you would have to commence your performances at 10 o'clock at night, and finish them at four in the morning.

1390. That would destroy the pit?—Certainly; it would open so wide a path for immoral scenes of all descriptions that it would be injurious to the true ends of the drama.

1391. Why should immorality follow?—Because it would be frequented by every loose character who would come to the theatre at one or two o'clock in the morning for any bad purpose that might be practised in a theatre.

1392. Is not that so at whatever hour half-price commences?—I would not answer for the description of persons who would frequent the theatres if the half-price commenced at two o'clock in the morning; it might happen that gentlemen breaking up from convivial parties might fall in, and they would not be the best behaved people in the world.

1393. You say it would not be to the interest of the managers to produce political pieces; how do you account for your colleague printing that play-bill; I suppose he conceived it would be attractive?—Certainly.

1394. Then all the managers might not be of the same opinion as yourself?—No.

1395. But you give it as your opinion that it is desirable there should be no licencer?—No; I am of opinion the evil would work its own cure. I conceive, if a manager interfered with politics, by appearing before the magistrates at the expiration of the time, if that interference was deemed injudicious, he would receive such a lecture that he would not be induced to meddle with political subjects again.

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Mr.  
G. B. Davidson

22 June 1832



Mr.  
G. B. Davidge.  
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1396. In the meantime might not great mischief be produced to the public?—I have stated the Secretary of State has the power to interfere whether it is within the precincts of the Court or otherwise.

1397. But he cannot foresee what the performance will be by the title of the piece?—I conceive anything that would run strongly upon politics might be traced in the play-bill.

1398. Might not you give it what name you please, as the name is not necessarily an index to the subject?—I conceive the press would correct that.

1399. If there is any conflict of opinion between two parties in the house, it might be detrimental to the theatre itself?—Yes; but the press happening to be on both sides, part on one and part on the other, it would very soon transpire to the Government that such representations were taking place, and the true spirit of the drama would be traced immediately.

1400. If O. P. rows were to occur, it would be very detrimental to the theatre?—Certainly.

1401. Covent Garden theatre lost very much during those rows?—Very considerably.

1402. You mention that the magistrates prohibited the performance of that play on the Thurtell murder?—They did.

1403. On what authority did they act in doing so; how far do you think their power extends with respect to prohibiting the performance of any play at the minor theatres?—I have no doubt the Secretary of State has the power of prohibiting any performance by sending to the sitting magistrate of the district, who would exercise that authority by force if necessary.

1404. You think that power should be retained?—Certainly.

1405. That amounts to a licensing almost?—No; I conceive it would be only necessary in cases where the matter was offensive, and not to subject every piece to the opinion of an individual; for there are scarcely two people to be found in the world who think exactly alike; and sometimes the licencer might think one way, and the public might think very differently.

Mr. Edmund Kean, called in; and Examined.

Mr. E. Kean.

1406. ARE you proprietor of any theatre?—Of the Richmond theatre.

1407. By whom are you licensed?—By the Lord Chamberlain; I am merely the renter of that theatre.

1408. You have an annual licence?—An annual licence.

1409. For what species of representations are you licensed?—For the drama solely.

1410. The legitimate drama?—The legitimate drama.

1411. You are of course aware of the state of the law with respect to the drama at present; do you conceive what is called the monopoly, or the exclusive right of the patent theatres, is prejudicial to performers, especially to the rising performers of the day?—If you speak of the multitude of performers, I do think it is prejudicial to their interests; but I think all the talent is combined within the two theatres royal.

1412. If the two great theatres only require a certain portion of talent; for instance, if you are engaged at Drury Lane, they would not want two Mr. Keans; and suppose another Mr. Kean should be rising, or what the public would consider a person of nearly equal talents to yourself, do you not conceive it would be rather hard upon that person not to be able to find some field on which he could develop his talents?—Certainly; but there is Covent Garden in opposition to the other.

1413. But that confines the theatrical field to two great performers; suppose there should be five or six persons claiming to be equal in talent to yourself, what would become of the other three?—They must take their chance.

1414. But where have they the opportunity of representing the legitimate drama?—The opportunities are now too numerous. You cannot find talent to fill all the theatres that are open.

1415. But no theatres are allowed to play the legitimate drama except those two?—They go so near it there is scarcely any distinction.

1416. Except at Drury Lane, Covent Garden and the Haymarket, where in the metropolis is Richard the Third acted?—I have acted it at the theatre of the last witness, and all Shakspeare's other plays.

