Esther K. Sheldon, Thomas Sheridan of Smock-Alley (NJ: Princeton UP 1967), 546pp.

[This text has been converted to Word (doc) and Notepad (.txt) and several recurrent errors in format and diacriticals include in capturing the original have been elminated as far as possible with global searching. The footnotes have not been altered but, although the small print is occasionally botched, they are usually easy to identity with the page reference and can separated from the text-blocks if so desired.]

Introduction

THIS BOOK is not a full-length biography of Thomas Sheridan, although at first it was planned to be. The story of Sheridan's oratorical activities during his later life has been gratefully abandoned to Professor Wallace A. Bacon, whose recently published Elocutionary Career of Thomas Sheridan (ijig-ij88) covers this part of Sheridan's life. To have included all here would have doubled the size of this volume. Thomas Sheridan of Smock-Alley focuses on Sheridan's other interest, the theater, which filled his early years and then supported him and his oratorical projects afterward. As the title suggests, his personal life has been subordinated here to his theatrical career. This is less of an injustice to the reader and to Sheridan than it may seem. Sheridan was a public figure who lived his life publicly in his work; what he accomplished there was more important to him than any of his private activities, minimal (according to his own report) in Smock Alley days. What life he had in Dublin with his wife and family he kept scrupulously apart from the theater and away from the public eye. Personal details beyond the usual ones found in Alicia Lefanu's biography of Mrs. Sheridan are rare to come by. As a theatrical biography, Thomas Sheridan of Smock-Alley gives most emphasis to Sheridan's rise and fall as theater manager. Historians from his own time, Victor, Hitchcock, Bellamy, and others, and from our time, La Tourette Stockwell, have each told parts of this story. They have been used here but much supplemented by less familiar sources—newspapers, pamphlets, letters, and playbills. These have helped to expand our answers to various questions about the Irish theater in Sheridan's day: how the theatrical life was regarded by Dubliners; why Sheridan chose the theater as a career; how and when he became manager; what his years at Smock-Alley meant to Dublin and to the history of the theater; what really was behind the two riots of his time; what made possible the final loss of his theater. The new sources have at times upset the conclusions or shifted the emphasis of eighteenth-century historians. They have filled in the years between the riots, slighted by historians yet useful for showing the daily life of the theater. Only through following this record can one appreciate the ingenuity by which Sheridan raised his theater from ruin to an unprecedented pinnacle before his own ruin. After the loss of his theater Sheridan supported himself by acting.

Introduction This work, much subordinated to what was now his paramount concern—his educational, oratorical project—is traced more briefly toward the end of the book. His acting career fell into the same pattern as his managerial career: it gained in prestige and popularity until it reached a peak and then fairly abruptly was cut off. Again, related questions are considered: Why did Sheridan insist on "acting on shares"? What did his contemporaries—Irish as well as English— think of his acting? What qualities made it distinctive? What roles were his best and his worst? After acting failed him, Sheridan returned briefly to his earlier career of theater management, helping Richard with Drury Lane. This interlude, about which little has been known, has been explored in the final chapter. At the end is included a Smock-Alley Calendar for the years of Sheridan's management, giving in Part I a chronological list of

entertainments with the company for each season and in Part II an alphabetical list of plays with their casts for each performance. A separate list of Sheridan's written works follows a selected bibliography of works consulted in writing this book. A table on page 2 which shows Sheridan's theatrical connections by seasons will help to keep the reader oriented. The main purpose of the whole work is to present Sheridan's theatrical life and accomplishments in as clear a light as the evidence makes possible. Richard Sheridan's biographers, through whom Thomas Sheridan is largely known today, have decried the father because of his treatment of his son. Although Thomas' personality had its defects (and it grew more defective as time pressed and hopes kept collapsing), he was not the fool some writers have made him seem. His failures, seen in historical perspective, were not so often failures of judgment as misfortunes of circumstance. This fact has been generally overlooked by Richard's modern biographers and was not always clear to his contemporaries. Nor was Sheridan the nonentity he has become in some eyes since. To his contemporaries he was controversial; he had strong partisans and vigorous detractors; but he was not ignored. In the history of the three generations of eighteenth-century Sheridans Thomas stands in the middle so far as scope of influence goes. His father, more gifted than he, was little known outside of Ireland; his brilliant younger son became, of course, an international figure. But before Richard, Thomas Sheridan's name was familiar up and down the British Isles. Less endowed in health and talent than either his father or his son, he wrenched out a reputation by extraordinary

Introduction effort and complete commitment to what he believed in. Whether this reputation deserves our regard, the reader may judge. Inconsistencies and errors are unfortunately inevitable in a book of this size written intermittently over a long span of years. All one can hope is that they are not numerous or glaring enough to distract the reader in making this judgment. A word about the stylistic practices used in the text seems needed. The word "theater," which was spelled both "theatre" and "theater" in the eighteenth century, has been regularized to conform to American spelling. Within quotations, the original spellings and initial capitalizations have been kept but, unless there were reasons to the contrary, no attempt has been made to reproduce special typographical effects, such as italics, small and large capitals, et cetera. And again unless there were reasons to the contrary, dates in the cross-dating period have been regularized to accord with modern time and practice. In the footnotes, bibliographical information has generally been kept to a minimum, the bibliography at the end supplying complete data. To all the many persons who have helped in the making of this book my gratitude goes out, but here I can thank publicly only a few. My greatest debt is to my colleague Dr. Robert H. Ball, whose encouragement and practical wisdom carried me through more than one despairing moment. Dr. and Mrs. William S. Clark of Cincinnati have been unfailingly generous in reading my manuscript and in supplying me with information on elusive facts. Mr. William R. LeFanu of London not only has given me permission to quote from his invaluable papers but has patiently and promptly answered my many questions. To the Comtesse de Reneville I am indebted for many kind favors, including her most welcome offer to let me reproduce her companion portraits of her ancestors, Thomas and Frances Sheridan. Professor Cecil Price of Swansea, Miss Sybil Rosenfeld and Mr. Ifan Kyrle Fletcher of London, Mr. Robert Walsh of Cork, Dr. Wallace A. Bacon of Evanston, and Mr. Walter A. Miller of Brooklyn have taken time to respond generously to my calls for help. My enthusiastic thanks go to the Office of Graduate Studies at Queens College for its free typing service and especially to Mrs. Florence Waldhetter for typing almost a thousand pages of my manuscript and making incredibly few mistakes. I am grateful, too, to Mrs. Virginia Hlavsa, Mrs. Ann Newton, and Miss Hilda Engelhardt for helping me with such matters as proofreading and index-

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excerpts from John Philip Kemble's Manuscript Diary; the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for passages from Dr. Thomas Sheridan's letters to Thomas Carte (MS Carte 227), which appeared in transcript in the Lefanu MSS. Acknowledgment for permission to cite short single passages has been made at the appropriate places within the text. Finally, I am grateful to the editor of Theatre Survey, who earlier published a large part of what is now Chapter IV in this book and who has given me permission to reproduce that part here; and I should add that most of my material on Sheridan's Coriolanus in Chapter VII has already appeared in The Shakespeare Quarterly. ESTHER K. SHELDON

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CONTENTS: Introduction; Contents; List of Illustrations; I. Gentleman Into Player; II. Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager; III. The Garrick Winter; IV. Dublin in an Uproar; V. Winning the Dublin Public; VI. King Tom; VII. Calm Before Storm; VIII. Cry Havoc Again; IX. A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses; X. The Reluctant Actor; XI. Clear the Exits Once Again. Part I. A Chronological Listing of Performances Given Under Sheridan's Management 1745-March 2,1754; 1756-1758. Part II. An Alphabetical List of Plays and Their Casts Given Under Sheridan s Management 1745-March 2,1754·, 1756-1758; Selected Bibliography; Sheridan's Works; Index. [See chapter extracts at JSTOR online; accessed 24.01.2024]

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS Following page 196

Sheridan as Theater Manager, resting his elbow on a Shakespeare folio Frances Chamberlaine Sheridan Sheridan as Cato, without and with the Robe Sheridan as Oedipus and as Brutus Sheridan as Lexicographer, Orator, and Educational Reformer The sketch of Smock-Alley Theater on the front of the jacket appeared in The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle for June 1789, shortly before the building was converted into a warehouse. The map on page 310 showing a section of Dublin with Smock-Alley and Aungier-Street is taken from "A New Plan of Dublin," the title print of Hibernia Curiosa.

[The Chronology Table of Thomas Sheridan's theatrical career has been removed in this copy.]

DUBLINERS who scanned the Dublin Journal or Gazette in late January 1743 would have found nothing unusual about the announcement that on January 29 at Smock-Alley 1 Theater the role of Shakespeare's Richard III would be "attempted by a Gentleman." Theatrical notices of this sort, heralding the debuts of anonymous gentlemen and even ladies, were frequent enough in the eighteenth century. But unique—and, in the light of later events, prophetic—was a postscript to this particular notice: As not only the Players but the Audience in general, have frequently complain'd of the ill Effects of a crowded Stage, it is to be hop'd that no Gentleman will take it ill that he is refused admittance behind the Scenes on that Night, under the above mentioned Price [half a guinea], but more particularly on this Occasion; it is to be hop'd his Complaisance will be greater, when he considers that the Confusion which a Person must necessarily be under on his first Appearance, will be greatly heighten'd by having a Number of People about him, and his Perplexity on his Exits and Entrances, (things with which he is but little acquainted) must be greatly encreas'd by having a Crowd to bustle thro'.2 Despite the tortuous formality of the style, few descriptions of the early eighteenth-century stage give a more personal view than this one written from the point of view of a nervous young player about to appear for the first time. Crowds of spectators gathered "behind the Scenes" (as the phrase was then for "on the stage"), milling around the actor as he spoke, blocking his movements and gestures, diverting his attention from his lines, even making it difficult for him to push through the stage doorways. These distractions 1 The spelling, hyphenation, and capitalization often vary for the same street name in the eighteenth century. Capel, for example, interchanges with Caple. Smock Alley, Smock-alley, Smock-Alley appear, with perhaps a slight preference for the last. For this reason that spelling has been used throughout. (I have also seen Smoak-Alley.) 2 Dublin Gazette, January 25—29, 1743. A similar notice appears in the Dublin Journal, January 18—22.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 171Q—1J43 would vex even a seasoned actor. For a beginner they might add enough confusion to his normal panic to make the difference between success and failure. The anonymous gentleman wished to take no chances. But to banish all from the stage was more than he dared. Perhaps if the price was raised from 5/5 to half a guinea for onstage places, the crowd there would be thinned for this special night. (Further steps might be tried later.) It was to be hoped that the gentlemen would not "take it ill." Apparently the gentlemen were complaisant, the new actor managed his exits and

entrances successfully, and in other respects did so well that a few nights later he undertook the leading part in Racine's tragedy Mithridates.8 With the success of this performance he "threw off the disguise" (to quote one of his contemporaries4) and in a notice for a second Richard III,5 revealed himself, to the few who did not already know his identity, as the late Dr. Sheridan's son, Trinity College graduate and young man about town, Thomas Sheridan. Before he died, Thomas Sheridan led at least three lives. His theatrical life, which is the subject of this book, began professionally when he was twenty-three years old β with his debut as an anonymous gentleman. Later his right to the rank of gentleman was questioned by his enemies, but his claim by birth to that nebulous and shifting title would seem to have been beyond dispute. He came from a good Irish Protestant 7 family, one which commanded considerable respect 3 Duilin Journal, January 29-February 1, 1743. This play is described in the notices as never performed before, having been taken from Racine and bearing not "the least Resemblance" to Lee's tragedy of the same name. Sheridan himself may have been the translator and adapter. Since it was advertised over a month before the Richard III notices appeared, he must have been preparing this play while he was learning the Richard role. 4Hitchcock, i, 129. 6 Dublin Journal, February 12—15, !743"The Part of King Richard by Mr. Sheridan." eTrinity College records show Sheridan as entering there on May 26, 1735, at the age of sixteen (Burtchaell and Sadleir, Alumni Dublinenses, p. 749). His birth date, which I have been unable to find in official records of the time, is generally agreed to have been 1719, presumably reckoned according to old style, with the year beginning in March. In January 1742/43, then, when Sheridan made his debut, he would not yet have reached his twenty-fourth birthday, which must have come somewhere between March and the end of May. 7 The family had been Irish a long way back, and may have been Catholic until an ancestor was converted by Bishop Bedell (Sichel, 1, 209). To be a

Gentleman Into Player in Ireland. Pamphlets attacking him during his later troubles agreed that his background and education had been above reproach although his connection with the theater, it was argued, had automatically reduced him from the gentlemanly level. Indeed, the problem of his social position as a gentleman and an actor (to many a contradiction in terms) continued to plague Sheridan much of his life. Even his young son Richard, the story goes, was taunted by his schoolfellows at Harrow for being a player's son. If authentic, his oft-quoted riposte to a physician's child shows his usual spirit: " 'Tis true, my father lives by pleasing people; but yours lives by killing them." 8 Later both of Thomas Sheridan's sons reached considerable heights. Richard, though a theater manager like his father, became not only a successful playwright—in itself no social guarantee—but also an important member of parliament; Charles Francis was Secretary of War for Ireland. Richard's descendants raised the family still higher, even into the English peerage. With the theater's possible stigma and its certain financial risk, why did young Thomas Sheridan choose it as a career? Physically he was not well suited. He was small and short, but probably not so short as Garrick, for the height of his leading lady never seems to have concerned him. His critics mention not only handicaps of stature but also of voice, which they report as inaudible when lowered and rasping when raised.9 He was not handsome like Spranger Barry or West Digges, although his portrait shows a pleasant countenance with high forehead, dark "speaking" eyes, and a delicate mouth. He was better looking, incidentally, than his son Richard. His health was bad. A stomach disorder made him irritable and often prostrated him.10 It could hardly have improved with the stressful career he chose. Fifteen years after his debut Sheridan publicly tried to explain this choice: from the first, he said, he had planned to make education his profession; the stage was merely an interlude for perfecting his Catholic in eighteenth-century Ireland was, of course, a great social, educational, and financial handicap. 8 Fitzgerald, Lives of the Sheridans i, 69. i 9 See, for example, Boswell's Life of Johnson, Hill, ed., 1, 358 (Johnson's letter to B. Langton, October 18, 1760). 10 Alicia Lefanu (pp. 269—270) reports that Sheridan suffered all his life from disorders of the head and stomach, which made him subject to bilious attacks. His wife's letters and his own writings mention the agonies he underwent during these spells.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley • /7/9-/743 ideas about elocution, ideas needed in his already conceived plan for reforming British education.11 Not everybody was convinced. And indeed, if this was his true reason, he chose a roundabout, grueling means to a shadowy end, and then long forgot the end in his devotion to the means. Perhaps other forces, less consciously articulated and stemming from his earlier life, had moved him toward the stage. As the favorite son of Dr. Thomas Sheridan, he must have been exposed to the drama as soon as he could understand language— his own and later the classical tongues. For his schoolmaster-father loved plays, and followed the English custom of school performances 12 in the commodious home in Dublin's Capel-Street, where he kept his school and his large family.13 Thomas,

who probably was born in that house, lived and studied there14 until his early teens. The house itself was much battered by schoolboy roughhouse and neglected by both the impractical scholar and his slovenly wife. Its general state of disrepair has been immortalized in verse by Dean Jonathan Swift, who dropped in frequently at "about the hour of dining," and would retire with the Doctor to the back parlor for a plate sent in from the family dinner in the common room. Swift describes the steps to the upper hall "all torn to rags by boys and ball," the parlor door "besmear'd with chalk, and carv'd with knives," the locks that stuck, the chair that collapsed and let him down upon his "Reverend Deanship's bum," and the dilapidated fireplace where the battered nose of the bellows substituted for the missing poker.15 Growing up in these relaxed surroundings, Thomas breathed an air which, though mainly academic, was friendly to the theater. Dr. Sheridan, as master of a classical seminary, preferred to stage classical plays in their original language; he had a Sophocles or Euripides drama performed periodically by his head class before they went to the university.1® Important people attended and gave his productions weight: the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Carteret, who had 11Sheridan,

An Oration, pp. 19—21. p. 12. Miss Lefanu notes that this custom was peculiar to Dr. Sheridan at that time in Dublin. 13 Sheridan, Life of Szaift, pp. 444, 383. 14 In Burtchaell and Sadleir's Alumni Dublinenses, Thomas Sheridan's schoolmaster is listed as "his father." Sheridan's Preface to his Complete Dictionary refers to his early education under a master who was "the intimate friend, and chosen companion of Swift." This was obviously his father. 15 Sheridan, Life of Szuift, pp. 444—446. 16 Lefanu, p. 12. 12Lefanu,

Gentleman Into Player asked for a tragedy of Sophocles;17 the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Dorset, who was conducted by Dean Swift to see a Terence comedy;18 Archbishop King before whom Htyfolytus was performed.19 So popular did these productions become that when they occurred they threatened attendance at the professional houses. A news item of December 1731 expresses surprise that even a new play at a Dublin theater could attract a crowd against competition which included, among other things, a Sheridan performance: "Notwithstanding there was last Monday Night a Ridotto, a Latin Play acted by Dr. Sheridan's Scholars, and two or three Lodges of Free-Masons, yet the new Tragedy of Love and Ambition was play'd to a vast Audience. . . ."20 But not all of Dr. Sheridan's interest in the theater was classical or academic. He may once, in 1721, have been involved briefly with the Dublin stage, its actors and its playhouse; at least, he was concerned with the effect on it of a man named Stretch, master of a puppet show located near the Sheridan school on Capel-Street and extremely popular with Dubliners over many years. In parody of Stretch's puppet show Dr. Sheridan wrote a farce called Punch Turn'd Schoolmaster21 which he himself, according to Swift, "put the Players upon acting."22 Full of puns and pedantic humor, neither the play nor the performance was a success23 (although years later it may have encouraged young Thomas to write a more popular farce, also laced with verbal humor). Another dramatic work, Dr. Sheridan's translation of Pastor Fidoy was not performed until after his death; 24 but it must have been made with some hope of seeing it on the Dublin stage. 17Sheridan,

18Swift, Corresfondence, v, 150. Life of S2ift, p. 379. 20 Dublin Journal, December 14—18, 1 7 3 1 . Ibid., H I, 125. 21 Dr. Sheridan's "Prologue to the Farce of Punch turn'd School-Master" was printed by Matthew Concanen (Miscellaneous Poems, 1724, pp. 398—400). (See Swift, Letters of Jonathan Szoift to Charles Ford, p. 91, n. 3.) A poem, "The Puppet-Show," perhaps mistakenly ascribed to Swift (Poems, Williams, ed., πι, 1102—1105), jokes about Sheridan's attempts to "refine" on Stretch. 22 Swift, Letters of Jonathan Swift to Charles Ford, p. 91 (Letter of April 15, 1721). That the actors were not Dr. Sheridan's boys but professionals and adults is indicated by Swift's word "Players" and also by the references in "The Puppet-Show" (see preceding footnote) to "men" acting as puppets. 23Swift, Letters of Jonathan Swift to Charles Ford, p. 91. The poem "The Puppet-Show" disapproves of the puns and the pedantry which try to pass for humor. 2i Dublin Journal, January 8-12 and 22—26, 1740. 19

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 17ig—1743 More successful was Dr. Sheridan with his own boys in an English play not of his writing, Julius Caesar. He had staged it as early as 1718} 25 and in December 1732 "some of the young Gentlemen in Dr. Sheridan's School" gave it—appropriately—at Madam Violante's new theatrical "Booth," in George's-Lane, where Violante's troupe of child actors, including Peg Woffington and others less educated than Dr. Sheridan's gentlemen, had recently been doing very well. Dr. Sheridan's thirteen-year-old son Thomas played Marc Antony. He may also have spoken the prologue, whose lines, flavored with his father's characteristic humor, reassured the mammas in the audience that, despite the "dreadful Play" chosen by the Master to drive them all away, they need not fear.

The thunder and lightning are merely one drum and pounded rozin, “the Blood that streams along the Floor/Is but a Bladder of Sheep’s Blood—No more,” and Tho’ Hundreds fall, there’s not one Mortal slain, And each Mamma shall have her Child again.28 Young Thomas, who was about to leave for Westminster School in another two months, delighted his father with his performance. “I hope that he will acquit himself upon his new Stage,” Dr. Sheridan wrote to Thomas Carte of the boy’s future at Westminster, “with as much honour as he did lately in the character of Marc Anthony.” 27 This seems to be young Thomas Sheridan’s first theatrical notice, although it may not have been his first role, considering his father’s fondness for theatricals. The father’s pride which prompted that gratuitous comparison in his letter to Carte must have been sensed by the son and may, in an obscure way, have been the first force to move him toward the stage, although Dr. Sheridan, if he had been alive at Thomas’ professional debut, would probably have regarded it with less enthusiasm. At any rate, Thomas was introduced young to the pleasures of the drama. What other boy in eighteenth-century Dublin could, without leaving home, watch plays being rehearsed, staged, and even written; sit in the audience when they were shown; and sometimes even take a part in them? Other advantages to being Dr. Sheridan’s son were less directly 25 Clark, p. 165. See idem for more about Dr. Sheridan’s classical productions. 2β “Pl Prologue to Julius Caesar As it was Acted at Madam Violante’s Booth, December the 15th, 1732, bγ some of the young Gentlemen in Dr. Sheridan’s School.” Dublin, n.d. 27 Lejanu MSS 227.L47 (Dr. Sheridan to Thomas Carte, December 24,

1732)·

Gentleman Into Player connected with the theater. The Doctor’s library must have included dramatic works; perhaps there, as well as through such school productions as Julius Caesar, Thomas Sheridan came to an early love of Shakespeare. From his youngest days he must have known his father’s favorite pupil, Henry Brooke,28 who become the leading Irish playwright of the mid-century and whose plays he later produced. And even though the house was filled with schoolboys, good adult company, particularly “the learned and ingenious” from among the Trinity College Fellows, flocked to Dr. Sheridan’s, for “where mirth and good wine circulated so briskly, it is to be supposed there was no lack of guests.”29 Prominent among the guests was young Thomas’ godfather, Swift, whose grim Irish exile was lightened by Dr. Sheridan’s gaiety, fruitful invention, and warm nature.80 For over two decades until the Doctor’s death in 1738 the Sheridan and Swift households lived intimately together, not always to the domestic harmony of the Sheridan family; for Swift loathed Sheridan’s wife,31 Elizabeth McFadden Sheridan, and his influence over Dr. Sheridan may have split the couple farther apart. Otherwise Swift’s interest was benign. He bespoke livings for his friend,32 praised his 28 Swift, Correspondence, HI, 147. Brooke, according to Lefanu (p. 108) was Thomas Sheridan’s cousin, but this relationship has been called conjectural by H. M. Scurr in Henry Brooke (U. of Minn, thesis, 1922). 29Sheridan, Life of Swift, pp. 370—371, 375. 30 The long, intimate relationship between the two men had its curious aspects. Most of the time they treated each other as equals, each vying to outdo the other in the roughest sort of fooling and name-calling. But in his serious moments Swift, some twenty years older, assumed the role of Sheridan’s mentor (e.g., “Let me desire you will be very regular in your accounts,” Correspondence, v, 191, June 1735). 31 Swift’s attitude toward Mrs. Sheridan is seen in “A Portrait from the Life” {Poems, HI, 954—955):

Come sit by my side, while this picture I draw: In chatt’ring a magpie, in pride a jackdaw; A temper the Devil himself could not bridle, Impertinent mixture of busy and idle. As rude as a bear, no mule half so crabbed; She swills like a sow, and she breeds like a rabbit: A house-wife in bed, at table a slattern; For all an example, for no one a pattern. Now tell me, friend Thomas, Ford, Grattan, and merry Dan, Has this any likeness to good Madam Sheridan? 32See,

for example, Swift’s letter to Lord Carteret of April 17, 1725 {Correspondence, HI, 234—235),

 learning and his teaching (“the best instructor of youth in these kingdoms, or perhaps in Europe; and as great a master of the Greek and Roman languages”),33 and worked tirelessly to promote the welfare of his school. For a time Dr. Sheridan’s fortunes prospered; his seminary became the largest ever known in Ireland.34 But because of competition from a rival academy and from other “cooperating circumstances” 35 he spent his last years in misfortune and debt; he died in middle age, a few years before the much older Swift. Although he paid his father tribute, Thomas Sheridan, writing some half a century later his Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift,36 regarded his godfather as the most beneficent influence on his life. He tells of Swift’s kindness, his gentle behavior,

and the many presents and rewards which accompanied the frequent instruction he gave his godson. “I loved him from my boyish days,” he concludes, “and never stood in the least awe before him, as I do not remember ever to have had a cross look, or harsh expression from him.”37 Some of the instruction given Thomas as a boy may even then have been in the art of speaking. Later, when he was well up in his teens, Swift did much to “correct” his pronunciation and give him the diction which was to attract attention in the theatrical world. As a boy Thomas showed so much ability in his father’s school that Dr. Sheridan judged him worth that highest reward of all—an English education. He sent him—though with great financial difficulty— to Westminster. Thomas was thirteen when he first crossed the Irish Sea, alone except for an acquaintance of his father’s who had agreed to “undertake the trouble of him to London.” 38 For a while there was the possibility that his father and the family would eventually follow and settle in England, where Dr. Sheridan hoped to retrieve his declining fortunes.89 But these plans fell through, and Thomas, 33Swift,

Prose Works, Scott, ed., xi, 161. s s I b i d ., p. 385. Life of Szvift, p. 374. 3ePublished in 1784 as a volume in Sheridan’s edition of Swift’s works. 37Sheridan, Life of Swift, p. 386. s 8 Lefanu MSS 227.^99 (Dr. Sheridan to Thomas Carte, February 23, 1733)3 9 Ibid., f.287 (Dr. Sheridan to Thomas Carte, November 28, 1732). In this letter, written while he was getting his son ready to leave for London, Dr. Sheridan says: “I wish with all my soul, as well as I love my country, that I were setled [sic] some where near you and London. To speak the truth I would rather be a flea-catcher to a dog in England than a privy-counsellour here. I 34Sheridan,

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Gentleman Into Player after having attended school snugly at home, was thrust into a strange new school-world across a sea from home. There he was left pretty much on his own for two years. The way he chose to spend his free time reveals his interests. Soon after his arrival in London Mr. Wesley, his housemaster, complained to Dr. Sheridan that his son was going out too often and spending too much money. The boy defended himself to his father skillfully: I Iayd out too much money I grant it [he wrote in July] but if I Iayd it out to any bad use, may I ever lose your favour, can any one think, that when I came into a city, I had no curiosity to see all their shews, to go to see their plays, &c, besides must not I make myself a friend in the beginning.40 So at fourteen, Thomas, alone or with some other Westminster boy, was spending several nights a week at London theaters, conveniently near the school—at Drury Lane or Goodman’s Fields or the Haymarket or Covent Garden. With his diminutive frame draped in the distinctive clothes of a Westminster King’s scholar, an outfit which included a long double-breasted jacket with knee breeches and a trencher cap,41 he could hardly have remained an inconspicuous figure in the audience. Nor is it likely that his behavior made him any less conspicuous j when he had returned to Ireland, Swift found him “a little too much on the qui vive”—his sole defect, Swift adds, and one he must have learned in England.42 But Dr. Sheridan was worried about another trait which was beginning to develop in young Thomas about this time and which was to irk many an enemy and some friends later on. “Above all,” Dr. Sheridan writes to Mr. Carte, who was in charge of the Irish boy in London, “I beg you may give make no doubt but you will use your endeavour to find me out some footing by which I may afterwards make my own way, when this is done a very small prospect shall incline me to breath [sic] in an air of Liberty.” 40 Ibid. (Letter from Thomas to his father, July 7. No year is given, but the contents suggest 173 3, the boy’s first summer in London.) Although Thomas Carte was given charge of young Sheridan and his father’s friends in London entertained him (Lejanu MSS), this letter shows how much on his own young Thomas was. 41Forshall (p. 59) describes the King’s scholar’s dress. That the boy was small is suggested by Dr. Sheridan’s reference to him about this time as “my litle son” (Lefanu MSS 227.^287; Dr. Sheridan to Thomas Carte, November 28, 1732). 42Swift, Correspondence, v, 312. I I

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · ijig—ij43 him cautions against vanity. I have reason to say this from his own letters to me.”43 Thomas’ early success as a King’s scholar and a London boy about town may have gone somewhat to his head. In the London theaters over the two years (1733-35) he had a great opportunity to see the noted performers of the time: Colley Cibber just before he went into semiretirement; the Irishman James Quin, so successful at Rich’s Covent Garden that he moved to Fleetwood’s Drury Lane at £500 for the 1734-35 season j Denis Delane, likewise from Ireland, at the new Goodman’s Fields Theater built by Giffard. He could also have watched certain promising newcomers, little suspecting that within a few years he would know some of them intimately as fellow actors he had hired for his own theater: stormy Theophilus Cibber, who in the fall of 1733 (Thomas’ first in London) led the revolt to the Haymarket;

gentle Henry Woodward, an engaging young comedian and pantomimist; and Charles Macklin, just come from Ireland to appear with Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Elmy at Drury Lane during 1733-34.44 Surprisingly many Irish actors did well in London, and some of them were gentlemen, educated at Dr. Sheridan's own university, Trinity College, Dublin. The theatrical fare for these years was less exciting, but one comedy may have had a special importance for the young outlander. The Cornish Squirei which, with Macklin in a main role, had a long run during the spring of 1734, was an old play, Squire Treloobyy slightly revised, renamed, and revived after thirty years.45 Later, Sheridan's remembrance of this play's success, together with the fact that farcical playwriting had not been beneath his father's dignity, may have encouraged him to write a similar farce about an Irish captain in London. Even within Westminster School itself Thomas was not entirely withdrawn from the theatrical atmosphere, for Westminster had always been partial to the drama. From Queen Elizabeth's time on, annual plays had been presented by the boys at Christmastime, a Latin play in the College (the Dormitory) and an English play in the Hall.46 Their purpose was to make "gesture and pronunciation" familiar, in short, to make orators as well as scholars of the boys.47 The Latin play given in the Dormitory was elaborately and expensively produced, with supper and a band. Rehearsals lasted for 43

Lejanu MSS 227.^32 (Dr. Sheridan to Thomas Carte, June 21, 1733). H I; London Stage, Pt. 3, seasons from 1733 to 1735. 4e Forshall, p. 468. London Stage, Pt. 3, p. 353. Ibid.; Tanner, p. 3.

44 Genest, 45 47

Gentleman Into Player weeks, and before the performance a Drury Lane dresser arrived to turn young boys into old men, unrecognizable even to their own mothers. Terence was much favored as a playwright, four of his plays being exhibited in rotation year after year against a scenic backdrop which in the early eighteenth century represented Covent Garden.48 (Years later, Manager Sheridan planned to present a Terence play in Latin at his Smock-Alley Theater to show how many educated gentlemen he had in his company.)49 At Westminster the parts in the Latin plays were usually taken by the boys in the upper forms, but a comedy or farce of the period was sometimes acted by the younger boys for the older ones. In 1727, a few years before Thomas Sheridan's arrival, the Town Boys of the school had performed Julius Caesar in the Haymarket for four days.50 No records are available to show whether Thomas played a part in Westminster's dramatic activities, but it is probable that he did; for the scholars acted the English play in the Hall51 (he was a scholar) and he had had earlier acting experience. In any event, his lively mind would have been curious in view of the similar performances at his father's school. Westminster's stress on oratory, on acting, and on dramatic production affected more than Thomas Sheridan, whose later career reflects all these interests. So many boys responded to this influence that the school has been called "the nursery of many gentlemen actors." 52 Thomas did well scholastically at Westminster. According to his godfather, Swift, he was "immediately taken notice of, upon examination: although a mere stranger, he was, by pure merit, elected a king's scholar." 53 The scholarship examination was severe and the competition keen; usually all but one or two scholars later received studentships to Christ Church, Oxford, or scholarships to Trinity College, Cambridge.54 But when Thomas was a year and some months away from this goal, the scholar's maintenance fell somewhat short, and Dr. Sheridan "was then so poor, that," according to Swift, "he could not add fourteen pounds to enable the boy to finish the year."55 So Thomas was forced to return to Dublin. He may not 48 Forshall,

49 Sheridan, An Humble Afpeal, p. 21. pp. 78, 80, 471, 469. 51 Ihid., p. 468. 52 Sichel, 1, 226. p. 469. 53 Swift, Prose Works, xi, 162. 54 Forshall, pp. 44ff. 65 Swift, Prose Works, xi, 162. Writing these lines shortly after Dr. Sheridan's death in 1738, Swift continues, "The doctor was forced to recall him to Dublin, and had friends in our university to send him there, where he hath been 50 Forshall,

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · /7/9-/745 have been disappointed} two letters that remain from these years show him unhappy and in trouble.86 Perhaps this fact as much as a shortage of fourteen borrowable pounds induced his father to recall him. If he had gone to Oxford or Cambridge, his decision to become an actor might still never have occurred. But back in Dublin at sixteen and enrolled at Trinity College there, he was even nearer to the playhouses than in London. And playgoing was a popular recreation with most Trinitarians. From the early seventeenth century the college and the stage in Dublin had had such influence upon one another as to become "complementary institutions." 07 Trinity students formed a powerful bloc in the audiences, taking a vigorous part in various theatrical disturbances, making and ruining players, and dictating programs. In the early 1720's The Conscious Lovers, for example, was played at Smock-Alley by request of the "Young Men of Trinity College, Dublin." Coffey's ballad-opera,

The Beggar's Wedding, also produced at Smock-Alley, was dedicated in 1729 to the Provost and Fellows of Trinity.58 Nothing like this existed in the English universities. As a Trinitarian Sheridan was to do his share of playgoing, and as a lively and interested young man he must have been an active member of the audience. A later critic writing anonymously in 1754 and perhaps not from firsthand knowledge pictures Sheridan as an ignoramus because he spent his time in college "frequenting Playhouses, getting acquainted with Actors, and mixing in their Riots." 59 Shortly after Sheridan entered Trinity in 1735, the rebuilt Smock Alley Theater opened ("the most compleat House of that Kind in Europe") to compete with the new Aungier-Street house ("the finest chosen of the foundation; and, I think, hath gotten an exhibition, and designs to stand for a fellowship." The shift to the present perfect and present tenses is significant. 58 Lejanu MSS. In one letter, he had to defend himself not only against the true charges, as we have seen, of going out too often and spending too much money, but also against the false charge of stealing his house mistress's key. In the other letter, undated, he is in trouble with the great Dr. Nicoll, Master of Westminster, because he is reluctant to go into College (the Dormitory). 67 Lawrence, "Trinity and the Theatre." 88 Ibid. Lawrence dates the Conscious Lovers performance as 1722, but Mrs. William Clark has called my attention to a notice in the Dublin Gazette (January 8, 1722/23) of the first performance of the play on January 10 (1723). 89 Mr. Sh—if s Afology to the Town, p. 8.

Gentleman Into Player Europe").60

in In the years that followed, young Sheridan might have seen Miss Woffington's debut as Ophelia in 1737;61 or the Smock-Alley riot at Dr. Clancy's benefit, on January 25, 1738;62 or James Quin playing to big houses regardless of the heat in July 1738 and again in the summer of 1741563 or Mrs. Furnival, in men's clothes, acting the part of Hamlet in April of that year; or Mrs. Cibber's first appearance in Ireland the next December.64 Dublin was not London, and its smaller population, as the century was to demonstrate over and over again, could not adequately support two theaters; performances were fewer and less regular than in the British capital. But the rivalry, which inevitably edged both theaters toward financial ruin, brought times of frenzied theatrical activity much enjoyed by the town and college. With Thomas' return to Dublin his intimacy with his godfather was renewed, and it was now that Swift particularly influenced his speech and his ideas about correct diction. Dr. Sheridan, who had given up the Dublin school, had moved his family to a house in the town of Cavan,65 some forty miles north of Dublin, near the Sheridan country "cabbin" Quilca, which had come into the family through the wife. During the 1720's Swift, Stella, and Mrs. Dingley had spent holidays at Quilca,66 and now in the fall of 1735 Swift, nearly seventy, arrived in Cavan to pass several months with the good Doctor. Young Thomas was there during all of this time, although his father was not, for he had been called to Dublin on business. For two or three hours each day Thomas read aloud to his godfather67— 60

Kemble, Manuscript Diary, March 9, 1734, and November 1735. AungierStreet Theater had opened on March 9, 1734 (Dublin Journal, March 9—12,

1734)· 61 Dictionary of National Biography (henceforth noted as DNB), v. "Woffington, Margaret." 62 Kemble, Manuscript Diary, January 25, 1738. 63 Ibid., July 1738, and Dublin Journal for these times. 64 Dublin Journal, April 4—7 and December 1—5, 1741. 65 Swift, Correspondence, v, 188; Sheridan, Life of Swift, p. 385. Dr. Sheridan had taken over the free school in Cavan. A notice in the Dublin Journal (January 5—8, 1740) after his death offers for sale the lease on this "late Dwelling House" of Dr. Sheridan. The house with its three-acre park lay "upon a handsome River, in a pleasant Country, and good Neighbourhood." 66 Swift, Poems, HI, 1,034. 172 S) f° r example, all three were at Quilca from April to October. 67 Sheridan, Life of Swift, pp. 386—387.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · ijig—1743 perhaps, on pleasant days, in the large garden dotted with ponds.68 Swift found that he much esteemed Dr. Sheridan's younger son, but it was then that he also found him turned into "an English boy" and so "a little too much on the qui vive." 69 As Thomas read, the great man, despite his impaired faculties and his uncertain temper, made instructive observations, and, we can presume, corrected the boy's pronunciation.70 (He could not bear to hear mistakes in the speech of his friends without righting them.)71 Swift's ideas about proper diction were conservative; his pronunciation reflected the earlier speech of Queen Anne's court. When Sheridan wrote the first complete pronouncing dictionary years later, he took as his ideal the speech of Queen Anne's court, familiar to him from other personages, such as the Earl of Chesterfield and the Duke of Dorset, as well as from Swift.72 Not surprisingly, his dictionary entries often record older pronunciations, still current but competing with new pronunciations which were closer to the spelling, and therefore preferred by other dictionaries of the time.

Sheridan's own pronunciation, like his dictionary entries, resisted these innovations based on spelling;73 and his many years in Ireland, where changes were slower, reinforced this conservatism. As important actor, theater manager, trainer of young players, and teacher of elocution, he had a hand in keeping stage speech conservative, and so giving it, with some people, the reputation for affectation. Actually his pronunciations often represented a more natural phonetic development than the newer spellingpronunciations. Swift did more than affect Sheridan's pronunciation. Sometime in 1737, after Sheridan had been at Trinity for two years, a fateful conversation took place between the boy and his godfather. Swift was questioning him about what he was being taught at the college. "When I told him the Course of Reading I was put into, he asked me, Do they teach you English? No. Do they teach you how to speak? No. Then, said he, they teach you Nothing." 74 This conversation, remembered over the years, gave Sheridan a clue to his life, 68

Mentioned in the notice offering the lease for sale (see footnote 65). Swift, Correspondence, v, 312. 70 Sheridan, Life of Szvift, p. 386; Sheridan, A Complete Dictionary, Preface. 71 Sheridan, A Complete Dictionary, Preface. 72 Ibid. 73 Sheldon, Esther K., "Walker's Influence on the Pronunciation of English." Toward the end of Sheridan's life, when he was directing at Drury Lane, letters to the press comment on the pronunciation heard on stage there. (See Ch. xi.) 74 Sheridan, An Oration, pp. 19-20. 69

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Gentleman Into Player providing him with inspiration, motivation, and perhaps even rationalization, as later events show. When Dr. Sheridan died suddenly and impecuniously in 1738, Thomas was still an undergraduate and a year away from his degree. But he stayed on for his B.A.75 and even for his M.A., which he won sometime before 1743.76 He was preparing to enter his father's profession.77 With his fine record as a scholar 78 and his interest in education, schoolteaching would be a logical career for him. He also had his father's reputation to build on and he had already received "some very advantageous Proposals," which gave promise of success.79 Yet schoolmastering, whose disadvantages he knew firsthand and whose subject matter, after Swift's censure, he had begun to question, was not just what he wanted after all. While he hesitated, he was busy in other ways. He entertained friends with dramatic readings; their enthusiastic response must have strengthened his confidence in his acting powers.80 Even the writing he did at this time pointed toward the stage. In the hope of publish75 The scholarship granted him in 1738 would have paid for his room, board, and part of his fees. (I am indebted to Dr. Richard Hayes, Director of The National Library of Ireland, for this information about Trinity College scholarships.) 76 Shown by a notice advertising his father's works for publication: "Proposals for printing by Subscription, the Works of the late Rev. Thomas Sheridan, D.D. Published by Thomas Sheridan, M.A." (Dublin Journal, March 12—15, 1743). The fact that Burtchaell and Sadleir's Alumni Dublinenses ascribes only a B.A. to Sheridan has raised doubts about this higher degree, but if Sheridan had falsely assumed the M.A. in a public notice of the sort cited above, his Trinity College colleagues would hardly have given him the support and respect they invariably did. Whyte's statement in Miscellanea Nova (p. 61) further confirms Sheridan's M.A. from Trinity. Whyte says that it was an earned degree for which Sheridan was "regularly matriculated" and which he obtained "in due course of gradation." Since the M.A. required three years' residence, the degree could have been granted in the spring of 1742 (his B.A. had been "Vern. 1739") 77 Sheridan, An Oration, p. 19. 78 WeeJcsj j[Rhafsody on the Stage. Weeks, a friend of Sheridan and a "Cotemporary in the very same Form," asserts that Thomas was "one of the best Scholars" of his time. 79 Sheridan, An Oration, p. 19. 80 In a later anonymous critical piece, Mr. Sk—n's Apology to the Town, Sheridan's life as a university student is recalled; he is pictured as reading fustian plays with much rant and being so encouraged by their reception that he "commenc'd Actor" (p. 8). This pamphlet is misdated 2754; internal evidence points to the Mahomet riot of 1754.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · ifig—1743 ing his father's works, he condensed them from eight volumes into four,81 but only one piece met the public eye through his efforts. Significantly, it was the play which his father had once translated from Guarini's Pastor Fido. As The Faithful Shepherd it was performed on January 31, 1740, two years after Dr. Sheridan's death, at Smock-Alley Theater. It had been "fitted for the Stage by his Son."82 Since Richard, the only other son still living, had no literary pretensions, Thomas must have done the tailoring on this play, probably the first of several adaptations he was to make of other dramatists' works; this may also have been his first literary effort to reach the stage. As part-author, who might be needed for interpretations and last-minute revisions, he could hardly have missed the rehearsals. In Dublin at this time even the disinterested public attended rehearsals as a pastime,

ringing the players with a circle of some forty or fifty men83 and causing as much confusion as on stage during performances. The foot-loose Sheridan must have been in this group many times, especially during the month or so when The Faithful Shefherd was in preparation.84 For not only was his new literary reputation at stake; the performance was for Dr. Sheridan's family.85 As author of a new play, Dr. Sheridan, if he had been alive, would have been entitled to a benefit, but on the third or second night, not usually on the first. With Dr. Sheridan dead, the benefit proceeds might reasonably go to his family, especially when his son was the adapter. But to have the benefit arranged for the first night (and only night, as it turned out), young Thomas must already have had connections, and perhaps a little influence, at Smock-Alley. Indeed, the whole episode shows Sheridan's closeness to the theater three years before he made his first appearance on the stage. It was to the theater he turned when he came across the translation of Pastor Fido in his father's writings. A theater benefit with this play would be the 81 This collection is usually mentioned first in connection with Sheridan's 1744 trip to London, where he tried unsuccessfully to publish his father's works. But the Dublin Journal notice (see note 76 above) shows that he had tried to publish them earlier with an equal lack of success, because of lack of subscribers. The extracts, originally enough for eight volumes, had been reduced to four, the notice reports. 82 Dublin Journal, January 8—12 and 22—26, 1740. 83 Victor, History, 1, 94. 84 The play is advertised as "now in Rehearsal" in the Dublin Journal, January 8—12, 1740. It was presented on January 31. 85 Revealed by John Sheen's notice, p. 19.