1417. Did you consider yourself liable to an action at law for that?—I never paid any consideration to the subject.

1418. Then



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1418. Then you are not aware of the state of the law?—No.
1419. Should not you consider it a great hardship on you to be liable to a penalty of 50*l.*, as you are now, for every representation you have given of Richard the Third at the Coburg theatre?—I should certainly think it a hardship.
1420. Are you then in favour of the legitimate drama being played at the minor theatres?—I cannot exactly say that; the two great theatres are almost in a state of bankruptcy.
1421. But if you with your talent were engaged for a certain number of years; suppose you had been engaged for the last 10 years at Drury Lane, do you think you could have saved the theatre from its impending ruin?—I should be very vain to say that by my individual talent.
1422. But you say it would be a hardship on the great theatres your continuing to play at the minor theatres?—I do.
1423. You think you were infringing their rights when you played at the Coburg theatre?—Certainly.
1424. Which do you prefer, a large stage, the stage of Covent Garden or Drury Lane, or the stage of the Coburg theatre?—Certainly, a large stage.
1425. You prefer Drury Lane?—Yes.
1426. Have you not found that you act quite as effectively at the Haymarket as when you acted at Drury Lane?—I do not consider it so myself; I think the intellect becomes confined by the size of the theatre.
1427. Do you consider that to be confined to particular parts, such as King Lear, or would it apply equally to all other parts; Hamlet for instance?—I am an advocate for a large theatre; I think the illusion is better preserved at a large than a small theatre.
1428. Are you as well heard at Drury Lane as the Haymarket?—Yes; any actor with a good enunciation would be heard as well at Drury Lane as any theatre in the kingdom.
1429. Do you consider that the persons who sit in the centre of the house at Drury Lane can see the play of your countenance, in any of Shakspeare's characters, as well as at the Haymarket?—Yes, quite as well, in the back seats of the galleries.
1430. Do you really think one-third of the audience at Covent Garden or Drury Lane would not be of a different opinion?—I cannot answer that.
1431. Did you ever try the experiment yourself?—I did.
1432. And it has been satisfactory to you?—Perfectly satisfactory.
1433. Mr. Kemble stated the other day he considered two-thirds of the audience at Covent Garden could see and hear as well as at the Haymarket, so that he admitted one third of the audience could not see and hear so well as at the Haymarket; is that your opinion?—I cannot answer that. I think, with respect to my acting at Drury Lane, I was never better heard or seen.
1434. Have you ever been in the one shilling gallery at Drury Lane?—Yes, in every part of it.
1435. Have you seen the persons performing on the stage?—Yes, and heard every word when the gallery was silent.
1436. Is your vision so perfect as to enable you to see their countenance at that distance?—Yes, I have a tolerably good eye.
1437. Do the persons of the performers appear so large to you in the one shilling gallery as in the boxes?—Probably not so large, but you hear them as distinctly.
1438. Do you not think that that destroys the effect, the illusion, by the person appearing so diminutive?—No, I do not; I think it preserves it.
1439. Do you think an eye of the average power would distinguish the play of the countenance as well at that distance?—I do perfectly.
1440. Are there not some very good performers who appear to greater advantage on a small stage?—Not in my estimation; the larger the stage the better the actor, and the less observable are his faults, which is a material consideration.
1441. To what greater extent might the large theatres be carried, in your opinion?—As large as St. Carlos, at Naples.
1442. Are you further removed from the stage there than you are here in the one shilling gallery?—Yes; there is no one shilling gallery, but you are at a great distance.
1443. Although you state you do not act so effectively at the Haymarket as you do at Drury Lane, did you ever hear the public complain that you did not act there



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so well?—I never heard the public complain at either Drury Lane or Covent Garden when I had the honour of being before them there.

1444. Have you ever heard them complain that you did not act as well and as effectively at the Haymarket as you did at Drury Lane or Covent Garden?—No, I do not hear the public complain of that; I do not feel so efficient myself as at Drury Lane or Covent Garden.

1445. You say you imagine the great theatres are in a very unprosperous state, almost in a state of bankruptcy; is not that a clear proof that the system which is kept up has not acted well, and therefore it is rather odd they should complain of the system being altered; notwithstanding all these advantages, they have arrived almost at a state of bankruptcy?—My idea of that is, that the number of minor theatres has materially injured the interests of the great ones.

1446. But at the same time, do you imagine the minor theatres should be pulled down?—That I have never contemplated.

1447. You do not think you could repair that injury to the interests of the patent theatres by putting down the minor theatres?—No: but for the benefit of the profession, I should be sorry to see more theatres than there are at present in London.

1448. Although you might not like to see more theatres than there are at present in London, should you like to see those theatres become legitimate, and performing with the sanction of the law, instead of against the law: do you think there would be any harm in allowing them to act under the sanction of the law?—They have a species of entertainment which answers their purpose, and I do not see why they should be allowed to injure the theatres royal.

1449. Do you think if those minor theatres were closed the patent theatres would be more numerously attended?—Yes, I do. I think the drama would be more followed than at present.

1450. Do you think Covent Garden or Drury Lane would be more filled than at present?—Yes, I do.

1451. Do you not think a change of hours and religious feelings have interfered with the attendance at these theatres more than the minor theatres?—I think that is irrelevant to this subject; I cannot enter into the feelings of the public.

1452. But we want to account for the particular way in which Covent Garden and Drury Lane are dealt with as they are?—We are not generally a dramatic nation, and it is more on the decline than ever.

1453. Why do you consider it is so?—From the late hours and private assemblies.

1454. Do you consider the state of bankruptcy in which you imagine the great theatres to be in, to result not from their exclusive privileges, but from those privileges having been violated?—I have never considered that subject.

1455. The present state of their patents does not preserve them from being ruined, and does not preserve them from the competition of the minor theatres?—No.

1456. Then is it your opinion that a still closer monopoly would contribute more to the purity of the drama?—Certainly.

1457. Do you think a closer monopoly could be introduced; do you think the public would be willing to suffer a closer monopoly of the great theatres?—Yes, I do; at least the play-going part of the community.

1458. Then they would not go to the minor theatres now?—They go to the minor theatres because there is an entertainment suited to them.

1459. The minor theatres are now against the law; they could not do more than go to a theatre against the law?—I understand your question to be, whether the minor theatres would injure the large theatres by acting the legitimate drama.

1460. The question was, whether the public would countenance a closer monopoly than at present exists: you say a closer monopoly would preserve the drama; do you think the public would be willing to countenance a closer monopoly?—I think the public would.

1461. And a closer monopoly you think would not be a great hardship upon performers?—Yes; it would keep several respectable performers from situations; they must go in their different grades.

1462. That you think would be a hardship?—Yes; but there are plenty of provincial theatres where there are a great many good actors.

1463. Then a closer monopoly would place actors at the mercy of the managers of the great theatres?—No; they must take care to cull the best talent from the provinces.

1464. Do



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1464. Do you think they do cull the best talent at present?—Certainly I do.

1465. Do you recollect Mrs. Yates performing at Covent Garden?—The present Mrs. Yates, I do.

1466. Have you ever been to see her act this year at the Adelphi?—Not this year; the last I have.

1467. Do you think she appeared to the same advantage at Covent Garden as she does at the Adelphi?—No, she is an exception to the rule.

1468. Then Mrs. Yates not succeeding at Covent Garden, do not you think it would be a great hardship to her not to be able to find a minor theatre in which she could succeed?—Yes, certainly; but that theatre is found; she is in possession of it.

1469. It would be a great disappointment to the public?—Certainly.

1470. Is not the inference from that, that there ought to be some minor theatres to provide protection for some performers?—They have sufficient, I think.

1471. If you want a closer monopoly, you want them restricted?—No, you misunderstood me.

1472. You think there are too many?—There are enough for the public to support.

1473. Do you not think a small theatre is a much better school for an actor, with good natural talents, than a large one; do you not think the minor theatres are good schools for actors?—Yes; but in London we should see the perfection of the art, not the school itself.

1474. Which have you found, during your experience of the stage, were able to give you the largest salaries, the major or minor theatres?—Drury Lane and Covent Garden.

1475. They have given you larger nightly salaries than the minor theatres?—My terms are the same wherever I go; the minor theatres could not afford it; I never played but in one.

1476. The Haymarket, for instance; you do not call that a minor theatre?—No, certainly not.

1477. Did you ever play at the Garrick theatre?—No, never.

1478. Only at the Coburg?—Yes, and the City theatre.

1479. That is a minor theatre?—Yes.

1480. And they could give you the same terms as at Covent Garden or Drury Lane?—They did.

1481. I thought you said they could not afford to give you the same terms?—Not regularly, probably; that was merely for a limited number of nights.