Gentleman Into Player very way to raise money for the family, semiorphaned86 and not too well off. One member of the family would have none of it. John Sheen, Sheridan's brother-in-law married to Anne Sheridan, washed his hands of the project in the public press: As it is given out that the Profit of the Play, called the Faithful Shepherd, is for the Benefit of Doctor Sheridan's Family} the Town may suppose that I have some share thereof, being married to one of his Daughters; but as I have not the least Benefit arising by the Play or the Doctor's Effects I imagine such Information, and received Opinion may be a Reflection on me, have therefore thought proper to publish this Advertisement, that no Person should think I lie under an Obligation to them on this Account. John Sheen.87 Sheen was acting in form here. When he was courting Anne (having been much encouraged by her mother), Dr. Sheridan, who despised him, described him to Swift as "a cynical thorough fop."88 But Sheen's notice to the papers produced no permanent family break, for it was at Mrs. Sheen's house several years later that Thomas is said to have met the woman he was to marry, Frances Chamberlaine.89 One other episode from this time when Sheridan "was a Member of Trinity College, and therefore a Gentleman"80 supports the pic80 Although Lefanu (p. 17) says that she died before her husband, the mother was still living. Not only does Dr. Sheridan's will, written shortly before his death, cut off with five shillings his "unkind wife" as well as his daughter, Anne Sheridan Sheen, but a 1746 document conveying Quilca from Richard, the older son and heir, to Thomas, the younger son, mentions "Elizabeth Sheridan Widow" (MS 121.83956, Off. Reg. Deeds). She is to have certain rents therefrom for "the term of her natural life." 87 Dublin Journal, January 29—February 2, 1740. The terms of his father-inlaw's will (see preceding footnote) may explain Sheen's tone here. 88Swift, Corresfondence, v, 154. Alicia Lefanu (p. 34) gives a totally different picture of Sheen. He was an Englishman, come over in the Viceroy's suite— "a courtier, gay, fashionable and distinguished for personal attractions." He must have been a successful man of business, for later Thomas Sheridan trusted him, rather than his older brother Richard or his other brother-in-law, John Knowles, to manage his debts for him. And again Sheen's selfishness emerged, as unpublished letters in the Lefanu MSS show. 89 Lefanu, p. 29. 90 A Serious Enquiry into the Causes of the fresent Disorders [in the City] [1747], p. 14.

 ture of him as a powerful leader in theater audiences, but it is recorded by such a vicious enemy of his so many years after and is, withal, so unlike the later Sheridan we know that its authenticity is suspect. In it young Sheridan is represented as cheating a gentlemanactor, Mr. Este, out of the proceeds from some tickets which Sheridan sold for Este at the college; then refusing a challenge because Mr. Este was a player and not on his level; and finally, with the hisses of fellow collegians in the audience to back him up, driving Este off the stage till he should beg public pardon from him. In the course of the anecdote the student Sheridan is pictured as standing up in the audience "in a Rage," and saying that "he was amazed at his [Este's] Insolence, to put himself upon a level with any Gentleman, who, by the Place from which he spoke, was but a Vagabond and a Scoundrel." 91 Written when Sheridan was in a position similar to Este's and still claiming to be a gentleman, this anonymous

account is too patly parallel to be convincing in its entirety. But if any part of it happened—and young people do many shocking things they feel shame for as adults—Sheridan surely regretted it soon after.92 Another witness to his early interest in the stage and also to his youthful joie de vivre93 is the farce he wrote during these years before he made his debut in 1743. Sheridan's only original play, it has two titles. When it was produced anonymously as "a new Farce" at Smock-Alley Theater on February 4, 1743, a week after Sheridan's debut there, it was called Caftain O1Blunder. During the next summer Smock-Alley advertised it as "The Brave Irishman by Mr. Sheridan," 94 who as Smock-Alley's new tragedian was too important to act in farcical afterplays but whose literary efforts would interest his 91

Ibid., pp. 14-15. It is perhaps significant that, when he was an actor of only four months, he played the leading role in a benefit for Mr. Este's widow (Dublin Journal, April 30-May 3, 1743). 93 Alicia Lefanu (p. 377) reports that Sheridan in his youth was much attached to "conviviality and the sports of the field," but that these tastes diminished after his marriage. Even as late as 1758, though, he still had horses and hounds at Quilca, we learn from the Lejanu MSS ("William Sheridan Gent. Pit. vs. Thomas Sheridan Esq. Deft."). 6i DuMin Journal, January 29—February 1 and July 2—5, 1743. Although performances were not always advertised, especially in the years before Sheridan took over the management, a search of theatrical notices in the Dublin papers from 1736 to 1743 unearthed no mention of the play before 1743, when it was advertised as a new play. 92

Gentleman Into Player large following. The Brave Irishman was Sheridan's own title,95 and it prevailed on the Smock-Alley stage and generally in the published versions. In writing this two-act play Sheridan took the outlines of his plot from Squire Trelooby, a three-act translation, first produced and published in 1704, of Moliere's farce Monsieur de Porcemgnac.96 Others before Sheridan had used Squire Trelooby. In 1720 Charles Shadwell's Plotting Lovers had copied from it verbatim, merely changing the scene from London to Dublin and cutting extensively. In 1734, during Sheridan's Westminster days, The Cornish Squire, which was Squire Trelooby with some changes and a new title, had been a great success at Drury Lane. Young Sheridan may have known Shadwell's version; to Squire Trelooby he openly and ingeniously acknowledges his debt in The Brave Irishman's first scene. When one of the two plotters against Captain O'Blunder asks the other how he came by such fruitful schemes, Schemewell responds: "By haunting playhouses" and keeping a special eye on the farces. "Moliere's Squire Trelooby," he explains, "has furnished me with some hints which I believe I have improved." 97 How much Schemewell's young author has improved his source may be open to question; but his Brave Irishmany unlike The Plotting Lovers and even Squire Trelooby, is original in most of its plot and characterization, and in almost all of its dialogue. Those who have called it a "mere translation—and that none of the best—from Monsieur de Porceaugnac"98 have not read Sheridan's work. It is not even an adaptation. The many published versions of this piece, including the earliest 98 The Brave Irishman appears as the only title in Sheridan's MS version of the play (Lefanu MSS). In the printed versions a double title sometimes occurs, usually The Brave Irishman·, or, Caftain O'Blunder, occasionally vice versa. 96 The 1704 published version was a translation, mutatis mutandis, of the French work. The translator's identity has been in doubt; The London Stage accepts Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Walsh as the authors of the Squire Trelooby produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields on March 30, 1704, adding that "the edition of 1704 is a translation by another hand, but the cast [listed in this edition] presumably represents that for this night" (Pt. 3, p. 62). Thirty years later, James Ralph, in publishing The Cornish Squire, insisted that it was the hitherto unpublished Congreve-Vanbrugh-Walsh version with a few modifications. But this claim too has been questioned. (For further details, see John C. Hodges, "The Authorship of Squire Trelooby," Review of English Studies, iv, 1928, 404-413.) 97 The Brave Irishman (Lefanu MSS), p. 7. 98Montagu Summers, ed., Comflete Works of Congreve, HI, 114.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · ijig—1743 known edition in 1754," were apparently printed without Sheridan's consent.100 They were certainly remote from the play as he wrote it} and their addition of much objectionable material must have outraged him at a time when he was trying to establish his reputation for respectability. His own version, which still exists in his handwriting,101 is not so finished as the published versions and is, in 89

The Brave Irishman: or, Caftain O'Blunder. A Farce. As it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Smock-alley: with the genuine songs, Not in any other Edition. Suffosed to be Written by T s S n, Esq; And Revised with Several Corrections and Additions by J—η P—st—η, Dublin, 1754.· The cast listed in this edition was one assembled at Smock-Alley only during the 1753—54 season. Perhaps the publication was made

easier by Sheridan's withdrawal as manager early in 1754» reprisals were less likely. The name J—η P—st—η in the Huntington Library's copy of this edition has been filled out as John Preston in handwritten letters similar to those in a sidenote on the title page: "Collated & Perfect J. P.(?)K.i800" (John Philip Kemble, perhaps?). John Preston has been tentatively identified as a minor actor and author of The Rival Father, published in Dublin in 1754 (Hughes and Scouten, p. 224). The claim on the title page that the songs do not appear "in any other Edition" suggests that this 1754 edition was not the earliest; Biografhia Dramatica gives "about 1748" as the date of first publication. A comparison of the 1754 Dublin edition with the 1755 Edinburgh edition shows many similarities in the two not to be found in Sheridan's manuscript or in the Larpent manuscript (see below, footnote 110); but there are also differences between these two early editions, some of which in each edition can be traced back to the manuscripts. Although the relationship of the editions and the changes made in them are irrelevant here, I hope to explore this subject further in a later article. 100 The Thesfian Dictionary says that it was "collected by some persons from memory, and frequently performed; but never, as Mr. Sheridan used to declare, with his consent" (v. "Sheridan, Thomas"). The great differences among the printed versions and between them and Sheridan's text in the Lefanu MSS indicate not only that they were collected from memory but that they were rewritten extensively by such "publishers" as J—η P—st—η. It is easy to understand why Sheridan never wanted to acknowledge the printed editions. But why did he never publish his own version? Possibly because it was too trivial, too unworthy. Even his tragedy Coriolanus bears no author's name on the title page. Sheridan was, on the other hand, willing enough to acknowledge his books on elocution and education. 101 This fifty-seven-page manuscript (in the Lefanu MSS) seems to be Sheridan's original text; or, if not, it is a very early copy. In it a third rival, whom Sheridan added to the Trelooby contenders for the English girl's hand, is called "Dapper" through the first act, but through the second act Sheridan crossed this name out and substituted "Monsieur Ragout"—the name, variously spelled, which appears in later printed versions and in the Larpent MS (see footnote no below). He also rewrote Dapper's speeches into a French-tinged English for Act 11, but did not bother to change name or dialogue in Act 1. (The dramatis

Gentleman Into Player places, duller, but O'Blunder's characterization is more consistent and the humor is rarely scatological (except where Sheridan has borrowed from his source). Yet, no matter in what version, The Brave Irishman had a fair success at Dublin theaters over many years. It had a few performances in England and Scotland102 too, but its main interest is as an Irish-authored farce which had an Irishman for a hero and which appealed to Irish audiences of the mid-eighteenth century. Sheridan's own way of winning his audiences reveals not only eighteenth-century Irish tastes but certain things about the author as a young man. English boy though he seemed to Swift, he was still Irish enough to take a poke at English snobbism toward outlanders. When the English heroine is asked by her maid how she can have such an aversion to a man "whom you never saw," she answers: "O hideous! is he not an Irishman? . . . Why I am told they are meer Beasts and have Horns in that Country." To this the maid retorts: "I believe not more than their Neighbours. But I assure you our London Citizens know to their Cost that they have an excellent Hand at Planting them come come it is time to lay aside these popular Prejudices, I have known Several of that Country, & I assure you they are the most charming, delightfull, agreable—(faith it was just out) Companions in the World." 103 In the end the blundering, truefersonae on the title page of the manuscript, however, shows "Ragoo" written over "Dapper.") In the whole manuscript Sheridan cut much and also made many additions and revisions, which he wrote on the blank pages opposite the emended passages. The fact that this document came down in the Lefanu family suggests that it might be the very one about which Richard, who had just left his father in Bath, wrote to him in 1772: "I packed up your Comedy by Mistake, and send the first opportunity . . ." (Lefanu MSS, Richard's letter of August 30, 1772). On the other hand, this version with its uncorrected DapperRagout confusion and its many unincorporated changes must have needed a fair copy. (The Larpent MS, not in Sheridan's handwriting, is just that, with a few additional changes and a title that is not Sheridan's.) Since Sheridan authorized no publication, presumably a few fair copies did exist and the "Comedy" mistakenly packed by Richard might have been one of these. 102 Under Sheridan's management at Smock-Alley it was played about forty times. In England its first performance seems to have been on January 31, 1746, at Goodman's Fields as Caftain O'Blunder or The Brave Irishman, "wrote by Mr. Sheridan the Player" (Genest, iv, 198; London Stage, Pt. 3, p. 1,215). It had a few performances at provincial theaters (Rosenfeld, pp. 148, 195) and at Edinburgh, where its popularity is indicated by several Edinburgh editions which list Edinburgh players. It even was played now and then in America (see Hughes and Scouten, p. 222, n. 8). 103 The Brave Irishman (Lejanu MSS), pp. 2—3.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J1Q—1J43 blue Irish hero not only wins the English girl but outdoes his cleverer "English" rival (revealed finally as an Irishman cravenly posing as an Englishman), who is married off—this must have rejoiced the galleries—to the girl's maid. The humor throughout is more sexual than scatological, as the passage just quoted suggests.104 The scatological was much expanded in the unauthorized editions and probably in response to eighteenth-century tastes. Young Sheridan had been willing to go along with the clysterpipe comedy of his original source, but using Irish dialect to produce shits from sits and turd from third 105 hardly appealed to him. He was more proper than his father and godfather, whose jeux d'es-prit knew few bounds. But much of his humor is, like theirs, verbal—and fairly obvious. Captain O'Blunder raises many a horselaugh with his grammatical confusions, logical inconsistencies, and malapropisms. Even this early, Sheridan is more interested in language than in subtleties of plot or characterization. Yet Sheridan's Captain, simply drawn as he is, not only makes more sense but is more winning than the Irish blusterer of the printed versions who just at the end turns unaccountably magnanimous, genteel, and intelligent. Sheridan conceived his Irishman as a mild, well-meaning blunderer who could be goaded to violence but whose first instinct was to please. He does not bully or swagger. And throughout the whole play his innocent mistakes, both in language and judgment, have considerable charm. But he was a temptation, probably, to actors playing him; hence the swashbuckling, Ioud104 Sheridan bowdlerized his own version in places. He crossed out a short song to be sung by the maid on the virtues of an Irishman:

Of all the Husbands living an Irishman's the best with his fol ter rol Nor French nor Dutch nor English like him can stand the test of your fol ter rol A lasting Fund of Pleasure in him alone you'll find Who ev'ry Day will please you & ev'ry Night be kind With his fal ter rol. (p. 36) 105 The passage which lays the groundwork for these pronunciations appears in the Larpent MS (see note no) but not in Sheridan's original version: "They sit down each of em on both sides me," says O'Blunder, describing the behavior of the two physicians in the madhouse scene, "and I was the Third Person, so they made me sit in the Middle. . . ." Here, although the actor may have used them on stage, the Irish substitutions are not represented in the spelling as they are in some of the printed versions which carry this passage. (The excerpt above from Larpent MS Φ 120 is quoted by permission of the Henry E. Huntington Library.)

Gentleman Into Player mouthed, fierce-tempered booby emerged as more suitable to farce and to eighteenth-century Irish audiences. This character, fresh for its time, made an early contribution to the history of that dubious type, the Stage Irishman, and influenced later creations, among them Richard Sheridan's Lucius O'Trigger.106 The O'Blunder role is supposed to have been written for Isaac Sparks,107 a young Irish comedian who, as a child, had appeared in Madam Violante's Lilliputian troop 108 and who for many years must have been familiar to young Sheridan. Although he was not the first actor to be advertised in the part (Mr. Morris had this honor), Sparks did play O'Blunder often enough, under Sheridan's management, to become identified in the public mind with the character. And so popular did the character and its actor become then in Dublin that signs picturing O'Blunder as represented by Sparks hung out here and there above the streets, probably over inns and taverns. One day, so the story goes, Sparks himself happened to be walking under one of these signs when a chair-man went by. Looking first at the actor and then up at the sign, the chair-man quipped, "Oh there you are, above and below." 109 Perhaps in gratitude for the comedian's popularization of the role, Manager Sheridan regularly performed in Sparks's benefits after he had given up the practice with other actors. And the farce chosen for these benefits was usually The Brave Irishman.110 106

107 O'Keeffe, 1, 357. 108 Hitchcock, i, 49. Duggan, pp. 196-201. O'Keeffe, 1, 357. The information about Morris in the O'Blunder role comes from the Dublin Journal, April 9-12, 1743, in a notice of a benefit performance for Morris on April 12 at Smock-Alley Theater. He had probably appeared in the role earlier in the February 4 performance, which was for his benefit also. He is advertised for it again in July 1743, in March 1746, and as late as May 1748. Sparks's appearance in the role, apparently not till 1749-50, rejuvenated the play. 110 When Sheridan was acting at Covent Garden in 1754—55, having given up the managership of Smock-Alley temporarily, Sparks too was in the Covent Garden company; and once, for his benefit, on March 22, 1755, he acted in The Irishman in London, advertised as "A farce never perform'd before" (London Stage, Pt. 4, p. 476). The text of this afterpiece, which exists in manuscript (Larpent MS 120), is very close to the text of Sheridan's manuscript of The Brave Irishman, and therefore quite unlike the printed versions of that play. Indeed, the Larpent Ms provides a fair copy of the Sheridan MS with a few additional changes. My assumption has been that these few additional changes were with Sheridan's consent or perhaps even made by him, as the drastic changes in the printed versions were not.

Therefore I am assuming that the productions of The Brave Irishman at Smock-Alley under Sheridan's management followed this 109

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 17iq—ij43 Sheridan is said to have written this only original play of his as a "mere boy" at college,111 some have thought as early as 1736, when he would have been only seventeen. But mention of Pamela within the manuscript text indicates a date no earlier than 1740, though probably not later than 1741. "The admirers of Pamela will never think the worse of me for it [soliloquizes the "English" rival as he contemplates marriage with the servantmaid]. I'll have some poor Author to write a second Part of Pamela upon my Story, & crowd all the female Virtues that can be assembled into my Spouse that is to be."112 Even without this evidence, the play would seem to be not only too linguistically knowledgeable but too socially sophisticated for a seventeen-year-old. Particularly interesting is the view of marriage expressed by the heroine's father and by her maid as they urge the heroine to accept O'Blunder. The father argues that she will have a better chance of governing a husband less intelligent than she. When the heroine asks her maid, "But Betty don't you think it is a text or one like it and not the texts represented in the published editions. If Sheridan had made or even had approved of the changes appearing in the published texts and if they had been incorporated into the play which had been so popular over the years at Smock-Alley, Sparks would presumably have used some published version with Sheridan's consent and under his eye at Covent Garden. His notice that the piece had never been played before follows the not unusual practice of advertising an old and little-played piece under a new title as "never performed before." Besides, the farce had not been performed in London in any version since 1746 (London Stage, Pt. 3, p. 1,245) and even Sheridan's version had, as the Larpent MS shows, been changed some since then. Sparks used The Brave Irishman again for his benefit on May 14, 1770, at Drury Lane, this time under its regular title—but in what version, one wonders. 111 Baker, "Captain O'Blunder." Pedicord (pp. 216—217) gives the season of the original performance as 1736—37. Both Allardyce Nicoll and W. H. Grattan Flood also assume that the farce was first produced in 1737 (February 21) anonymously (as written by a gentleman of Trinity College Dublin) at Aungier-Street Theater under the title of The Honest Irishman·, or The Cuckold in Conceit. (Nicoll, 11, 355 and 444; W. H. Grattan Flood, "Thomas Sheridan's 'Brave Irishman,' " Review of English Studies., 11, 1926, 346—347.) Although I have not seen The Honest Irishman (nor, so far as I can judge, had Grattan Flood), the subtitle shows that it was probably not The Brave Irishman, in which there are no cuckolds. 112 The Brave Irishman (Lejanu MSS), pp. 54—55. The last sentence, which speaks of having a sequel written to Pamela, is marked for excision, probably because Richardson had outdated it by publishing his own sequel in 1741. Thus the mention of Pamela would seem to give us a temfus ab quo and a tempts ad quem for the composition of the manuscript.

Gentleman Into Player terrible Thing to marry a Man without either Understanding or good Breeding?" the answer is:

BETT.—O Lord Madam he'll make up those Defects in—Something else I warrant you. Besides don't you think it a charming thing to be free from the Tyranny of an imperious, prying, sensible Fellow. [Why Lord Madam he's the only Man in the World to make a Woman happy, for you'll enjoy in him all the Sweets of Matrimony without its Inconveniencies.] Luc.—But don't you think that there's a great Deal of Pleasure in the Conversation of a Man of Sense? BETT.—Not if he's a Husband I assure you Madam. There is not duller Company in the world than Man & Wife, especially if they are both people of sense. He presumes too much on his Superior Understanding, she thinks her's is at least equal to his. Their Conversation soon turns into Disputes & Wrangles. They are mighty good Company asunder but the dullest Creatures when together in the World. As for my Part I did not care if my Husband were dumb, for I assure you I think their silent Conversation is by far the best.113 Sheridan was a bachelor when he wrote these lines; his childhood had been spent with parents who, though unequal in "Understanding and good Breeding," had not been happy together; in a few years he himself was to marry and live happily with a woman who was quite his equal in "Understanding and good Breeding." But these passages and their cynical smartness came naturally to a twenty-oneyear-old with some reputation as convivial sophisticate for all his fundamental seriousness as an M.A. scholar and a prospective schoolmaster. During the four years after his B.A., while Sheridan was preparing to teach, Swift's remarks returned to plague him with doubts about his father's profession. Before he could begin his teaching, education needed to be reformed to include English and the art of speaking. For a young educational reformer in search of practice, rather than theory, in the art of speaking, one way was open—the stage.114 So Sheridan reasoned then, or rationalized later. The truth was he had 113 Ibid., pp. 19, 37-38. The passage

in brackets is marked for deletion. The father's scene with his daughter (Act i, sc. 4) seems to have been dropped later— possibly as too dull and preachy for farce. It is not in the Larpent MS. 114Sheridan, An Oration, pp. 20—21.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · /7/9-/743 often turned to the stage before, as a relief from loneliness in London, as an outlet for his writing in The Brave Irishman, as a way of raising money for his family. The theater had an undeniable allure for him, which had steadily mounted over the years. He wanted only a gentleman's reason for stepping on the boards. His long-range plans (if they existed) gave him a reason, but, he says, they were revealed to only two people besides himself.115 To the rest of the world he would be nothing but an actor—then, in Dublin and to many Irishmen, something less than nothing. Fifteen years later when he was describing this crucial time in his life, he wrote a sentence which may reveal the real reason for his prolonged hesitation: "The miserable State in which I found the Stage, and the Meanness of the Performers at that Time, had brought the Profession itself into such a Degree of Contempt, as was sufficient to deter a young Man of any Spirit, who had gone thro' an entire Course of a liberal Education, from entering into it." 116 He was still hesitating when events during the summer of 1742 apparently spurred him out of his indecision and into a stage career. Theatrically speaking, Dublin summers were often more exciting than winters, for then well-known London actors came to Ireland to supplement their income after the English season was over. Not every Dubliner approved, feeling that these foreign actors milked Ireland and spent elsewhere.117 But their novelty and their superior talent attracted great houses, rare in Dublin winters—and this in spite of summer heat, ill-ventilated theaters, and the danger of infectious diseases. The summer of 1742 brought over several London actors. Only two of them were important enough to be called by the Dublin Journal "celebrated": Mr. Giffard, actor-manager of Goodman's Fields, and Denis Delane, a Trinity-educated Irishman who had been much loved in Dublin since his debut there in 1728. Not "celebrated" were Miss Woffington, returning to her native city after two years in England, the dancer Signora Barbarini, and Mr. Garrick,118 a rising young actor who had appeared for the first time eight months before at Goodman's Fields. He had made quite a sensation in London, but the Dublin Journal was waiting to be shown. These visitors arrived in mid-June. Garrick performed at Smock Alley, supported by Mrs. Furnival of the local company and by Mrs. lx ^Ibid.,

p. 21. 116 Ibid. 117Kemble, Manuscrift Diary, November 1743. Journal, June 8-12 and 12-15, !74 2 Woffington is called Miss in the press item, but Mrs. in the theatrical notices. See also p. 58, n. 3. l l i Dublin

Gentleman Into Player WoiEngtonj Signora Barbarini danced. Delane was engaged at the rival Aungier-Street Theater, with Mrs. Cibber, who had been there through the winter, staying on to play opposite him. Advertisements indicate that these last two acted only a few nights. The main Dublin attraction that summer was Garrick. He appeared about twice weekly for two months (from June 18 to August 19), in such plays as Richard III, Leari Hamleti The Orfhani Venice Preserved, Love Makes a Man, and most frequently as Bayes in The Rehearsal. His interpretation of this last comic role was especially popular; years after, actors were doing Bayes a la Garrick in Dublin. He even acted in a few afterpieces—in The Mock Doctor, for example, and in his own farce, The Lying Valet. Many of these plays were presented "by the particular Desire" of people or groups in the audience. One evening the Lords Justices, rulers of Ireland in the absence of a viceroy, went to Smock-Alley to see Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Barbarini perform.119 Although WoiEngton put on men's clothes and did her charming best as Sir Harry Wildair, she was too familiar to attract attention. It was Garrick who inspired a poem in the Dublin Journal, praising his Lear and asking how so gentle a man could play so convincingly the villainous Richard III.120 Many a Dubliner took to his bed with what theatrical historians called "Garrick fever," an epidemic spread, it was believed, by the crowds pressing into Smock-Alley on Garrick nights. Among these crowds was Thomas Sheridan,121 only slightly younger than Garrick and with as much passion for the stage. He may have been one of the gentlemen who persuaded Garrick to change his benefit play from The Fair Penitent to Hamlet,122 always one of Sheridan's favorites. He probably knew Peg WoiEngton from her earlier days in Dublin; his apologies sent to her in his note to Garrick the following April reveal that she was an old-enough friend to be neglected.123 Perhaps through her he became acquainted with 119

120 Ibid., July 3-6, 1742. Ibid.., June 26-29, 1742. He himself in An Humble Affeal (p. 14) speaks of seeing Garrick on his first visit to Dublin, playing opposite Woffington. 122 Notice in Dublin Journal,

August 3-7, 1742: “Mr. Garrick thinks it proper to acquaint the Town, that he did not take The Fair Penitent (as was given out) for his Benefit, that Play being disapproved of by several Gentlemen and Ladies; but by particular Desire deferred it till Hamlet could be ready, which will be played on Thursday next [August 12].” 123 Garrick, Private Correspondence, 1, 16. Sheridan’s letter to Garrick, April 21, 1743: “Pray remember my best respects to Mrs. Woffington: I should own myself unpardonable in not having wrote to her, were it in my power; but I 121

Sheridan of Smock-Alley • /7/9-/745 Garrickj but without her his interest in the theater, his authorship of an Irish farce, and his position at Trinity College could have brought the two men together. The next spring, after eight months of separation, Garrick still felt close enough to Sheridan to invite him to live with him in England. Sheridan’s response shows that he recognized Garrick’s genius and solid popularity with the public.124 This genius and popularity may have infected Sheridan with a special kind of “Garrick fever.” Garrick’s respectable background had not kept him from the stage; the social position he was winning showed old prejudices weakening; more gentlemen in the theater would strengthen the actor’s status (an argument which the reformer in Sheridan would cherish). And then the nightly enthusiasm for this young actor, greater than any he had seen before! Garrick’s success seems to have removed Sheridan’s last scruple. Within five months, the proper time needed to persuade Manager Phillips of Smock-Alley, to learn the parts in Richard III and in Mithridates and to attend the required rehearsals, Sheridan was making his Smock-Alley debut. A gentleman who watched one of these rehearsals wrote about it in a letter to the Journal just before Sheridan’s first appearance: I had the Curiosity Friday Evening to attend the Rehearsal of Richard IIId at Smock-Alley. I was pleas’d, and surprised to see a Gentleman in the Character of Richard, shew Talents superior to what I had observed in the oldest Tragedians. I am an Enemy to PufFs of all Kinds, but most of all to the [Mojdern Way of building one Man’s Fame on the Ruin of another. This Gentleman is pleased to acknowledge Garrick for [his] Master, and not to vye with him, and is prompted to app[ear] first in this Character, from a Remembrance of his Beauties.125 Soon Sheridan was to regard Garrick as his equal rather than his master; but Garrick’s importance to him at this moment, even to the role he selected for his debut, is underlined here. The letter writer’s main purpose, however, was to obviate objections being made to the have been already sufficiently punished in the loss of so agreeable a companion, for, I assure you, I have a long time envied her pretty Chronon that pleasure: as soon as I have a moment to spare, I intend to do myself the honour to write to her. . . . Tommy Philips desires me to present his best respects to you and Mrs. Woffington.” 124 Ibid., pp. 15—16. 125 Dublin Journal, January 22-25, 1743.

Gentleman Into Player young man’s attempt by his friends, who were apparently urging him to try for a Trinity fellowship 126 instead of risking his honor and future in a degenerate vocation. The letter writer argues that, degenerate though it now is by the reputations of performers, the stage can be raised by “Persons of Genius, Character, and Education.”127 Young Sheridan brought to his new vocation not genius but a good mind, and a better education than usual. As for his character, which had been forming over the years, he was alert and energetic, convivial, and, on the surface at least, self-confident. His self-confidence bordered at times on vanity. Like many vain people he was easily wounded and overdefensive, as his Westminster letters to his father show. Like his father, he had a sense of humor but he was basically more serious and ready to commit himself to idealistic goals. An undeniable allure may have drawn him to the stage, or a desire to master the art of speaking. Once there, his goals became clear to him and he expressed them often: he was going to raise the stage, make the actor’s profession respectable, and restore the theater to its classical role as a cultural institution. He could not know then at what cost. 12e Hitchcock,

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Dublin Journal, January 2 2 2 5, 1 743·

CHAPTER II

Theatrical Hero Into Theater zJXCanager, I 743” I 74S HEN Sheridan came to the stage, he must have known something of recent stage history in Dublin. Later he recounted it in speeches and pamphlets: how Smock-Alley Theater had prospered under Joseph Ashbury’s forty-five-year monopoly and under Thomas Elrington’s briefer management after Ashbury’s death (in 1720); how after Elrington died (in 1732) and the Smock-Alley company had moved to the new Aungier-Street Theater, a rival group had

sprung up, rebuilding the abandoned Smock-Alley house and giving Dublin a second regular company,2 quite different from Stretch's puppets and Madam Violante's child-actors. Even though it was not London (as Swift and others complained), Dublin, when compared to other provincial capitals—Calvinistic Edinburgh, say— was becoming a city of the world. Physically too, Dublin was growing fast during these mid-century years. In 1747 a survey showed that it measured nine and threequarters miles around and, although still only about one-third the extent of London,3 it was the sixth largest city in Europe for number of inhabitants, exceeded only by London, Paris, Constantinople, Moscow, and Rome.4 Many of the buildings, houses, and streets which so delight the modern admirer of eighteenth-century elegance were being constructed during Sheridan's youth and early manhood: the beautiful Trinity College library, completed only three years before he became a Trinitarian 5 the Parliament House rebuilt at about the same time and regarded as "infinitely superior" to that of Westmin-

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An epithet for Sheridan from Weeks, A Rhafsody on the Stage: "Your first setting out, promised, what a Year or two performed, the Theatrical Hero" (Dedication). 2 Sheridan, Mr. Sheridan's Sfeech, pp. 5—7 (dates have been added from Clark and Stockwell). This rival group had come from the Rainsford-Street Theater, which had offered brief competition earlier (Stockwell, p. 69). For a detailed history of these theaters, see Clark to 1720, Stockwell to the period under consideration. 3 Hibernia Curiosa, p. 10. 4 Dublin Journal, September 12-15, 1747·

the Lying-in Hospital, with its handsome gardens; and, in the residential sections to the north, neat new houses roofed with blue slate, facing one another along regular and spacious streets. At least a quarter of the city, according to one estimate of the time, had been built in the forty years between 1724 and 1764.® Yet, with all of Dublin's expansion and its cosmopolitan manner, visitors were appalled by the poverty and unemployment there. Debtors' prisons were overflowing; desperate robberies for the most trifling objects brought death often to the robbed and the robber; marauding and fighting gangs roamed the streets.7 Ireland's wealth was owned by a handful and even then was siphoned off abroad by Irish absenteeism, which in turn compounded Irish misery.8 So, with the theatergoing public remaining small, though no longer so aristocratic, two competing companies still could not both survive. The theaters themselves were owned by "subscribers," mostly well-to-do gentlemen who had undertaken them as a public service,9 to whom money was secondary; but they were leased and run by managers, usually actors (hence, "acting managers," where "acting" means "performing"). To these managers and their companies competition meant near starvation and the ghastly prospect of debtors' prison. When Sheridan came to the stage in 1743, just such a ruinous rivalry had been going on for eight years between Smock-Alley and AungierStreet. The two theaters were located not far from each other in the older part of town between the castle and the college—Smock-Alley Theater in a street by that name just off the Liffey and Aungier-Street Theater10 a short distance across Dame-Street, Dublin's main thoroughfare. Smock-Alley's curious name went back, according to legend, to the time of a certain infamous Mother Bungy, when the district was "a sink of debauchery." Later, after a man had been 5

A Description of the City of Dublin, p. 13; Hibernia Curiosa, p. 9. Hibernia Curiosa, pp. 10, 11. 7 Ibid., p. 14; "A Description of Dublin" lately published in the London Chronicle, republished in the Dublin Journal, June 17—20, 1758; other items in newspapers of the time. 8 Maxwell, pp. 17-18: From a list of absentees published in 1730, the yearly value of the income spent abroad was estimated at £621,499; a similar estimate in 1769 shows an increase to £1,208,982. 9 Hitchcock, i, 87—93. 10 Although called Aungier-Street Theater, it was actually in Longford-Lane (Stockwell, p. 71). 6

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1743—1745 murdered there, the shacks were pulled down and handsome houses put up.11 By the 1740's the street suffered from no more serious taint than might emanate from theatergoing crowds such as these milling around the various doors: Lords, ladys, shoe-boys, GENTLEMEN, and whores; Dogs, horses, chairs, parsons, bullys, proctors, Old men and widows, quacks, madmen, doctors; Pimps, statesmen, pocket pickers, poets, fools, Coaches and chariots, flams and chairmens poles: All mix'd confusion, noise, tumults, curses, Swearing, breaking shins, and picking purses.12 The theater aside, Smock-Alley had achieved a sort of middle-class respectability and was occupied by shops, inns, and dwellings. At the corner near Fishamble-Street Mr. Craig, the grocer, let

lodgings to Smock-Alley players. Fishamble-Street, which ran at right angles, housed the celebrated Music-Hall and picturesquely named inns such as the Black Boy and the Bull's Head. Other actors and actresses stayed even nearer the theater—with Mr. Smith, the perukemaker, or at Harry of Monmouth's Head in Smock-Alley itself.13 After Sheridan became well established as manager, in the early fifties, he began to use a large house next to the theater for an office and as a place for entertaining friends, one more spacious than the Smock Alley greenroom and more convenient than his remote home in Dorset-Street; this annex is referred to as the Great House adjoining the theater on the Blind-Key side.14 And sometime in 1749 Deputy Manager and Treasurer Benjamin Victor moved from lodgings in Crow-Street into a "neat little box" of a house opposite the theater.15 Yet, for all of its respectable population and crowded theatrical activity, one walked Smock-Alley (as one walked most of Dublin) at the risk of one's limbs and even one's life. Great holes gaped in the street; in 1753, because of "the badness of the Pavement," a man fell down and broke his leg.16 Desperate thieves lurked in the dark passageways. In one such alley a gentleman was knocked down and 11

The Life of Mrs. Abington, p. 19; Chetwood, pp. 72—73. The Gentleman, p. 15. 13 Notices of benefit performances often show where players lived, since tickets were to be had at their dwellings. xi Duhlin Journal, January 9-13, 1753. 15 Victor, Original Letters, 1, 163. Victor had built the house "on an entire 18 Dublin Journal, January 2—6, 1753. new plan" of his own. 12

Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager robbed of his hat and wig, "the Want of proper Lights" being "a manifest Encouragement to such villainous Practices." 17 Smock-Alley Theater, located on the north side of the street in mid-block, had been in existence since 1662. When it was rebuilt in 1735 to compete with the new Aungier-Street Theater, it had a larger auditorium than Aungier-Street, but a smaller stage.18 Later, when both theaters were under Sheridan's control, he used the larger Aungier-Street stage for operas and spectacles, but Smock-Alley was his regular theater, "a strong, elegant, commodious, well constructed" building, which had avoided the errors of other theaters and in which the audience section was particularly good for seeing and hearing.19 There still exists a depressing line sketch of its front fagade (reproduced on the jacket), and both exterior and interior are described with much satiric license in "an Heroic Poem," composed in 1747: High on a hill their gothic structure rose, Tall as an Alfine mountain crown'd with snows; A lusty fabric whose stupendous height, O'ertop'd the bounded reach of human sight. Three various gates three various quarters fac'd, With golden valves, and golden portals grac'd: This at the north, a spacious entrance gave, Where the smooth Liffy rolls her silent wave; And seeks with tardy steps her native main Well stor'd with cats and dogs untimely slain. This to the east, beholds the eastern skies, That to the south, sees Wicklow mountains rise. In four divisions, form'd by art within, The various quarters of the world are seen: And first the STAGE, like Africs desart land, Where gold abounds, and APES and MONKEYS stand: And next, like Euro-pe fam'd for Arts, the PIT 17

Ibid., November 16—20, 1756. Chetwood, pp. 72-73. I can find nowhere the measurements for Smock Alley, but figures for Aungier-Street are given in the Dublin Journal, January 31February 4, 1758, and are compared there with the new Crow-Street Theater just being built. (See below, Ch. ix.) Smock-Alley seems to have been between them in size. Hibernia Curiosa (pp. 12—13) reports Smock-Alley as smaller than Crow-Street, which was about the size of Drury Lane. 19 Hitchcock, i, 93-94.. 18

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1743—1745 Where artful pimps, and artful parsons sit: The BOXES then, America display, With naked charms, and painted feathers gay; Where ev'ry fair one deck'd in paint appears, While gaudy Gewgaws gravitate their ears: And then the GALL'RY Asia's medium hits, Between the Lybian APES, and Eurofe's WITS; While overhead, no less than GODS I trow, Survey the world, in every act below; And pleas'd or vex'd, their smiles or vengeance deal, Their smiles a clap, their vengeance orange peel. Such was the structure, such Smock-Alley stage. . . .20 A less colorful picture of the theater written by Sheridan himself to describe normal conditions there before his management shows only the upper gallery filled, the rest of the house almost deserted: twenty persons in the pit, no one in the boxes, one row of the middle gallery filled.21 Half-empty houses like these had forced Manager Louis Duval to give up in 1741 to Thomas ("Harlequin") Phillips,22 who, when Sheridan joined, was still running the company. For several years before Sheridan joined, a union of the two theaters—to save them from the disaster which threatened—had been contemplated. As early as 1739 a press item mistakenly predicted a merger for the next season, and a week after Sheridan's debut in 1743 the Dublin Gazette rumored that the proprietors had agreed on an immediate union.23 Perhaps Sheridan's success, with its promise of prosperity for Smock-Alley, postponed this expedient. For his success was immediate and

spectacular. The phenomenon, frequent then, of an untrained actor without professional experience stepping into the leading part of some difficult Shakespearean play and from there leaping to fame and a future career seems strange now. Sheridan hardly ever in his life played a minor role. Stranger still seems the managerial brashness which would permit an inexperienced unknown to attempt the lead; yet Sheridan, in his early years as manager, brought out many a newcomer this way, although eventually he came to disapprove of the custom as risky and too frequently disappointing. But his own debut was no disappointment; it turned him into a 20

21 Sheridan, An Humble A-pfeal, p. 15. The Gentleman, pp. 13—14.. Stockwell, pp. 80-81. 23 Dublin Journal, March 27-31, 1739; Dublin Gazette, February 5-8, 1743. 22

Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager leading actor overnight. For the first three months he played at Smock-Alley about once a week; then, from April on, about twice weekly. He was plagued by ill health, which forced him to postpone several performances.24 Even so, he worked prodigiously all spring to enlarge his repertoire, adding Hamlet, Brutus, Othello, and in April trying his first comedy, as Charles in Love Makes a Man and Lord Townley in The Provoked Husband.25 The order and proportion in this list show Sheridan's early preference for tragedy and for Shakespeare. Supporting him in the Smock-Alley company were many players who were later to serve under him: Mrs. Elmy, Mr. Beamsley, Miss Orfeur (to become Mrs. Kennedy),26 et cetera. For a time one of the minor actors was Richard Sheridan, whose trial in the company reveals the solicitude and influence of his younger brother, the star. Richard played Cassius and at least one other role,27 but he was not a success and in the end retired to a place in the Custom-House and to respectable living in a home of his own on Moor-Street—a "snug, cosey, friendly little man," as described by O'Keeffe, who painted his portrait28 Dublin that spring is said to have gone wild over its discovery, young Thomas Sheridan. Even though it is probably not true that the veteran Quin fled Dublin, driven off by the new actor's success,29 24 For example, "Mr. Sheridan being recovered from his late Indisposition, the Play of Hamlet will positively be acted at the Theatre in Smock-Alley, on Monday next" (Dublin Journal, February 22-26, 1743). Another such notice appears ibid., June 18—21. 25 Sheridan's Caftain O'Blunder, or the Brave Irishman was the farce at his debut as Charles. (For dates of first appearances during 1743 see note 83.) 26 Bellamy, I, 75. Others in the company, as shown by Dublin Journal notices, were Mr. Elrington (probably Ralph), Mr. Husband, Mr. Wright, Mrs. Bailey, Mr. Oates. Mrs. Elmy played Lady Townley to Sheridan's Lord Townley. At Aungier-Street were still others who were eventually to join Sheridan's company: Mrs. Furnival, Isaac Sparks, Bardin, Morris, Barrington, Layfield (probably Lewis Layfield), and Moreau, the dancer. 27 Richard appeared as Clincher Jun. in The Constant Coufle, a performance in which Thomas did not appear. The Cassius part was played on April 29, "the first time of his Appearance upon any Stage" (Dublin Journal, April 19—23,

1743)· 28

O'Keeffe, 1, 123. Davies (1, 83—84) says that Quin had expectantly returned to Ireland after playing in other years to large houses there, then had left precipitously when told by the theater proprietors that all the following winter was given over to the new actor. This story is repeated in The Lije of Mr. James Quin, 1887 edition, p. 87, and elsewhere. The arrival or departure of a celebrity like Quin 29

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J43-1745 other less dramatic evidence must have persuaded Sheridan o£ his sudden popularity. In February his first benefit at Smock-Alley obliged an Aungier-Street player—Mr. Griffith,30 no less—to defer his long-planned benefit "at the Request of several Ladies of Quality, because Mr. Sheridan's Play is that Night." 31 Plans to close Smock Alley from mid-March to Easter were hastily revoked to keep the theater open for the new star.32 His first appearance as Brutus produced such great satisfaction that, according to a rare Dublin Journal news item, "some Ladies of the first Quality" had bespoken Hamlet for the next Friday night, when the theater was usually closed} and soon after, Julius Caesar was repeated "by Desire." 33 Even Sheridan was surprised by his reception. In trying to explain and describe it to Theophilus Cibber less than two months after his debut, he expresses pride, but also an unexpected modesty: "I know not how it is, whether it be their Partiality to their Countryman, or whether it be owing to the powerful Interest of a Number of Friends that I have in this City, but there never was known such Encouragement, such Applause given to any Actor, or such full Houses as since I appear'd on the Stage."34 This from a witness of Garrick's triumph the summer before! But the climax for Sheridan must have come with a letter from England, from Garrick himself, inviting this player of three months' experience to spend the summer with him at Walton and share roles with him in London the following winter. All this fame was heady stuff to a young man whose vanity for far less cause had

worried his father a decade before. No wonder, would have been announced in the Dublin Journal, yet no mention of his name appears during the spring or summer of this year. Although possibly Quin negotiated by mail, it would seem that Smock-Alley's rival would have welcomed him for the summer at least. Both theaters were hoping to combine in the fall, but later evidence indicates that there was no firm engagement with Sheridan for the next winter, as Davies' story implies. Sheridan, in An Humble Affeal (p. 17), mistakenly puts Quin and Mrs. Cibber at Aungier-Street in the winter of 1742—43. A search, of the advertisements shows that they were there in the winter of 1741—42, but not the next year. 80 Griffith, at one time manager of a Dublin theater, was an important theatrical figure. 81 Dublin Journal, February 15-19, 1743. Sheridan was repeating Richard III, his third performance of the play. 82 Ibid., March 22-26 and 26-29, 1743. 88 Ibid., March 15-19 and 26-29, 1743. 84 Cibber and Sheridan, p. 38. "A true Copy of Mr. Sheridan's Letter to Mr. Cibber," March 22, 1743.

Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager then, that Sheridan's answer declining Garrick's offers reflects a certain cockiness. His counterplan at the end has struck modern critics as a particularly offensive piece of young man's impertinence; they forget that Garrick was a young man then too, only three years older than Sheridan, and not yet the personage he later became. Sheridan, better born and better educated, felt at least the equal of Garrick socially; professionally he was on his way to rivalling him—or so Dublin thought. But he declined Garrick's offers because he felt he could not compete with him; he was only "a well-cut pebble" to Garrick the "diamond"; audiences would scorn to see a worse performer in Garrick's parts in Garrick's theater. Immature though it seems in places, his response still recognizes Garrick's superiority. His counterproposal begins charmingly with just such an acknowledgement, "if you could be brought to divide your immortality with me," and then suggests, in a half-joking way, the scheme, which though "a little extraordinary" could be advantageous to both: . . . we might, like Castor and Pollux, appear always in different hemispheres; (now I think on't, I don't know whether the old simile of the two buckets would not do as well, but that is beneath the dignity of a tragedian:) in plain English, what think you of dividing the kingdoms between us; to play one winter in London, and another in Dublin? I have many reasons to offer in favour of this scheme, which will not come within the compass of a letter; I shall only say, that it will make us always new in both kingdoms, and consequently always more followed; and I am satisfied that Dublin is as well able to pay one actor for the winter as London. But more of this when I have the pleasure of meeting you. . . .35 Garrick, for obvious reasons, was not interested. And so Sheridan stayed in Dublin for the rest of 1743—mostly to his sorrow, for storms began to disrupt the halcyon days of early spring. At the end of April he became involved in a dispute between Duval and Phillips. Duval, who had given up the management but had stayed with the company under special provisions, now claimed in public notices that Phillips and the company had broken their contracts with him, stolen his property, and subjected him to "cruel treatment"; "neither would they suffer Mr. Sheridan, who is under their Influence, as he alledges, to play for me [in a benefit perform35 Garrick,

Private Corresfonience, 1, 15 (Letter of April 21, 1743).

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J43—1J45 ance], and therefore refused me that Service." 88 Unpleasant as this wrangle must have been for Sheridan, caught in the middle, it emphasized publicly his popularity as an actor. Not to have Sheridan for his benefit—this to Duval was the cruelest cut of all. But Sheridan's personal difficulties, the first to disrupt his honeymoon with the Dublin public, began in July. Shortly after his debut, and at least as early as March, Aungier-Street Theater, hard-pressed by its rival's successful discovery, had approached Colley Cibber's son, Theophilus, about a "Summer Expedition" to Dublin.37 Theophilus Cibber was a good choice. In contrast to Sheridan, he was an experienced comedian, of the slapstick sort according to contemporary descriptions.38 (He played, less frequently and less successfully, in tragedies j it was said that his father had taught him his "old Manner of singing and quavering out . . . tragic Notes," but though the audience excused the fault in the old man, they could not forgive it in the son.)39 Theophilus was from London, too, where he had already achieved notoriety as a theatrical hothead and a self-cuckolded husband in a scandalous lawsuit. Unfortunately, he was unattractive both in appearance and personality; 40 but since he had never acted in Ireland, he would be a novelty as well as a curiosity to Irish audiences. Sheridan, who had quickly got wind of the Aungier-Street plan and as quickly foreseen that Cibber would threaten him in competition but complement him in supporting roles, wrote to London, asking him to join him at Smock-Alley. "I have no small cause to be afraid of so potent an Antagonist," Sheridan admitted as he drew his letter 36 Dublin Journal, April 26—30, 1743. Lewis Duval, primarily a dancer who had come to Ireland with Madame Violante (Stockwell, p. 69), became a manager when Rainsford-Street Theater was built ten years before (1733). He and his

company had moved to Smock-Alley after it was rebuilt. When he gave up the management to Phillips in 1741, he became entitled to one benefit play a year without charge. According to Hitchcock (11, 148), he had an annual benefit at the theater until his death at over ninety. 37 Cibber and Sheridan, p. 38. 38 Davies, I, 54. 39 Victor, History, 11, 163—164. 40 Bellamy (4th edn., 11, 84—85) describes him thus: "When this oddity was formed, Nature certainly was not in the best of humours. . . . To a short squat figure, was joined an enormous head, with the most frightful face I ever beheld. The latter endowment was, indeed, frequently of service to him; as, in his acting, he made ugliness to pass for grimace: besides which, he substituted pertness and assurance for wit and humour." This description does not appear in earlier editions.

Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager to a close. This letter, written on March 22, was later published by Cibber41 as evidence that Sheridan himself had lured him to Smock Alley 42 before he turned against him. For Cibber did act with Sheridan after he arrived in Dublin in late April.43 He took the lead in comedies for a month and then joined Sheridan amicably in tragedies, taking secondary roles.44 On July 7 Sheridan first played a part for which he later became noted, that of Addison's Cato; Cibber played Syphax. A week later a second showing of Cato was substituted for Macbethy which was to have been Sheridan's last performance of the season but which had been deferred at the request of several persons of importance.45 If Macbeth had been played as his final performance, all would have been well; but Cato provoked an unexpected difficulty, one so insuperable that, despite the audience assembled, Sheridan did not play at all that evening. Sheridan later explained the unexpected difficulty in a public letter to the audience he had disappointed. When he had arrived backstage at the theater that evening, everything had been in confusion: the musicians, unpaid, were refusing to perform, and Manager Phillips, according to rumor, had absconded, taking with him the robe which Sheridan as Cato was supposed to have worn. A robe, Sheridan explained in the letter, seems like a trifling thing but it was a large robe, which he needed to cover "Defects, and add Gravity and Dignity," since he felt himself particularly unfit "in his Person" for the role of Cato.46 Faced with appearing without this robe, and suspecting that Phillips had removed it to prevent his playing, the young actor of only five months' experience seems to have gone to pieces. To shatter him further, as he continues to explain in a later Address to the Towni Theophilus Cibber's behavior, formerly "complaisant, or rather meanly submissive," took a sudden change for the worse; instead of trying "to appease a Person beside himself with Passion" he turned on his heel and said insolently, "D—η me if I care what you do, the Play shall not stand still for In Cibber and Sheridan, pp. 38—39. p. 13. Here Cibber says, "And do you not know, your particular Application since my Arrival, was one of my strongest Motives for playing in Smock-Alley. . . ." 43 Cibber's arrival is announced in the Dublin Journal, April 26—30, along with Mr. and Mrs. Giffard's. 44 Cibber played with Sheridan in such plays as The Fair Penitent (Lothario to Sheridan's Horatio) and Richard III (Dublin Journal notices). 46 Dublin Journal, July 9—12, 1743. 4e Cibber and Sheridan, p. 8. 41

42 Ibid.,

 you." Thrown thus into further confusion, Sheridan rushed on stage to apologize to the audience, only to discover that he had lost his voice from the disorders he had suffered. If this had not happened, he would still have played; but how could he have acted, when he couldn't speak? At the same time Cibber followed him on stage and offered "very officiously" to read the part of Cato as he played Syphax.47 Sheridan wanted to dismiss the audience. Cibber, in his first public letter to Sheridan, explains that Phillips had merely returned the robes to some Dublin lady from whom he had borrowed them, that all the cast had been similarly discommoded, that Sheridan had been offered another robe (Julius Caesar's, almost new), but that he had persisted in wanting "the other uncomeatable Robe." In the end Sheridan, who had been fully dressed for his character—save for the robe—had undressed, made a broken speech to the audience (at which they showed their dissatisfaction), and had run hastily out of the house, sending back word that he would act no more. But, adds Cibber, addressing Sheridan directly, "I am informed you stay'd . . . just long enough to hear the extraordinary indulgent Reception the Audience were pleased to bestow on my proposing, with their Leave, to give them the Play. . . ."48 The performance apparently then proceeded in this huggermugger way without Sheridan, but with, ironically, his farce The Brave Irishman as the afterplay.49 The tempest in the greenroom and on stage at Smock-Alley during the evening of July 14, 1743, did not end there. First, as often happened, Trinity College students took up the cause and in a letter to the Dublin Journal expressed satisfaction with Sheridan's reasons and demanded to see him righted. Another letter assured him of the college's support and hoped that his resentment would not deprive them of his genius.50 A poem stuck up on posts about

town theatened Cibber under the title “Cibber’s Warning Piece.”51 Finally, a week after the original trouble, a riot between college students and “a party of ruffians” got up by Cibber to oppose them drove Cibber off the stage.52 Since these moves were bound to be attributed to orders from Sheridan—indeed, Cibber immediately accused him of every47

is Ibid., pp. 11—13. Ibid., pp. 27—28, 8. Dublin Journal, July 9—12, 1743. s0 Cibber and Sheridan, p. 6. The two letters appeared originally in the July 16—19 issue of the Dublin Journal. 61 Cibber and Sheridan, p. 7. 52 Ibid., pp. 17—20. 49

Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager thing from the Trinity College letters to the riot—another letter from the college explained that Sheridan was hardly acquainted with the authors, that he had begged them to stay away from the theater and to let Cibber play for his own benefit—something that they were still willing to let Cibber do.53 Actual hostilities ended on July 28, when Sheridan by “the Lords Justices Special Command” and “at the general Desire of all his Friends” performed Cato, not at Smock-Alley but at the AungierStreet Theater in his last performance of the season.54 Meanwhile, the paper war grew more violent and more abusive. And here Sheridan blundered even more seriously than when he lost control at the theater. In a second address to the town he tried to defend himself against charges made in Cibber’s letter, forgetting that Theophilus, as the son of Colley, was not only facile with the pen, but quite at home with invective, billingsgate, and every art of offensive writing. Before the epistolary exchange was over, Sheridan had been smeared with a variety of names and charged with cheating his brother, tyrannizing at the theater, and ill-using the women there, although he was also accused of being a stranger still—as Cibber certainly was not—to the joys and pains of love.55 After two letters apiece the writings become anonymous: most of them are even more scurrilous, and some are from other pens. The inexperienced Sheridan must have been flabbergasted at the intense and widespread interest his impulsive moment had aroused when two collections of these writings appeared shortly after, one in Dublin and one in London.56 The preface to the London collection made great fun of the trivial cause of the quarrel and of the “two theatrical Generals” involved—the one, a “Heroe” long known in England and not to be daunted “by the Threats of private Whispers, or publick Manifestos” j the other, a younger general, not so experi53

Ibid., p. 20. Dublin Journal, July 23—26, 1743; Cibber and Sheridan, p. 20. At Smock Alley Cibber was scheduled to perform Pistol, but the play was deferred, perhaps because of the event at Aungier-Street. 65 Cibber and Sheridan, pp. 17-19, 41-45, 50. Cibber became especially virulent after the college riot had occurred in the theater. Accusing Sheridan of being able to play only two roles well, Maskwell and Scrub, Cibber calls him “naughtypaughty Tommy,” “dear Mock-Monarch,” “sweet meager Sir,” et cetera, and asks him where he was hiding his “calicoe Carcass” during this “noble Riot.” 86 Cibber and Sheridan was apparently gathered together by Cibber at a Dublin publisher’s request. The Buskin and Sock, the London edition, has four pieces from the Dublin collection. 54

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J43—1745 enced or so fierce or formidable, but well qualified for the rank from “a Disposition rather to give Orders, for the Battle, than an Inclination to hazard his person in it. . . .” Dublin’s theatrical scandals frequently amused London. Not amused was the anonymous author of a serious commendatory poem addressed to Sheridan and included as a finale to the Dublin collection Cibber and Sheridan. This poem, which tells how the sun reproved some foolish owls, has been traditionally ascribed to the literary daughter of the Reverend Philip Chamberlaine, Frances, who read and wrote in secret because her father disapproved of learning for women: it led, he felt, only to sentimental scribbling. Fortunately, her brothers took a hand in educating her surreptitiously, and by the time she was fifteen she was scribbling a two-volume novel (years later adapted for the Dublin stage) and, after that, two sermons.87 She was eighteen or nineteen at the time of the Cato affair. Whether she had ever seen Sheridan act by then is doubtful, since her father disapproved of the theater too. Most of the poem expresses its ideas in general allegorical terms and could have been written any time for anybody, but one stanza refers to actual events: Tho’ you be prais’d by half the Globe, And charm its Factions dumb; Yet spite shall soil your newest Robe, And Cato dread Tom Thumb. Charmed himself by this tribute, Sheridan, the story goes, wanted to know his admirer. Since she was an acquaintance of his sister, Mrs. Sheen, a meeting was arranged. The two fell in love and were married—according to tradition, in 1747. Whether or not the romantic story of the matchmaking poem is true,58 the marriage itself 67Lefanu,

pp. 4-11. My hesitation to accept the story of the poem without question comes from certain errors in the traditional family account of it given by Alicia Lefanu (pp. 22—24), one which has been repeated by later

historians (e.g., Fitzgerald, i, 24). She ascribes the poem to Frances but is mistaken in saying that it was written in 1747 to commend Sheridan for his part in the Kelly riot. Aside from its unassailable place in a 1743 volume, internal evidence shows that it is more appropriate to the Cato affair: the only mention of actual events refers to Cato's robe and not to Kelly. This one stanza out of ten is the only one omitted in Alicia Lefanu's version of the poem, otherwise corresponding closely with the poem printed in Cibber and Sheridan. Alicia, incidentally, has no account of the Cibber-Sheridan feud; this incident may have dropped out of family tradition 58

Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager was a lifelong romance and a complete success. During their early life together Frances was so occupied with bearing children and entertaining friends that she had no time for writing and perhaps little even for the theater, although, with her active mind, she must always have been interested in her husband's work. Later, in London, she wrote again—not only a novel but two plays. Most of her literary efforts flourished while Sheridan's ventures ended in nothing; but Frances always remained his admiring, protective, intelligent supporter. Although it may have brought him the perfect wife, Sheridan's controversy with Cibber over Cato's robe, coming when he stood so high in public esteem, was in other ways unfortunate. For, in trying to explain it, he forgot that, though people inside the company might understand and even sympathize,59 a quarrel over such a trifling matter would appear ridiculous to the outside public. It put Sheridan in a comic light in Dublin's eyes, and Dublin in a comic light in London's eyes. To some—like Cibber, perhaps—this would as unflattering to Sheridan, and the poem, minus the related and therefore meaningless stanza, may then have become transferred to the Kelly affair. Frances Chamberlaine was still very possibly the author; if so, the meeting between Frances and Thomas belongs almost four years earlier. They are supposed to have married soon after the Kelly riot in 1747. (I have found no record of their marriage, but their first child was born March 9, 1748, Register of St. Mary's Church, Dublin.) If they met in 1743 and married in 1747, the whirlwind courtship described by Alicia, and required by her mistaken dating of The Owls, lengthens out over several years. This is not only more in keeping with Sheridan's conservative instincts, but also more understandable in terms of his other preoccupations at the time of the riot. That he could have met, wooed, won, and married Frances in the few crowded weeks after that upsetting event (see Ch. iv) seemed incredible even for a man of Sheridan's youthful energy. A tantalizingly undated letter from Sheridan's sister Eliza to Miss Frances Chamberlaine which appears in the Lefanu MSS seems to support the view that Frances knew Sheridan well, before the Kelly riot. 59 Sheridan's behavior and feelings were not unique within the theater. Eight years before, Charles Macklin had accidentally killed a fellow actor at Drury Lane in a dispute over a wig. (Cibber had been in the company when this happened.) Macklin, who was convicted of manslaughter, defended himself at his trial, saying: "The wig I then used was proper for the new play, and absolutely necessary for my character, the whole force of the poet's wit depending on the lean meagre looks of one that wanted food. This wig being so fit for my purpose, and hearing that the deceased had got it, I said to him . . . [the fatal quarrel followed]" ("An Apology for the Conduct of Mr. Charles Macklin," pp. 34—35; see also Appleton, Charles Macklin, pp. 29—33).

 have been less important. But Sheridan was proud. (His enemies called him vain.) His pride had led to his behavior at the theater and later to his almost as childish threats to leave Ireland: his enemies, "a few Snakes in the Grass," were driving him from that fair field.60 These enemies could hardly have been reduced by such a display of importance; but he insisted that they had all been created by his success, the public's approval of him, and, in the case of Cibber, a desire to build his own fame on the wreckage of another's.61 Throughout his life Sheridan evoked the strongest feelings in others —of devotion or of animosity. In his coming struggles for reform an active and persisting enmity for him (aside from his ideas) was always an additional force to be overcome. That it often stemmed from forces within him was a fact which he could never see and one which made his task no easier. For Sheridan himself the Cato affair so wounded his sensibilities that he often afterward felt surrounded by enemies. But it also showed him the dangers of descending to personalities62 in paper wars. Although the need to defend his actions always drew him into such battles, he tried, after this, to keep to large issues even when his antagonists spared him nothing. Further, the Cato affair seems to have made clear to Sheridan certain weaknesses in theatrical management which he was later to reform: the use of borrowed costumesj the custom of dismissing audiences; and the practice of reading a missing actor's part. The fact that Cato's robe had been borrowed from a Dublin lady, who had bought it at a London auction, was not unusual in 1743; clothing was sometimes lent, sometimes donated, often cast off from private wardrobes of well-to-do people.63 Later Manager Sheridan took pride in the valuable wardrobe which he had built

up for Smock Alley Theater. Borrowed costumes, apt to be snatched away at the wrong moment, became rare. Nor was Sheridan's impulse to dismiss the Cato audience unusual at the time. Irish audiences were frequently "disappointed," mainly because the house was too thin to make the performance worth while. A Cibber epistle implies that the real reason for Sheridan's behavior "on the fatal night" was the unexpected thinness of the audience.64 el Ibid. Cibber and Sheridan, p. ío. In his second letter to the public Sheridan had referred to Cibber's marital difficulties, thereby inspiring Cibber to further name-calling (ibid., p. 29). 64 Cibber and Sheridan, p. 42. 68 Stockwell, pp. 286—290.

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Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager Sheridan's rather frequent deferrals had evoked suspicion earlier} and a month before, he had explained in the press that he had postponed King Lear because of a sudden incapacitating illness and not for the reasons spread by "malicious or designing Persons."65 Although Sheridan's health was always uncertain, the dismissed house became uncommon within a few years, after his improvements kept the income steady enough to carry an occasional thin night. By reading Sheridan's role while he acted his own, Cibber was doing nothing strange either, surprising as the procedure seems today. Spranger Barry later volunteered to read a part in this way; and his offer too was made to embarrass Sheridan. But in refusing Barry Sheridan pointed out that notices had led the public to expect certain players in certain parts;68 the old unprofessional stopgap device was thus discouraged later at Smock-Alley. In the more efficient theater run by Sheridan, the experience of Cato's robe would not be repeated. The next fall Cibber was back in England, but this new season of 1743-44 brought Sheridan other complications and further publicity, this time on more important issues. By October the long-planned union of the theaters was effected,®7 the combined company intending to perform at Aungier-Street. Immediately Sheridan saw this move as an opportunity for himself; and when the gentlemen proprietors made him overtures of an acting spot in their united company at a good salary,68 he countered by offering them £500 a year for the eB

66See Ch. m, p. 73. Dublin Journal, June 14-18 and 18-21, 1743. Dublin Journal, October 1—4, 1743: "We are informed, that the Gentlemen Proprietors of both Theatres, have finally agreed all their AflFairs relating to both Houses, and are resolved to spare no Pains or Expence, to entertain the Town in the most agreeable Manner." 68 The amount varies depending upon how it is computed and who describes it. An anonymous letter writer to the Journal, representing the proprietors' point of view, says that Sheridan was offered nearly £6 a week for acting only once a week, a sum never given to any but Quin and other "Birds of Prey from London." The reduction to a weekly performance was a concession to Sheridan's delicate constitution (Letter to the Dublin Journal, copied by J. P. Kemble in his Manuscrift Diary for November 1743). Sheridan's reply (Dublin Journal, November 12—15, 1743) corrects the false impression given here by explaining that he would be getting £6 a week only up to the beginning of benefits in March; in short, the total offered by the proprietors was only £100 for the season, less than the total offered to Mrs. Furnival and Madame Chateauneuf, and about a third of that paid to Mr. Arne and Mr. Lowe. A third letter in response to this adds that Sheridan would have received £100 more from his 67

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1743—1745 theater if they would let him have sole control} he promised "to give them good Security for the Payment of it."69 Still unsatisfied by his success as Dublin's leading player, and undiscouraged by the summer's late unpleasantness, Sheridan now wanted to take on the responsibility of managing a Dublin theater. After nine months under Phillips' inept direction, he had ideas for improving it too. The proprietors, who had less confidence in his inexperience or, perhaps, in his financial sources, rejected his plan. So Sheridan went over to help Elrington manage 70 the players who had been dropped in the merging j these new-sprung rivals of the united company had obtained from the former manager, Duval—fraudulently, says Hitchcock 71—a lease on Smock-Alley, where they were unexpectedly arranging to open.72 With characteristic zeal Sheridan spent time going about town to "the Houses of all Persons of Quality and Distinction (he could have Access to)," imploring support for this undertaking "as an Act of Generosity and Charity to him." His activity was dimly viewed by an opponent, who, in reporting it thus, added that no one who had refused the salary offered Sheridan could claim to be an object of charity.73 benefit, and that Mrs. Furnival averaged about 30/. for every acting night, Miss Chateauneuf about 40s. Sheridan would have been getting £10 (Dublin Journal, November 19-22, 1743). 69 Dublin Journal, November 12—15, 1743· 70 The anonymous letter (Kemble, Manuscrift Diary, November 1743) reports that one or more of the former managers had "absconded." Presumably then

Sheridan stepped in and joined Elrington (probably Ralph) in the direction. That Sheridan became one of the managers is suggested by remarks in Dublin Journal letters and announcements (see notes 75 and 79). 71 Hitchcock, i, 137. It is unlikely that Sheridan, so upright in business matters, participated knowingly in any fraud here. Records show that the financial affairs of the two theaters were in a great snarl at this time; there may have been no fraud, just confusion and a long-standing want of funds. Furthermore, certain matters of ownership were under litigation, and therefore unsettled at the moment. 72 Dublin Journal, October 25—29, 1743. 73 The anonymous letter (Kemble, Manuscrift Diary, November 1743). Miss Stockwell, who quotes this letter in full (pp. 83—85), feels that its author was probably Duval. In this confusing epistle first occurs the accusation that the scratched company's managers (perhaps Elrington was one) had tricked Duval into a lease. They had also managed to borrow back the "Cloaths and Scenes," sold long since for rent due the Ground Landlord. Furthermore, because they had owed their players £500, they had either run away or denied their debts. Sheridan obviously had not run away. He may, at this point, have just joined the group.

Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager In November the "aggrieved"74 opposition at Smock-Alley opened their season with Sheridan as Richard III, Elrington as King Henry, and "all the rest of the Parts by Persons who never appeared on this Stage." 75 Most of the scratched players had dropped out, apparently, and the new management had been forced to bring in a strolling company from the north of Ireland. From the beginning they were under attack in the press. Charges made against them by an anonymous letter writer include acting "in a House they have no Right to," "with Cloaths & Scenes that do not belong to them," "by a Lease neither good in itself, nor having paid the Conditions of it."76 Rightfully theirs or not, the scenes were soon lost to them, seized as the property of a Mr. Norris; the "Cloaths," however, they saved by removing them "from Place to Place"}77 yet, despite the absence of scenes and the presence of a generally inferior company, the admission price seems to have been raised, much to the outrage of another letter writer to the Journal.78 The paper fight this time was relatively genteel and brief, Sheridan, as he says, having "already experienc'd the ill Consequences" of such warfare. That he had risen above the petty bickerings of personalities and was this soon thinking of the future of the Dublin theaters is shown by his single, restrained letter to the Dublin Journal, in which he tells of a pamphlet he plans to publish, The Groans of the Stage. Here he will give his ideas about the present state of the stage, the causes for the disputes and the way of stopping them. He will also try to justify his own conduct and to show that he has entered upon a "very laborious, painful, and hazardous Undertaking, with very little Prospect of Gain, purely with an Intent to save the Stage from Ruin, and . . . to put it on a good Footing for the 74Hitchcock,

i, 137. notice in the Dublin Journal, October 25—29, 1743. What happened to the rest of the scratched company is not clear, since notices at this time gave the names of only principal players. The anonymous letter writer (Kemble, Manuscript Diary, November 1743) worries about the fate of the "poor Strollers from the North," for since the "two Kings [Sheridan and Elrington] are to divide the Profits, which I suppose is all the Money they can finger (as they did last Winter) it would have been more human in these Managers to have engaged a Set of Players out of Punch's Theatre, who would have been content with the Honour of acting with these Heroes, and never mutiny for Want of Subsistence." 76The anonymous letter (Kemble, Manuscript Diary, November 1743). 77 Dublin Journal, November 5—8, 1743. 78 Ibid. This letter writer speaks of the sad "Set of Players, who have the modesty to advance their Prices for such Sadness." 75Advance

 future." This pamphlet, lost now, would be useful in giving us Sheridan's early ideas, particularly on one thesis which he soon abandoned: that "the Stage would be entirely and for ever destroyed in this Kingdom," if "the Scheme succeeded of uniting the Houses." 79 Not long after, he was to think the exact opposite. His actual experiences in managing Smock-Alley were to teach him that two rival theaters could not survive in Dublin. This lesson began right away. Although Sheridan and his feeble company struggled on into the winter, they were impossibly handicapped by the united theater's competition. Benefit performances started only two weeks after opening80—a desperate sign of the need to increase attendance through subscriptions. Sheridan's expectation that his drawing power could sustain Smock-Alley faded soon and fast. In his single letter to the press in November Sheridan had said that to save the stage from ruin he had "neglected the fairest Opportunity that ever a young Actor had of shewing himself to Advantage in London," and had declined large proposals made to him from there.81 By January the lure of London had brightened, as Smock Alley affairs grew ever darker, and on January 16 Sheridan made his last appearance of the season.82 This date marked, almost to

the day, the end of Sheridan's first year in the theater—an eventful first year of serving as the principal actor, carrying on a feud with a fellow player, and managing a poverty-stricken, failing company. He had also mastered at least twelve roles in this short space of time.83 79 Ibid., November 1 2 — 1 5, !743* t^e November 2 2 — 2 6 issue appears an announcement that within a few days will be published "the Case truely and

fairly stated between the Gentlemen Proprietors of both Theatres, and the pretended Managers of Smock Alley Company," exposing the fraud, trickery, et cetera of the latter, "together with authentick Letters from Mr. Sheridan, to some of the Gentlemen Proprietors, relating to the uniting their Houses; by which Letters the Publick may judge of that Gentleman's Sincerity; with Proofs of the Facts there laid down, and the Whole very proper to be bound up with Mr. Sheridan's Groans." It seems that this pamphlet has not come down to us. 80The first of these, Julius Caesar, was scheduled for November 1 7 (Dublin Journal, November 12-15, '743)81 Dublin Journal, November 12—15, 174382 Ibid., January 101 4, 1744· 83They were Richard III (January 2 9), Mithridates (February 3) (this was not Lee's play, but one "taken from Racine"), Hamlet (February 28), Brutus (M a r c h 1 7), Charles i n L o v e M a k e s a M a n (A p r i l 1 2), O t h e l l o (A p r i l 1 4), Lord Townley in The Provoked Husband (April 18), Lear (June 23), Horatio

Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager Even before Sheridan left for England the Smock-Alley group had collapsed without him, and the united company from AungierStreet had taken over both theaters.84 He was probably still in Dublin and may even have been in the audience on February 15, 1744, when an event portentous to his future took place. Spranger Barry, the man who was to provoke Sheridan's theatrical downfall, made his debut with the united company in circumstances reminiscent of Sheridan's first appearance.85 This young man, handsome, graceful, and silver-tongued, won Dublin's love as Sheridan had won its admiration the year before; he quickly became the united company's leading actor and later seems to have taken over at least its partial management.88 With Barry's star thus rising, perhaps it was well that Sheridan was off for England. And, as it turned out, his year abroad was precisely what his career needed. His arrival in London on March 17, 1744—just ten years after he left Westminster School—was enough of an event to be noted in the General Advertiser: "Mr. Sheridan, the celebrated Comedian, is arrived . . . from Dublin."87 As a celebrated player, he was wanted by both the important London theaters. He played in Covent Garden under Rich in the spring of 1744, opening as Hamlet on March 31; during April he acted other roles he had already learned. His second appearance in Macbeth on May ι was "by particular desire." (June 27), Cato (July 7), Macbeth (December 8), and Pierre (December 22) (taken from Dublin Journal notices). In these notices Richard, Mithridates, Hamlet, Charles, Lear, Cato, Macbeth, and Pierre are specifically advertised as Sheridan's first appearance in each role. The others are not. 84 During Sheridan's absence an important step in Irish theatrical history was taken, a step which, however, had no effect for some time. In October 1744, by request of "several Gentlemen and Ladies of Distinction," the pit was opened to ladies "at the same Price as the Gentlemen" (Dublin Journal, October 23—27, 1744)—an innovation already in practice in London and elsewhere in Ireland. But the old custom, as well as the hard benches crowded with often boisterous and drunken gentlemen, seems to have deterred ladies from the pit for years. At least through Sheridan's regime we find no mention of any but men in that section except on benefit nights, when the front part of the pit was sometimes railed off into boxes for the special use of the ladies. Even in O'Keeffe's time (1770) no female sat in the pit (1, 287). 85 Barry's first appearance was as Othello; the play was at Smock-Alley and for his benefit (Dublin Journal, February 11—14, 1744) · 86Sheridan, in An Humble Affeal (p. 17), speaks of the united company "with Mr. Barry at their Head." 87 Quoted by Genest, iv, 64.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J43—1J45 The next fall (of 1744) he was at Drury Lane under Fleetwood, driven by circumstances into acting the well-cut pebble to Garrick's diamond. He was not a regular member of the company, either here or at Covent Garden; he acted as a guest star, on shares. His first appearance at Drury Lane was on October 20, the night after Garrick's opening. From then on he played (except for a three-month gap from mid-December to March) about once a week in leading roles and usually opposite Mrs. Cibber; Garrick played several times a week and usually opposite Mrs. WoiEngton. In choice of roles Garrick clearly had the preference: he appeared regularly in Sheridan's favorite characters—Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, Richard III, and, for the first time, Othello. Except for one performance each as Hamlet, Othello, and Richard III—the first two for his benefits—Sheridan had to be content with repeating Horatio, Pierre, and Tamerlane,88 three less popular roles and not even Shakespearean. Once Garrick and Sheridan acted together, with Mrs. Cibber, in a new play, Thomson's

Tancred and Sigismunda, with Garrick playing the title role. Many famous or soon-to-be-famous performers were in the company this season, and Sheridan had the chance of watching Delane, Havard, the Macklins, Mrs. WofEngton, and Mrs. Cibber firsthand, to say nothing of his master and inspiration, Garrick. His position as a guest star in this stellar company is noteworthy. Sheridan was given two benefits during the season, a generous number; but he found Fleetwood's careless management a trial. His Hamlet benefit had been arranged so hastily that he lacked time to call upon possible subscribers in accordance with eighteenth-century custom. A public announcement expressed Sheridan's regrets in his characteristic phrasing: "As his benefit was not appointed till last Friday, he humbly hopes that such Ladies and Gentlemen, as he shall omit to wait upon, will impute it rather to a want of time, than to a want of respect and knowledge of his duty." Shortly before, he had been incommoded when the "Disturbance" over Fleetwood's raised prices had closed the house and canceled two of his performances.89 This must have been his first experience with a theatrical riot 88 Sheridan's appearance as Tamerlane on November 5, 1744, seems to have been his first time in this role. The play was repeated four times during the following months (London Stage, Pt. 3, pp. 1,128—49). 89 Information on Sheridan's theatrical activities in London may be found in Genest, iv, 74—75, 136—151; Winston's Manuscript Diary·, and London Stage, Pt. 3, seasons of 1743—45. Notices of Sheridan's benefits show that he

Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager from the other side of the curtain. As a player on shares he stood to lose financially each time he did not perform. In England Sheridan became acquainted with that amazing young lady George Anne Bellamy, when she was visiting Peg Woffington in Teddington. Her account of him, undated and ambiguous in parts, seems to show that he lived in Kingston sometime during this second visit to England, perhaps in the summer of 1744. There, although not yet married, he entertained with an already famous hospitality which recalls his father's. He was this soon, George Anne shows, Garrick's competitor and a "celebrated" actor even to the English theatrical set, many of whom were originally Irish. Her memoirs throw brief light on Garrick's attitude toward him at this time. While visiting Peg's sister, she says: I became acquainted with Mr. Sheridan, a celebrated actor, and a competitor of the incomparable Garrick. This gentleman invited us to his apartments, which were generally crowded with Irish gentlemen from the college of Dublin. Roscius, at this time, languished to be reconciled to Mrs. Woffington, with whom he had formerly lived upon terms of intimacy. For this purpose he obtruded himself in the house of a gentleman at Kingston, of whose talents, which were great, he was jealous to a degree, though they lay in a different line of acting. Mr. Sheridan's hospitality was as well known as Garrick's parsimony} of which the latter condescended to avail himself. I flatter myself I shall be credited in this assertion, as I declare I have no reason to be partial to the former, as will appear in the course of the ensuing letters.90 Sheridan's success in London was useful if only for the impression it made on Dublin; but it destroyed the friendship between him and Garrick. Almost from the beginning a rivalry had been set up between the two by officious friends. Garrick became needlessly jealous, and a quarrel followed which was still unreconciled when Sheridan was living in Bridges Street, Covent Garden, in April 1744, and in Russell Street, Covent Garden, in April 1745 (London Stage, Pt. 3, pp. 1,102, 1,170). 90 Bellamy, 1, 27. Bellamy's shift to "a gentleman" and his house right after her description of Sheridan and his apartments is confusing. Her italicized clause may or may not contain a double-entendre, but her observation that Garrick availed himself of Sheridan's hospitality seems to tie the Kingston gentleman and Sheridan together.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley • 1743—1745 left for Dublin.91 That Sheridan was more deeply hurt than Garrick is suggested by the lifelong coolness he felt for the man who once was his inspiration and master. The wound still smarted when he wrote the next summer, inviting Garrick to join his Smock-Alley company, but warning him to expect nothii.g from his friendship, for he owed him none.92 In Dublin, meanwhile, the united company was having a bad time. Competition from a new theater in Capel-Street was threatening; and Barry, good though he was at acting, had no talent, as later events showed, for managing a theater. Hitchcock describes the managers' arrival one evening at the theater, dinnerless: "The first shilling that came into the house they dispatched for a loin of mutton, the second for bread, the third for liquor, and so on till they had satisfied the calls of nature, when they prepared for the business of the night." 93 Later Sheridan, in his Humble Appeal written in 1758, reminded his readers of this grim period in 1745, when the company under Barry "did not during the whole Season play three Times to Charges, and for three successive Weeks in the height of the Season they either dismissed, or gave out no Plays."94 Conditions such as he described are dimly reflected in the newspapers. There are notices of

only two performances in the Dublin theaters for over a month from December 10, 1744, to January 17, 1745.95 Notices for performances during November had been intermittent. The regular stage in Dublin was dwindling away, while Stretch's puppet show, its only serious rival, prospered. This unusual situation stirred public concern and called for unusual action. The action taken by the united theater's thirty-odd96 gentlemen proprietors "as their dernier resort [the wording is Hitchcock's], and at the request of the public"97 was a surprise indeed. Turning to the young actor of only two years' experience, the same one who had treated them so cavalierly not long before, they approached Sheridan now with the very offer which they themselves had rejected a year ago: the management of the united theaters. Theatrical 91Davies,

92 Ibid. 93Hitchcock, 1, 157. i, 84. An Humble Af feal, p. 17. 95On January 17, 1745 the New Theatre opened in Capel-Street under Phillips' management for a brief time. Not much later Phillips ran off to England, taking "more Money than his own along with him" (Stockwell, pp. 86— 87). 98 Victor, a year later, speaks of thirty-six proprietors (Original Letters, 1, I2i; Letter of December 23, 1746). 97 Hitchcock, i, 149. 94Sheridan,