1482. I dare say you did not find the houses empty on those nights?—No.

1483. As full perhaps as they could reasonably hold?—Yes.

1484. Would it not have been an injustice to the public if those houses had been shut up, and all the persons who thronged to them on the nights you performed there had been deprived of the pleasure of seeing you?—Yes, I think it would.

*Mr. William Downton, called in; and Examined.*

1485. AT what theatre are you performing now?—I am not playing at any theatre at present.

1486. Is that from your own wish?—No; after being 36 years at Drury Lane, I have no theatre where I can act at present, unless occasionally by breaking the law, and acting at a minor theatre.

1487. You have been in the room during Mr. Kean's evidence?—I have.

1488. You have heard Mr. Kean's evidence?—I have.

1489. Do you coincide with the greater part of it?—I am astonished at Mr. Kean's opinion, because when I am told that actors can be as well seen in Drury Lane theatre as in a smaller theatre, I can as well believe you can hang a cabinet picture on the top of that tower, and say, "Do you observe those beautiful touches, do you observe its lights and shadows? No; I cannot see it at all." That is my opinion as to the stage. Give me a theatre of a moderate size where you can be natural.

1490. How many years have you been on the stage?—I think I have been upon the stage somewhere about 40 years.

1491. You consider, therefore, you have had great experience as to the merits of an actor?—I think I have.

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1492. Have

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1492. Have you ever seen Mr. Kean perform at the Haymarket?—No, I have not.

1493. Have you ever seen him perform in a small theatre?—Yes, in the country.

1494. Do you think he performs as effectively there as at Drury Lane or Covent Garden?—Much more so to my satisfaction.

1495. How great a proportion of the audience at Drury Lane do you think can see and hear well?—I think it was said by Mr. Kemble about two-thirds at Covent Garden; I am much of his opinion with regard to that; they may hear, because the actor knows he must be heard; he must bawl if he cannot be heard by speaking naturally.

1496. Do you conceive in a theatre moderately large, a theatre of the size of the Haymarket, a play like Julius Cæsar could be as well performed as it could be at a large theatre?—Much better.

1497. Not only as regards the merit of one actor, but as regards the whole body?—Yes, the whole body, I should think, if they have any pretensions to acting.

1498. What effect do you conceive it would have on the art of acting, if the monopoly of the two great theatres was broken up, and the legitimate drama was allowed to be played at the minor theatres?—I cannot exactly say; I think a number of theatres would be injured; but I am inclined to believe if the theatres were less, and there was another theatre, a fourth theatre licensed, it would be beneficial; but I think to throw it generally open would be ruinous to the greater part of those who embark in theatrical speculations, for the consequence would be, as so many adventurers embark in theatres, that in the course of two or three years one half of them would be in gaol; because it is very extraordinary, that though one man takes a theatre for a few years and loses a great deal of money while he has it, yet others will take it, and they will also become bankrupt.

1499. Do you not think that that exists at this moment?—Yes; such is the rage, that notwithstanding that, you will find another and another who will embark in theatricals.

1500. Do you not think that the circumstance of so many adventurers and speculators without fortune embarking in theatres, arises in some measure from the anomalous state of the law, which renders them all in fact out of the pale of the law?—Yes.

1501. If it was not against the law to be the proprietor of a small theatre, do you not think a more respectable class of persons would be willing to embark their property in them?—I do, most decidedly.

1502. Then you think to break up the monopoly would be to cure the evil with respect to the number of bankrupts and speculators embarking in the minor theatres?—I am not prepared to answer that question exactly, because I cannot judge. I do not know that breaking of the monopoly would do that; I have already said I think since the great increase of London, another theatre or two would be absolutely necessary for the entertainment of the public; and indeed with respect to the monopoly, it was always considered a monopoly by Mr. Sheridan. I have heard him admit a thousand times, "It is a monopoly, we do not deny it; but if it is broken in upon, we think we are entitled to compensation." That is not a question for me to answer, but it is perhaps a natural thing they should look to it after having been encouraged for so vast a number of years in having this monopoly; and it would be a hard thing to be broken in upon without some remuneration.