Theatrical Hero Into Theater Manager tempers cool quickly if desperation or advantage—or public demand —presses. Besides, Sheridan was an energetic young man with ideas as well as ideals. His responses to them a year ago had shown that. Finally—and importantly—he was the most popular and successful Irish actor of the time, one who had been called to London, where he had made an impression on English audiences. In this century the leading actor frequently managed his theater as the actingmanager, a custom much in vogue until Richard Brinsley Sheridan, not an actor, took over Drury Lane from Garrick. Thus Thomas Sheridan, young and inexperienced as he was, was offered the position which for two years he had wanted more than anything in the world. It was a great triumph. More than that, it put him in a position to bargain: his management was to be on trial for a year only "in order that he might judge what reasonable Expectation of Profit there should be on future Occasions."98 Although he did not have, during this next year, the "sole direction and management" with "unlimited authority," which Hitchcock claims the proprietors offered him," the position gave him the right to hire his company, plan its offerings, and bear the title of "manager." Probably to discuss the proprietors' offer and perhaps to reach final terms, Sheridan left Drury Lane for three months in the winter of 1744-45 100 and returned to Ireland. That he returned as a friend to the group he had left as a hated competitor is shown when he appeared for his own benefit with the united company on February 1, 1745.101 His performance at Smock-Alley reactivated the Irish theater after its month and a half of dormancy, and was followed by a whole series of benefits, for Mr. Barry, Mrs. Dyer, et cetera. But he still had commitments at Drury Lane. In March he was back there, representing Siffredi in Tancred and Sigismunda, which Davies claims was presented under the patronage of Pitt and Lyttleton, both of whom attended rehearsals regularly.102 By late spring he was again in Dublin,103 acting into the summer, at a time when the theater was usually shut unless opened for visiting celebrities, like Quin and esSheridan

99 Hitchcock, 1, 149. An Humble Affeal, p. 17. explains the three months' gap in Sheridan's appearances at Drury 5

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Lane. 101 Dublin Journal, January 26—29, 1745. 102Davies, 1, 78-79. 103 Hitchcock (1, 149) says that Sheridan returned to Dublin in May. There are later indications that Sheridan's agreement with the proprietors began on May ι (see Ch. v), a date which allowed him to finish out his season at Drury Lane.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J43—1J45 Garrick. His London success had not only saved him from being eclipsed by Barry; it had turned him into a visiting celebrity. In all, Sheridan acted only four or five times104 during the summer of 1745, twice for his own benefit. He was busy with plans for his first season as manager. The next fall some of the old company would be with him—Barry, Ralph Elrington, Mrs. Furnival, et cetera—but new talent was needed to revive Dublin's interest. A good company was always Sheridan's first concern because its drawing power was essential to other improvements. Especially now in this year of trial a good company was vital; on its success in winning back the Dublin public his future decision depended. 104 On one of these he played Zanga in The Revenge for the first (July 18).

time

CHAPTER III

cThe

Qarrick Winter,

1745-1746

I

T is no surprise, then, to find the new Smock-Alley manager,

after his three weeks of summer performances in Dublin, hurrying back to England "to raise recruits" for the next winter. This is the expression used by George Anne Bellamy, who turned out to be one of his prize recruits. Yet her engagement seemed almost accidental: Sheridan happened, one morning in London, to meet her mother on her way to ask Manager Rich of Covent Garden whether he wished to engage her daughter. Sheridan remarked that he would like Miss Bellamy to come to Dublin, and Rich, when consulted, endorsed the new idea heartily, since George Anne would have a chance not only to appear in every major role but also to "receive the instructions of so great a master." Whether or not Rich believed all that his argument asserts, Sheridan's reputation as a master had by this time reached such proportions that it could be used to persuade Mrs. Bellamy. George Anne, who had been out of town while her future was being decided, found Sheridan awaiting her at her Chelsea lodgings on her return; and she then and there concluded her agreement with him.1 Sheridan's engagement of George Anne Bellamy to play principal characters—indeed, as it turned out, to supplant the veteran Mrs. Furnival—is an early instance of his ability to sense potentialities in young, sometimes untried actors. George Anne had had some experience, more than she admits and over a longer period; the season before, when Sheridan was acting at Drury Lane, she had ingratiated herself enough with Quin and Rich to appear at Covent Garden in at least seven diiferent roles,2 and Sheridan undoubtedly had seen her there. Yet, in comparison to others he might have solicited, she was a fledgling. She fully justified his foresight, however, both in her success at Dublin and in her career afterward. O'Keeffe's description of her a little later in her life explains some but not all of her attrac1

Bellamy, i, 61—62. Stage, Pt. 3, pp. 1,744-45, shows her playing In Covent Garden as Monimia (T h e Orfhan), Aspasia (T h e Maid's Tragedy), Lucia (Cato), Celia (Volfone), Blanch (Pafal Tyranny), Arsinoe (Mariamne), and Anne Bullen (Henry V I I I) . 2 London

 tion: "The acting of Mrs. Bellamy3 gave me great delight: she was very beautiful, blue eyes, and very fair. . . . Garrick being a little man, and Mrs. Bellamy not very tall, he preferred her, for his heroine, to Mrs. Yates or Mrs. Pritchard." 4 There were other, less important persons in Sheridan's bag of theatrical game, among them a "young adventurer named Lacy"6 —not, as some theatrical historians have thought,6 James Lacy, the new patentee and manager of Drury Lane—and Mrs. Elmy, Sheridan's former leading lady at Smock-Alley, an actress whose spirits off stage were livelier than on, according to Chetwood.7 George Anne's mother, herself an old Dublin trouper,8 "who had conditioned to attend" her daughter, was also in the group which the new man8 Like some other unmarried women of her time, Bellamy changed her title from Miss to Mrs. Miss Peg Woffington did the same thing on November 8, 1740, when she was in her twenties (see DN B, v. "Woffington, Margaret"). 4 O'Keeffe, 1, 1 0 7 . 6 Bellamy, 1, 6 3 . e Hitchcock (1, 1 5 0) was among the first to mistakenly put Manager James Lacy of Drury Lane in the Smock-Alley company during the 1745-46 season; his source may have been Davies, who is less definite in his dating but quite wrong in other related facts (Davies, 1, 87). Later historians, among them Gilbert (History, 1, 79) and Knight (David Garrick, 1, 95) have repeated the error. It is significant that none of these writers were in Dublin that season. Those who were say nothing about the Drury Lane Patentee. Victor, an admiring friend of James Lacy since 1722 (he gives a long account of him in History, i, 64-81), would certainly have noted the singular appearance of the new London manager as a minor player in Sheridan's troupe if he had been there. Instead, Victor says only: "When I arrived in Dublin I found my good Friend Mr. Garrick at the Theatre-Royal, with Mr. Sheridan, as Sharers and Adventurers; and Mr. Barry engaged at a Salary by the Proprietors" (History, 1, 8889). George Anne's description of "a young adventurer named Lacy" is hardly the one she would have used for the middle-aged, well-to-do, and powerful manager of London's most important theater and a man well known to her, since he had been Rich's assistant at Covent Garden the year before when she was a novice there. Final evidence that James Lacy was not in Ireland in 1 7 4 5 4 6 appears in letters

from Mrs. Cibber in England to Garrick in Ireland describing Lacy's activities at Drury Lane during this fall (see Garrick, Private Correspondence, i, 38—39, 46—47). The younger Lacy seems to have made his debut at Smock-Alley in November (Dublin Journal notices) but to have left before the benefit period. Victor (History, i, 66) and The London Stage (Pt. 3, p. 599) show James Lacy playing under Fielding in the Haymarket as early as 1736. 7 Chetwood, p. 147. 8 Mrs. Bellamy, George Anne's mother, had acted at the Aungier-Street opening in 1734 (Chetwood, p. 72), and had appeared at Smock-Alley as early as 1729 (from the unpublished notes of Mrs. William S. Clark).

The Garrick Winter ager had arranged not only to "frank" to Ireland but even to conduct personally, in what seems to have been an excess of beginner's zeal. He got them as far as Parkgate, but there the wind proved contrary and, after committing them to Miss Bellamy's mother, he left them to set off directly for Holyhead. Under Mrs. Bellamy the wayfarers continued (enlivened by Mrs. Elmy's off-stage spirits) 9 and arrived in Dublin to appear on Smock-Alley stage early in November.10 But Sheridan's "grand object," as Hitchcock puts it, was to secure Garrick to crown his first season as Smock-Alley manager.11 He must have conceived of this object from the beginning, since even by July Garrick was contemplating Smock-Alley for the fall, as letters from Victor show.12 Sheridan's idea of asking Garrick was a delicate point: they had parted in anger and besides, as Hitchcock explains, his own position and prestige in Dublin might be jeopardized by the comparison. Yet, continues Hitchcock, this man, who later was often accused of theatrical envy, wished to bring to Dublin the only actor of whom he had reason to be jealous.13 One too whose transcendence would be doubly bitter because he was no longer a friend. Even so, Sheridan did not hesitate to sacrifice his own feelings for Smock Alley's advantage. Only, Garrick must be frankly apprized of the businesslike motives prompting the new manager. The letter Sheridan wrote explaining this and offering him a position on shares struck Garrick as "the oddest epistle I ever saw in my life." Unfortunately lost now, it is indirectly quoted by Davies, probably from memory. Sheridan is said to have written "that he was then sole manager of the Irish stage, and should be very happy to see him [Garrick] in Dublin; he would give him all advantages and encouragement which he could in reason expect," everything "the best actor had a right to command," everything, that is, except his friendship. As for remuneration, he proposed to divide the profits with him after expenses had been deducted. Garrick's friend, Colonel Wyndham, on seeing the letter, agreed that it mas odd but observed that it was "surely a very honest one: I should certainly depend upon a man that treated me with that openness and simplicity of heart." 14 9

10 Dublin Journal notices. 11 Hitchcock I, 150. Bellamy, I, 63. j Original Letters, 1, 106. To Wolseley, July 1745. Davies (1, 84) implies that Garrick had intended to visit Ireland before Sheridan approached him; but it seems unlikely that he would have made such plans without an invitation when he knew that Sheridan felt unfriendly. ls Hitchcock, i, 150-151. 14 Davies, 1, 84-85. 12 Vietor,

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1745—1746 Although dickering with Drury Lane, Garrick had been hoping for just such a definite offer from Ireland. Both Barry and Sheridan, he knew, were to be in Dublin the coming winter—"which must," he observed, to both actors' credit, "put the wise ones of Drury-Lane into great difficulties."15 James Lacy, the new Drury Lane patentee, had outraged his feelings in several ways, by offering him too little money and, most seriously, by accusing him of "making Interest in Ireland" while under articles to him. Although doubtless instituting no advances, Garrick had received in Litchfield a gentleman from the Smock-Alley management, possibly Sheridan himself, lingering in England to press his proposals. Sheridan's letter,16 with its specific terms, strengthened Garrick's position. But, not surprisingly, he kept the new Smock-Alley manager suspended for weeks while he contemplated other possibilities. With the prospect of London theaters emptied by the Scottish rebellion, he could volunteer to fight for his king. (He did, and was rejected.) With Lacy so impossible, he could accept a late, unexpected offer from Rich of Covent Garden.17 But in the end he suddenly did what he had been more and more leaning to as the season progressed: he sailed to Ireland. It was his second and his last trip. On his first, three years earlier, his arrival had been relatively unmarked; but now he was given a separate notice in the Dublin Journal: "Sunday morning [November 24] Mr. Garrick the celebrated Player arrived here from England."18 The same time span had brought a more notable transfiguration to Sheridan. Three years earlier he had been only an aspiring spectator, humbly acknowledging Garrick as master, hoping to be his friend. Now he no longer wished to be Garrick's friend, but—in a sense, at least—he was Garrick's master. The oddity of this reversal must have been in the consciousness of both when, shortly after Garrick's arrival, there arose a financial 15

Garrick, Letters, I, 50, 54. Ibid.., pp. 54, 58. In a letter to his friend Draper (post October 10, 1745) Garrick mentions Sheridan's offer, at the same time reporting that Mr. Wyndham (who had been visiting him in Litchfield) had left that morning (pp. 57—58). In another letter from Litchfield (October 26, 1745) Garrick says he has had "a most civil letter" from Sheridan (ibid., p. 67). This may have been a later letter from Sheridan following up the offer which Garrick and Wyndham had regarded as so odd. 17 Ibid., pp. 56—57, 68. Garrick even went so far as to draw up, with Rich, a memorandum contracting to perform for him during the coming season. is Dublin Journal, November 23—26, 1745. 16

The Garrick Winter dispute, which was resolved in a strange way described by Davies. In spite of Sheridan's specific offer, Garrick had come to Ireland uncommitted, apparently hoping to better Sheridan's terms by treating with the proprietors. Even by December I he still had not signed a contract. What he wanted was a set sum for the season. Sheridan, who argued that the other players ought not to lose by Garrick's gain, would yield neither to the proprietors nor to Garrick on the provisions of his first proposal—that Garrick perform with him on equal shares. After a lengthy argument between the two actors Sheridan, as Davies reports it, drew out his watch and insisted upon an answer in a certain number of minutes. Garrick submitted. Hitchcock, who copies this incident from Davies almost verbatim, concludes with his own typically optimistic comment: ". . . and the affair terminated in the most amicable manner." 19 How amicable Garrick felt can be seen in his explosive letter to his friend Draper. Calling Sheridan a name that later editors declined to print, he accused him of trying to prevent his engagement (out of jealousy, he implies, although he admits at the same time that he had had the strongest solicitations from him). The final terms, he felt, were very indifferent (a third of the profits were to go to the proprietors). But he was to be joint manager with Sheridan. If the latter had not been engaged, he would have had much more, he wrote to Draper; and the gentlemen proprietors regretted not having known his plans earlier, before taking on Sheridan20 (the preceding February, presumably). There may have been still another source for Garrick's irritation: the knowledge that morally Sheridan had the right of the whole issue. Weeks before Garrick's arrival Sheridan had begun the 1745-46 season and he continued to assume, probably without protest from his co-manager, the main burden of the management. Garrick's few letters from this time speak only of roles he was learning or playing and of the gay time he was having in Dublin society, eating, drinking, and being rather idle, as certainly Sheridan was not. But his mere presence was enough to give the season an unprecedented brilliance, a brilliance not to be surpassed in Dublin until the twentieth century. Besides Garrick (and Miss Bellamy), there was Spranger Barry, already a member of the united company. Barry, whose physical endowment and acting abilities complemented Sheridan's, had not yet 19 Garrick, 20

Letters, i, 68-69; Davies, 1, 85; Hitchcock, 1, 152. Garrick, Letters, 1, 69.

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Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1745—1746 reached his full fame. Later he and Sheridan were regarded as Garrick's only serious rivals. In after years Dubliners looking back on their theatrical history remark nostalgically of the phenomenal season when Garrick, Sheridan, and Barry were playing under one roof. Even at the time, the blase Colley Cibber, writing to Benjamin Victor in March 1746, observes that "your Hibernian theatre seems to be in a much better Way than the British" 21—truly a miraculous accomplishment for Sheridan, when one considers the Irish theater's desperation a year earlier. Although Garrick did not appear until December 9, the first play of the season had opened on October 30. With true showmanship Sheridan, as Hitchcock points out,22 built up his attractions bit by bit, reserving his best for later, when audience appetites began to fail. Miss Bellamy was saved till November 11, making her first appearance in The Orfhan with Barry and Sheridan. Sheridan's benefit on November 21, marking his first time as Sir Harry Wildair in The Constant Coufle and performed by command of the Earl of Chesterfield, then Lord Lieutenant, was made into a highly special occasion. Prices were raised because of the extra demand for places, pit and boxes going up to a crown. When all the boxes were taken, room was provided for ladies on stage and in the pit. The stage was transformed into "an Amphitheatre, illuminated with Wax Candles, and made warm and commodious for Ladies," who graced the performance patriotically wearing Irish poplins.23 The temporary reconstruction of the stage, whereby tiers of benches were erected around the back in a semicircle to accommodate a surplus crowd, was not unusual at benefit performances. Both Smock-Alley and Aungier-Street being available to the united company, the theater used for Sheridan's benefit and during most of the fall was Aungier-Street, with its larger stage and smaller audience accommodation. After Garrick's arrival the company moved to Smock-Alley to take care of the larger

crowds. Significantly, Sheridan's May 8th performance in The Merchant of Venice is advertised for Aungier-Street again,24 Garrick having left at the end of April. 21

22 Hitchcock, 1, 160. Victor, History, n, 205. Journal, November 16-19 and 19—23, 1745. The latter issue reports "a most numerous and polite Audience at Mr. Sheridan's Benefit," but Garrick, arriving in Dublin a few days after, wrote to Draper that Sheridan had "hurt himself as an actor among his friends" by playing Sir Harry Wildair (Letters, 1, 69). This was not one of Sheridan's best parts. 24 But Smock-Alley was used for other performances after Garrick's departure. ss Duilin

The Garrick Winter Many of Sheridan's accomplishments during this winter must have gratified him. His management of so many topflight actors, some of them unfriendly with others, most of them defensive of their prestige, was not so permanent a contribution to stage history as were some of his other achievements, but at the time it surely loomed as his most difficult task. Performances were arranged judiciously. Garrick at first starred alone in roles like Hamlet and Richard III, Sheridan's favorite parts. His success was reflected in many ways: prices were raised, new regulations were needed to take care of the crowds of people and carriages, command performances were numerous. A rare sort of news item appeared in the Dublin Journal for December 17-21: Last Night the Comedy of the Rehearsal was acted for the Benefit of Mr. Garrick, to the most polite and crowded Audience that hath been seen at any Play: His Excellency the Earl of Chesterfield, by whose Command it was performed, was present} and vast Numbers of People went away for Want of Room. Poems to Garrick were printed almost weekly in the newspaper. Witness, for instance, this epigram, somewhat at a loss for a rime. Hearing that aged Crows are learn'd and wise, I ask'd the antient famous one, at Warrick Which of all Actors best deserv'd the Prize? Roscius it could not say—but—Garrick—Garrick.25 In January Sheridan began to accompany Garrick, sometimes featuring Garrick, sometimes himself. For example, in a notice of The Fair Penitent, given January 2, both actors were announced in large print, but Garrick's name appeared above Sheridan's. A later notice of the same play (to be reenacted February 7) gave Sheridan first, Garrick second, still in the same roles. A January 9th performance of The Orphan was advertised with Sheridan first} 28 for a February 26 Dublin Journal, December 17-21, 1745. Garrick, writing to Draper (ca. December 26), exclaims "Business here is prodigious . . ." (Letters, 1, 74). 26Of The Fair Penitent Garrick writes (Letters, 1, 75): "1 have just now played Lothario to a very good house; I never was in better spirits, and indeed Sheridan played the scene well with me." The advertisement for The Orfhan reads as follows: "The Part of Polydore, by particular Desire, to be performed by Mr. Sheridan, being the first Time of his appearing in the Character; Chamont, Mr. Garrick; Castalio, Mr. Barry; Monimia, Miss Bellamy" (Dublin Journal, January 4—7, 1746).

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1745—1746 nth performance of the same play, the order of actors was reversed in the notice to put Garrick first. Toward the end of the season Sheridan appeared alone in leading parts already acted by Garrick— as Hamlet and as Orestes in The Distrest Mother. The latter role, to become one of Sheridan's favorites, was advertised as played for the first time by both men that winter.27 Contrariwise, Sheridan appeared first in Jane Shore (as Dumont), Garrick playing much later in the same play (as Hastings) at the request of several gentlemen and ladies who "have desired to see Mr. Garrick in a New Character." 28 In February another experiment was tried to keep the balance just and the audience interested. King John, not played "these many Years in this Kingdom," was presented with Garrick as the King, Sheridan as the Bastard, this being his first appearance in that role.29 Later, according to Miss Bellamy, the roles themselves were reversed, Sheridan appearing as the King and Garrick as the Bastard.30 The Dublin Journal shows that a similar alternation was used in the parts of Othello and Iago at two performances given only two days apart (February 26 and 28). To an audience familiar with the play and primarily interested in acting and interpretation of characters—as eighteenth-century audiences were—these opportunities to compare two famous performers interpreting the same part must have been exciting. For the same reason Dublin audiences were always eager to 27

Garrick is recorded as performing Orestes first on March 6 for the benefit of Barry (ibid., February 22—25, 1746). This takes no account of the amateur performance with Bellamy in Teddington, where, according to Bellamy, Garrick acted Orestes the year before (1, 27). Sheridan's first appearance in the role was March 21. 28 Ibid., April 19-22, 1746. vii Ibid., January 21—25, 174-6· King John had been revived successfully at Drury Lane the preceding season to compete with Covent Garden's production of Pafal Tyranny, in which Bellamy had played Blanch. At Drury Lane Garrick had acted John for the first time (February 20, 1745); Delane had played the Bastard. Sheridan, although he was acting there, had had

no part in this production (London Stage for 1744-45 season). 30 Bellamy, 1, 74-75. I find no notice of this second performance, with the roles reversed, in the Dublin Journal, but probably not all plays were advertised there, especially in the early years of Sheridan's management. Support is given the not too trustworthy Bellamy here by her circumstantial account of a second performance, in which Sheridan played the King, Garrick the Bastard and she Constance. The only production of King John advertised in the Dublin Journal for this season shows Mrs. Furnival as Constance, Sheridan as the Bastard, and Garrick as the King (February 5). But Hitchcock lists Garrick in the Bastard (see note 32).

The Garrick Winter see their favorite performers playing a new role, and these occasions were specially advertised in the press, as "being the first time of his appearing in that character." This season, crowded as it was with managerial activities, was also an outstanding one for Sheridan in new parts added to his repertoire—at least nine, and perhaps as many as twelve.31 To study some of these many "new Characters" Sheridan withdrew for a while to the country (probably to Quilca, at this time owned by his older brother Richard), until hastily summoned back to town to support Garrick, who had been having some thin nights at the theater. While he was away Garrick must have taken over the direction of the theater. Garrick played in only one new role, but was generous in acting a large variety of parts which he already knew; he played nineteen different characters in approximately thirty performances while he was in Dublin.32 Barry, last year's star, usually played supporting roles. The three top actors appeared together with George Anne Bellamy in several plays besides The Orfhan: in The Fair Penitenti for example, and in Tancred and Sigismunda, with which Garrick and Sheridan were familiar from their Drury Lane performances the season before. Thus the acting fare provided by Sheridan was varied and stimulating. Less impressive were the dramatic offerings: only two "new" plays 31

New roles for Sheridan announced as the first time of his appearing in the character: Sir Harry Wildair in The Constant Coufle; Polydore in The Orfhan·, Bastard; Iago; Dorax in Don Sebastian·, Orestes in The Distrest Mother·, Dumont in Jane Shore; Comus; Shylock. Falstaff was prepared for May 14 but was not given. If the roles were reversed in King John, Sheridan probably played the King for the first time this season; and, although they are not announced as firsts, I can find no earlier performances with Sheridan as Chamont in The Orfhan or as Ventidius in All for Love, revived after ten years. When a role is not listed as a "first" and yet there is no record of an earlier performance, often the play was a revived one that had not been played for many years. Therefore, the newness of the roles to many of the actors would be obvious to the reader of the advertisement. 32 The nineteen roles advertised for Garrick were: Hamlet, Richard III, Archer, Bayes, Lothario, Macbeth, Chamont, Lear, Capt. Plume, Sir John Brute, Master Johnny (The School Boy), King John, Tancred, Othello, Iago, Orestes (advertised as first time in that role), Sir Harry Wildair, Hastings, Sharp (The Lying Valet). Probably the Bastard should be added to this list. Hitchcock, who gives a list of Garrick roles for this season, includes the Bastard (1, 161), but not the King in King John. I have added four over Hitchcock's number. In a December letter to Draper, Garrick mentions studying Jaffier and Brass, and contemplating Young Marius and Varanes (Letters, 1, 72), but none of these parts are advertised with Garrick during this season.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J45—1*746 were advertised, Tancred and Sigismunda and Dryden's Don Sebastian, both of which had of course been produced elsewhere, although they had never been acted at Smock-Alley; and one new afterpiece, The Anatomist. But the presentation of all the old plays given that season was a new challenge to the new manager; Garrick1S presence must have been helpful here. On the surface at least Sheridan maintained amicable relations with and among his troupe. He came successfully through a dispute between George Anne and Garrick, in which George Anne claims to have been responsible for "the first theatrical humiliation the immortal Roscius ever met with." As she tells it, Sheridan was quite willing for her to play Constance in King John, according to a promise made when he first engaged her in London; but Garrick, probably for the reasons acknowledged by George Anne herself—her want of experience and her slight figure "more properly adapted to the lady's son, Prince Arthur"33—objected so violently that Sheridan changed his mind. Thereupon George Anne flew to her patroness, Mrs. Butler, who influenced the audience to stay away that night. As a result the house was thin and Garrick much humiliated. (At a later performance of the same play in which Bellamy acted Constance, the house was packed.) 34 This incident, if true, shows Garrick exercising his managerial authority over the strong-willed Sheridan—to his own disadvantage, it would seem. Nor was Garrick the only colleague humiliated by George Anne that season, according to her account.35 One evening in the greenroom just before the revived performance of AU for Love, Sheridan was shocked to see Miss

Bellamy, ready to go on as Cleopatra, inappropriately dressed in plain white satin. George Anne coolly told 33

Bellamy, i, 63, 74-7 5· p. 7 5 . This is the performance of which there is no record in the Dublin Journal (see note 30). si Ibid-.,

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Bellamy, 1, 81 if. This following incident is erroneously placed by Bellamy at the beginning of the next season (1746—47); All for Love had been revived in the fall of 1745, when Barry, whom she mentions as acting in this performance, Mrs. Furnival, and Mrs. Elmy were in the company, as they were not in 1746—47. Bellamy's memory was frequently confused. As Hitchcock says, "All the incidents related by this extraordinary lady in the memoirs of her life, are not in every respect strictly true" (1, 149). Sheridan, reading Bellamy's memoirs in 1785, called this story of Mrs. Furnival's stealing the dress a fabrication of George Anne's own brain (Betsy Sheridan's Journal, p. 57). Mrs. Butler, George Anne's patroness, was the wife of Col. Butler, one of the Smock-Alley proprietors. She gave loyal support to the theater.

The Garrick Winter him that she "had taken the advice [of] Ventidius [Sheridan, amusingly, was playing Ventidius, although Bellamy does not make this point] . . . and had parted with both my clothes and jewels to Antony's wife." Puzzled by this double talk, Sheridan grasped her meaning only when he went on stage and discovered Mrs. Furnival playing Octavia wearing the jewelry and the elegant gown intended for Cleopatra, a costume remodeled for George Anne from a dress worn by the Princess of Wales. Sheridan was "so confounded that it was some time before he could go on with his part." And Mrs. Butler, who had lent George Anne the jewels, threw the audience into an uproar by calling out from her box, "Good Heaven, the woman has got on my diamonds!" At the end of the act Mrs. Furnival was cried off the stage and Mrs. Elmy was called in to finish the part. Mrs. Furnival had already owed the little Bellamy a grudge "on account of my eclipsing her" with the public. George Anne's sense of triumph over her and over Garrick, Barry's attitude toward Sheridan revealed in a letter (to be shown later)—these and other hints indicate that relationships may not have been so harmonious below the surface.36 But at least no quarrels erupted into the newspapers or the law courts. One additional source of irritation between Garrick and Sheridan may have been the odd behavior of the Earl of Chesterfield. This patron of the arts gave unusual support as viceroy not only to the Dublin theater, but to other worthy entertainments such as musicals and oratorios. The many command performances of this 1745-46 season bespeak the frequent attendance of the earl, his countess, and other important members of the court at Smock-Alley or AungierStreet theaters. "On such occasions," according to Miss Stockwell, "the viceroy was received in the vestibule by the patentee of the theatre dressed in regulation court attire and bearing lights in two silver candlesticks. With these, he ushered the Lord and his Lady to 86 In his Letters Garrick's relations with Sheridan are not mentioned after his first explosion to Draper. Even there, he notes, "My brother Manager and I at present are civil, so I would not have you say anything about him—I intend to behave in such a manner, that no blame shall light upon me, but (entre nous) he is as shifting as Lacy. . . ." Later, around the end of December, Garrick, who had had word that Lacy might fail, was hoping to get a chance at the Drury Lane patent. Although he himself could not leave Dublin until his contract ran out in March, he was promising to send Barry over immediately to keep Drury Lane going, regardless of what it did to Smock-Alley (.Letters, I,

69, 7 4) .

 the vice-regal box."37 Davies tells us that Chesterfield was very gracious to Sheridan and often admitted his visits at the castle, but "he took not the least notice of Mr. Garrick; nay, when they both waited on him with candles in their hands, on the night of Mr. Garrick's benefit, he spoke very kindly to Sheridan, but did not even return the salute of the other."38 Yet Chesterfield had requested plays with Garrick in the leading role and, as we have seen, had commanded The Rehearsal played at Garrick's benefit. If true, the feeble explanation reported by Davies for the cruel jilt, that "his lordship, when in Ireland, had a mind to convince the people of that kingdom, that his heart was intirely Irish,"38 would hardly have appeased Garrick. Besides command performances and benefit performances, several other important occasions were marked in the theater that winter. The rebellion, which had threatened in the fall, finally broke out in Scotland; Dubliners showed their loyalty by elaborate celebrations of the Duke of Cumberland's birthday, including, at the theater, a prologue on the occasion by Sheridan and an epilogue by Garrick.40 After Culloden, Sheridan, whose father had been

vaguely suspected of Jacobitism, not only spoke a new prologue “on the Occasion of the glorious and happy Victory . . . over the Rebels in Scotland,” 41 but also after another performance “ordered a large Bonfire before the Theatre, and a Barrel of Ale to the Populace, on Account of the Duke’s Victory.” 42 Sheridan enjoyed doing things on a grand scale; the publicity was desirable and, besides, his loyalty to the crown was heartfelt. Particularly interesting, however, were the improvements which the new manager introduced during his first year. Some were trivial, as, for example, the occasional elaboration of the advertisements to give more lurid details about the play. Richard III might entice more people if they knew they would see “the Distresses and Death of King Henry VI; the artful Acquisition of the Crown by King Richard; the cruel Murder of King Edward V and his Brother in the Tower; the Landing of the Earl of Richmond, &c.” 43 Theater no37

Stockwell, p. 183. 39 Ibid. Davies, 1, 86. Later Chesterfield was not so kind to Sheridan. 40 Dublin Journal, April 12-15, 1746. 41 Ibid., April 26-29, 174-6. 42 Ibid., April 29—May 3, 1746. iz Ibid., November 9-12, 1745. This elaboration had appeared occasionally in London theater advertisements, and had been used at least once before Sheridan in Dublin (see Pue’s Occurrences, March 20—23, 1736). 38

The Garrick Winter tices in general became more attractive during the year, moving in the January papers from an obscure place in fine print to a prominent position with large type and indented lines. Many coming performances were featured as news items and given extra-large capitals. With another change, the omission of the comic part of Don Sebastian., Sheridan inspired a poem, printed in the Dublin Journali “To Mr. Sheridan on his leaving out the Scenes of Ribaldry in Don Sebastian . . .,” wherein he was congratulated on his wisdom, elegance, and polished turn of mind and advised to pursue this track, since success always attends conscious virtue.44 Amusingly, the comic part had been omitted, according to Sheridan, “on account of the great Length of the Performance,”45 but all favorable publicity was, we can be sure, welcome. With Garrick’s appearance in Dublin and the prestige it restored to the theater, Sheridan grasped the chance to press the public reforms he must have long had in mind. Some were announced as early as Garrick’s opening night, on December 9, 1745. For example, to eliminate the footmen who had crowded the Great Room with flaming torches, much to the inconvenience and danger of the public, Sheridan “hoped” in a Journal announcement that “everyone” would “give Orders to their Servants to stand without.”46 The crowds around the outside of the theater, greatly increased by Sheridan’s new attractions, created worse problems. To relieve the confusion caused by unregulated coach traffic in the narrow alley before the theater, Sheridan inaugurated a “one-way street” system, and guards were placed to prevent violations.47 So successful was this change that the Music-Hall in Fishamble-Street published similar directions for one of its entertainments. At Garrick’s first performance Sheridan took other, more important steps: no person was to be admitted onstage “at any Time during 44

Dublin Journal, March 11-15, !746. i e Ibid., December 3-7, 1745. Ibid., February 18-22, 1746. vt Ibid., December 21—24, 1745: “As there have been several Complaints made of the Difficulty of passing and repassing to and from the Theatre, on Account of the meeting of Coaches in so narrow a Place, it is hoped that all Ladies and Gentlemen will order their Coachmen to drive to the Theatre by the Passage from Essex-street and the Blind-quay, and in going from the Play to enter the Passage from Fishamble-street, which is the only Method to obviate such Inconvenience. And that this Rule may be punctually observed, Guards shall be placed at each of the above Entrances to prevent any Coaches from passing but according to the above Order.” 45

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1745—1746 the Performance, under 5s. $dP and no one was to be admitted to the servants’ gallery “without a Ticket from the Book-keeper.”48 By these regulations he hoped to keep the worst offenders out of the two most troublesome sections. But the upper gallery, where for is .id. sat the servants who had spent hours before the play saving unreserved seats elsewhere in the house for their masters and mistresses, continued to be so noisy that by January “the Managers” were threatening in a public notice to close the section entirely and even “never to admit the Servants into the Theatre again.” 49 This prospect, which threatened the masters’ convenience as well as the servants’ pleasure, sobered the gallery temporarily. But Irish servants were an undisciplined lot, whom neither Garrick’s golden acting nor Sheridan’s direst threats could silence for long, and Smock-Alley was for years to be plagued by their misbehavior. In the end, though, Sheridan devised a way to keep the upper gallery quiet. As for the audience on stage, Sheridan’s feelings about them had been clear from the beginning. His notice at his debut had given a partial picture of the crowded inconvenience of allowing customers (sometimes more than a hundred) 80 on stage during a performance. Another excellent account by Tate Wilkinson

illuminates other drawbacks. Wilkinson describes a benefit audience sitting behind the scenes “up to the clouds, with persons of a menial cast on the ground, beaux and no beaux crowding the only entrance.” Three or four rows of illdressed lads and persons sat on stage in front. And between the audiences on stage and in the galleries there was constant shouting and quarreling amid frequent “golden showers of oranges and half-eaten pippins.” 51 As if this were not enough, people could wander from the stage back into the greenroom, crowding the corridors and interis Ibid ., December 3-7, 1745. 49 Ibid., January 21—25, 174.6. The notice runs for some time and reads as

follows: “The Disturbances in the Upper Gallery have been so frequent of late, and occasioned such Interruptions in the Performance, that there have been many Complaints made of it by all Persons who frequent the Theatre. The Managers have us’d all means in their Power to put a Stop to it but hitherto to no Purpose: They are now apprehensive that the only effectual Way to do it will be to shut up the Gallery; and therefore hope that no Gentleman or Lady will take it ill if their Servants are entirely excluded, unless they behave themselves better for the future: They shall have one Night of Trial more next Monday, and if there should be any Noise as usual then, or on any of the succeeding Nights, they are resolv’d to shut up the Passage to the Upper Gallery, and never to admit the Servants into the Theatre again.” 50Sheridan, An Humble Affed, p. 15. 61Wilkinson, iv, 110-114.

The Garrick Winter fering with the players there. On stage it was difficult to distinguish between actors and audience,52 and actors were often harassed by exhibitionists and inebriates who shared the act with them. For example, both Davies and Sheridan tell of an experience of Peg Woffington, who, playing Cordelia opposite Garrick during his first visit to Dublin, found herself seated on stage, as the curtain was to be drawn, not only with the old king—asleep, with his head in her lap—but also with a “Gentleman” from the stage audience who had thrown himself down on her other side and was fondling her “with the utmost Indecency.” When she resented his activities, he abused her; and later he and his gentlemen friends uttered death threats against Garrick, who though silent throughout had dared to look his indignation “at so brutal a Scene.”53 Sheridan, who had witnessed this incident from the audience, now hoped to prevent a recurrence by keeping stage prices at Ss5^· during the whole performance, instead of reducing them, as was the Dublin and London custom, after the third act. Latecomers, apt to be drunk and disorderly, would thus be discouraged from the stage. While this may have kept stage crowds smaller and more orderly, Sheridan was not to be satisfied with such a compromise for long. He wanted to clear the stage entirely. His move to do this is usually dated from the next season; actually the big step was first taken at his debut as Shylock on May 8, 1746, soon after Garrick left. In announcing it, he astutely shifted the responsibility to the Lord Lieutenant, although it is unlikely that Chesterfield had any personal hand in it: “By Command, no Person whatever to be admitted behind the Scenes.” 54 Thus the regulation which is supposed to have touched off the Kelly riot of 1747 had been tried out months before without ill effects.55 Garrick, whose presence in Dublin had helped Sheridan in building as well as reforming his theater, stayed in town until May 3, announcing “the last Time of his acting this Season under his present Agreement” as early as March 14,56 but continuing on through many “last Times” until an April 26th performance of Jane Shoret at the close of which he spoke his farewell in An Address to the Town.57 In 52 Sheridan,

An Humble Affeal i p. 15. See Davies, 1, 331-332, and Sheridan, An Humble Affeal, pp. 14-15. 54 Dublin Journal, Maγ 3—6, 1746. 65 Barry, it is true, reports a very thin house on this occasion. See the quotation from his letter to Garrick, p. 73. 56 Dublin Journal, March 8-11, 1746. 57 Ibid., April 19-22, 1746. 53

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1745—1746 this charming piece he poked fun at the difference between himself on stage and off: The hero shrinks into his native span— This little sketch and miniature of man. “Where’s Garrick?” says the beau: and as I pass, To mark the noted insect—takes his glass. Plac’d in yon box, to publish my disaster, “Mamma,” cries miss, “who is that little master?” “Zounds!” says the captain, “what! is that Othello? Ha, ha, ha!— A good joke, damme—a rare hulking fellow!” At the end he thanked Dublin for its favors and expressed his feeling that he would always be “a native by your special grace.”58 The town had given him a gay winter socially; it could have made little difference to him that in accordance with Sheridan’s letter of the summer before he had not traveled in Sheridan’s circles.59 Hitchcock’s comment on the final relationship of the two men may be somewhat naive: “To Mr. Sheridan’s honour, be it observed, that through the whole of the connection between him and Mr. Garrick that season, such was his strict adherence to his engagements and open unreserved behaviour, that they

parted good friends, Mr. Garrick acknowledging that he [Sheridan] was the man of honour and the gentleman."60 A letter written on June 6 to Garrick by Spranger 68 This piece has come down to us under the misleading title of Henry Brooke's Prologue to Othello "spoken in Dublin, by Mr. Garrick" (see Alexander Chalmer's English Poets, XVII, 426). Supposed to have been written by Brooke to be spoken by Garrick, it starts with the line "My term expir'd with this concluding play," a line which, as Genest (x, 339) says, indicates that it was an epilogue rather than a prologue; furthermore, Garrick's concluding play in Dublin was Jane Shore on April 26 and not Othello, not acted by Garrick, according to the Calendar, after February. Added proof that this poem was written and spoken later than February—even later than April 15—lies in its last line, where it is implied that Chesterfield has left Ireland. This event did not occur until late April. Brooke may still have written the verses, but the first part (see the lines quoted in the text, for example) is the sort of thing a man would more comfortably write about himself. Garrick may have been the author. 59 Bellamy throws light on Garrick's social life in Dublin. Sheridan is not mentioned in connection with it (1, 77-79). See also Davies, 1, 88; Garrick, Letters, 1, 72, 76. 60 Hitchcock, i, 164.

The Garrick Winter Barry, who had finished out a month more of acting with Sheridan after Garrick's departure, could hardly have been sent to a "good friend" of Sheridan's. Barry, apologetic because he owed Garrick money, begins by explaining that through "the intrigues of Prest" he had not received a penny of his salary since Garrick left, although he had been "daily soliciting and hourly expecting [his] money from the proprietors." He continues with bitter irony: I know you have had an account of Sheridan's late deserved success} he played the "Merchant of Venice" to 18; the "Orphan," he contrived to put off the morning of the play, by advertising that some of the performers were ill: without the gift of prophecy, he well knew how the evening would turn out. The hero's own benefit was to have been "Harry the Fourth," advertised [as] being positively the last time of his performing in this kingdom. Mr. Watson, who was to have played the part of Poins, was fortunately taken ill} Ten pounds in the house at seven o'clock. . . . At this point, in front of many of Sheridan's "collegiate admirers then in the green-room," Barry had offered, as had Cibber two years before, to read the part of Poins, which as it happened did not interfere with his own part. But Sheridan refused, saying that, after having advertised certain players in certain parts, he must keep his word to the public. Thereupon he dismissed the house. Barry then went on to describe the trouble that followed between the few who had paid ready money and "those who had brought in his [Sheridan's] benefittickets." When the doorkeepers decided not to refund a penny to either party, cuffs and blows were exchanged and the doors had to be shut in a hurry. Sheridan's action was later represented by Prest to the proprietors as a wanton dismissal of the house, which meant that Sheridan might have to pay £30 agreed upon. Barry predicted a possible lawsuit. He concludes, "To remain here next winter useless, which must be the case in our present circumstances, will be a situation most irksome to me. . . ."61 el Garrick, Private Corresfondence, 1, 42. I find no notice of The Orfhart during this part of the season; The Merchant of Venice Sheridan had deferred from May 5 to May 8. Barry's failure, in this letter, to blame Sheridan for the difficulty about his salary supports the possibility that Sheridan had not yet become responsible for the regular payment of his troupe during this first, trial year.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J45—1J46 Sheridan too must have been discouraged by the letdown after Garrick's departure, which had emphasized the normal decline of business in late spring. At one point he was on the verge of giving up the whole venture. A notice of a May performance as "the last Time of his performing during his Stay in this Kingdom"62 implies not only that his position was temporary but also that he had no intention of making it permanent. Years later he looked back on the financial returns of this glorious first year without enthusiasm. Even with Garrick present, the theater was not always full, he recalls: . . . it is amazing to consider that Mr. Garrick, in his height of Reputation, during the November Term, in a Parliament Winter, played the fourth Night of his Performance to a Receipt of little more than forty Pounds, and that a Messenger was dispatched to Mr. Sheridan to hasten him to Town . . . for the immediate Support of the Business. That with all their Strength united they were not able to exhibit Plays oftener than two Nights in a Week, and could seldom ensure good Houses to both those Nights. And that the Receipt of the whole Season did not exceed three thousand four hundred Pounds.63 But this was written from a blurred memory (notices show that plays were offered as many as four and five nights weekly during February and March) and after Sheridan had done much better at Smock Alley. It is true that the number of advertised performances totaled only about seventy for the season, half the figure which Sheridan was to achieve at his peak. Yet even seventy was a great gain over the preceding years, and £3,400 a triumph compared to the £1,200 normal for earlier seasons.64 Garrick is said to have been

pleased with the “rich harvest”65 he took home with him as his share of the profits; Sheridan seems to have used his equal share to buy Quilca 6 2 Dublin Journd y May 10—14, 1746. Several notices of this sort appear in May, and as early as April 26 this news item appears in the Journal: “We hear that Mr. Sheridan is engag’d to perform four Times More during his Stay in this Kingdom.” 68Sheridan, An Humble Affeal p. J8. 9 i Ibid., p. 53. y 65 Bellamy, 1, 77. Davies too (1, 88) reports that Garrick had “considerably added to his stock of money.” Sheridan, in An Humble Affealy published in 1758, recalls that twelve years ago Mr. Garrick, at the height of his reputation, asked “but four hundred Pounds of Mr. Sheridan for a Season’s Playing.” It will be remembered that no set salary was agreed on, since Garrick was to share the profits. This may have been what he asked in the fruitless interview with Sheridan; or it may be what Sheridan twelve years later remembered Garrick to have made that season (An Humble Affealy p. 54).

The Garrick Winter from Richard in July 1746.66 Later all the profits he could spare from his ever-growing family were turned back into improving his theater. Welcome encouragement came in the form of two poems written on Barry and Sheridan, probably when these two actors were alone in the last month of the 1745-46 season. A Rhapody on the Stage, twenty-two pages in heroic couplets by James Eyre Weeks, a friend and former classmate of the Smock-Alley manager, is even more a rhapsody on Sheridan, whose genius as an actor was established on his first appearance and whose liberal education had given him an understanding of plays, authors, history, oratory, rhetoric, and orthoepy, among other subjects. Under him Ierne’s stage will revive: Ev’n now the Symptoms of her Health appear, While our Applause by turns, two Rivals share, Barry, by Nature for the Stage design’d, In Art, and Judgment, Sherridan refin’d, Barry, the darling of our Ear and Eye And Sherridan, of Art the Prodigy, Never did Fruit mature in such a time, Nor Youth attain so speedy to its Prime.67 The other poem, more humorous and only eight pages long, claims to be written by a poor poet asking the freedom of the house (Weeks, he says, already has this gratuity). Although the tone wavers between seriousness and satire (the two actors are pictured nursing at Ierne’s breast, Tom sucking the right breast of Apollo, Barry the left of Jupiter), most of the piece is complimentary. Sheridan’s oratory as Cato, his convincing delineation of Richard, and his virtues in other roles are praised.®8 These two poems were among the first of many writings inspired by the Smock-Alley manager, some panegyric, others venomous. None, however, reached the irony—quite unintentional—to be found in the last sentence of Weeks’ dedication to Sheridan: “That you may make as large Acquisitions in Fortune, as you have in Reputation; and that your Happiness may be in Proportion to your Merit, is the sincere Wish of Sir, your most obedient, humble Servant and Admirer, James Eyre Weeks.” With the last performance of the season on May 26, the year of trial ended. But Sheridan had yet to make up his mind. 66 Ms. n·

121.83956 and Ms. 121.83957 (Off. Reg. Deeds); Stockwell, p. 333,

33· 67 68

Weeks, A Rhapody on the Stage, p. 10. A Poem on Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Barry, 1746.

CHAPTER IV

cDublin

in an Uproar,

1746-1747

HERIDAN came to no decision and the theater remained closed

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until late the next fall. In the meantime, Barry, who had been angling for help from Garrick back at Covent Garden, had accepted Lacy’s offer of a season at Drury Lane. Some twelve other players, including the important Mrs. Furnival and Mrs. Elmy, had also left, with no one to take their place.2 For Sheridan had made no attempt to hire replacements, his own future was so much in doubt. The proprietors had reached the point of threatening to shut the doors for the winter, even at a loss of £600 to themselves, before Sheridan agreed to try again.3 A letter of Benjamin Victor’s may give a clue to his reluctance. Victor, a former English linen merchant who joined the company that fall as deputy manager and treasurer, had been in Dublin the preceding season, had accompanied Garrick back to London, and now had returned to Ireland, where Sheridan’s warm reception provided the spark for a “most agreeable

friendship" between the two men.4 Writing to an English acquaintance in December 1746, Victor explained that the theaters, owned by thirty-six nobles and gentlemen who called themselves proprietors, had for some time been under the direction of "one artful man" who served as their agent, governing all in a base and highhanded way. Although Victor does not name him, he may well be Prest, the villain of Barry's letter. His baleful presence, above the manager's place, would be enough to explain Sheridan's hesitation.5 The theater would 1 The title here is taken from the title of a collection of writings (1 747) dealing with the riot (see Bibliography). 2 Sheridan, A State of Mr. Sheridan's Case. 3 Ibid. 4 Victor had been in the linen trade in London. He came over to Ireland on January 20, 1746, to balance his accounts with Irish linen manufacturers. Already a good friend of Garrick's, he established a "slight acquaintance" with Sheridan that season and attended several performances. He returned to settle in Dublin in October 1746, determined apparently to connect himself with the theater. Treating with Col. Butler, one of the proprietors of the united company, Victor decided that, since Sheridan was expecting to remain in Dublin as an actor and manager, it was better to "engage with him" rather than to start an opposition "to one who was the best Actor there, and who had a natural Interest to support him" (Original Letters, i, 121; History, 1, 88, 90). 5 That Prest had influence with the proprietors and meddled to Sheridan's

Oublin in an Uproar have been closed for the winter, but Sheridan called together the board of proprietors and, supported by the whole acting company, brought articles of impeachment to displace this agent. The proprietors were thus forced to give up their man. This event, or the prospect of it, may have persuaded Sheridan to undertake the management again. Soon after the proprietors' capitulation, Sheridan "entered into articles" for the two theaters, and was given, along with Victor, the power to direct business.® Probably only now, rather than in his first year as Hitchcock suggests, did he start to raise salaries, arrange for punctual payments (we recall Barry's complaints of the year before), and in return demand certain obligations from his company. Hitchcock tells of regular rehearsals under Sheridan's personal guidance where scene business was planned and other details of acting worked out.7 All this efficiency, rare in Dublin theaters in recent years, inspired the company with such confidence that punctuality became the rule and forfeits were few. The new regimen, continues Victor in his letter to his English friend, was so successful that theatrical matters in Dublin "go on in a very prosperous manner, to the amazement of every one." 8 Bellamy too reports that, though the company had opened that fall apprehensive without Garrick, they succeeded as well as when they "were aided by his powerful assistance"—all because of "the exertions of the manager, who was deservedly a great favourite with the gentlemen of the college, at which he was bred. . . ."9 During the summer the pit of the infrequently used Aungier-Street Theater had been floored over10 and now could be rented for balls and ridottos to bring in needed revenue. From this time on, Aungierdisadvantage is shown by Barry's letter of June 6 to Garrick, where, as we recall, Prest had "infused it into the proprietors' heads" that Sheridan had wantonly dismissed the house when he refused to allow Barry to read an extra part (see Ch. H I) . eVictor, Original Letters, i, 121—122. Sheridan's articles with the proprietors must have been drawn before the date of the letter, December 23, 1746. These could not have been the long-term lease taken in March 1748. (See Ch. v, note 42.) 7Hitchcock, i, 156-159. 8Victor, Original Letters, 1, 122. 9 Bellamy, 1, 79. The next February Sheridan himself reports that, though he had had little hope for the season, he had been agreeably surprised. He found that industry and "good and chaste Plays, decently represented, drew crowded Audiences, without the Assistance of Dances, Pantomimes, or even Farces" {A State of Mr. Sheridan y S Case). 10Announced in the Dublin Journal, June 28-July 1, 1746.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1746-1747 Street except for special occasions was abandoned as a playhouse, the company moving permanently to Smock-Alley. Sheridan could hardly have been happy with that company this fall, reduced as it was to only two players of any importance, himself and Miss Bellamy. Other means to attract audiences had to be devised—new productions and bargain rates. Sheridan's novel idea this season was a subscription series of six plays, advertised in the October 25-28 Journal, with tickets at the reduced fee of a guinea to cover the series and to "carry a single Person into the Boxes, or any other Part of the House, except the Stage." For three guineas one could get a ticket to all the plays of the season, except benefits, for any part of the house except the stage. As for the stage, there had been so "many Complaints last Season on Account of the Stage's being crowded" that nobody would be admitted there "under 5s, 5d." Among the six subscription plays Sheridan promised at least two revived ones. These turned out to be two by Shakespeare which, according to the notices, had never been acted "in this Kingdom":11 Much Ado About Nothing (first on November 27) and Romeo and Juliet (first on December 15).12 At the second performance of Romeo and Juliet followed by a new afterpiece, Pyramus

and Thisbe, no person whatsoever was to be admitted behind the scenes, “as the Machinery would be much obstructed by it.” 13 Here again Sheridan cleared the stage for an evening without public protest. The two revived plays had been specially chosen because they could be carried by two strong actors in an otherwise undistinguished cast. Romeo and Juliet, “written by Shakespear, with Alterations,” was acted nine nights14 to great houses, “an extraordinary thing” in Dublin then; and its success there inspired its revival at both Drury Lane and Covent Garden.15 In Dublin there was such demand for places that subscribers were urged to send “an Account of what Num11 Iiid., November 8—Ii and December 2—6, 1746. Normally a revived play was one that had been acted in Ireland but not for some time. 12 The revival of Romeo and Juliet may have been inspired by the run which Theophilus Cibber’s revision of the play had had in the Haymarket two years earlier, when both Sheridan and Victor—and Bellamy too—had been in London. 13 Dublin Journal, December 13—16, 1746. 14 So says Victor, History, 1, 93. My records show only six performances, but perhaps not all productions were advertised. On the other hand, Victor’s memory or records may have been inaccurate. 15 Again, Cibber’s success two seasons earlier may have contributed to this London revival.

Dublin in an Uproar ber they will want” as soon as possible.16 The crowds were due, Hitchcock says, to Miss Bellamy’s playing of Juliet and to the picturesque way Sheridan represented the funeral scene.17 Sheridan’s role as Romeo was not so universally admired; nor were his alterations (for he was the reviser) entirely approved. Some years later Wilkes wrote of having seen Sheridan play Romeo, “altered by himself, in which he took Mercutio’s fine speech tO! then I see Queen Mab has been with you’ very unseasonably out of his mouth, and recited it with all the melancholy solemnity of a sermon. I am sure,” Wilkes perspicaciously observes, “he must have seen the impropriety of making Romeo speak a speech which was intended for the gay Mercutio to divert his own gloom: but perhaps he had no performer then in his company whom he could entrust with the speech; and things considered in this, but in no other light, his performing the part of Romeo may be pardoned.” 18 One overflow night was less profitable to the management: it occurred at a charity performance. Theater benefits for worthy persons and causes not connected with the company—families in distress, needy authors, public hospitals, et cetera—were common in Dublin, and Sheridan increased the number this year, so gaining good will from the public while he assured the house charges, at least, from the tax—usually some £40—paid by the beneficiary. The worthy object during the fall was one whose name is now lost, “a Gentleman confined in the Marshalsea of the Four-Court, For the Debt of Another Person.” Efficiently managing his benefit from his prison cell, he wrote to the paper on December 12, 1746: The Gentleman confined in the Four-court Marshalsea returns his sincere Thanks to the polite and numerous Audience that honoured him with their Company at his benefit Play last Night, but being informed that a great Number of his Friends who paid for Tickets could not get in, by their Advice and Application to Mr. Sheridan, that Gentleman has been so good to appoint Monday the 29th of this Instant, when the Beggar’s Opera will be performed for the Benefit of the same unfortunate Person, at which Time the Tickets delivered out for his former Play the Orphan will be then taken.19 16

17 Hitchcock, 1, 167. Dublin Journal, December 6-9, 1746. pp. 314-315. 19 Dublin Journal, November 25-29 and December 9-13, 1746.

18 Wilkes,

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J46— 174 7 This notice records not only an overflow evening at Smock-Alley, but also the eighteenth-century custom of selling all the tickets possible (there were no reserved seats) regardless of the accommodations.20 On the night of the performance seats were grabbed on the principle of “first come, first served” and the overflow crowds were turned away with the expectation that they could use their tickets at a later performance. After his two successful benefits it seems reasonable to hope that the magnanimous and enterprising gentleman in the Marshalsea was freed. But for Sheridan it was not all Romeo and overflow crowds. Probably because of his hesitation the season had opened unusually late— on October 30. Until Christmas, plays were offered only twice, or at most three times, weekly. By mid-December the upper gallery crowds were getting out of hand again, and were throwing apples and even stones at the band during the music before the play. In a letter to the Journal which ran for several months, Sheridan, not prosperous enough to threaten to close the section, warned that . . . proper Men will be placed to mark the Offenders, who will certainly be prosecuted the next Day to the utmost Rigour of the Lawj and a Reward of three Guineas will be paid by the Manager, upon the Conviction of any Offender.21 Most disturbing of all, though, must have been the appearance, during the

fall, of competitors, Sheridan's first as manager. Apparently encouraged by his indecision about the managership, and by the possibility for a while that Smock-Alley would be closed, this rival company opened on November l at the City Theater (Phillips' New Theater) in Capel-Street, operating by the Lord Mayor's permis20

Stockwell, p. 230.

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Dublin Journal, December 13-16, 1746. Sheridan did not close the upper gallery to all but servants in livery for six months beginning in January 1747, as some (Stockwell, p. 102; Kavanagh, p. 181) have thought. On the only two occasions when Sheridan limited the personnel of the upper gallery, it was the servants who were excluded, by public notice (see February 11 and March 19, 1747, in Smock-Alley Calendar). The error comes from reading a Capel-Street advertisement as a Smock-Alley notice (see Dublin Journal, January 10-13, 1747). Nor were Smock-Alley upper gallery prices raised at this time from 6d. to is. (this happened at Capel-Street). At Smock-Alley, 1/1 was the advertised price for the upper gallery before January (see ibid., November 8—11, 1746), as well as after, except when it was advanced to a still higher figure for special performances.

Dublin in an Uproar sion.22

With rates still lower than Smock-Alley's (although Sheridan had brought his prices down somewhat23 to compete with them) and with the promise that great care would be taken "to prevent all Irregularities" in the upper gallery,24 the new group was in a position to draw away part of the Smock-Alley audience. Further misfortune had been caused by the failure of Much Adoi the play so favored by Sheridan against Victor's advice.25 Indeed, Victor's happy report by letter of December 23 that theatrical affairs were prospering is reversed in his History of fourteen years later: the 1746-47 season would have been a bad one, he says there, "if a very fortunate Accident had not happened on the nineteenth of January, at the performance of Aesop."26 This "fortunate Accident" later became known in Dublin history as the Kelly riot. Eighteenth-century Dublin was prone to civil disturbances: destructive wars between rival street gangs, Trinity demonstrations and high jinks, mobs of citizens besieging government buildings in some protest or other. Not surprisingly, several Smock-Alley riots had preceded Sheridan. The small, constant, and hence intimate audiences, made up largely of men out for an evening's entertainment, felt the right to express their disapproval if occasion arose. In some of these "expressions"—perhaps in the disturbance on the night of Dr. Clancy's benefit in 1738 27—young Sheridan may have taken part as 22 Ibid., January 6—10, 1747. See also their petition reprinted in Lawrence, "Trinity and the Theatre." 23For the November 4 performance: pit 2/8(earlier 3/3); middle gal l e r y I/7J4 (earlier 2/2). Boxes, stage, and lattices remained 5/5, upper gallery remained 1/1. Prices were raised back to normal for Romeo and Juliet and for benefit plays. For Romeo and Juliet upper gallery prices were advanced to 1/7½. 24The new City Theatre in Capel-Street advertised boxes 3/3, pit 2/2, gallery 1/1 (January 6—10, 1747). The notice includes a statement that "the greatest care will be taken to prevent all Irregularities, the Upper Gallery (which formerly had been opened for Six-pence) will be applyed solely for the Use of Servants in Livery, who shall upon the Entrance of their Master or Mistress receive a Ticket from the Box-keeper, or Pit-Office-keeper." The new company at the Capel-Street Theater included Mr. and Mrs. Mynitt, Mr. Mason, and Mr. Layfield. 25 Victor, History, 1, 92: ". . . from its first Appearance there, to the last Season, it [Much Ado About Nothing] has fully answered its Name, in regard to him as Manager." 26 Ibid., p. 93. 27 Dublin Journal item copied by J. F. Kemble in his Manuscript Diary for January 25, 1737/38.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1746—1747 a theater-haunting Trinitarian. We recall later charges that he had mixed in playhouse riots when a youth.28 But no theatrical riot of the period inspired such pen-twirling (Victor says enough in a month's time to fill a large octavo29), assumed such national importance, or produced such beneficial results as the Kelly riot at Smock-Alley in January 1747. For the newspaper reader not at the play, the affair started quietly enough. The issue of the Dublin Journal (January 17-20, 1747) published the next day after the inciting event makes no mention of it among the current news of a new method for extracting foul air out of ships and work to be done "in the Kitchen Garden in this Month." In the following issue, appearing three days after the riot itself, no headlines screamed, no pictures called attention to the event; the first relevant item which Editor Faulkner inserts in the finest of print and in a manner so unlike modern reportorial style notifies subscribers to a hospital benefit that: Whereas by a Riot which happened at the Theatre-Royal on Monday the 19th Inst, and was repeated the

two following Nights, whereby the Players were interrupted in their performance, and the Playhouse rendered unfit for the Entertainment of the Publick. This is to inform the Town, that the Play appointed for the Benefit of the Hospital for Incurables, is put off till further notice.80 In the same fine print several affidavits supporting Sheridan's part in the affair are accompanied by the manager's promise that "a whole state of the case will be published next week." And along with these notices appear three pathetic advertisements, apparently uncanceled, for coming attractions at Smock-Alley, together with Sheridan's perpetual threat to the upper gallery. The ultimate cause of the riot has usually been ascribed to Sheridan's decision to clear the stage permanently of stage sitters, a decision which was announced in the January 13-17 issue of the Journal thus: "In the future no money will be taken nor no person admitted behind the Scenes except on benefit nights." He himself claimed that, for clearing the stage and thus trying to prevent the disturbances which almost nightly interrupted the entertainment of the audience, is Mr.

29Victor, History, 1, 109. Sh—n's Afology to the Town, p. 8. Dublin Journal, January 20-24, 1747. This notice may have been placed by the hospital governors. Later notices like this bear their address. 30

Oublin in an Uproar he "was publicly insulted in the most ignominious Manner" and "afterwards us'd in private in a Way which human Nature could not bear."81 Fourteen years later Victor too, in the History of the Theatres, prefaced his account of the riot with a statement that he had often urged a reform to get the audience off stage and had proposed several "Methods," all of them rejected by the manager "as too dangerous to be executed in Dublin."32 But, in a letter to Colley Cibber written only a few months after the event, Victor emphasized an entirely different cause.83 And, indeed, the contemporary accounts of the affair and the writings inspired by it give the impression that Sheridan's new order played a negligible part} its connection with the riot was something thought up later to rationalize irrational behavior and perhaps give Sheridan a stick to use on his enemies. Further support to this impression comes from the hitherto unnoticed fact that on the evening of the riot and probably on the evening of the inciting incident the stage was crowded with stage sitters. On the latter night Sheridan's new regulation could hardly have been enforced, since stage tickets had already been advertised} 34 and the riot occurred on a benefit night, specifically exempted from the general order. Dublin Journal readers who felt cheated by the scanty news at the beginning of the Smock-Alley affair knew the story by heart before the end. They read it in many forms—in letters, pamphlets, affidavits, history, and biography; but the narrative of events remained remarkably the same in all. It provided Dubliners with drama when the theaters were forced to close, and it aptly followed the classical pattern they were used to in their entertainment. Barely stated, it went like this: 35 31

82Victor, History, i, 94—95. A State of Mr. SheridanyS Case. Original Letters, i, 126 (to Colley Cibber, May 1747). 34 The advertisement for the second Aesof performance, at which the inciting incident occurred, quotes the price for box, stage, and lattices as 5/5 (Dublin Journal, January 13-17, 1747). 35 My summary of the inciting incident is based on [Sheridan's] Faithful Narrative of what haffen'd at the Theatre on Monday the 19th Instant. This pamphlet, although it bears no name on the title page and refers to Sheridan in the third person, is so clearly his that it can hardly have been intended to be anonymous. Evidence of his authorship appears, for example, on page 8, where the writer concludes his account of January 19's events with the words "Having thus set forth a State of the Case, Mr. Sheridan humbly begs leave to offer a few Things to the Consideration of those Gentlemen," et cetera, et cetera. Indeed, this paper seems to be the State of the Case promised by the Smock33Victor,

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1746—1747 The inciting incident, but not the riot itself,36 occurred on Monday, January 19, 1747, at a second performance of Aesof .37 Sheridan had revived this Vanbrugh comedy as part of his plan for fresh productions and perhaps in search for plays more suited to his "scientific talents."38 He himself was acting old Aesop, complete with oaken stick and false nose, and the play was well under way when a young gentleman, very drunk, clambered out of the pit, over the spikes designed precisely to prevent such a happening, and onto the stage. Friends in the pit cheered him on.39 Perhaps because the stage was already filled with audience, he crossed it unaccosted and made his way to the greenroom. There he found one of the actresses, Mrs. Dyer, who in a later affidavit described the episode genteelly enough to prove her respectability at least: First he "designedly" trod on her foot and then he put one of his knees between hers, she protesting, meanwhile, that he would "spoil her cloaths." His frankly stated intention has been charmingly rephrased by Mrs. Dyer: "he would do [he said] what her husband mr. Dyer, had done to her, using the obscene expression," and he followed this threat with

“abusive obscene language.”40 At this point George Anne Bellamy appeared by chance in the greenroom; normally she stayed in her own dressing Alley manager in the Journal of January 20-24. I have supplemented A Faithful Narrative by details from other contemporary sources: Victor’s History and Original Letters·, G. A. Bellamy’s Afology; and Edmund Burke’s letter to his friend Shackleton (in Samuels’ edition, pp. ii5ff.). Anonymous pamphlets and other writings supply the rest of the information. se The Journal notice about the hospital benefit quoted earlier is misleading here, and later accounts often mistakenly give the riot as occurring on January 19, e.g., Samuels’ account in his edition of Burke’s Early Life, p. 115. 37 Bellamy (1, 95) is wrong in calling this the first performance of Aesof (see Smock-Alley Calendar). Her narrative appears verbatim in Stockwell, pp. 94ff. 38 Ibid., p. 95. 39 Ibid. Bellamy says in her second edition, “This removal received marks of disapprobation [corrected to affrobation in the third edition] from many of the audience, who by no means approved of the new regulation, which debarred them from coming behind the scenes.” 40 Mrs. Dyer’s affidavit is one of several, all supporting Sheridan, printed in the Dublin Journal of January 20—24, 1747. Edmund Burke, a Trinity student at this time, embroiders upon this scene, reporting to Shackleton that the young man “put his hands under their [the actresses’] petticoats.” But from the way he writes he was probably not at the theater on January 19, and he was certainly not in the greenroom. His letter (of February 21) is quoted verbatim in Stockwell, pp. 96ff.

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Dublin in an JJfroar room, apprehensive of just such unrestrained behavior. The instant she saw Mrs. Dyer’s straits, she interposed, “not considering the brutality of a drunken man, particularly of an illiterate Irishman when drunk.”41 Her interference momentarily distracted the young gentleman so that the two women were able to escape to a nearby dressing room,42 where they locked themselves in 5 but the villain still pursued them and tried to force the door. When one of the dressers, Ann Banford, remonstrated, he struck and abused her, though she was “big with Child,” 43 at the same time swearing that he would have “carnal knowledge” (Mrs. Dyer is reporting again) of one of them between the scenes. Meantime, the moment was approaching when the actresses would be needed out front. Sheridan first heard of these backstage activities when he was on stage acting. Word was somehow conveyed to him. He retired, leaving the play at a standstill and the players staring dumbly at one another.44 Outside the dressing room he called to the actresses to come out, but the young gentleman let forth such a “Volley of execrable Oaths, abusive Names, and obscene Expressions”45 that they retreated again. The play would have had to close had not Sheridan, with perfect calm, ordered the young man taken into custody,46 after warning him several times in vain. (Official guards were stationed in the theater-royal at every performance.) 47 The play could then continue. Sheridan must have been surprised, when he next appeared on stage, to see this same young gentleman escaped from his guard and back in the pit. He must have been more surprised when an avenging orange, thrown with accuracy and the usual shower of abuse, struck his false nose with enough force to dent the iron into his forehead. The Smock-Alley manager was, as Miss Bellamy asserts, born and bred a gentleman, had “as much personal courage as any man breath41

Bellamy, 1, 96. Accounts disagree here. George Anne implies that she ran alone to her dressing room; Mrs. Dyer’s more trustworthy affidavit states that both she and Miss Bellamy fled to Mrs. Storer’s room. 43 [Sheridan], A Faitkjul Narrative, p. 3. 44 An Humble Address to the Ladies, p. 4. 45 [Sheridan], A Faithful Narrative, p. 4. 46 So ibid., which would seem most reliable here. Other accounts make no mention of custody, most of them saying that Sheridan merely had the young gentleman removed from behind the scenes. 47 Clark, p. 131. Sheridan mentions the guard in his petition to reopen. 42

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1746—1747 ing,” and was not one to put up with such an indignity.48 Removing his false nose,49 he stepped out of character, walked to the front of the stage, and began to speak.50 What he said George Anne failed to hear because she was so distraught. But the young gentleman continued his abusive name-calling until Sheridan was provoked to respond: “I am as good a Gentleman as you are.” This famous sentence, soon garbled into “I am as good a Gentleman as any in the House,”51 inflamed his enemies and, along with his punishment of the young gentleman, became the real inciting force for them, rather than any order to clear the stage. After the curtain had dropped that evening,62 Sheridan found himself followed back to his private room by the persistent young drunk, who now was demanding an apology. When Sheridan replied that he would apologize to no one below the royal family,53 he recommenced his stream of abuse, calling him impudent vagabond, liar, scoundrel, rascal, before the manager’s friends who were gathered there. Sheridan treated him coolly at first, but

finally could take no more: he gave the man “the Usage he deserved,”54 an ample drubbing with Aesop’s oaken stick which he still carried in his hand.55 The young gentleman, who wore a military cockade and a sword, collapsed on the floor in tears, much to the delight of Sheridan’s friends.56 Vowing 48 Bellamy, i, 97. George Anne is the only one who gives the vivid detail about the damage to Aesop’s false nose. 49 A Serious Enquiry, p. 10. 50 Sheridan’s Faithful Narrative omits this point, but others record it, each somewhat differently. George Anne missed what Sheridan said; Victor claims that he asked protection from the audience, which was rather thin that night (George Anne says that the house was crowded); Burke reports that Sheridan asked the young man’s friends to take care of him, else he would have to be turned out of the house. 81 Victor (History, 1, 97—98) is the only one to include Sheridan’s statement in his story at this point. Victor admits that he did not hear Sheridan speak that night, depending instead on reports from “Gentlemen of Sense and Honour” (p. 106); but the other narrators mention it elsewhere and later pamphlets and letters disputing over what Sheridan meant bear witness to its utterance. 82 Bellamy (1, 97) says that the play was unfinished, but several other accounts imply that the play ran its course. At any rate, it is clear that no actual riot took place on this night. 53 A Serious Enquiry, p. 11. This pamphlet is hostile to Sheridan. 54 [Sheridan], A Faithful Narrative, p. 5. 55 Bellamy (1, 97) gives this detail about the stick, omitted in the others. Both Burke and Victor report that the young gentleman took his beating meekly—”with Christian patience,” says Burke. 56 Bellamy, 1, 97.

Dublin in an Uproar revenge on this usage to a gentleman, he was finally permitted to crawl away, with, ironically, a broken nose. At his coffeehouse, he incensed his club by an account of the treatment he had received, embellished by such false details as that he had been held by Sheridan’s servants while Sheridan beat him.57 Sheridan, in writing the story of this evening later, forbore to mention the young man by name or initials} and in other writings he usually appears as “E. . . . K. . . ., Esq.,” although the manager is always named or referred to contemptuously by the opposition as “the player” or “the fellow.” But E.K. soon became known all over town as a Mr. E. Kelly. He was a gentleman from Galway in Connaught. That a player should beat a gentleman, that a player should consider himself a gentleman—this more than anything else raised the riot against Sheridan, fostered by a powerful group known as the Connaught party or “the Gentlemen” in the literature that followed. This was the only cause which Victor reported to Cibber soon after the event: “From the earliest account of theatrical history, down to the present Laureat [this was Cibber] . . . I could not meet with a parallel to the case of Sheridan, which was no less than a violent dispute about the HONOUR of an actor. . . .”58 The fear which five years before had made Sheridan hesitate to turn actor had been suddenly and dramatically realized: as actor he had lost his honor, his status as a gentleman—or so his enemies would try to persuade the public. After the heights of acclaim and power he had reached, this reversal must have been a great blow to his pride. It had to be fought with every argument he could devise. The events just described occurred on a Monday. The next evening, passed over in all the accounts of the affair, may not have been uneventful. The Dublin Journal notice deferring the hospital benefit reports that the riots were repeated two nights following the Monday disturbance. For Tuesday a command performance, celebrating the birthday anniversary of the Prince of Wales and starring Sheridan and Miss Bellamy, had been announced. To the large audience normal for such an event would be added curiosity seekers who had heard of Monday’s excitement and interested persons from both sides 57 Victor, History, i, 98. Four of the men witnessing the scene in Sheridan’s room filed affidavits in the Dublin Journal (January 20-24, 1747), swearing that the young gentleman provoked Sheridan unmitigatedly and that no person but Sheridan struck or molested him. 58Victor, Original Letters, 1, 126 (May 1747).

 of the dispute. But Tuesday evening’s activities, if any occurred, were probably confined to interruptions of the performance and to the verbal threats which, according to Victor, were being made during this interval against all “that dared to look as if they were inclined to take the Part of Sheridan.” 59 The Wednesday 60 performance was to be a charity showing of The Fair Penitent, for the benefit of another poor gentleman in the Marshalsea Prison, one apparently impounded through his own efforts and not through a friend’s. For this evening Sheridan had been warned by his enemies to stay off the stage; when he took their advice, Mrs. Dyer’s husband going on stage to acquaint the audience with this decision, about fifty “gentlemen” rose up from the pit,61 crying, “Out with the ladies, and down with the house.” 62 With this, the actual riot commenced j and, as George Anne Bellamy put it, “It is impossible to describe to you the horrors of a riot at a Dublin theatre.”63 The rioters moved across the stage, crowded into the passages behind, broke open dressing-room doors and the wardrobe, beat up a poor “taylor,” 64 thrust swords into closets and chests,65 and “revenged themselves

upon the stuffing of Falstaff, which they stabbed in many places." 68 When they entered George Anne's room, she faced them resolutely and asked them to leave, which they did after "being permitted to lift the covering of my toilette, to see whether the manager was there."67 Unable to discover Sheridan there or anywhere at the theater,68 a group went off to his residence, but "upon finding he had provided for their Reception, they thought proper to retire." 69 59

Victor, History, i, 99. January 21. A Faithful Narrative takes us through Monday's events only. Victor, Bellamy, and Burke supply Wednesday's story, although they all confuse the date of it. Victor places it on Thursday, and George Anne and Burke both imply Tuesday by saying "the next night" after the Aesof incident. Bellamy's account in some respects confuses the night of the riot with an evening two weeks later, when the hospital benefit had to be discontinued. 61 Victor, History, 1, 99. 62 Bellamy, 1, 98. 83 Ibid. 64Burke (Samuels, p. 116). 65Victor, History, 1, 100. 66 Bellamy, 1, 99. 67 Ibid. 68 According to Bellamy (1, 98) Sheridan had been at the theater and had at first refused to yield to his friends' pleas to leave and go home; but finally when his life was threatened he had departed. Victor (History, 1, 99) says that Sheridan had never left his house that night and that he had taken "particular Care to be well guarded . . . there." 69 Victor, History, 1, 100. 60Wednesday,

Dublin in an Uproar After this the theater was closed,70 for repairs and for a cooling-off time. These were the sober facts of the Kelly riot. When Dubliners got bored with the sober facts, they could turn to a mock heroic epic called The Gentleman and laugh at what poetic license had made of the affair. Here Kelly becomes Ergasto; Sheridan, Typhon, "monarch of the affronted STAGE." The poem opens with a description of Smock-Alley Theater on the fatal night. The stage is crowded: While on the shining stage, th'important beaux Display with like content, their tinsel'd cloaths; And, self-exalted, such high raptures feel, As turky cocks beneath expanded tail. . . . And elsewhere too the house is busy with its usual activities before the play begins: And now a murmur rose of frequent claps, And hisses, whistlings, cat-calls, noise and raps; A rattling tumult spreads from end to end, And orange peels, like falling stars descend. . . . The object of the assault has been changed, no doubt to Mrs. Dyer's relief. Bellamy 71 may or may not have been flattered by the description: Mean while upon th'illumin'd stage is seen, An actress fair, of soft enticing mein, A tempting girl, improv'd by labring art With ev'ry outward charm that wins the heart. . . . The setting of the assault is changed, and the language which had referred to Mrs. Dyer's knees is appropriately elevated: Her young Ergast with wishful eyes surveys . . . And longs between her snow white arms to sin. . . . Then from the Pit, instinct with lust and rage, He springs forth lightly, sheer upon the Stage. . . . 70

Bellamy is probably wrong in saying that the magistrates closed the theater at this time; she seems to be confusing this event with the second closing in mid-February. Burke says that Sheridan shut up his playhouse. 71 Several of the accounts assume that George Anne was the object of Kelly's interest, and it is likely that he switched his attention to her, young and pretty as she was, after she appeared in the greenroom. Her own account has him following her alone to her dressing room (i, 96).

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Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1746—1747 When burning now to raise the glorious war, With rough assault he seiz'd the trembling fair. . . . Sheridan's rescue mission is most delicately accomplished; he "Sets free the trembling fair, and then retires," but Ergasto and his friends are infuriated to the point of riot. Once again Sheridan comes to the rescue and brings his blow down not on Ergasto's nose but on his teeth, "His hapless teeth, that fall by fifty's out, While gore bespangles all the floor about." Ergasto's friends bear away their wounded leader, and retreat "in multitudes," leaving Sheridan the victor and the true hero of the epic. After the riot the theater stayed closed for two and a half weeks. Sheridan tried during this time to arrange a peace, but the opposition would be satisfied with nothing less than a public apology from the manager.72 After this, Sheridan was forced to go to law, although he offered to omit from prosecution those who applied to him and he ordered his attorney to proceed in the mildest manner against the others.73 Seven of the Kelly party were indicted for riot.74 When two weeks had passed, Sheridan decided to reopen Smock Alley on February 9 for what Victor called "the first Trial-Play after the grand Riot." 75 The support of many letter writers, pamphleteers, and a large group at the college had encouraged him to appeal to the public, now that "all Hopes of a private Accommodation [had] fail'd." 76 At first he planned not to antagonize his enemies by appearing himself; Oroonoko was advertised with the lead by Elrington, who assured the ladies that there would not be "the least Disturbance in the House that Night, as they [might] judge by the Disposition of the several Parts."77 But at the last minute Richard III

with Sheridan was boldly substituted, without explanation. Thus the Smock-Alley manager grasped the nettle and "redisposed" the parts to include himself in the "first Trial-Play." This time—the evening of February 9—the house was well filled with Sheridan supporters, including many ladies who came to give their backing to "the Reformer of the Stage."78 The play began. 72

Sheridan, A Full Vindication, p. 4. Sheridan, A State of Mr. Sheridan's Case. 74 Dublin in an Uproar, p. 2 (Letter of February 17). 75Victor, History, 1, 110. 7eSheridan, A Full Vindication, p. 5. 77 Dublin Journal, January 31—February 3, 1747; also February 3—7. 78 A Letter, By a Freeman, p. 3. Victor also describes the events of this evening in detail, especially the composition of the audience. 73

Dublin in an Uproar Since it was Colley Cibber's adaptation of Shakespeare, Richard would not appear until the end of the first scene. On stage, Henry VI, who had heard the bad news from Tewkesbury, was conventionally bemoaning his lot before a quiet house when a messenger appeared to speak—not to him but to the audience. Sheridan, he announced, was about to make his entrance as Richard, if it was their pleasure. The generous applause which followed ended to everyone's surprise in groans, yells, and hisses from six or eight persons in boxes. All means were used to silence this unseemly clamor.79 Meanwhile, Sheridan appeared, but was kept from beginning by calls of "a Submission, a Submission, Submission, off, off, off." 80 He came forward and said, "As I am perfectly satisfy'd that the Voice of the Publick can never be wrong, if it be their opinion that I ought to make a Submission, I am ready to do it." But his friends called out that it was no longer his quarrel, that he was not the aggressor, that he should not bow "to lawless Rage and Tyranny." 81 At this point a spectator rose up in the pit "and asserted the Rights of the Audience and the Freedom of the Stage." He deplored the fact that private quarrels were thus brought into the theater, but "since the Dispute was introduced, it must, like other Disputes, be determined by the Majority." He then asked for a show of hands of those who were for "preserving the Decency and Freedom of the Stage." His speech was heard respectfully and greeted with shouts of applause. When the vote was taken, "the Numbers were so great against the Rioters, and withal appeared so animated for Action, that the Majority [of them] suddenly went off, and left the Performance of that Night in quiet." 82 But the "Gentlemen"—one or two of their leaders having been turned out83—were now so incensed that they resolved renewed vengeance on Sheridan and his protectors: "He was now never to be permitted, on any Account, to perform again, and those who took his Part were doomed to Destruction." And, indeed, the citizen who spoke at the theater was assaulted on the street one night near Essex Bridge.84 He was Dr. Charles Lucas, a noted Dublin figure and 79

80Victor, History, 1, 113. A Letter, By a Freeman, p. 3. A Letter, By a Freeman, p. 4. 82Victor, History, 1, 113—115. A Freeman, who was, in fact, the speaker for Decency and Freedom, modestly omits the applause, saying simply that these ideas were adopted by the majority and that the play was continued with sobriety. 83Burke (Samuels, p. 117). 84Victor, History, 1, 115—116; A Letter of Thanks to the Barber, p . 6 . 81

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1746—1747 almost certainly the author, over the signature of "a Freeman," of three pamphlets vigorously supporting Sheridan. The fourth and final act of the Kelly drama took place two nights later, on Wednesday, February 11; but, in keeping with the usual custom of those days, it was followed by a farce and an epilogue. On this Wednesday was to be offered the annual benefit play for the Hospital for Incurables (the "poor, deformed, distempered Objects, that have long infested our Streets").85 Deferred because of the first riot, it was being presented at the demand of the hospital governors, who had sent word to Sheridan that they would if necessary "take upon them [selves] to defend him that Night." 86 By special notice and as an added precaution, no servant was to be admitted into the upper gallery.87 Actually, no trouble was expected, the "Gentlemen" having long promised their permission for this benefit performance,88 and so not more than seven or eight of Sheridan's Trinity supporters appeared.89 The house was brilliant that evening, with over a hundred ladies seated on the stage. Except for the first few rows, preempted by "Gentlemen" who had got there first, the pit too was filled with ladies.80 Yet when Sheridan was ushered on stage by a hospital governor, thirty armed men rose up from the front of the pit and ordered him off. A storm of clapping and hissing followed, until finally the hissing began to predominate,91 whereupon Sheridan wisely retired to prevent further mischief.92 After his withdrawal disputes began between the hospital governors on stage and the gentlemen in the pit (some of the governors were from the college and all the disputants were publicly known). Even the ladies took part, one of them, a "beautiful Foreigner," clapping her hands and calling for her favorite actor, Sheridan; another rising up and saying the play was not worth hearing without

him.93 For by this time the gentlemen were agreeing to the play if someone else took Sheridan's role; or they would be satisfied, they said, with any reasonable apology from the manager, even the slightest.94 But when word of these concessions 85

86 Victor, History, 1, 117. A Letter, By a Freeman, p. 4. Dublin Courant, February 3—7, 1747. 88 A Letter, By a Freeman, p. 4. 89 Burke (Samuels, p. 117). 90 Victor, History, 1, 118. 91 "Extract of a Letter from Dublin," Gentleman's Magazine, XVII, 123—124. 92 Sheridan, A Full Vindication, p. 16. 93 Dublin in an Uf roar, p. 11 (The Gentlemen's Apology). 94 Ibid., pp. 6—7. 87