1503. How do you think that remuneration could be obtained; should it come from the minor theatres?—I think the question was asked Mr. Davidge whether such a plan could not be hit upon. I am unable to give any opinion upon it. I remember a very few years after Drury Lane was built, Mr. Whitbread did me the honour of consulting me a good deal, along with Mr. Dunn and some others, about the size of the theatre, and I always said, "Your house is too large; you are laying out too much money in building the theatre; it can never answer; you can never see a return for it; 250,000*l.* or 270,000*l.* is too much." The theatre went on, and became excessively involved in consequence, and the last time I saw him, a few days before his death, he said, "Doughton, I always considered you a good-hearted fellow, but a wrong-headed fellow. You said the theatre would never answer; you are a true prophet, and my golden dreams are over; you have been right in your advice; can you tell us what to do?" I said, "I think the only thing you can do is to apply to Parliament to dispose of your theatre, and that they should do so by Covent Garden; get rid of it, and let it be thrown open, and get a theatre on a smaller scale, for this theatre



theatre can never answer." The incumbrance is so great a burden, the immense sums laid out in building. I think a theatre, to answer all the purposes of the drama, might be built for one-fourth of the sum they laid out in those immense buildings. I am at a loss to imagine how they came to lay out so much money when they saw that the former theatre, Sheridan's theatre, as it was called, failed from the immense sums that were laid out. I remember Mr. Sheridan saying the day after the fire, "There is one consolation, as the theatre is burnt down and we must build another, we must build a theatre where we can be seen and heard, and not go to such a monstrous expense in future."

1503\*. I think you say you are not of opinion the monopoly should not be broken up?—Do you ask me as to the justice of the case?

1504. In any point of view?—I think if there is another theatre, perhaps I speak selfishly, perhaps I could get engaged in it, and therefore I should like to see another theatre, for although I have a great respect for the managers of the theatres, I think they have used me excessively ill.

1505. You think it would be to the advantage of the theatres that now exist?—I think if a theatre of the proper size was built in addition to these, it would run them down, it would be a frigate that would run down and destroy these men-of-war; for I firmly believe if the drama were represented there, people would go where they could see and hear.

1506. There are some theatres now existing where they can see and hear?—None that are authorized, I believe, except the Haymarket.

1507. There is the Coburg?—That is not an authorized theatre; though it is licensed by the magistrates, I do not believe it is of any effect. I do not believe the magistrates have any power to license a theatre.

1508. I think you said it would be hard upon the patent theatres if the monopoly were broken up without some indemnification?—I should think so, without some indemnification.

1509. But you were at Drury Lane for 36 years acting, and did not then complain of the size of the theatre?—Always. I remember first coming into the theatre, I played with Mrs. Siddons in the country, at Weymouth particularly; she was excessively kind to me when she came to the theatre the first night I played.

1510. Whilst you were acting at Drury Lane, did you complain of the size of the theatre?—Yes; I was going to state, Mrs. Siddons said, "I am glad to see you at Drury Lane, but you are come to act in a wilderness of a place;" and God knows, if I had not made my reputation in a small theatre, I never should have done it here; but the public gave me credit for what they saw me do and heard me say at a small theatre. All the actors of that day, Mr. Charles Kemble, who was a young man as I was at that time, can remember that Mr. King never went on the stage without cursing it, and saying it was not like a theatre, and if Garrick was alive he would not act in it.

1511. Did you find the public complain of the size of the theatre at that time?—Yes; that they could neither see nor hear. The size was always a great complaint, and is now. I am astonished actors do not hear it wherever they go.

1512. Were the theatres well filled at that time?—Yes: and I believe they would now if they were conducted as they were at that time.

1513. If there were four theatres?—Yes; and I differ from Mr. Kean upon the subject. If there were 24 Mr. Keans, I would engage them all; for I never knew a theatre to go to any expense in actors that they were not repaid, and the only time that Drury Lane has succeeded has been when they could pick up all the talent throughout the kingdom.

1514. If they were equally well conducted, they would equally well succeed in spite of their size?—I think they would succeed in some degree, because they do so at present, though not so well as formerly.

1515. At former periods they have succeeded in spite of their size?—No; they they have been falling off these last 30 years.

1516. Before they began to fall off, they were filled in spite of their size?—It was after the destruction of what was called Garrick's theatre. From that moment the drama began to decline at Drury Lane. What was the reason pieces succeeded so well at Covent Garden? It was because the theatre was less and Drury Lane was large; they ran down Drury Lane completely.

1517. Do you happen to recollect what the size of Garrick's theatre was?—No, I do not; I think it was about the size of the Haymarket, from all I have heard of it. About 300*l.* or 350*l.* would fill it at that time.