Dublin in an Ufroar was sent to Sheridan, he was gone.93 The dispute, meanwhile, grew warmer and menacing gestures were exchanged. One gentleman, when approached by a scholar, entrenched himself behind some ladies' hoops, crying out: "Here's an Apothecary comes with his Clyster-pipe, God demme! but I come with my Sword, by Gad!"— flourishing, meanwhile, "the pretty Bauble" over the ladies' heads.96 Eventually someone from the pit threw an apple at a student on stage in his bachelor's gown, called him a scoundrel, and shouted that "they were all a Pack of Scoundrels." At this insult to his fellows "Away flew the Scholar like a feathered Mercury to the College (the distance half a Mile) and returned in about twenty Minutes, with about as many Youths armed for the Combat." But the rioters had left the pit, and the audience had broken up.97 The play—The Fair Penitent again—was suspended.98 And now followed the farce. This included a council of war held all night at the college; attacks next morning by armed bands of a thousand scholars or more on the lodgings of the principal offenders; capture of at least three, a Mr. Martin, a Captain Fitzgerald, and John Brown, Esq. of the Neale; 99 public apologies made by Martin on his bare knees surrounded by a vast circle of students in the courts of the college; and, for a final memento, sufficient cold water bestowed upon the ringleaders from the college pump "as served to keep their heads perfectly cool to defend their cause against the manager," who by then had "commenced a prosecution against them." 100 Burke, who was one of the avenging Trinitarians, reports that Kelly came to the college voluntarily to avoid ill usage and made his submission meekly. In the end the city was thrown into such a fright that shopkeepers shut up their shops, several of the 95 Ibid.,

p. 16 (The Tradesmen's Answer). 97 Victor, History, i, 119—120. p. 11 (The Ladies' Answer). 98 So we gather from later notices in the Journal. 99 Victor, History, 1, 120—121; Burke (Samuels, p. 117); and Bellamy, 1, 99— 100. Victor gives no names, but Burke and Bellamy both name Martin and Fitzgerald. Burke adds Brown's name, saying that he too was obliged to make a submission at the college (see footnote 106 below). The first letter in Dublin in an Ufroar gives "Mr. K-ll-y" as the third name, but Burke, as a Trinitarian, would seem to be more reliable here. 100 Bellamy, 1, 100. Bellamy says that the suit was commenced that same day, but it must have been instituted earlier, for it is mentioned in A State of Mr. Sheridan's Case, published, Sheridan says, the day he opened the house for the trial-play, February 9. (See Sheridan's Full Vindication, pp. 5-8, where A State of Mr. Sheridan's Case is reprinted.) w Ibid.,

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1746—1747 opposition leaders fled with "Fear and Trembling" to the Lord Chancellor, the students were confined to quarters, and the theater, since it had become a "Seat of War," was closed by order of the Lords Justices101—an order which applied to the rival City Theater in Capel-Street as well as to Smock-Alley. This Dublin theatrical riot was shared by all of Dublin. The epilogue was proclaimed in the law courts. Sheridan, by this time, had been indicted by Kelly, so both sides were tried by the same jury. The three rioters (the seven had been reduced to three) 102 were charged with assault only—"a Crime," comments a Freeman, "of which no fashionable Gentleman is ashamed." Kelly returned Sheridan's compliment in kind, indicting him for, as a Freeman puts it, "hindering the Gentleman to ravish Actresses, abuse Actors, and for defending himself from the Outrages offered him." 103 The excitement over the trial reached such heights that wagers were taken on the outcome, most bettors feeling that no gentleman would be found guilty. To their surprise Sheridan was acquitted, with the jury not even troubling to leave the box.104 When Kelly's trial came up, his defense attorney arose and sneeringly said that he wanted to see a curiosity. "I have often seen (continued he) a Gentleman Soldier, and a Gentleman Taylor} but I have never seen a Gentleman Player." Sheridan, who was well dressed, bowed modestly and said, "Sir, I hope you see one now."105 On February 19 the jury found Kelly (and one of his associates) guilty. A notice in the February 17-21 Journal reports: Last Thursday Mr. Sheridan was tryed at the Court of Oyer and Terminer, for assaulting Mr. Kelly and was acquitted. At the same Time that Gentleman was tryed for assaulting Mr. Sheridan, and found guilty of three Assaults. Two other gentlemen were tryed for an Assault, and one of them acquitted and the other found guilty.106 101Victor,

History, i, 121, 123; Burke (Samuels, p. 117). the verdict shows. A Freeman explains that "Examinations were . . . given against the chief of the Rioters only; many being left out of the Prosecution, upon their bare Parole, to keep the Peace and give no further Disturbance" (Second. Letter, By A. F., p. 5). 103 Ibid., pp. 5, 6. 104Victor describes the unusual procedure whereby an honest and able jury was selected through the good offices of Chief Justice Marlay (History, 1, 124). 105 Ibid., p. 126. 106 The other culprit is identified in the letter cited by the Gentleman's Magazine (see note 91) as Brown, "son of Brown mentioned in the Draper's le2As

Dublin in an Uproar Kelly was fined the very considerable sum of £500 and on February 21 sentenced to a short imprisonment (some accounts say a month, others three months).107 After a week in jail the young "gentleman" appealed to Sheridan, who instantly arranged to have the fine canceled and then became "Solicitor and Bail himself . . . for the Enlargement of the young Gentleman." 108 Here ends the account of events which threw Dublin into an uproar for over six weeks. But the agitation came less from events than from the writings which appeared in unprecedented numbers109 and Letters." Perhaps Brown's son did participate in the riotous activities, but A. F[reeman]'s Second Letter and also "The Tradesmen's Answer" leave no doubt that the enemy leader was not the son, but the very same Brown mentioned in Swift's Drapier's Letters. If two Browns were involved, perhaps it was the younger one who was given the treatment by the Trinity boys, although Burke's use of the full title would seem to indicate the father. 107 Victor (History, 1, 127) says three months' imprisonment. Burke and the article in the GentlemanyS Magazine say that the sentence was for one month, Burke adding that Kelly had to give security for his behavior for seven years. The writer to the Gentleman's Magazine reports that Brown, earlier in the article identified as the son, was fined £100 "and to give security for his good behavior for a year." Victor describes a related incident which took place in the courtroom: Lord Chief Justice Marlay "ordered his Tipstaff to whisper a Gentleman Leader he saw in Court, against whom Complaints had been laid of his bad Behaviour in Public, to meet him in his Chamber when he left the Bench; where his Lordship obliged him to give Bail for his future good Behaviour" (History, 1, 127). This "Gentleman Leader" may have been Brown, the father (see p. 99). 108 Victor, History, 1, 128—129. Victor says that, when the action was first commenced, the Kelly faction talked of nothing but the hundreds of pounds that had been subscribed to help their martyred hero, but "when the Truth was obliged to appear, not one Farthing was subscribed" and Kelly was left to the mercy of his foes. 109 For these few weeks twelve relevant items appear in Loewenberg's bibliography as contrasted with ten items for the whole twenty-year period preceding. Furthermore, these twelve are not the complete tally for the event; to be added to Loewenberg are: A Letter of Thanks to the Barber, for his Indefatigable Pains to Suffress the Horrid and Unnatural Rebellion, Lately broke out in this City: But by His Means, novo haffily almost extinguished. By Mr. Francis Liberty, a Freeman and Citizen of Dublin. Dublin, 174.7 (dated March 28, 1747), ι s pp. Brutus's Letter to the Town. Printed in the Year 1747. (By William Dennis, identified as the author by Burke in a letter to Shackleton; see Samuels, p. 127.) The Profhecies of the Book of the Profhet Lucas. (Reprinted in Samuels, p. 120.)

 which kept the battle boiling even after the action had died down. Nor were these restricted to Dublin. News of the excitement traveled quickly to far-off London in a February 24th letter from Dublin to the Gentleman's Magazine.110 As with the Cato affair, Londoners would be interested; but this time a reprint of a complimentary poem to the Celebrated Mr. Sheridan from the Dublin Journal spread Sheridan's fame in a way that must have pleased him more. Although most of the Dublin public was on his side, Sheridan felt the need to explain and defend his actions in three pamphlets spaced over the six crowded weeks, and in several letters and notices to the newspapers. His second pamphlet, A State of Mr. Sheridan's Case, written to be distributed at the trial-play, stressed his improvements to the theater: his "good and chaste Plays, decently represented," his subduing the upper gallery, and his attempt to clear the stage; on this last move he now blamed the indignities he had suffered from Kelly.111 But in his first pamphlet, A Faithful Narrative, written right after the inciting incident and the indignities, he nowhere mentions his order to clear the stage. Instead, after an account of Kelly's behavior and his own that evening, he argues his right to the status of gentleman, although, he insists, he never thought himself as good a gentleman as any in the house. Sheridan's third and final pamphlet, A Full Vindication., dated March 4, appeared two weeks after the court verdict, but before he had appeared again on the Smock-Alley stage. Because his conduct had become the subject of conversation all over town, he felt obliged to give his side of the case, that the public might judge whether he should be kept on at the theater. In conclusion, he offered to do anything to bring peace to Dublin except give the

submission the “Gentlemen” were still demanding. This he could not do against the public judgment expressed at the trial-play. All three of these writings argue convincingly. But, except for a rare flash of humor recalling The Brave Irishman (e.g., If the dispute is, as the oppoThe Farmer’s Yard (an eight-page allegorical and satirical poem). Neither Loewenberg nor this additional list includes newspaper material, which was plentiful. 110 See note 91. 111 If the “Gentlemen” will agree to stop disturbing the town’s entertainment, Sheridan, toward the end of this pamphlet, offers to drop his prosecution and accept his financial losses (already so great as to destroy all hopes of profit for the season). Later, after the authorities had closed the theater again for over two weeks, he mentions the sum of £1,000 lost (in A Full Vindication, p. 18).

Dublin in an Uproar sition claims, “the Gentlemen’s Quarrel,” surely the “Gentlemen” of the Town must have a larger body of “friends” than one “Scoundrel Actor” would have),112 the style which Sheridan was beginning to develop for his controversial pieces lacked appeal. Remembering, perhaps, his too intimate outpourings in the Cato controversy, he now wrote in the third person to create an air of objectivity and dignity. For his enemies, though, his reference to himself as “Mr. Sheridan” and “the Manager” must have breathed pomposity and self-regard. On the other hand, his feelings of obligation and gratitude to the public were often expressed in terms so lavish as to sound obsequious. This enraged his enemies because his public loved it. The public expressed its ideas too in pamphlets, mostly favorable to Sheridan, and in Faulkner’s Dublin Journal (other Dublin papers held aloof from the controversy).113 Faulkner had offered at the beginning of the dispute to print essays for both sides,114 but the material sent to him seems to have been exclusively in Sheridan’s support. A campaign to raise funds for the mistreated Smock-Alley manager was started early through the newspaper and some £100 were donated, mostly by ladies but £5 came from a poor clergyman who wanted to contribute something to the “Cause of Virtue, of Liberty, of Publick Good.” 115 Numerous letters, variously signed, defended Sheridan, who, as one anonymous writer reports, had become the universal topic of all conversation in Dublin.116 Some 112 113

Ibid., p .

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The Dublin Courant took only advertisements for Smock-Alley; the editor of Pue’s Occurrences (March 14—17) declined a letter signed by Scriblerus Hibernicus “as I have always avoided publishing any Thing from either Side in the late Dispute.” 114 Dublin Journal, January 27—31, 1747. 115 Ibid., February 3-7, 1747. 116 The letter from which this quotation has been taken is no longer anonymous, Benjamin Victor having claimed it in his History, where he reprints it in toto (1, 101—108) as “Victor’s Letter to Faulkner’s Journal.” A comparison of this reprint with the piece as it first appeared in the Dublin Journal (January 31—February 3) shows that it is not quite the verbatim copy that Victor implies, although the changes are minor: Victor has, for example, expanded on Sheridan’s pedigree and education in his reprint; Westminster School and Sheridan’s B.A. at Trinity do not appear in the letter to the paper. The Journal letter, although unsigned, concludes with a note that the name of its writer may be discovered “by a proper Enquiry at the College.” Victor, not a Trinity College man himself, had apparently allied himself with collegians interested in Sheridan’s cause. Finally, Victor’s letter to the paper promises that its author will make oath that “it was wrote and published without the Knowledge and Consent of the young Man in whose Favour it is written.”

Sheridan of Smock-Alley • ij46—1747 argued his right to the title of “gentleman.” A poem, written “a good while past” by a fellow scholar, was refurbished, fitted out with a new introduction on the gentleman question, and titled “On the Celebrated Mr. Sheridan.” 117 A suggestion for arbitrating the quarrel envisioned a committee from both sides and perhaps composed of ladies, whose decisions would be compulsory for the two principals. For, unless something was done, people deprived of the theater would go to gaming houses and taverns, where wagers and fights would follow, to bring down whole families to ruin.118 Letters and notices from Sheridan appeared in the Dublin Journal, where as late as March 6 he was still solemnly swearing that he never thought himself as good a gentleman as any in the house.119 Through these writings can be sensed the personalities of the other main actors in the drama. Kelly, not necessarily the illiterate that George Anne insinuates, was a Trinity College man, but younger than Sheridan. Even so, Trinity supported Sheridan, though, when he left the college, he “must have been out of the Memory of most of the present Set of young Gentlemen [at the college], and was personally known to very few of them.” 120 No one, not even Kelly’s friends, denied that he was quarrelsomely

drunk that evening. But, from then on, he seems to have become the dupe of others, committed to them even after he was willing to quit. Sheridan said that Kelly, after the benefit fiasco, was about to agree to reciprocal apologies and a reconciliation when his party interfered.121 After his trial and conviction he was cast off by those who had "edged" him on, his true friends proving to be those who had prosecuted him. Sheridan, "at the Peril of his Life," visited Kelly in his place of confinement and both parted in "Love and Friendship," as Sheridan went off to seek relief for the young man.122 Dr. Charles Lucas, a Dublin apothecary, later a physician, was regarded as, above all, a great fighter for Irish liberty.123 A man of 117 Dublin Journal, February 7—10, 1747. This is the poem which was reprinted in London in the Gentleman's Magazine, XVII, 124. 118 Dublin Journal, February 14—17, 1747. 119 Ibid., March 7—10, 1747. 120Sheridan, A Full Vindication, p. 10. 121 Ibid., p. 16. 122 Second Letter, By A. F., p. 12. 123 DNB, v. "Lucas, Charles." Before this time Lucas had served on the city council, where he had unsuccessfully attempted reforms. His struggle with the government, which in 1749 ended in his twelve-year exile and disenfranchisement, endeared him to the Dubliners so thoroughly that, after his pardon and return, he served as their elected representative in parliament for the last ten

Dublin in an Uproar much public spirit and apparently a personal friend of Sheridan's,124 he could hardly have remained neutral in this dispute. His timely speech at the trial-play introduced democratic methods and asserted the rights of players and audiences. On the other hand, his writings —the three letters to the Free Citizens of Dublin by a Freeman, Barber, and Citizen—grew more and more hysterical, stirring up sectional and religious antagonisms. In the end, he saw the whole thing as a Romanist conspiracy, encouraged by a too early slackening of Irish legal discipline, a conspiracy which aimed at "foreign Invasion, a Western Insurrection, or a Universal Massacre."125 An amusing parody called The Profhecies of the Book of the Profhet Lucas126 implies that a Freeman's hysteria was a calculated political maneuver, devised when Sheridan came to him and asked: What shall I do, for the men of Connaught are upon me? And Lucas said unto Sheridan; fear not, neither be dismayed, Are there not Papists in the land of Connaught ? And are not the Papists rebels? We will go forth into the streets, and into the market place, and we will say that the men of Connaught are rebels; so shall it be well with thee. But most Dubliners believed in Lucas' sincerity. Like him, AngloIreland was still nervous from last year's civil war. More interesting than any of these imputations was the mysterious person supposed to be masterminding the anti-Sheridan activities, a person who was never named outright but who, by hints and implication, was shown to be none other than one of the villains of the Drapier Letters—Halfpenny Brown, John Brown of the Neale,127 years of his life. The DNB makes no mention of his part in the Sheridan-Kelly controversy. 124 The Tickler, No. i, written a year later, implies that Sheridan lodged with Lucas at one time. 125 Second Letter, By A. F., p. io. 126Reprinted by Samuels, p. 120. 127 An account of John Brown or Browne of the Neale, County Mayo, is given in Herbert Davis' edition of The Drafter's Letters (pp. 226—228). Brown outraged Swift and most Irishmen by being one of four to testify that Wood's "Copper Money was extreamly wanted in Ireland" (ibidp. 48). Swift mentions Brown's trial for rape and his conviction for perjury and subornation in an attempt to take away the life of John Bingham, Esq. Davis quotes excerpts from the Dublin Journal of 1749, showing that two years after the theatrical riots Brown was stirring up trouble again. Having killed a man in a duel and having been convicted of manslaughter only, in a trial at which he was "attended by a

Sheridan of Smock-AUey · 1746—1747 mentioned by Burke as one of the gentlemen forced to make a submission to the Trinity College boys.128 An "infamous old crafty Traitor and Conspirator, declared so by the unanimous Voice of the National Common Council in the Year 1723," when he was disqualified from holding oifice for conspiracy and perjury, he didn't dare a ballad even until the death of the Drapier. Now, some twenty-five years later, he was covering seditious falsehoods with the same solemnity as he had sworn that "stamp'd Leather was the current Coin of this Kingdom."129 Now, "after a Trial for a Rape . . .; after giving false Testimony in another Nation against, and to the Prejudice of the Country . . .; after prostituting himself to the infamous Service of some vile tool of a detestable Minister," this "Parricide" was sounding "the Trumpet of Rebellion," and if his "dark, Jesuitical Schemes" succeeded, he hoped "to be made Chancellor to the Pretender." 130 If, as is unlikely, Sheridan ever doubted that his cause was right, he must have been reassured as well as stimulated to find one of Swift's old targets at the head of the enemy faction.131 Halfpenny Brown may well be the author of one of the anonymous attacks on Sheridan, A Serious Enquiry into the Causes of the -present disorders in the city. . . . Far outnumbered by writings favorable to Sheridan's side, this piece and a few others 132 give the case against great Number of the Nobility and Gentry," he writes to the Journal to deny reports that he fomented the riots

and public disturbances on the night of his "acquittal," when bells were rung and bonfires built (ibid., pp. 227-228). Davis' account of Brown's activities makes no mention of his part in the theatrical to-do. 128 See notes 99 and 106. 129 Second Letter, By A. F., pp. 5, 6, 9. 180 Dublin in an Ufroar, pp. 19, 22 (The Tradesmen's Answer). 131 Not to mention the fact that Sheridan's father had a low opinion of this Brown. When Dr. Thomas Sheridan was corresponding with Thomas Carte, at the time that young Thomas was in Westminster, he was trying to return the favors Carte was doing for him by ferreting out some important old letters of the preceding century necessary to Carte's research. A man named Brown was in possession of them; and Dr. Sheridan writes to Carte that, if he had known what Brown it was, he could have had them long since; but he little imagined it was a gentleman "called half-peny Brown, one of our musical Society. He made many advances to me," Sheridan explains to Carte, "but I would not be acquainted with him, because of an unlucky character given him by the Drapier . . ." (Lefanu MSS 227.^32). 132 Other writings hostile to Sheridan are replies to defenses of the manager. A Letter of Thanks to the Barber (see note 109) answers the Third Letter by A. F[reeman\, Barber and Citizen. Less of an attack on Sheridan than on "A. F. IOO

Dublin in an Ufroar the manager: he "thought to treat Gentlemen as he pleased," having had an attorney "dragged forcibly" from the house, even before the Kelly affair; 133 he failed to handle Kelly, "an unhappy Gentleman who drank too freely," with the proper tact and good humor; he so terrified his audiences that no one even dared hiss in the galleries; he set the city's inhabitants at each other's throats and filled the town with fear and confusion; and he tried to "reassume the Gentleman" after he had lost the status by turning player. The overwhelming defense184 of Sheridan was more spirited and otherwise C— L—, Barber, Freeman and Citizen of Dublin," who was recently assaulted and given several kicks in the "A—," it sustains its irony so consistently that the modern reader is not sure until the end which side its writer is on. There one reads that gentlemen have entered into a society organized to debauch wives and daughters and to massacre every advocate for virtue. "The Gentlemen's Apology to the Ladies for their being disappointed at the Playhouse on Wednesday, the Iith of February, 1746—7," is printed in Dublin in an XJfroar as a reply to a letter from a lady defending Sheridan and reproving the other party. "We think it greatly hard and unkind," says the Gentlemen's Apology, "that our standing up to require a proper Apology from an Actor, who had treated you so ill, should be resented by you." The Prophecies of the Book of the Profhet Lucas makes fun of Sheridan as well as Lucas: "Then Sheridan arose and arrayed himself in the coat which his father gave him . . . and the man was well-favored in his own eyes; and he found grace with the young men who are called Sophisters." Another satirical work, the poem "The Farmer's Yard," laughs at Kelly and Sheridan. Kelly is called a goldfinch, who courted a goose, saying he'd do to her what any gander could. Sheridan is depicted as a gander "of high Descent," who in the law court orates in a style so Ciceronian that he proves all his geese are swans. 133 In a notice in the February 17—21 issue of the Journal Sheridan solemnly declares that he was not connected with the theater when the gentleman-attorney was turned out of the gallery. 134 Writings favorable to Sheridan include An Humble Address to the Ladies of the City of Dublin, by a Plebeian (Dublin, 1747); the three letters by a Freeman (dated February 12, March 3, and March 26); and three of the four letters in Dublin in an TJfroar. Two of these last three purport to be written by ladies, and the first may be Frances Chamberlaine's if it is true that she wrote an anonymous prose pamphlet defending Sheridan (Lefanu, p. 25). The third is entitled "The Tradesmen's Answer," from which I have quoted above. Brutus's Letter to the Town, written by Dennis after the verdict, gives a calm arraignment of Kelly's action, and supports Sheridan in an unemotional way, ending with the statement that the general voice agrees with that of the magistrate. In a more humorous style The Gentleman, a mock heroic epic from which lines have been quoted earlier, ridicules the behavior of the "Gentlemen." An impartial judgment of both principals is attempted in one paper, now incomplete, called Reflections of a Gentleman in the Country on the Present Theatrical Disturbances.

 convincing. For the punishment meted out to Kelly, it was argued that Kelly struck the first blow (with an apple—or was it an orange?), that the provocation was great, and that, had Sheridan not responded as he had, he would hardly have been fit to be manager. Imagine the results otherwise! As Sheridan himself humorously points out, announcements would have to be made like this: Ladies and Gentlemen, Cato would wait upon you in this Scene, but a Gentleman has taken it into his Head, to entertain himself with kicking him, when the Gentleman has done he will be sure to attend you. And, We hope you will excuse Monimia's Appearance this Scene, for a Gentleman is

just now diverting himself with her, but she will be ready by the next Act.135 It has been said, another defender observes, that Kelly intended no serious harm to Miss Bellamy; he thought only to "rumple her Robes and raise the Blood into her Cheeks. And such an Honour as that, at the Hands of a Gentleman, might be deem'd a full Compensation for the coarse foul-mouth'd Ribaldry with which he persecuted her Ears." But what, it is asked, should Sheridan have done in the meantime? Come onstage and dismissed the waiting audience? 136 "Sure every one must allow that a Theatre in such a Condition . . . must be the greatest Pest that ever plagued a Metropolis." 137 Throughout the controversy Sheridan's accomplishments as manager were granted, even by the opposing side. His enemies confessed that "By his Regulations . . . the Theatre became more entertaining and agreeable than it had been for some Years before," and that "the House has been since kept to better Order." 138 His friends stressed his improvement of the stage and his choice of moral and loyal plays. Indeed, it was this choice, said a Freeman, that gave umbrage to certain gentlemen, who then determined on the destruction of the reformed stage.139 Furthermore, Sheridan insisted on decency behind as well as before the scenes; he cultivated good manners, harmony, and justice among the actors, said Treasurer Victor, 135

[Sheridan], A Faithjul Narrative, p. 6. Humble Address to the Ladies, p. 6. 137 [Sheridan], A Faithjul Narrative, p. 6. 138 A Serious Enquiry, pp. 6, 8. 139 A Letter, By a Freeman, p. 2. lse Au

Dublin in an Uproar paid all his bills, and entertained the town better than ever before.140 During the course of the controversy three issues important to theatrical history were publicized and debated: the duty and rights of a manager, the rights of the audience, and the position of the actor. The rights of the manager to improve his theater by making it a decent, orderly place, where the audience could enjoy the play it came to see, made the most immediate gain. After the sentence against Kelly was given, Lord Chief Justice Marlay observed that the theater was a "Place of public Resort" and that any person apprehended forcing his way behind the scenes there "should feel the utmost Severity of the Law." 141 Victor ends his account of the Kelly affair with these words: Where "before that happy Aera, every Person who was Master of a Sword, was sure to draw it on the Stagedoor-keeper, if he denied him Entrance," "from that Hour, not even the first Man of Quality in the Kingdom ever asked, or attempted, to get behind the Scenes." 142 So Kelly's drunken behavior and his friends' destructive violence secured Sheridan the reform which gained him a place in stage history. It was not until some fifteen years later that Garrick, after several unsuccessful attempts to follow Sheridan's lead, was able to banish the beaux from the Drury Lane stagej 143 and this reform at Covent Garden came even later. As for the rights of the audience, the feeling was that Sheridan's enemies, concerned only with their privileges over the actor, had ignored the rest of the house. "It is the uncontestable Right of the bulk of an Audience to be entertained in what manner and by whom they please" 144—such was the democratic thinking which found expression during the Kelly controversy. The issue of the actor's status, however, was the really engrossing one to the eighteenth-century public. And most of the writings revolved around the question of who was and who was not a gentleman. The view of Sheridan's enemies we have already seen. Our modern view was expressed by the republican Lucas—that a person should be esteemed a gentleman solely on the basis of his morals and 140 Victor,

ill Ibid.., pp. 127-128. 142 Iiid., p. 129. History, i, 103. 1, 331; Wilkinson, iv, 120-123. At Drury Lane as early as 1747 Garrick, trying to abolish the custom, had advertised his intention, but the players as well as the audience objected, because they wanted their patrons on stage for their benefits. Not until about 1764 was complete reform effected {Johnson's England, "The Drama and the Theatre," n, 183-184). 144 An Humble Address to the Ladies, p. 12. 143 Davies,

 conduct, regardless of his birth or fortune.145 The compromise reached in the eighteenth century is best represented in Sheridan's own reasoning: By birth and education a gentleman, he had not degraded himself by any base behavior or servile employment ·, as a matter of fact, he was really not a player because he had taken no salary to perform, always having been a director of a theater and having had it "at his own Option to perform or not." But even if he were a player, acting ranks as an art with poetry, painting, music; famous authors, painters, and actors—Roscius, Booth, Wilks, Cibber —were gentlemen in spite of their profession and were always treated as such. The conclusion is that "tho' the Profession of an Actor, does not entitle a Man to the Name of a Gentleman, yet neither can it take it from him if he had it before"; and this can be proved both by reason and "the Custom of all polish'd Nations, who enjoy'd their Liberties." 146 The airing of this view helped to clarify and raise the social position of the eighteenth-century gentleman turned player. Afterward gentlemen like West Digges,

Henry Mossop, and others whose names are now forgotten accepted Sheridan's invitation to make their debuts on the Smock-Alley stage with less hesitation because Sheridan by his affirmation—and by his behavior too—had shown that a gentleman could be an actor and still remain a gentleman. After the theaters were closed by official order, they stayed closed for almost three weeks. At the end of February petitions to reopen were filed with the Lords Justices by both theaters. One petition was from "Thomas Sheridan . . . Gentlemann [italics mine]; another was signed by the employees of Smock-Alley, fifty-one in all, who had been thrown out of work for a total of over four weeks because of Kelly's inebriety.147 Although Smock-Alley opened again on March 3,148 Sheridan did 145 A Letter, By a Freeman, p. i. Lucas' view is somewhat marred by his warning that morals can be "corrupted by conversing with Papists and Slaves." 146 [Sheridan], A Faithful Narrative, p. 13. 147 Lawrence, "Trinity and the Theatre," Irish Times, September 2, 1922. The petitions themselves were lost in the burning of the Public Records Office, but copies had fortunately been made by the author of this article, Mr. William J. Lawrence. The Capel-Street petitioners (R. Layfield, Michl. Mason, Wm. Mynitt) complain that, after performing peaceably since November 1, they have now been shut up through no fault of their own, but through a disturbance at a rival theater. 148 Bellamy (1, 109) specifies no date, but says that the Lord Mayor allowed Sheridan to open his theater although he was not to perform until after his trial.

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Dublin in an TJproar not appear. A March 6th letter from him to the Journal shows that, even this long after the trial, party faction and not any legal restriction was keeping him inactive. His enemies, he complains, have multiplied, and their violence is unabated.149 His return from exile, delayed until March 19, a month after the trial, justified the apprehensive tone of his letter. For the theatrical troubles were not quite over. The performance was to be that much postponed benefit for the Incurables and hence the stage was to be occupied, but only by "Ladies and the Gentleman Stewards . . . appointed for it."150 Before the play Sheridan was introduced to the audience by some of the charity stewards.151 He spoke to the spectators voluntarily, although on the advice of friends. Once more solemnly denying, one by one, all the many charges laid against him, he concluded with this near apology: "If any particular Gentlemen have taken Offence at any part of my publick Behaviour, I am extreamly sorry for it, and beg Leave to declare publickly, that I am not conscious of ever having designed to offend them in any Shape." This speech was followed by "the most general, loud, and continued Applause that was ever remembered," and The Fair Penitent was at last performed without interruption. But before its conclusion the Smock-Alley manager had received word from "the Gentlemen" that they were not satisfied. This incredible persistence could not have been a surprise to Sheridan, who had felt all along that his enemies Actually, Sheridan's petition and Journal notices show that the theater did not open until two weeks after the trial. 149 Dublin Journal, March 3—7, 1747. Because he asked his supporters to "drop their Pens" and join him in restoring peace, this letter, according to Samuels, the editor of Burke's early work, was regarded by Trinity students as an ignoble surrender and did much to cool their ardor for Sheridan. But Samuels' evidence consists of several passages unfavorable to Sheridan written by Burke over a year later (Samuels, p. 121) after a play of Burke's had been rejected at Smock-Alley. It is significant that six days after the Sheridan letter, Burke, in identifying his friend Dennis as the author of an article favorable to Sheridan, called Dennis' article "a good Thing, I think" (Samuels, p. 128)— approbation hardly possible if Burke had already begun to turn against Sheridan. 150 Dublin Journal, March 14-17, 1747. Also, no servants were to be admitted to the upper gallery. 161 Two sources give information on this evening's events. A long report, written by a gentleman who was present to "observe the many false Reports that have been spread upon this Occasion," appears ibid., March 21—24, !747A Third Letter, by A. F., likewise reports the evening, including a few details not in the Journal item. "The Gentlemen," says A. F., offered the society stewards a large reward for the hospital if they would withdraw support from the play. I05

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · /746-/747 were still flourishing and full of ill will. At the end of the performance he advanced to the front of the stage, accompanied and advised by the stewards, and said: Ladies and Gentlemen, I humbly beg Leave to know what the Sense of this Audience is in Regard to the Apology made by me before the Beginning of the Play, whether it was satisfactory or not? The Decision of so numerous and polite an Assembly must be definitive to me, and I hope will be to every one else. The response was deafening, as the entire audience rose to its feet and cried: "No more! No more! Enough! Enough!" With this, the theatrical feud seems finally to have come to an end. And, for the time being, Dublin had heard the last of "the Gentlemen." The rest of the season was uneventful. Although Capel-Street continued to run regularly, Smock-Alley did little through early April except for a three-play

subscription series, suggested by Sheridan's friends as a way to recoup some of his losses.152 In an interesting departure the subscribers were invited to select the plays at a dinner meeting arranged by Sheridan.153 Dutifully they chose three Shakespeare tragedies, Hamlet, Othello, and Romeo and Juliet. The manager continued to consolidate the gains he had won so dearly by informing the public that "No Money will be received, nor any Persons admitted behind the Scenes." And he took another bold step forward when he concluded this advertisement thus: "No odd Money will be taken during the Performances, nor any returned after the Curtain is drawn up." 154 In mid-April Sheridan announced that he had to go into the country till the May term "for the better Recovery of his Health."155 But actually, "flush'd with this happy Conquest" of his enemies, he left for England, to shop for much needed reinforcements for his troupe.15® It was apparently wiser not to wait till summer; and during his month in London he made several profitable bargains,157 including some first-rate dancers from Drury Lane, the Mechels, who began dancing at Smock-Alley in mid-June158 and so enabled Sheridan to keep the theater open later than usual. With CapelStreet closed (its advertisements had stopped early in May), he was hoping to make up some more of his earlier losses. ls2 Duilin

153 Ibid., March 24-28, 1747. Journal, March 17-21, 1747. 155 Ibid., April 11-14, 1747. Ibid., March 31-April 4, 1747. ls7 Ibid. 156 Victor, History, 1, 131. 166 Dublin Journal, June 6-9, 1747. 154

Dublin in an Uproar Smock-Alley's last performance on July 16 marked the end of a stormy year.159 But the storm had subsided and the Smock-Alley manager stood, more fixed in his position and stronger than before. For the next seven years all his considerable energy, his unstinted time, his creativity were to be undeviatingly committed to the improvement of his theater. He regarded this mission as serious and important} looking back three years later, he was to say of his work at Smock-Alley: "No Manager before ever undertook such a Task."160 Though colored with Sheridan's characteristic exaggeration, the statement shows his grasp of the possibilities which his more assured position offered. In the relative calm of the next seven years he began to realize some of these possibilities. 159 In spite of the uproar, Sheridan seems to have appeared in seven new roles this season: Bevil Junior in The Conscious Lovers·, FalstafF in King Henry IV, Part ι; Benedict; Romeo; Aesop; Tancred; and Ranger in The Susficious Husband. Only Bevil, Falstaff, and Aesop are advertised as "firsts." 160 [Sheridan], State of the Case (1750), p. 22.

CHAPTER V

Winning the cDublin cPublic,

1747-1749

Λ ITER the season of 1746-47 a calm of sorts settled over Smock-

l\ Alley affairs j and although each following season had its own X. A.problems and achievements, the events were played out against a similar backdrop—the seasonal and daily routine which Sheridan could now maintain with a regularity basic to winning the Dublin public. The seasonal routine began toward the end of September or early in October when Smock-Alley opened, after newspaper items had sufficiently whetted public interest in the improvements to the theater which Sheridan had made over the summer. "Mr. Sheridan, Manager of the Theatre Royal," reads a lead item for September 12, 1747, "is fitting it up in the most elegant and beautiful manner, by new Scenes, and very grand Decorations on the Stage, as well as other Parts of the House. . . ." 1 At first, performances were scheduled for two or three nights a week only, later in the season for more. "Agreeable to the custom of the great ones," 2 Sheridan and usually his leading lady did not appear until several weeks after the opening. Sometimes he was not even in town for the first weeks,3 Victor, as deputy manager, probably carrying out the prearranged and relatively commonplace schedule. November, which, along with February and May, was term time, when Dublin was most crowded and most socially inclined, was a good theatrical month. Only in November and February did the theater make enough profit to balance the deficits of other months.4 The Christmas holidays closed the theater sometimes for a week or more, and afterward, as in the autumn, the company carried on without the top actors for a short time. The last three months, March, April, and May, were given over to that traditional theatrical bane, the actors' benefits.® 1

Dublin Journal, September 8-12, 1747. Original Letters, i, 135 (Letter to Garrick, October, 1747). 8 In the fall of 1750, for example, the theater opened on September 19. The October 6—9 Journal runs this press item: "Yesterday [Monday, October 8] arrived in Town, from his House in the Country, Thomas

Sheridan, Esq., Manager of the Theatre-Royal." Sheridan's first appearance that season was on October 15. 4 Sheridan, State of the Case, p. 12. 0 For the beginning of actors' benefits in Ireland see Clark, p. 103. In the 2 Victor,

Winning the Dublin Public During the benefit period only two nights—usually Tuesday and Saturday—were available for nonbenefit plays. For the first few seasons the theater remained closed on these nights, but toward the end Sheridan had a large-enough audience to use all spare evenings. By early June the season was usually over.® Because Smock-Alley was the theater-royal, the government paid Sheridan £1007 annually to perform plays on "Government Nights," 8 which marked certain national anniversaries, among them the king's birthday, his coronation date, and the birthday, on November 4, of that great favorite of the Anglo-Irish, "the ever-glorious and immortal King William 3rd," whose memory was idolized in Dublin "almost to superstition."9 On November 4, as at Drury Lane, Tamerlane (with Sheridan in the title role) was always the play, although for the other anniversaries comedies were invariably chosen,10 as more suitable to the mood. These occasions were advertised as by command of the Lord Lieutenant or, if he was absent from Dublin or lacking, the Lords Justices; a prologue sometimes marked the event and the boxes were free to the ladies. "The Lords Justices gave a play to the Ladies"; thus quaintly does the Dublin Journal report an anniversary play ordered for the Prince of Wales' birthday.11 Viceregal command performances for no special occasion— most advantageous to the theater's income—were more or less frequent, depending on the Lord Lieutenant's presence in Dublin and also on his interest in the theater. On "command nights" the viceregal presence filled the boxes and, consequently, all the rest of the house—with servants who had come early to hold seats for these great ones and with others who had come largely to behold these early years of Sheridan's regime occasional fall benefits for players occurred, but had disappeared by 1750. Sheridan stopped taking benefits for himself in the 1747-48 season. 6 Much of this routine parallels that at the London theaters as shown in MacMillan's Drury Lane Calendar and in The London Stage. 7Victor, Original Letters, 1, 136. 8 Government Nights in Dublin are described by Clark, p. 136. 9 Maxwell (p. 72) takes this quotation from a letter written by Mrs. Delany in 1751. 10In 1753, for example, The Non-Juror was performed on June 4 in honor of the birthday of the Prince of Wales; The Suspicious Husband on October 22 to celebrate the anniversary of His Majesty's coronation; The Beggar's Ofera on November 10 for His Majesty's birthday; The Committee on November 30 for the Princess of Wales' birthday. 11 Dublin Journal, June 2—5, 1753. IO9

 great ones. Certain viceroys were much more beneficent in their support than others. An evening's entertainment at Smock-Alley, as at Drury Lane, consisted of the play, preceded by music and followed except on rare occasions by a second short play, often a farce (straight farce, ballad farce, et cetera), sometimes a musical play (burlesque opera, ballad opera, serious masque, et cetera), occasionally a puppet show or a pantomime. Often interspersed or following was some other offering: singing, dancing, instrumental music, processions, mimicry, animated statues, tricks (such as the Escape of Harlequin into a Quart Bottle), tumbling, rope-dancing, even something called "a comical and diverting Humour Some Body and No Body . . . performed by Living Figures, some of them six Feet high."12 The play usually started shortly after six thirty, the time of the last music. One advertisement gives the schedule for the preliminary musical entertainment, provided primarily to pass the time for servants holding places and for other early comers: first music, five thirty; second music, six; third music, six thirty.13 But the schedule was flexible if other matters—an assembly or a court reception— pressed; on Fridays in 1747 the curtain was drawn up at six so that the play should be finished in time "for such Ladies as please to go to the Castle." 14 Because the relationship between the theater manager and the gentry was so intimate, accommodations were easily made for these important patrons. At Smock-Alley as at Drury Lane "the play" was usually one of the old stock comedies or tragedies, whose recurrent production seemed, strangely enough, not to bore the small and unchanging audience, although some members of it must have known The Susficious Husband and The Distrest Mother by heart as well as the actors did. These stock plays formed about seventy-five per cent of the plays presented, the revived plays making up most of the rest. Revived plays were advertised specially as "not acted these so-many years"; they sometimes received special advance notice in the news columns of the papers.15 After the first few seasons prices were usu12

Ibid., March 13—17, 1750. See Smock-Alley Calendar for March 22, 1750. 14 Ibid., October IO-13, 1747. September 27-October 1, 1748. 15 For example, “The Historical Tragedy of King John is now reviving at the Theatre-Royal, and will speedily be performed, the Part of King John by Mr. Mossop, and the Part of the Bastard by Mr. Sheridan. Between the Acts there will be performed some new Choruses, in the Manner of the Antients, set to Musick by Mr. Lampe” (ibid., March 13—17, 1750). lzIbid.,

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Winning the Dublin Public ally not raised. By far the smallest in number were the “new plays,” most of which were not actually new because they had been performed in London. Also advertised as new were plays which had been revised considerably by Sheridan or someone else. On these grounds Sheridan called his version of The Loyal Subject new.16 Rarest of all were the plays which had never been acted anywhere before. As at Drury Lane the time in the season for new plays was generally winter term time, February and March, before the benefits; but several made their debut in May to give a final fillip to the season. Early in his managership, in October 1747, Sheridan tried to introduce the London system of running a revived or new play on successive nights with the idea that he would have more time “to exhibit a greater Variety of new Performances.” 17 But the new system did not work out, probably because the smaller playgoing public could not support a play for successive nights. Though revived and new plays were repeated two, three, or more times, their representation was scattered throughout the season and accompanied by different afterplays and entertainments. If we are to believe the advertisements, the choice of “the play” was frequently dictated by “the Desire of several Persons of Distinction,” or sometimes just “by Desire” or “by particular Desire.” Probably Sheridan did receive requests from ladies and gentlemen for particular plays, and it is likely that he consulted his friends from the college and others. During his early managerial years Sheridan’s collegiate admirers flocked to his greenroom. What more natural topic there than the future bill at Smock-Alley? It is significant that the notices of such request plays, very common at first, fall off in later years when Sheridan was growing away from the college and becoming more secure in his own judgment. Although he had no luck in running one play for a continuous time, Sheridan made a great success of his various series. His chief contribution to the offerings at Smock-Alley and to the standard of taste in Dublin was his Shakespeare series, advertised enthusiastically and specially illuminated with wax candles instead of the usual tallow lights. A series, consisting at the least of six Shakespeare plays given one a week and subscribed for in advance, was presented usually twice a year, in the autumn and in the spring. So popular was this idea that la Ibid., February 20—23, 1748. Sheridan advertises it as having been never before acted. 17 Ibid., October 13-17, 1747.

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Sheridan of Smock-Alley · / 7 4 7 — 1748 Sheridan tried other series: in 1749-50 he planned a group of three Jonson plays,18 but only two of them were performed. The Congreve series, started the next year, was more successful and was thereafter made a regular part of the season’s offerings, usually running concurrently with a Shakespeare series. The publicity given coming performances continued to improve. As in the past announcements were made from the stage, and bills were distributed as well as posted outside the theater. But press notices became regular and impressive. The Dubliner opening his semiweekly Journal could expect to find future plays announced right after the Dublin news, usually on the second page of the four-page sheet, but sometimes even on the front page. Besides, they were set under the large, clear heading of “Theatre-Royal,” rather than buried haphazardly and without distinction in the fine print of other notices. Special linear and typographical effects, usually involving Mr. Sheridan’s name, caught the eye and made for easy reading. Sometimes the offerings for the whole week were given at once, and frequently a performance was advertised more than once. Details of unusual attractions—particular songs, dances, performers—appealed to the jaded playgoer. As time went on, names of the minor players were included, until sometimes a whole column or more was given over to Smock-Alley activities. The Dublin Journal, run by Sheridan’s friend George Faulkner, was his steadiest outlet, but the Dublin Couranti PueiS Occurrences, and EsdalVs News-Letter during certain seasons also carried announcements, sometimes in more detail than the Journal. Faulkner was always generous with theatrical news items; Sheridan’s personal activities—his comings and goings, his recovery from indispositions, his charitable contributions, et cetera— were featured along with news about plays in rehearsal, plans for special series, and the arrival of theatrical notables coming to Smock Alley from Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and other exciting places. The annual routine of the theater, its opening and

closing, the selection, timing, and advertising of productions, was only the regular part of Sheridan's occupation. Each season brought new and special problems and new and notable advances. For, until his terrible downfall in 1754, the manager of Smock-Alley, despite the gloomy diagnosis year by year of Victor, Hitchcock, and others, did improve the well-being of his theater and win more and more of the Dublin 18

Ibid., January

30-February 3, 1750.

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Winning the Dublin Public public. So the story of these seven seasons, between riots, passed over briefly in most accounts, has its own interest. AT THE beginning of the 1747-48 season, the first after the Kelly

riot, Sheridan felt himself strong enough to lay down several significant regulations, not for sporadic evenings but for the whole year. In advertising his first play he announced that he would admit no person behind the scenes 5 that no odd money would be taken anywhere in the house j and that coach traffic was to follow a certain route coming and going from the theater.19 From this time on, Sheridan was to be firm about stage sitters j and when, occasionally, he relaxed his ban for unusual events such as benefits with overflow crowds, the special boxes "formed" on stage were for ladies only, no gentleman, he announced, would "on any Account be admitted behind the Scenes." 20 Nor would he relax this rule even to let men use the stage as a passageway to their seats. When, in 1753, he opened the slips (over the lattices), hitherto closed, he opened them to women only. "As there is no Passage to them but by the Stage," he explained in the Journal advertisement, "Men will not be admitted there on any Account."21 By 1749 he could discontinue his notices banning stage sitters, so complete had been his victory there. Although after he left Dublin there were occasional lapses,22 Sheridan's continued firmness during his time, and his success in this battle encouraged other managers and led to the final elimination of the pernicious custom. About a month after the theater opened in the fall of 1747 Sheridan made permanent his regulation against odd money, at the same time widening the scope of his decree: "No odd Money for the future will ever be received in the Theatre, nor any Money returned after the Curtain is drawn up." 23 With this announcement he hoped 19

Ibii., September 22-26, 1747. Ibid., November 24-28, 1747. A Bellamy benefit and a benefit for Mile. Mechel in the fall of 1747 had seats on stage for ladies. ^ 1 Ibid., September 22—25, 1753The slips, also called pigeonholes, were above the lattices and level with the upper gallery (O'Keeffe, 1, 287). The lattices, called greenboxes by Londoners (Wilkinson, 1, 7), were on a line with the middle gallery. 22Stockwell, p. 336, n. 54. 23 Dublin Journal, October 24—27, 1747. The announcement was repeated at the beginning of each season until 1750-51, but not after that, so thoroughly 20

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Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1747—1748 to wipe out another pernicious custom which allowed latecomers to enter at a reduced price and permitted earlygoers to claim a refund of part of their entrance fee.24 Full admission prices during this period were normally 5/5 for the boxes and lattices; 3/3 for the pit; 2/2 for the middle gallery; and 1/1 for the upper gallery.25 In order to collect the full price Smock-Alley managers, even before Sheridan, had published occasional notices: "No odd Money to be taken." 26 The preceding spring, right after the Kelly riot, Sheridan had begun his fight against reduced prices and refunds. At first he refused to return money after the curtain had been drawn up at some performances; then he declined to accept odd money from latecomers during some performances. But his notices were sporadic until the last few nights of the 1746-47 season, when he announced in every advertisement that no odd money would be taken. It is interesting that this first regular notice refused to acceft money rather than make refunds after the performance had begun; latecomers, often drunk and noisy, were more of a nuisance than earlygoers. To eliminate these and so improve his house Sheridan was willing to sacrifice the financial profit from odd money—not inconsiderable if Dublin theaters were like London theaters.27 For Dublin had the practice been eliminated. Burke, who criticized more than he complimented Sheridan, liked the reform which Sheridan had established in refusing to admit for odd money "a Set of Wild Fellows who generally come flustered from Taverns, to the Disturbance of the more orderly Part of the Audience" (Samuels, pp. 299-300). 24 Dublin theaters followed the practice of London theaters, beginning reduced prices and refunds (called in London "half price") after the third act of the main play

(O'Keeffe, 1, 286—287). So far as I can determine, the phrase "odd money" applied, in Dublin, only to reduced prices for latecomers. 25 Prices had gone back up to normal this season after Capel-Street failed to reopen. Occasionally prices were raised for unusual occasions, for special benefits, for the Shakespeare subscription series, et cetera. For example, the pit seats for the hospital benefit and for the special subscription series after the riot were raised to 5/5, the gallery seats to 2/8^ (Dublin Journal, March IO-14, 1747). For Sheridan's benefit on July 13, 1747, only upper gallery seats were raised— to I/ήY/ι. Sometimes other benefits charged 2/2 for both galleries. Stockwell (p. 230) lists lattices as 4/4, but 1 find that when they are mentioned in the advertisements they are 5/5. It is interesting that Smock-Alley prices in the mid-eighteenth century under Sheridan are about the same as those postulated for the end of the seventeenth century by Clark (p. 108), although salaries had risen enormously. 2e 27 Stockwell, p. 232. Pedicord, pp. 38-39. ii4

Winning the Dublin Public theatergoers too the new ruling must have been a financial hardship. Not only were there the same reasons as in London for coming late—late dinners, late work, et cetera—but the more limited offerings of only one theater would make some people wish to avoid a familiar main play and come simply for the entertainments or the farce. This new regulation was, then, more of a hardship to more people, probably, than Sheridan's rule against stage sitters. But, perhaps because of his complete victory over the Kelly faction, no outbreaks occurred as they did in London when, over fifteen years later, the English managers tried to follow Sheridan's example and eliminate "half-price."28 For in this improvement, as in clearing the stage, Sheridan antedated the London theaters by a number of years. O'Keeffe shows what an advantage this gave the Dublin stage. "In my day," he recalls, "there was no half-price at a theatre in Ireland; so that a noisy fellow, for paying his sixpence after the third act, as in the London theatres, could not drive a new comedy for ever from the stage by a hiss, (for a single hiss may do that;) neither could a critic come into the pit, or a man of fashion into the boxes, for his eighteen-pence, or half-crown, and censure the fourth and fifth act of a play, ignorant of the previous parts which led to the denouement." 29 Almost as much of a problem for Sheridan was the abuse of "silver tickets,"30 tokens which entitled the holder to a free seat at any time. The number of such permanent free-riders—members of the viceregal court, theater proprietors, their relatives and descendants, et cetera—had reached the disturbing total of ninety-two by 1747, when Victor wrote to Garrick to find out what the London practice was in this matter. He asked because he and Sheridan were forming an "application to the Lord Lieutenant, to redress [this] insupportable grievance. . . ." 31 Although the Dublin theater royal 28 Fitzgerald, A New History of the English Stage, n, i87ff. In 1763 Garrick had a two-day riot on his hands when he tried to abolish half price (Pedicord,

P29). 29

O'Keeffe, 1, 286-287. Regular tickets, those used for benefits, for example, were cardboard or paper, we gather from a notice published by Victor in May 1747: "N.B. The Card Tickets delivered out for this Benefit which was to have been performed on the 23d of January last, will not be taken the above Night, there being a new Set of Paper Tickets printed on this Occasion" (Dublin Journal, May 16—19, I747)·_ 31 Victor, Original Letters, 1, 13 5 (Letter of October 1747). 80

Sheridan of Smock-Alley • 1747—1748 was officially allotted its £100 a year for the governor and his court, this sum could soon be outweighed if each silver-ticket holder used his privilege regularly. The "redress" which the Smock-Alley application requested was probably not granted, for a month later Sheridan was trying to improve the situation himself by systematizing the methods of admitting his permanent "guests," some of whom had long since lost their tokens, others of whom were using cards and written orders, illegal according to the terms of the original agreement. To these Sheridan served notice that no person would be admitted unless he deposited his silver ticket in the doorkeeper's hand, that no cards or written orders would be accepted, and that those who had lost their tokens would need to have new ones made forthwith.32 With all these new regulations, which his critics regarded as officious, Sheridan hoped to make his theater an orderly and wellrun place, attractive to the Dublin public primarily for the good entertainment he could then provide. The great stumbling block to the realization of this hope continued to be the upper gallery.33 Sheridan's long struggle with the rowdies here, which started in his first year as manager, had been less successful than his other reforms. His periodic threats to close the section, to punish the guilty (who were being warned before the Kelly riot that "proper Men" were stationed there to mark them) had not availed, although in the Kelly disturbance itself the upper gallery, it seems, took little part, the riot having been limited to "Gentlemen." Now, in the autumn of 1747,

Sheridan thought of a new approach for quieting this unruly section of his house: he would woo the gallery with good entertainment. Believing that part of the ferment there stemmed from boredom with inferior preliminary music, he hired the best band he could find, hoping, he said, to please the town in general, but especially the gallery audience, who, having come early for seats, ought to welcome some first-rate music to make the time pass less heavily. The galleries did welcome the band to make the time pass—but not quite as Sheridan had hoped. When several musicians had been injured and their instruments damaged (in one night to the sum of £10), Sheridan, feeling less anger than "great Surprise" that the "best Pieces performed by the best Hands" were so unappreciated, had to warn his audience that they could 32

Dublin Journal, November 17—21, 1747. Although the notices sometimes speak of galleries, most of the disturbance seems to have come from the upper gallery. 33

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Winning the Dublin Public expect "worse Hands" or no music at all, if such behavior continued.34 This notice, milder than that of the preceding season, appeared several times in November ·, but the soft approach had little effect. In early February, just a year after the Kelly riot, an English visitor who called himself Brittanicus remarked to the Dublin Journal that in the pit and boxes of the Dublin theater he never saw "genteeler Behaviour" (although Irish gentlemen, unlike English playgoers, did boorishly wear their hats during the performance), but he was appalled by the Dublin gallery, "the Part of the House that most wants Regulation." In London, he said, they have learned how to deal with the offender: for upon any Disturbance there, they Cry thro' the whole House Throw him over—Throw him over. Every One in the Gallery contributes to shove the Disturber forward, and the People in the Pit very politely make Room for the Reception of their new Guest. And this Discipline having been more than Once put into Practice, has struck such a Panick thro' the Heroes of the upper Regions, that the sturdiest of 'em All upon hearing those Words, is, immediately frighten'd into a proper Behaviour.35 The best kind of audience reform, Brittanicus felt, occurred when the members reformed one another. Despite this sound English advice, the Smock-Alley gallery continued to be a problem for several years more. Goaded partly perhaps by the gallery, Sheridan was about to give up Smock-Alley and its management at one point in this season. Near the end of January 1748 he announced plans to leave soon for London and, in mid-February, he was asking all persons who had demands on him to send their accounts to Mr. Victor.36 A few days after his first announcement, a public notice, hidden away in the fine print of Dublin Journal advertisements, came from the theater proprietors: To be let for any Term of Years from the 1st Day of May next, The Theatre-Royal in Smock-Alley and the Theatre-Royal in Aungier-Street with all the Cloaths, Scenes, Machines, etc. thereunto belonging. 34

Dublin Journal, November 21-24, 1747, and following issues. January 30-February 2, 1748. 36 Ibid., January 19—23 and February 13—16, 1748. vi Ibii.,

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1747—1748 Bidders were asked to submit their proposals to the proprietors.37 Additional reasons may have been behind Sheridan's sudden intention. His health had not been good; he did no acting from midDecember to mid-January, and performances had fallen off during this time.38 George Anne Bellamy reports that receipts had begun to decline over last season's and tells of passes given her to paper the house. She blames Sheridan's misjudgment in attempting characters inappropriate to him such as Antony (instead of his usual role of Ventidius) in All for Love and Sir Charles Easy in The Careless Husband.39 Burke writes Shackleton in a letter of February 2, 1748: "Sheridan is to lose his house, which we count a judgement on his arrogance and ignorance."40 By this time Burke had thoroughly turned against Sheridan—because of that play of his which Sheridan had rejected earlier this winter? 41—and had launched an attack on him in his new weekly, The Reformer. The attack, indeed, may have been designed to influence the proprietors. Whether Sheridan was to "lose" his house (Burke was hardly writing from firsthand knowledge) or whether he was giving it up of his own accord, the main reason for the January notices in the Dublin Journal was probably that Sheridan and the proprietors were undecided about a lease for the future.42 That Sheridan had had over37

Ibid·., January 23—26, 1748. Proposals for the theaters at Waterford and Cork were solicited in this same notice. Except for Samuels, who notes the proprietors' advertisement only (p. 164), both this notice and Sheridan's announcement have been overlooked by writers about the period. 38 Notices were sporadic in early December and entirely missing from December 16 to 30, a longer period than the usual week's

intermission for the holidays. The first half of January was almost as barren. The January 9th Journal reports that “Mr. Sheridan being perfectly recovered from his late Indisposition intends shortly to appear in the Character of Anthony in All for Love.” But he did not appear until January 18. 39 Bellamy, 1, 111-113. 40Burke (Samuels, pp. 163—164). This is the only contemporary reference I have found to this whole shadowy affair. 41 Samuels speaks of a comedy which Burke may have written for Sheridan, one which was not accepted. In October and November of 1747 it was in Victor’s hands. Burke expected it to be produced after Christmas (Samuels, pp. 113— “4)42 It has been generally assumed, I think mistakenly, that Sheridan took his twenty-one-year lease on the theater in March of 1747 (the year before). If this was so, either Sheridan or the proprietors were now breaking that lease after just a year. And if such an untoward rupture threatened, why is there no mention of it in the press, no account of it in Victor or Bellamy, both on the scene

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Winning the Dublin Public tures from Covent Garden to act during the spring is revealed in Hiffernan’s Tickler, which names the six different roles he will play there and the money he will make (£50 sterling for each performance), at the same time that it sneers at “the late advertisement of the young hero’s indispensible necessity of going to Londony where, doubtless, he is greatly wanted.” 43 Before he left, Sheridan became so much the center of public interest that this season rivals the last in the amount of print devoted to him. Not all of it is derogatory. As early as mid-December his friend James Eyre Weeks published a poem, “To Mr. Sheridan. On his being appointed Director of the Irish Theatre,” in which he expects that now Hibernia’s stage will vie with the British and asks and much involved, no memory of it left for Hitchcock, who came later? If, on the other hand, Sheridan’s short-term lease had run out, and the question of renewal was pending for a while with one side or the other undecided, the absence of excitement and the fading of memory would be more understandable. The evidence on the dating of the lease is not perfectly clear, with the lease itself no longer in existence. But reference to it occurs in two later deeds, Sheridan to Victor, 1754 (169/346/114101, Off. Reg. Deeds) and Victor to Sowdon, 1755 (174/248/116009), where it is described as having been “dated on or about the Nineteenth Day of March, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty Seven.” March 19 before 1751 falls within the period of cross-dating; the actual date then was March 19, 1748, unless the persons writing the later deeds after the fixing of the calendar adjusted the year—an unlikely possibility in view of the circumstances and the wording of the passage quoted just above. One other reference to the lease occurs in a petition to parliament by Sheridan (1758) in which, looking back on his history as manager, he says, “. . . your Petitioner in the Year 1747, took a Lease of the united Theatres of AungierStreet and Smock-Alley, from the Proprietors of the said Theatres.” But again Sheridan may not have allowed for the change in the calendar, and, besides, his dating of past events was frequently vague and inaccurate. Other evidence supports the probability that a lease’s renewal rather than rupture was pending in 1748 and that the problem was resolved that year by the new contract: The date mentioned in the proprietors’ January advertisement, May 1, suggests the expiration of a lease; it could well have been on May I, 1745, that Sheridan first took over the management (Hitchcock says he returned to Dublin from England in May 1745)· Sheridan himself says he first took the theater on trial for a year (this would mean until May I, 1746). The Irish writer to the Gentleman’s Magazine at the time of the Kelly riot describes Sheridan as having taken a lease on the Dublin theaters for two years, which would put the expiration date at May 1, 1748. (See also note 58.) 43 Tickler, February 18, 1748, 1, 3; March 11, 1748, iv, 23. In the latter we read, “. . . he is to perform six nights in Covent-garden Theatre for 50 1. sterl. each; the parts are as follow: In Tragedy, Orestes, Tancrede, Marc-Antony; in Comedy, Ranger, Archer, Captain Plume.” ï ĩ 9

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1747—1748 the public to strike a medal for “so bright a Date. The Irish Theatre resumes its State.”44 More disinterested was the praise from Brittanicus, who was surprised to find Smock-Alley “perhaps one of the best regulated Theatres that either is, or ever was, in Europe,” and especially noteworthy for the decorum on stage.45 By mid-February a letter to the Journal reports that Sheridan has again become the sole subject of our present writers, and thus their chief source of income—all much to the alarm of the manager’s friends who fear an insufferable increase in his already sufficient vanity.46 By this time Burke’s Reformer and Hiffernan’s Tickler were devoting many of their weekly issues to attacks on the theater and its manager. Burke—he was about twenty years old when he launched The Reformer from Trinity College—made his onslaught less personal than Hiffernan, although the rejected author in him may emerge occasionally in statements like this: “The Poverty of this Kingdom can be no Excuse for not encouraging Men of Genius, one tenth of what is expended on Fidlers, Singers,

Dancers, and Players would be able to sustain the whole Circle of Arts and Sciences." His chief protests were against the quality of the entertainment: the badly chosen plays j the players who changed whole speeches and even the plot 5 the attention and money spent on extra trimmings. But Burke admitted that the audience was largely to blame, entranced as it was with the dancing and the scene paintings: I have seen what they call a polite Assembly, sit in Rapture a full half hour at the Gestures of a foreign Dancer, and after reward him with the loudest Applauses, while an endeavouring Native who has racked his Lungs in their Service met with Inattention, or had his Words drowned in their Clamours. Burke was hard to please. He ridiculed Sheridan's great foible of being "too nice in the Choice of his Dullness," serving up learning with his buffoonery and calling the dance of the statues introduced into All for Love a "Pyrrick Dance" when not one in five hundred knew it as anything but a common country dance. The manager would have done better, Burke decides, to order M—1 (M. Mechel, the dancer) "to clap his Posteriors in Cleopatra's lap." (Cleopatra, 44 Dublin Journal, December 15—19, 1747. I can find no other mention of this appointment, nor do I know whether the title meant anything more than manager. i5 Ibid., January 30—February 2, 1748. 46 Ibid., February 16—20, 1748.

Winning the Dublin Public incidentally, was George Anne Bellamy.) And yet Restoration and eighteenth-century comedy was distasteful to the young critic, who also disapproved of kissing, at least on stage. Sheridan's personal appearance and acting are derided briefly—the effeminate carriage, the squeaky voice which "fribilizes" even the most masculine characters, and Sheridan's manner of dying on stage, one which will "afford you the double Delight of a Hero and Harlequin." 47 The Reformer ran from January 28 to April 21. Sheridan, away for the last half of this time, made no response. In May Burke, writing to Shackleton, describes Sheridan as "a pitiful fellow who was never able to defend himself."48 Dr. Paul Hiffernan was Sheridan's archfoe during this time and for some years after. Just Sheridan's age, Hiffernan had recently returned from France, where as a Roman Catholic he had gone to be educated, at first for the priesthood and then, after meetings with Rousseau and other advanced thinkers, in medicine. Back in Dublin, he gained entrance through his wit to high society and was encouraged in a life of indolence and dissipation. What living he earned, he earned by his pen. He may, as Samuels suggests, have written for the "Gentlemen" after the Kelly riot; 49 his sympathies would certainly have been with them. His measure is suggested by the fact that he calls Burke a Sheridan partisan and is in turn characterized by Burke as "sometimes too severe}" though a man of "good Sense." 50 His Tickler began in February and consisted largely of outrageous attacks on Faulkner, Lucas, and Sheridan, whom he nicknames "the arbitrary Lewis [King Louis] of the Stage." Like Burke, Hiffernan disapproves of the dullness and especially the obscenity of Sheridan's offerings. Nowadays, he says, the custom in the audience is for gentlemen, "at every smutty allusion, to look the ladies triumphantly out of countenance, who timidly skulk behind their fans." No beauty himself, he ridicules Sheridan's indifferent stature, his aspect inexpressive of dignity or passion, his "native sneer exclusive of all tender scenes," his "puppet-like strut." Like The Reformer, The Tickler jeers at Sheridan's acting, especially his method of dying, for which, 47

See Burke's Reformer, Nos. 1-4 (Samuels, pp. 297-308) and No. 8 (Samuels, pp. 318—320). The word fribilizes is taken from Fribble, an effeminate dandy in Garrick's popular Miss in her Teens. 48 Samuels, pp. 121—122. Ibid., p. 119. For short biographies of Hiffernan see Baker's Biografhia Dramatica; Eurofean Magazine, xxv, 110, 179; Madden, 1, 320®.; DNB. 50 Reformer, Nos. 5, 6 (Samuels, pp. 309, 312).

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1747-1748 according to Hiffernan, he has been so injudiciously applauded by would-be critics: he dies in a series of starts and flounces possible only to one in perfect health (obviously an allusion to Sheridan's frequent "indispositions"). Even more cutting must have been the attacks on Sheridan's literary style, for, as the future author of English grammars, dictionaries, and plans for English language teaching in the schools, Sheridan would have been hypersensitive there. Hiffernan takes apart several passages of Sheridan's prose, italicizing constructions which he dislikes, such as the tautology in "all the whole house shall be entirely illuminated." Both Burke and Hiffernan express apprehension over Sheridan's revisions of older plays. Hiffernan speaks of The Loyal Subject, on which Sheridan has exhibited his "inoculation." 51 Burke hopes that Sheridan's revision of this play will be better than "his late modest Attempts on Shakespear."52 Sheridan paid little or no public attention to these barbs; he knew Hiffernan too well, says Davies, to fear his criticism and he thoroughly despised Hiffernan's attacks on his acting.53 Besides, he was too busy. In the same January Journal in which he had announced his intention of leaving soon, he had projected a crowded series of plays to be given before his departure.

These were gratifyingly successful. Performances rose from almost none to the surprising average of four a week, with Sheridan himself taking the lead in many. A Shakespeare series of six was included; The Careless Husband was revived, with Sheridan playing Sir Charles Easy for the first time; Woodward's new pantomime was elaborately staged; and The Loyal Subject, "now first altered and adapted to the Stage by Mr. Sheridan," 54 was produced. That all this activity brought happy results is inadvertently revealed by Hiffernan, who, writing on February 18, speaks of the "crowded audiences this winter," attracted by 81

See Hiffernan's Tickler, I—HI, vi, and also The Tickler Tickled. Reformer, No. 2 (Samuels, p. 302). Probably a reference to Romeo and Juliet. 53 Davies, 1, 248. si Dublin Journal, February 16—20, 1748. See also ibid, February 20-23, where it is called "a new Play never before exhibited." Baker (Biografhia Dramatica, 11, 207), implying that the alterations were not extensive, says Sheridan thought it worthwhile to revive this only fair play and reprint it "with a few alterations of his own." S. A. Tannenbaum ("Beaumont and Fletcher," Elizabethan Bibliographies No. 5) lists under The Loyal Subject as item 267 "[Altered] Mrs. [sic] Sheridan ad'r—Ln. 1750." 52

Winning the Dublin Public Sheridan's many artifices, such as "parsimoniously dealing out Shakespear by the half-dozen, and illuminating him with wax-lights (which predilection to a favorite saint has a distant cast of Popery)."55 Sheridan could hardly have taken this last thrust seriously, but some attack on his use of foreign and Catholic performers seems to have provoked him to a rare response: he is supposed to have declared that "if he thought himself indebted to the Mechels' dancing for any part of the extraordinary receipts of this winter" (another side light on his financial success), he would refund the money or give it to charity because the Mechels were Papists and subjects of the French king.5® Sheridan's last performance was in Hamlet on March 4. But he did not leave for England immediately, as he had planned} and indeed The Tickler reports him as uncertain "whether he shall or no."57 The reason would seem to have been that an agreement on the Smock-Alley lease was being reached, with Sheridan's success during the last few weeks perhaps playing a part in the decisions. For "on or about the Nineteenth Day of March" he leased the two theaters and their appurtenances for twenty-one years from May 1 at a yearly rental of £200 Sterling.58 When Sheridan went to England at the end of March, he went as Smock-Alley manager with this twenty-one-year lease in his possession. He did not perform at Covent Garden, a fact of which The Tickler makes much} 59 instead, he spent his time providing for the next season in Dublin. In May he returned to Ireland, still very much the manager of Smock-Alley, 55

Tickler, 1, 3. This remark takes on added humor when we remember that Hiifernan had been a Catholic. 56 Ibid., 11, 12. So reported by Hiffernan, who makes fun of him for saying so. 57 Ibid., v, 29. 58Ms 169/346/114101 and MS 174/248/116009, OiF. Reg. Deeds, Dublin. These are the 1754 deed from Sheridan to Victor and the 1755 deed from Victor to Sowdon, which describe the earlier lease. The date given for beginning the terms, May 1, supports the argument outlined in note 42 above. Also significant is the fact that Sheridan did not leave for London until March 22, after the day of signing the lease (March 19). The £200 annual rental was, incidentally, over and above the ground rent and taxes. 68 Tickler, vn, 54. "Mr. Sh-r-d-n arrived [back in Dublin] last Sunday from London, and is to perform the part of Hamlet to night, which, we hear, he was not ask'd to play in London, or any other part;—but the inhabitants there are poor tasteless wretches—and we Dublinians compose the most polite, and judicious audience in Europe. I am sure the manager told us so from the stage before Christmass."

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1747—1748 and from then on until 1754 there is no talk of his losing the theater or of giving up his position. If Burke and Hiffernan had hoped to drive him from his management by their criticism, they had failed. Some of this criticism Sheridan was to answer in the next few years, not by words, but by improving the quality of his programs—and doing it so tactfully that he won ever larger numbers of the Dublin public. He himself had, for some time, preferred Shakespeare to Vanbrugh, tragedy to tumbling. Part of the financial success of the 1747-48 season—and in the end it was a success 60—must be laid to Sheridan's company, particularly to his two principal players, Henry Woodward, new from Covent Garden,61 and George Anne Bellamy, now in her third season at Smock-Alley. These two, according to Bellamy, were no strangers, George Anne having earlier (at Covent Garden) refused Woodward's proposal of marriage. At first somewhat embarrassed at finding his scornful lady here in Dublin, Woodward soon became reconciled and indeed pleased to have a "tolerable actress" performing with him. All this is according to George Anne herself.62 But, whatever their relationship then (and it was to be very intimate toward the end of Woodward's life), Woodward, a most gentle and winning

person, became a great favorite in Dublin that year. On his arrival he was hailed by the Dublin Journal as "not only the best Harlequin, but one of the best Comedians of the Age." 63 Because Sheridan shaped his entertainment by the particular talents in his troupe, comedy and pantomime predominated during this season, when he himself was the only male actor suitable for tragic leads. Here lies one of the reasons for offerings so offensive to Burke and Hiffernan. Three comedies new to Dublin were produced that season, all starring Woodward: Crowne's Sir Courtly Nice; The Little French Lawyer, "written by Beaumont and Fletcher"; 64 and Moore's Foundling. 60 Victor, History, i, 131. Victor calls the season a "gainful" one to the manager "and indeed to the whole Company." 61 Dublin Journal, September 12-15, 1747· 62 Bellamy, 1, 112. The Bellamy-Woodward "alliance," as Oulton calls it, was formed long after this time in London and lasted ten years (Oulton, 1, 53). 63 Dublin Journal, September 12-15, !747Both Bellamy and Victor report Woodward's popularity, Victor in the History and in a letter to Garrick (October 1747); Bellamy in the Afology, where she says that Woodward's Lord Foppington was, as usual, justly admired (1, 112). 64 So advertised in the Dublin Journal, October 17—20, 1747, and see also The London Stage, Pt. 4, p. 142. The Drury Lane Calendar (p. 272) lists the

Winning the Dublin Public For the afterpiece, pantomimes vied with farces, and most of the pantomimes were either entirely new or new to Smock-Alley. Sheridan had expected much financial gain from them, some of which had been composed by Woodward j but, according to Hitchcock, they added little to the season's receipts.65 On the other hand, the not-new farce Miss in her Teens was revivified by Woodward's acting of Captain Flash and by his changing roles, toward the end of the season, to Fribble, performing it "alamode Garrick." Here an announcement in the press from Woodward to the town is interesting for what it shows of his character: Lest it be supposed from his playing Fribble that he feels "he can be equally right in all Characters," he wishes to explain that several ladies and gentlemen wanted to see a picture drawn from the original actor in that character.66 It was in this very art of mimicry that Woodward made his greatest triumph of the season and at a time when Sheridan was away in London, during the spring, when theatrical business normally fell off. The beginning of this particular success was touched off in early March by the arrival of Samuel Foote, the celebrated mimic, who spent three weeks in Dublin treating the nobility and gentry to chocolate in the London manner.67 Burke, in his Reformer of March 17, says that Foote came to supplant Sheridan "by exhibiting Entertainments still more monstrous and incoherent." According to him, Foote refused Sheridan's offer of his house and his cooperation, and took, version revived at Drury Lane on October 7, 1749, as altered from Fletcher and Massinger (?) by an unknown alterer. In his productions of Sir Courtly Nice and The Little Trench Lawyer Sheridan preceded Garrick by several years. The Foundling at Smock-Alley followed Drury Lane by two months. 65Hitchcock, i, 193. Although much touted and freshly dressed and painted, a new pantomime by Woodward, Fairy Friendship, played the second night to not more than £20, and was not a success even after later "Alterations" (Dublin Journal, February 2-6 and 23-27, 1748; Victor, History, 1, 132-135). Victor thinks that this same pantomime ran successfully later at Drury Lane as Queen Mab. Dubliners, he felt, had too much good sense to like pantomimes. 66 Dublin Journal, April 26—30 and April 30—May 3, 1748. Miss in her Teens was revived on October 8, 1747, when Woodward played the Captain. 67 Bellamy (1, 111) mentions Foote's arrival and his tea, an exhibition "which consisted of mimickry, wherein he imitated or took off the voice and manner of most of the performers in England and Ireland. I never could find out [Bellamy adds] what analogy there was between tea and the talent of mimickry." What George Anne apparently hadn't heard was that Foote had invented this device of summoning his friends to take tea (or chocolate) with him in April 1747 as a means of circumventing the English Licensing Act.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J47—1J48 instead, a little theater of his own (it was Capel-Street), drawing away Sheridan's best and most constant auditors.®8 But his activity seems to have redounded to Smock-Alley's eventual advantage, for Woodward quickly swung into action and began treating "his Brother Atall [Foote] with a Dish of his own Chocolate"69—with such success, according to Miss Bellamy, that Foote was driven from Ireland "precipitately."70 But, fortunately for Woodward, this was not the end. A local person calling himself "Foote the Second" and "Young Atall"71 invited old Atwou'd (note the pun on Woodward) to a new Chocolate, "in which three celebrated Originals of this City will be taken off in a picturesque Manner. . . ." Some of the "taking off" seems to have started in this notice, which concludes: Absolutely the last Time of performing in this Kingdom. The Whole House will not be illuminated with Wax, nor will there be any Tickets given gratis to swell the Pitt.72 98Reformer,

No. 8 (Samuels, p. 319). Foote's chocolate is announced in the March 1—5 issue of the Dublin Journal, his first appearance scheduled for noon, March 7. 69In a Dublin Journal notice (March 8-12 issue) for a March 14th performance. Woodward answered Foote, then, in just a week. Bellamy says that Foote had attacked Woodward first. Atall is the name of a protean character in Cibber's Double Gallant; Woodward had played the role earlier in the Smock Alley season. 70 Bellamy, 1, 112. 71Notices (Dublin Journal, April 5-9 and 16—19, 1748) indicate that this local person was John Pilkington and that his gag writer was his mother, Letitia Pilkington, Swift's old favorite who had turned out so badly. Not only must Letitia have been familiar to Sheridan through his parents and godfather, but a Master Pilkington—probably John—played Tom Thumb on Aungier-Street stage during Sheridan's first spring at Smock-Alley. Later, in revenge for Sheridan's arresting her son for having forged (as a joke, Letitia implies!) two orders to his theater one night, she wrote a vicious satirical poem about him (Memoirs, pp. 438—439). Tracing in it his evil heritage, she reviles his mother as sordid and greedy (this a la Swift), his father as "lavishing all upon a whore"; he himself is a "beggars brat" and a "scoundrel thief," whose "very looks presage a halter." 73 Dublin Journal, March 22-26, 1748. Sheridan's notices inspired others to satire. When the New Theatre in Capel-Street was opened briefly the preceding December "by an artificial Company of Comedians," their play, The Sorceress, was advertised "with all the Sinkings, Flyings, and Decoration . . . interspersed with several diverting Interludes of Dancing, too tedious to insert" (ibid., December 29—January 2, 1748).

Winning the Dublin Public Woodward's Chocolate (and Coffee) became so popular that he repeated it frequently (see the Smock-Alley Calendar for this year), often by request and at benefit performances. George Anne reports that he was paid an extra ten guineas a night by fellow actors at whose benefits he performed this piece.73 His financial gains, whereby he cleared £300 from the manager, 60 guineas from Foote's Chocolate, and £120 apiece from two of his benefits, aroused an anonymous critic to sneer that a harlequin could get more money in Ireland than anybody with real genius—all because "Tommy now is King."74 Press publicity like this and Woodward's own popularity brought him an unusual number of benefits—three in one season. After Sheridan returned from London in May, all Chocolate ceased. Mimicry, which may even have involved him, would hardly have suited his revivified ideals for Smock-Alley Theater. The following autumn Woodward was at Drury Lane. George Anne Bellamy was Sheridan's other principal player during this season. Her popularity continued unabated,75 but her autobiography, written years later, pictures her as growing more and more discontent, partly for personal reasons, but partly because Smock-Alley receipts were falling off—this must have been during that mid-season slump—and she was regretting that she had declined Garrick's invitation to Drury Lane. To fill the house Sheridan, she says, gave her some passes to distribute to her young lady friends; later Victor tried to charge her account with £75 for these. Not only did George Anne refuse to pay, but, after a dispute with Sheridan, she refused to play. Changes had to be made in the schedule,7® and, 73

Bellamy, 1, 112. A Letter to Mr. W—DW—RD, Comedian, signed T. S. This piece was certainly not written by Sheridan or in 1747, as Loewenberg thinks; the phrase I have quoted, "Tommy now is King," is enough to disprove Sheridan's authorship, even if the whole tone were not entirely uncharacteristic of him. Loewenberg errs too about the date, which must have been 1748, since Foote's performances in Dublin did not begin till March of that year. This piece could well have been written by one of the Pilkingtons. Another undated piece, entered by Loewenberg as f? 1758I, belongs to this season (1747—48): Punch's Petition to Mr. S—n, to be admitted into the Theatre Royal. This is signed by Punchinello, who, since all his harlequins have been drawn into Sheridan's company, asks to be taken on at Smock-Alley and offers to play second to Woodward (mention of whom dates the piece). 78 Her fall benefit occasioned such an extra demand for seats that boxes had to be formed on stage (Dublin Journal, November 24—28, 1747). 76As shown by Dublin Journal notices (February 13—16, 1748). 74

 with his own departure threatening about this time, Sheridan must have found her fractiousness almost unbearable. Victor, trying to patch things up, offered to pay her whole account (she goes on to report) if she would "enter into a fresh engagement," an offer hardly possible without Sheridan's consent. "The illiberal treatment" she had had from the manager, however, would have deterred her from another Smock-Alley season even if she had not decided to depart for other reasons.77 She played a month or so more, and then at the end of March, a few days after Sheridan's departure, left Smock-Alley without a leading actress. Some years later, meeting Sheridan in London, she

says: “I was not upon the best terms with that gentleman for more reasons than one. In the first place, I could not forgive his making me pay for the orders I had issued during my being with him in Ireland.” 78 The only other performers to receive constant billing throughout this season, aside from Sheridan himself, were the Mechels. When he had good dancers in his troupe—like the Mechels now, and others in several later seasons—Sheridan introduced dancing not only between the plays but often between the acts and sometimes into the play itself. As we have seen, Burke speaks of the “Pyrrhic Dance” interjected into All for Love; this seems to have been the same piece which Bellamy calls a dance of the gladiators, introduced to make the play “as pleasing as possible” and to counteract the unfortunate effect of Sheridan as Antony.79 Some indication of the importance now attached to dancing lies in the space and emphasis given it in the notices} fairly often, as a glance at the calendar shows, the names of the dances are included, while the names of all but the main actors in the plays are omitted. Mademoiselle Mechel’s benefit precedes Woodward’s. In thus stressing the dance Sheridan, Burke implies, was only giving the public what it wanted. Sheridan tried to please the public by other devices. He dressed his cast of the revived Careless Husband entirely in “the Manufactures of OUR OWN COUNTRY,” 80 “which [Bellamy says] he judiciously thought, would increase at once his popularity and receipts.”81 Considerable publicity, at any rate, resulted and Sheridan tried the idea at least once more that season.82 Other favorable publicity came from 77Bellamy,

78 Ibid,., p. 271. 79 Ibid., pp. 111—112. i, 113. Dublin Journal, January 30-February 2, 1748. For the whole advertisement see Smock-Alley Calendar for February 9. 81Bellamy, 1, 113. 82In The Provoked Husband on February 27 (see Smock-Alley Calendar). 80

Winning the Dublin Public his frequent charities, both personal and theatrical. He gave large sums from his own pocket, lent his musicians for benefit performances elsewhere at his own expense, used the proceeds from his own benefit for charity. These activities were often reported as the lead item under “Dublin” in the Journal, and, besides, they satisfied his own generous impulses. At Smock-Alley, benefit performances were given to persons in distress, The Merry Wives of Windsor playing for one “in deep Distress” under the aegis of Charles Lucas.83 With the performances themselves Sheridan took special pains in his effort to win larger audiences. News items in the Journal indicate that new entertainments were “in Practice” (i.e., in rehearsal) for some time before they were performed; 84 and Sheridan’s insistence that his company act smoothly is reflected in this unique postscript to the notice of a second showing of the farce A Duke and No Duke: “Care shall be taken to have it more perfectly performed than it was last Time.” 85 Sheridan arrived back in Dublin on May 8,86 performed a few times at Smock-Alley, and closed the theater at the end of May. The 1747-48 season, like the preceding one, had had a bad mid-year slump. But this time, when no fortunate accident like the Kelly riot occurred to save him, he had expanded his efforts and, with the help of his company, had saved himself, even turning a winter of despair into a profitable year. The season’s end had left him with several other comforting achievements. Personally he had weathered the most violent criticism, without involving himself in retaliation; he had added seven new roles87 to his repertoire, while he was also much occupied with managerial problems. In the interests of building a more attractive theater he had successfully introduced new permanent regulations; he had tried a Shakespeare series with such happy results that he could follow it with a second; best of all, he had secured from the proprietors a warrant of confidence and sufficient time to gain Dublin’s confidence and make Smock-Alley into the theater of his dreams. 83 This very successful performance, on May 4, yielded the surprising sum of £110, 10/, ηά (Dublin Journal, May 7—10). 84 For example, see ibid,., November 3-7, 1747. 89 Ibid., January 26-30, 1748. 86 Ibid., May 7-10, 1748. 87Archer in The Stratagem·, Antony in All for Love; Varanes in Theodosius; Sir Charles Easy in The Careless Husband; Archas in The Loyal Subject. All these are advertised as “firsts” for Sheridan. Apparently new roles, although not listed as such, were Jaques, and Captain Plume in The Recruiting Officer.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J48—1749 PART OF SHERIDAN’S REGAINED ENTHUSIASM AND DETERMINATION WAS

spent during the summer of 1748 on an elaborate remodeling of Smock-Alley’s interior—the only one of note in this seven-year period, although almost every summer after this minor improvements were made.88 A new passage was constructed to the upper gallery to relieve the crowding caused when both galleries had to use the same stairway. A new passage was also constructed through the boxroom to the lattices. The back part of the middle gallery was made “much more warm and commodious for hearing.”

And the orchestra was greatly enlarged to accommodate “the extraordinary Number of Hands”89 engaged for the season. The new passages must have been of special help in emptying the theater j the modifications in the middle gallery, perhaps including partitions to keep out drafts and keep in sound, were also improvements for the comfort of the public. More surprising, in view of Sheridan’s difficulties the season before with the musically illiterate galleries, would seem to have been the extra space for an enlarged band. Victor, who disapproved of Sheridan’s extravagances this season in hiring too many performers at too high salaries, particularly resented the members of “the Musical Tribe” with their two-year contracts. These “woeful Bargains” 90 included Signor Pasquali, formerly first violin at the opera in London, who was to lead the band and direct the musical entertainments at Smock-Alley; Mr. Lampe, the celebrated composer and harpsichordist from Covent Garden; twenty-two instrumentalists; and at least five principal singers.91 As owner of this costly equipment—the Dublin Journal calls Pasquali’s group “the best Band of Instrumental Performers ever heard in this Kingdom” 92—Sheridan laced his evenings with musical productions, 88 Almost every summer minor construction was reported at the theater. In 1751 the galleries were made still more spacious and commodious (Dublin Journal, August 27-31, 1751). In 1752 alterations and improvements were made (ibid., September 30—October 3, n.s. 1752). In 1756, on his return from two years in England, Sheridan made a drastic change in the upper gallery. 89 Ibid., September 24—27, 1748. The orchestra, note, was no longer in the music box over the stage but now down in the pit (music pit) in front of the stage. 90 Victor, History, 1, 143. 91 The band consisted of ten violins, a harpsichord, two double basses, a tenor (?), a violoncello, two hautboys, two bassoons, two French horns, and a trumpet (Dublin Journal, September 24-27, 1748). The principal singers were Mr. Sullivan, Mrs. Storer, Mrs. Lampe, Mrs. Mozeen, Mr. Howard. 92 Ibid., November 29-December 3, 1748.

Winning the Dublin Public sometimes even replacing the afterpiece with music.93 As a performer Pasquali became more prominent than Lampe (although Mrs. Lampe’s singing kept the name before the public); but over their years at Smock-Alley both men presented a very large number of original compositions, which are emphatically noted in Sheridan’s advertisements. During this first season Dublin enjoyed three new masques with music by Pasquali and two burlesque operas with music by Lampe—these in addition to scores of minor pieces.94 Contemporary critics of Sheridan’s entertainments fail to mention his encouragement to this one of the arts—no small contribution from a man who himself had little use for music. Besides, there were the singers. Some of these could be used in straight acting parts,95 but generally they were saved for the masques, operettas, et cetera j and they also sang within plays, between the play and the afterpiece, after the afterpiece: they sang cantatas, ballads, duets, solos, even a new serenata with words by Theophilus Cibber.96 The importance attached to these pieces can be gathered by the fact that titles of songs to be sung (like the names of dances in the previous season) are sometimes included in the theatrical advertisements. Were people enticed to Smock-Alley to hear “Elin-aRoon” 97 sung by Mrs. Storer ? It would almost seem so. During this 1748-49 season the extra entertainment was almost exclusively musical. Perhaps stung by Burke’s and Hiffernan’s criti93See

Smock-Alley Calendar for 1750-51. See ibid, for 1748—49. It is indicative that last year’s Pyrrhic Dance, introduced into All for Love, was replaced by a short new masque written by Henry Brooke with music by Pasquali. The three 1748—49 masques by Pasquali, which were used as afterpieces, were premiered in Dublin; Lampe’s burlesque operas had been given earlier in London. 95 For example, Mrs. Mozeen and Mrs. Storer. The latter had been acting and singing in the company at least since Sheridan’s first year at Smock-Alley; she was extremely popular in Dublin as a singer. Even dancers occasionally attempted dramatic roles “by particular Desire” (e.g., Mile. Granier as Miss Biddy, March 28, 1751, and Miss Baker as Juliet, March 29, 1751). w Dublin Journal, February 20-24, ‘750. Apparently songs between acts were not specially chosen to fit the play. A performance for Mr. Sullivan’s benefit of The Merchant of Venice, which included many songs within the acts (Sullivan often played Lorenzo “with Songs in Character”) was advertised with various songs and singers between the acts. Later the projected Merchant of Venice was replaced by The Careless Husband, but all the interact singing was kept unchanged (Dublin Journal, February 27-March 3 and March 10-13, 1750). 97This title, like others, varies widely in its spelling in different notices. 94

 cism, but more certainly influenced by Dublin’s rising enthusiasm for music, Sheridan had eliminated the harlequins and dancers of the previous year; now there

were only the members of the cast to perform an occasional country dance after such plays as The Susficious Husband and The Beggar's Of era. The next season dancers were to return and for a few years share the stage with the musicians, whom they eventually nearly replaced; but for the time being Pasquali's band and the Smock-Alley singers held sway. From the beginning the position of Pasquali himself was important and rose even higher; his benefits were as numerous and as well-advertised and attended as those of the top actors. He seems soon to have become a personal favorite of Sheridan. When the new masque, The Temfle of Peace, was staged in February 1749, the music was, not unexpectedly, by Pasquali; but the "Machinery," heralded long in advance as "the finest" ever exhibited here, was conceived and executed by an artist from England, eventually revealed as Pasquali Junior, brother to Signor Pasquali.98 In years to come Sheridan used Pasquali as his deputy in missions that provoked critics to call him Sheridan's foreign minion and other less flattering terms. From the beginning Sheridan had to devise ways to make these Smock-Alley musicians more financially productive. Soon after their arrival they played at a concert of the Charitable Musick Society around the corner in Fishamble-Street,99 and this opportunity recurred off and on. The following year an agreement was worked out whereby regular weekly concerts were to be given for the FishambleStreet musical society by the Smock-Alley band. This arrangement, though profitable, brought complications for Sheridan and sparked one of the most unpleasant controversies of his career. In the meantime, a less explosive solution for the problem of the band was the Grand Festino, a new kind of entertainment which utilized the unused Aungier-Street Theater as well. This playhouse had remained closed during the preceding season (1747-48) except for an occasional ball. Now, in September 1748, the "large Room" 98

Dublin Journal, December 27-31, 1748 and February 7—11, 1749· Ibid., October 22—25, !74-8. Victor {History, 1, I43ff.) claims that it was he who, seeing Sheridan's distress after a season with his "musical Tribe," thought of how to save him by letting out his musicians and singers to the 99

musical society. Hitchcock (1, 200) mentions this move but credits it to Sheridan's judicious contrivance. At any rate, the appearance of Sheridan's musicians before the musical society occurred only a month after their arrival and not a season later.

Winning the Dublin Public there was fitted up most elegantly for a reception to honor His Majesty's birthday. The entertainment, which included a birthday ode set to music by Lampe, was dubbed a "Grand Festino," done in Italian style.100 This festino was a great success, and Aungier-Street festinos, consisting of music, refreshments, and dancing, and managed monthly by Victor, became so much the rage this year in Dublin that a rival series of "Grand Festinatas" started up at the Music-Hail in Crow-Street, in hopes of attracting Victor's customers by more easily attained liquid refreshment. The Crow-Street notice that "Wine and Glasses, &c. will be delivered by proper Attendants as often as called for" counters Victor's announcement that "there will not be any Bottles or Glasses delivered from the Side-Boards on any Account." 101 The Aungier-Street festinos, under Victor and Sheridan, were respectable social events.102 They kept the band busy too. The rest of the freight with which Sheridan (in Victor's metaphor) 103 had overloaded his vessel this season, consisted of players. Woodward had been replaced by Charles Macklin, a more versatile actor but a much more temperamental personality. To prevent the embarrassments of the last season when Smock-Alley had had only one leading actress, Sheridan had engaged several women to succeed Miss Bellamy—especially Mrs. Vincent and Mrs. Bland from Covent Garden. These gave Sheridan little trouble and indeed Mrs. Bland served him loyally for four seasons.104 With Macklin came his wife, Ann, who played minor roles. Sheridan's two-year contract provided the two of them the very generous salary of £800 a year.105 An Irishman returning from London successes, Macklin was greeted enthusiastically by Dublin theatergoers. Not surprisingly, for his first performance he played Shylock, giving the role the new serious interpretation that had won him fame in London. A poem, 100 Dublin Journal, September 24—27 and October 22—25, 174-8. The word jestino is first recorded by the OED for 1741. Apparently festinos had already been popular in London. 101 Ibid., January 21-24 and April 11 -15, *749· 102 Festinos were given the following fall too at both Aungier-Street and Crow-Street, the latter advertising them then as Venetian Balls (ibid., October 31—November 4, 1749). 103 Victor History, 1, 136. 1 104 Mrs. Bland had been mainly a singer before she came to Smock-Alley (Thesfian Dictionary, v. "Bland"). She stayed with Sheridan until 1752. She later became Mrs. Hamilton (see Hitchcock, 1, 196). 105 Cooke, Macklin, p. 77; Appleton, p. 87.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1748—1749 published in the press the following year, describes the effect of his acting in this part: When in the frantic Jew we see him rage, We then no longer view him on a Stage . .

. When from his Eyes the Jewish Vengeance darts Ev'n Nature at her own Performance starts! 106 Usually, however, he played comedy roles, while Sheridan appeared in the tragedies, although sometimes they acted together, both in comedies and in tragedies.107 Particularly excellent as a comedian, Macklin had a flair for originality and (says Chetwood, writing at about this time) always added something fresh to any part.108 His literary talents were also profitable to Sheridan, who used as an after-piece Macklin's farce A Will and No Will, which had been "performed with universal Applause" in Drury Lane.109 Mrs. Macklin, who knew "the Power of her own Talents," played such minor roles as Emilia and Mrs. Peachum. She was noted for the propriety of her dress.110 During this year Sheridan enlarged his acting troupe by discovering Miss Danvers. This "young Lady . . . who never yet appeared on any Stage" first played anonymously as Indiana in The Conscious Lovers on February 3, 1749.111 Some time later she appeared again under the pseudonym of Danvers and from then on she remained one of Smock-Alley's steady players, usually in secondary roles, for many seasons. In using an assumed name (Victor says it was "out of Respect to a Family of Distinction in Dublin"),112 she showed that, while gentlemen like Sheridan could risk their family's reputation on the stage, ladies might still hesitate. And understandably so. When in 1753-54 Miss Danvers left "to try her powers for capital characters" in Edinburgh, Victor anxiously pulled strings to get her under the lwDublin

Journal, September 30-October 3, 1749. For example, The Suspicious Husband (Ranger by Sheridan, Strictland by Macklin) and Hamlet, where Macklin played the gravedigger, or Othello, where he played Iago. This season Macklin played Bayes in The Rehearsal for the first time. 108Chetwood, p. 188. 109 Dublin Journal, December 3-6, 1748. This farce was a translation from the French. Its first performance was for Macklin's benefit; it had sporadic production thereafter. 110Chetwood, p. 190. 111Dublin Journal, January 21—24, 1749. 112Victor, History, 1, 142, footnote. 107

Winning the Dublin Public protection of some highborn lady. "I would, by no means," he explains, "have a recommendation to any gentleman. . . . Gentlemen are inclined to think lightly of actresses, and often with too much reason."113 Though trouble with Macklin simmered underneath and was to erupt the next year, Sheridan's relations with his company were, on the surface, unruffled this season. But to some Dubliners his very presence gave offense. An anonymous satirical piece in the form of a "Letter to the Admirers of Mr. S—N," which appeared sometime during this season, brings the grievances of his enemies down to date, at the same time that it shows, inadvertently, how much progress he had made in winning the Dublin public at large. Among his other offenses Sheridan, "notwithstanding his known aversion to drawing a sword," had overcome two powerful parties (a reference to the "Gentlemen" and perhaps to Hiffernan and Burke?); he had held the affections of Dublin for two years by banishing all rival merit, even actresses (a reference to Miss Bellamy, doubtless); he had relieved the worst plays and worst actors by the dullest of harlequins (Woodward) and dancers (the Mechels) the previous winter, fiddlers (Pasquali, Lampe, et cetera) and singers (Mrs. Storer, Mr. Sullivan, et cetera) this winter—next winter probably tumblers "and so on until he has reform'd the stage of all wit and just action to make room for tumbling, fiddling, capering, juggling, rofe-dancing, and festinism." The details and the style of the personal attack which follows suggest Hiffernan's fine Irish hand: Shall I add to all this, how naturally qualified he is for a tragic hero? whether we observe the languishing deadness of his eyes, his cadaverous complexion, his person, the burlesque of majesty and antidote of love, or his face, capable of no passion but one which he expresses by a constant and indeed very significant sneer. Or what, I believe works more with you [the admirers of 113Victor,

Original Letters, i, 213. (Undated letter to Mrs. Irwin, but Dibden, p. 74, shows Danvers playing in Edinburgh in February 1754.) From the beginning the agreeable Miss Danvers (often "Miss W—" in Victor's letters) seems to have had a special attraction for Victor, married, middle-aged, and, by his own testimony, paunchy (Original Letters, 1, 155); Colley Cibber twits him for the minute accounts he sends of her (History, 11, 208). The first Mrs. Victor died in 1757. It is no surprise, then, when Hitchcock informs us that Victor married Miss Danvers, although he errs in dating the marriage and her retirement about a year after her debut (1, 197); her debut occurred in 1749 and she was still playing in 1758. 13 5

Sheridan of Smock-AUey • 1748—1749 Sheridan], the manner of adorning this excellent person? the index ring, which he so critically displays on his little finger, the jantiness of his motions, or his cloaths in which you doubt whether to prefer the fashionableness of the cut, or the richness of the lace? These, indeed, are powerful charms, and by which he has won your hearts so surprisingly, that some have attributed it to witchcraft. In conclusion the letter reports that Sheridan recently spoke from the stage

about certain “machinations against him from the remains of a certain faction, the known enemies of his person and government.” These frequent alarms of his are designed to arouse the public’s affection by fear of losing him; his reward to them for all the insults and suffering he puts upon them is to call them from his own mouth “the politest audience in Europe.” The machinations hinted at so mysteriously by Sheridan from the Smock-Alley stage may well have been the plan of a group of gentlemen, led by Hiffernan, to open the Capel-Street Theater again and to produce plays in rivalry with Smock-Alley. This plan, announced in the Dublin Couranti was calculated to improve upon Sheridan’s practices: new plays and Irish writers were to be encouraged, and, between Irish plays, there were to be exhibited none “but the most moral of the English.” Novel provisions were planned to encourage native writers: authors were to have all the profits, and their plays were to run as long as house expenses were defrayed; promising playwrights were to be given benefits to allow them to perfect their work; anonymous authors were to receive their “Emoluments” by “whatever Channel they please.”114 In May 1749, earlier than had been expected, this company of gentlemen, “By Permission of the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor,” ran two performances of a new comedy, The Election, written by an Irish author “little known in this City.” 115 The cast, unfortunately, was not named in the Dublin Courant notices. No notice of this company, its proposals or its performances appears in Faulkner’s Dublin Journal—a fact which gives some support to later claims that Sheridan manipulated the press; on the other hand, Hiffernan and Editor Faulkner were no friends, as issues of The Tickler show.116 On June 3 a Sheridan supporter, 114 Dublin

Courant, February 28-March 4, 1749. Ibid., April 2g—May 2 and May 20-23, !74-9118See Tickler, n, 13, where Faulkner appears as “the lying Chronologer” and “Face of Brass.” 115

Winning the Dublin Public writing under the pseudonym of Frank Somebody for The Censor, sharply criticized the magistrate who had promised to support “one free and well regulated theatre” and then had licensed another theater and encouraged a set of nameless actors to present performances in which “personal, perhaps, undeserved Invective should be attempted.” The reference must have been to the Hiffernan group at the Capel-Street Theater; the renegade magistrate must have been the Lord Mayor. Another threat to Sheridan’s monopoly this season added to his anxiety, although in the end it aborted sooner than the Capel-Street plan. In April the last “Grand Festinata” was advertised for CrowStreet Music-Hail, because the proprietors, at the urging of several eminent persons, had decided to turn the place into a theater, “fitted up in as elegant a Taste as any thing of the Kind in this Kingdom.” 117 For some reason this project too fell through and Crow-Street remained unconverted until years later when, under Barry’s direction, it became the site for a new theater, one which finally broke Sheridan as well as his monopoly. During these anxious months in the spring Sheridan held his peace, at least in the public press, and chose other ways to compete for the good will of his company and the public. At the end of May he set aside a benefit performance, the proceeds of which were to establish a fund for “decayed, distrest, and superannuated Players.” 118 Annual benefits and small weekly deductions from the company’s salaries (to which all had “chearfully agreed”) were to support the fund in the future. So sensible was this idea that a letter writer to the Journal signing himself Theatricus wonders why it was never initiated before. People hitherto deterred from an acting career by fear of the many accidents which could disable a player—a disorder of the lungs, the loss of an eye, a limb, or a few teeth—would now be encouraged to take up the profession; and good actors, at present imported and exported annually, would be eager to settle in Ireland, putting the Irish theater (so concludes Theatricus) on a more permanent and respectable basis.119 How regularly the annual benefit was performed is not clear, but in 1751 we find advertised The Susficious Husband, to be 117

Dublin Journal, April 11—15, 1749. May 16-20, 1749. It was not until 1758 that Garrick started something similar in his benefits for distressed actors who formerly belonged to the theaters. 1 1 9 Ibid., May 20—23, 1749. l l s Ibid.,

 given for a “Fund begun for the Support of maimed, reduced, and superannuated Players.”120 Proof of the importance of this latter performance to Sheridan is given by the almost unique note attached: tickets were to be obtained at Mr. Sheridan’s house “in Dorset Street, the upper end of Bolton Street.” This was Sheridan’s home, a place which he tried to keep quite separate from the theater. Of all Sheridan’s many theatrical reforms this first step toward social security for his actors—one, incidentally, which has been hitherto overlooked— shows his imaginative concern for those working with him. To win public approval he provided more genuinely new productions than usual—two main plays and three new afterpieces. Furthermore, both main plays were by Irishmen. Irish playwrights

had not been encouraged for years in Ireland, not since early in Ashbury's regime.121 Yet patriotic Dubliners were eager for them, as Burke, Hiffernan, and the new Capel-Street proposals imply. Now to answer this demand Sheridan risked two Irish-born plays in one season (he was a successful Irish playwright of sorts himself). Neither play used naive material. One, written by Henry Brooke, popular Irish political writer, former pupil of Dr. Sheridan's and lifelong friend of Manager Sheridan's, was an allegorical ballad-opera called Jack the Giant Queller.122 Its first performance, with Mrs. Lampe as Jack and with a new prologue spoken by Macklin and a new comic overture by Sign. Pasquali, met with "universal Applause"; the announcement of its next performance was greeted "with the loudest Claps of Approbation"; and its songs ran quickly into a second edition.123 But the Lords Justices, under what Brooke later called "some Misapprehensions,"124 120IM.,

121Clark, p. 175, and passim. April 30-May 4, 1751. Brooke had composed several other plays before this and in 1750 was to do The Earl of Essex, his most popular piece at Smock-Alley. His works, filled with a strong spirit of liberty, were, Baker's Biogra-phia Dramatica says, often suspect, but those who knew him were convinced of his loyalty to "the present happy succession." During 1745, as the Farmer, he wrote pamphlets supporting the government; later, when Lucas was being persecuted, he became his spokesman in attacking the government (Madden, n, 374). 123 Dublin Journal, March 25-28, 1749. 124Z^iV., February 26—March 1, 1757. This was when it was revived eight years later by Sheridan. In his letter to the Journal at that time Brooke avows that his meaning was always intended to be general, and that "the Author would not write, nor the Manager represent, what could justly give Cause of public or private Offense." The play ran five nights in 1757 without incident. And Victor (History, 1, 197) tells of an earlier revival during his interregnum (175456) by government permission—one which aroused little interest, politically or theatrically. 122Henry

Winning the Dublin Public suspected local applications in its ridicule of bad governors, lord mayors, and aldermen, and they banned its second performance.125 Despite the considerable financial loss Sheridan promptly and without protest withdrew the play from the boards. Like the public, the authorities had to be won to his side. The other new Irish-born play, Darcy's remotely located Orphan of Venice, though inoffensive to the Lords Justices and reported as winning "more universal Applause than any new Piece that ever was exhibited on this Stage,"126 was not the success expected from this enthusiasm. Even though its second performance, which had been deferred once rather significantly "at the Request of the Author," evoked an equally favorable audience response and a request that the play be printed, this performance seems to have been its last.127 Thus Sheridan's experiences with new plays by Irishmen did not encourage him to further trials in that direction. Indeed, this was the only season of his career in which he produced as many as two really new main plays. Sheridan had more luck with the season's new afterpieces. These were the three new masques with music by Pasquali, all elaborately staged. One of them did what the Irish-born plays did not—it celebrated the Dubliners' native land. The Triumfhs of Hibemiay written for the November 4th command performance, had six other performances and turned out to be a triumph for Pasquali. A very special masque, The Temple of Peace, to commemorate "the present happy Peace established over Europe," must have rivaled a similar commemoratory masque at Drury Lane in new scenes, machines, habits, decorations, and especially in "a grand view of the Temple of Peace." 128 The third new musical entertainment, Apollo and Daphne, with music by Pasquali ingeniously introduced comic scenes from Trick Upon Trick, particularly the skeleton scene and that famous escape of Harlequin into a quart bottle. No wonder Pasquali became a favorite of Sheridan's. 125According to Hitchcock (1, 197), it was vetoed the morning following its first performance. This was not the first play of Brooke's to run into trouble with the authorities. Some ten years earlier his tragedy Gustavus Vasa had been banned before production at Drury Lane (Baker, v. "Brooke"). 126 Dublin Journal, March 11—14, 1749. 127 Ibid., March 14-18 and April 11-15, 1749. A benefit planned for the author apparently did not materialize. A poem to Darcy by Philo-Dramaticum, which appears in the May 23-27 issue, salutes him as "the Orpheus of our Age." lzs Ibid., February 14—18, 1749. This was the masque for which Pasquali, Jr., designed the machinery and scenes.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J48—1749 The year 1748-49 was the first uninterrupted season under Sheridan's continuous and permanent direction at Smock-Alley. Victor's prognosis made in mid-November 1748 in a letter to Colley Cibber glows with hopes for the year: "I make no Doubt but the surprising Success of this Theatre has reached you in London; the Auxiliaries we got from thence prove

of eminent Service, and the Profits of this Winter promise, already, to be much greater than were ever yet known in this Kingdom." 129 It is surprising, then, to find him, in his History written years later, quite gloomy about this season, chiefly because the musicians' salaries totaled nearly £1,400 and were, Victor figured, "a dead Loss to the Manager." 130 A gross gain, at least, seems indicated by the fifteen more performances over the previous year's. There is no evidence that attendance fell off; during March Victor writes to Cibber: "We have great houses."131 Because this season is the first uninterrupted one for Sheridan after Garrick started managing Drury Lane (in September 1747), a comparison of the season's offerings of the two managers is profitable. In the production of new plays neither man made much of a contribution to theatrical history. Like Sheridan, Garrick brought out two new main plays and three new afterplays (or perhaps only two). In total number of performances the Smock-Alley Calendar shows 111 performances as compared with 175 at Drury Lane.132 But, despite the fewer performances, Smock-Alley offered more variety in its principal plays—54 different main plays as compared with 44 at Drury Lane. Both Smock-Alley figures are to be explained by the smaller size of the theatergoing public in Dublin. Credit must be given to Sheridan's energy and foresight in meeting the problem of the small audience by providing an attractive variety. In this respect his task was more difficult than Garrick's. During this season there was cross-fertilization between the two theaters, as might be expected. Actors coming from London to Dublin, and vice versa, brought suggestions and successful roles with them. Sheridan often advertised plays as having been performed to universal applause in London.133 Garrick, of course, did not describe plays as lzo Ibid., 1, 137. History, n, 212. Original Letters, i, 150. The letter is dated 1748 (in accordance with O. S.), but references to Macklin and the revival of Cibber's Refusal 129 Victor,

131 Victor,

show clearly that it was written in March 1749. 132 My sources for information about Drury Lane are MacMillan's Drury Lane Calendar and The London Stage. 133 p or exam p] e; β Will and No Will (Dublin Journal, December 3—6,

1748).

14O

Winning the Dublin Public having been first shown at Smock-Alley, but the surprising truth is that Sheridan preceded him over and over again. During this season, for example, two Shakespearean plays never before acted at Drury Lane had smashing successes there. Both of these, Romeo and Juliet and Much Ado About Nothing,13* had been presented earlier at Smock-Alley, Sheridan thus leading the way for Shakespeare-loving Garrick. Sometimes Smock-Alley preceded Drury Lane by only a month or so: The London Merchant,135 for example, was revived at Smock-Alley in April, at Drury Lane in May, of 1749. But many other plays showing in Dublin during the 1748-49 season were not presented by Garrick until several years later.136 Garrick, more creative as an actor and writer, seems often to have followed Sheridan as a theater manager, largely, as has been suggested, because necessity did not press, as it did in Dublin. Variety was essential in Dublin, and Sheridan, as Smock-Alley advertisements show, let hardly a week go by without some excitingly different production. Perhaps it was a revived play, such as The Mistake or The Refusal; or it may have been an old play with some new variation rung upon it, like Theodosius with the original songs set to music by Lampe. Two of the most important and successful productions of the year were the Shakespeare-Dryden-Davenant Temfesty with the Purcell music, sinkings, flyings, and "an extra-ordinary Piece of Machinery representing the rising Sun," 137 and Oroonoko, with a scene never exhibited at Smock-Alley before "wherein Mrs. Lampe and Mrs. Storer will sing the two original Songs, new set to Musick by Mr. Lampe, in the Habits of American Slaves; and a Foreigner, lately arrived, will perform a Piece of Musick on a new invented In134 Sheridan had, we must remember, at least a season's advantage over Garrick, having been sole manager, at the beginning of this 1748—49 season, two years to Garrick's one. (The year before that both men were co-managers in Dublin.) For example, these two Shakespearean plays had been revived by Sheridan before Garrick became Drury Lane manager (as early as fall 1746). The next season, 1747-48, Smock-Alley saw Much Ado About Nothing once and Romeo and Juliet several times. Incidentally, in Garrick's first production of Romeo and Juliet, the following year, Woodward played Mercutio, a role he probably filled the year before at Smock-Alley (full cast is not given). 135 As in London, this play is often advertised as George Barnwell. 138 For example, Dryden's Sfanish Fryar and All jor Love, Vanbrugh's Mistake, Southerne's Oroonoko, Steele's Tender Husband, Congreve's Way of the World and Old Batchelor, Addison's Cato

and Drummer, Farquhar's Twin Rivals, Fletcher's Rule a Wife, Lee's Theodosius. Some of these had, of course, been played earlier at Covent Garden. 137 Dublin Journal, January 17—21, 1749.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1748—1749 strument, never heard in this Kingdom."138 If there was nothing else to draw the crowds, there was always some principal actor in a role new to him.139 While a part of Sheridan's reputation and success as Smock-Alley manager can be laid to his clearing the stage and running an orderly theater, much more must be attributed to the variety of his programs} for, though people might stay away from disorderly performances, an orderly stage in itself, without interest or variation, would hardly be enough to attract them. This fact has been obscured to moderns, who, reading over the Smock-Alley offerings, are apt to be more impressed by their repetition and monotony. Only a comparison with concurrent programs in London and a study of each evening's total entertainment show how Sheridan won his great popularity with the Dublin public. Particularly this last season, relatively placid if not financially all he had hoped, had given him a chance to approach his own high standards and so begin winning a reputation with the Dublin public. 136 Ibid., February 7—11, 1749. The weird instrument is later revealed as a cymballo (ibid., March 28—April 1, 1749). 139 Sheridan added five new roles to his repertory during this year: Heartwell in The Old Batchelor; Maskwell in The Double Dealer·, Oroonoko; and a role in Darcy's Orfhan of Venice. Sheridan also appeared for the first time (although not listed so) as King Henry in King Henry V, revived after five years.

CHAPTER VI

King Tom,

1749-1751

HE SEASON of 1749-50 was full of unpleasant overtones for

Sheridan personally, starting with the inauspicious death of the Smock-Alley prompter, whom Victor describes as a normally "well-behaved, sensible" man:1 Last Thursday Morning, Mr. Harrington, Prompter to the Theatre Royal, being delirious and in a high Fever, in the Absence of his Nurse-keeper, threw himself out of his Lodging Window, and was killed by the Fall.2 Harrington's madness, tragic death, and particularly his occupation as prompter inspired a satiric attack, early the next spring, on all enemies of liberty, of justice, and of Charles Lucas, in a pamphlet titled A Full and True Account of the Woefull and Wonderfull Affarition of HurIoe Harrington. These enemies of Lucas, according to the author, a "Parson Fitz-Henery," are being prompted by Harrington's mad ghost. Some time ago Manager Sheridan hired a sane, well-behaved, and modest Harrington through friends in London (he had served at Covent Garden). But, because a theater prompter has the actors' lives and fortunes at his disposal, Harrington soon began taking over all the powers of the manager—except for command of the cobblers, the porters, and the women, the last of whom the manager insisted upon keeping under his sole direction. Then our prompter went to London to hire actors, tumblers, and fiddlers. When he brought back only Irish strollers already rejected in London, the Dublin company threatened him so horribly that he fell into a fever and eventually threw himself out a window. Since then his ghost has returned, first to the theater, where he began prompting everybody to do things wrong, then to the castle, and finally to all public institutions. Nights, though, he still spends at the playhouse, where he prompts musicians to play "Italiano piano" to Irish ears; a promising young army officer (probably West Digges) to turn actor; and the manager himself "to attempt Characters quite out of the Reach of his Genius and natural Disposition; nay, to expose himself in attempting Comedy, when the 1

Victor, Original Letters, i, 143. September 12-16, 1749.

2 DublinJournal,

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1749—1750 Bent of his whole Body and Soul is to Tragedy, at least, on our Stage." This exposition is doubly interesting. It suggests the power of the prompter in the eighteenth-century theater: Victor reveals that Harrington had gone to London the year before "with commissions for the next season" j3 and within the theater, says Parson Fitz-Henery, no one would think of disputing with him about "the painting the Scenes, or providing new Actors, Guards, and other Attendants for the Theatre." Fitz-Henery's account also reflects the political storm which had broken over Charles Lucas and, peripherally, over Sheridan. Lucas, Sheridan's loyal friend and main supporter in the Kelly affair, had been fighting for his political life during the preceding summer. His troubles with the authorities, who feared him as too radical, filled the press then. In January he was to be "disfranchised from his Freedom

of the City" and in February declared an enemy of his country, as a preliminary to his long exile. Some of the anonymous letters and pamphlets written during the summer in his support were apparently attributed to Sheridan, for whom Lucas had written letters and pamphlets two years before. But Sheridan, arguing that the theater manager was busy enough without engaging in "Matters out of his Sphere," publicly disavowed his authorship of these pieces in a notice which ran for some ten issues in the Journal. "Whilst I have the Honour to be in that Office," he says of his position as manager, "the faithful Discharge of my Duty shall be the sole Object of my Ambition, nor have I Leisure or Inclination to attend to any Thing else."4 Sheridan's desertion of Lucas implied in the word "Inclination" can be somewhat explained by his steadfast determination to keep the peace he had enjoyed since the Kelly riot. But another reason may be found in his private political leanings, to be revealed more openly before and during the theatrical riots of 1754. Sheridan was a Tory, who took the side of the Court party. Lucas was a democrat, in trouble with the authorities for his subversive activities. Almost from the beginning of this season there were complications too in connection with the Smock-Alley musicians. During the last year the band and the singers, it will be recalled, had been occasionally lent out for various charities and benefits. Now a regular agreement 5 was worked out between the Fishamble-Street Charitable Musick Society and Sheridan's musicians, whereby concerts, conducted by Pasquali, 3 Victor, 4 5

Original Letters, i, 143. Dublin Journal, September 12-16, 1749. Announced ibid.., September 19—23, 1749.

King Tom were to be given every Tuesday during the 1749-50 season. (On Tuesdays Smock-Alley was normally closed.) Announcement of this arrangement seems to have stirred up a quarrel over Sheridan's discrimination against "native established musicians" j8 but Sheridan stayed on the side lines in this minor skirmish, and Pasquali's group functioned as planned on Tuesday nights, played many Saturday nights at Aungier-Street affairs, and spent the rest of the week at Smock-Alley, keeping themselves fairly well occupied. Other charities used the band occasionally, for example the Charitable Infirmary on the Inn's Quay.7 These outside activities may have given Dr. Mosse the idea of engaging Sheridan's musicians for his charity, an idea which stirred Sheridan to some tactless behavior and involved him in his most unpleasant public wrangle so far. Dr. Bartholomew Mosse, an eminent and philanthropic Dublin physician who was raising funds to build a new lying-in hospital 8 by concerts given in the New Garden, found himself in a most embarrassing position at twelve noon on March 8, 1750. He had advertised the opening of the New Garden for that time with a "grand Band of Vocal and Instrumental Musick," which was to be continued every fair day until the end of April and from then on every fair evening during the season.9 But, when the usual "polite and numerous" audience had assembled, there was no entertainment. Sheridan had not allowed his band to perform. Because of the clamor which followed, Sheridan felt impelled to defend himself, with notices in the papers, affidavits, and states of the case. Briefly, the difficulty was this: Dr. Mosse had engaged Sheridan's musicians for a long-term arrangement without consulting Sheridan himself. The negotiations had been carried on through intermediaries: a Mr. Storace, band director at the New Garden, acting for Dr. Mosse; and Pasquali, acting for Sheridan. Early in January Storace approached certain Smock-Alley musicians 10 and had word back from Pasquali that Sheridan would e Ibid., October 3—7 and 10—14, 1749. These native musicians, according to the musical society, had in the past asked such fees that little charitable money was left. Now Sheridan was to have the subscriptions, but the "6d. halfpenny fund"—about £100—was to go to charity; also, Sheridan was to perform The Messiah for the annual benefit (usually costing £50 to £60). 7 Ibid., January 9—13, 1750. 8 The foundation of the hospital at the New Garden, Great Britain-Street, was laid in the summer of 1751. 8 [Sheridan], State of the Case, p. 3. 10 Seven of these musicians were bound in articles to Sheridan "in the penal Sum of 300 1. sterl. not to perform in any publick Place whatsoever, before the

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1749—1750 agree to let them perform at the Garden, but only at such times as he "had no Occasion for them."11 Pasquali apparently also reassured his musicians that they might engage with Mosse, that it was not necessary to put Sheridan's leave in writing, and that Smock-Alley rehearsals could be arranged so as not to interfere with the noon-tothree p.m. performances at the New Garden.12 When, however, Dr. Mosse's advertisement appeared, promising musical entertainment in the evenings after April 28, Sheridan informed Pasquali that he would not release the band until he had seen Mosse and received assurances from him that he would not interfere with the theatrical business.13 This demand was not made until the morning of Mosse's scheduled performance, although Pasquali, without Sheridan's authority to speak, had pressed Mosse to see Sheridan the day before.14 But Mosse refused flatly to speak to Sheridan or to permit anybody else to (he said later that he had cooperated with Sheridan

once before and that it had cost him above £50 sterling).15 Storace, however, and another musician, according to their affidavits, did go to Sheridan, who refused to confirm their application and threatened to put the articles in force against anyone who performed.16 So it happened that the usual polite and numerous audience at the New Garden was disappointed in its entertainment that day. Sheridan kept his musicians rehearsing for a production of King Arthur from twelve to three on the eighth of March.17 Once more the press was full of defenses and explanations. The poor confused musicians published signed certificates supporting Sheridan's arguments one week and Mosse's arguments the next week: Sheridan's account of their contract with him was correct, and, furthermore, Mosse knew all about it} Mosse's story of Storace's activities and Pasquali's assurances was accurate, and, furthermore, Sherifirst Day of June next, without Leave first had in Writing from Mr. Sheridan." Four others, though not bound thus to Sheridan, testified that they felt themselves obliged to play for him for the season (Dublin Journal, March 6—10, 1750). 11 [Sheridan], State of the Case, p. 5. 12 Dublin Journal, March 10—13, 1750. 13 [Sheridan], State of the Case, pp. 9—10. 14 Dublin Journal, March 10-13, 1750. 15 Ibid., March 6—10 and 10—13, 1750. The performance referred to was of Judas Maccabeus, which had been conducted by Pasquali on February 21 at the Music Hall in Fishamble-Street (ibid., January 16—20). le Ibid., March 10-13, l 7S 0 · 17 The Man of Honour, but not of his Word, p. 13.

King Tom dan knew all about them. But one musician, a John Kemplin, who had signed the certificate supporting Sheridan, refused to confirm the Mosse account, because, as he said, "he looked on the Band of Musicians . . . as the Slaves of the said Sheridan, and that they ought to be subject to him as such."18 Before the affair was over, even Faulkner, the Dublin Journal publisher, was defending himself in print against rumors that he had refused advertisements for Dr. Mosse.19 On April 10 Sheridan's long-promised State of the Case, deferred by "the Quantity of Business . . . on his Hands" and by unforeseen accidents, was published by Faulkner and included "some Remarks upon the present State of the Stage." 20 This pamphlet in turn provoked anonymous responses: To the Publick and The Man of Honour, but not of his Word, both of which could have been written by Dr. Mosse. After this the affair died down, leaving Sheridan with a few more enemies to be concerned about. This time again Sheridan seems to have had the literal right of it, but his judgment at the crucial moment was hasty and ill-advised. What disturbed him most was that Mosse was advertising evening performances—with the theater's band, presumably21—for May, when the theater would still be open. Sheridan's request to see Mosse personally for further assurances, made as it was through Pasquali, must have sounded like an ultimatum. But Mosse was surely at fault in refusing to speak to Sheridan on the subject. On the other hand, Sheridan's decision to prevent the band's appearance at the New Garden seems unnecessarily highhanded, since it penalized not only Mosse and the musicians, but also an innocent audience which had turned out to support a worthy charity. Some less drastic way of settling with Mosse, one less damaging to Sheridan's own reputation, must have been possible. Relevant to Sheridan's behavior, however, is his state of mind, as shown by his written defense, A State of the Case. In this pamphlet 18See

Dublin Journal, March 6—10 and 10—13, 1750. March 24—27, 1750. He also denies the rumor that Mosse himself sent the musicians' affidavits to be inserted in the paper. 20 Ibid., March 20-24 and March 31—April 3, 1750. 21 Although the author of The Man of Honour (p. 10) asks Sheridan how he knew his band was to be used at the New Garden in May ("What, was there no Music in Dublin, but Your Band!"), Mosse admitted in his early statement to the press that Storace had approached the Smock-Alley musicians for "every fair Morning from March 5th to the 28th of April" and for "the Evening the remaining Part of the Summer" (Dublin Journal, March 10—13, 1750). 19 Ibid.,

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1749—1750 the last ten pages are taken up with near hysterical complaints that he who had done so much for the public should have to take time so often to defend himself, innocent as he invariably was. Why, it is often asked, has the manager so many enemies? The reasons are as varied as their numbers are vast. Some resent his rules for the "well Government of the Stage"} others still harbor a grudge, having been part of that large and formidable body raised against him several years ago; still others, managers of concerts, assemblies, et cetera, having been refused music when it interfered with the theater, feel ill will toward the manager, although he tried to conciliate them by rendering all reasonable assistance. "If it be objected that no Manager before ever had so many [enemies], the Answer is very easy, that no Manager before ever undertook such a Task." In his private capacity, Sheridan rejoices, not many have more friends. And the public voice is much in his favor.22 Although through this period Sheridan generally refrained from replying to attacks and even illustrated to O'Keeffe his

indifference to them,23 Sheridan's obsession with his "enemies" bespeaks a mind not untouched by the many unpleasant things said about him. Interesting light is shed by this same pamphlet on certain problems of theater managership in Dublin at this time. Sheridan argued that if May were cut off by Mosse's engagement with the band, the three months of actors' benefits would have to commence in February and thus would take from the theater itself the most profitable month of the season. Sheridan's expansion of the company, desirable as it was, made it necessary not only for him to have the income from the most profitable periods but also to perform more frequently than before. On Saturday nights the theater had formerly remained closed out of 22

[Sheridan], State of the Case, pp. 15, 19—23. O'Keeffe, 1, 358—359. O'Keeffe tells of an incident in which a gentleman, much agitated, called on the Smock-Alley manager to apologize for the "irreparable injuries" he had done to Sheridan's professional reputation by writing him down in a popular publication. "'I am sure I must have hurt your mind exceedingly,' he said. 'Hurt my mind!' Sheridan exclaimed. 'This is the first knowledge I ever had of the circumstance; and, as to injuring my professional reputation—here! bring the box-book,' (calling out the door to the box-keeper), 'There, Sir, look, I play this night; and, as you see, every box is taken by persons of the first rank and consequence in Dublin; therefore, pray comfort yourself, as to having hurt either my mind, or my reputation.' " O'Keeffe dates this incident "about the year, 1750," and says it was told him by Sheridan himself when O'Keeffe had "the happiness of his company, much to the profit of my own mind, in the years 1775 and 1776." 23

King Tom regard for the assemblies; but during the past season, if Sheridan had not reversed the custom and opened on Saturdays, he would have lost £1,000. These Saturday performances, Sheridan asserts, created other enemies.24 The newly introduced Saturday-night performances were given usually at Aungier-Street, which during the last season and for two months of this had been open for festinos, but which in November was remodeled again: "The Form of the Great Room will be altered . . . in order to have Dramatick Operas exhibited there." 25 After its opening in February Sheridan's players, especially his singers, went over to give Comus or King Arthur on Saturday evenings, and sometimes on Tuesdays, when Smock-Alley was closed. When Aungier-Street was reopened, the Dublin Journal notice reported the event with this N.B.: "The Upper Gallery is intirely removed."26 Taken literally, this would mean a major structural innovation like that accomplished some years later at Drury Lane when Garrick remodeled his stage to eliminate stage sitters. But the fact that three years later Sheridan again advertised upper gallery seats at Aungier-Street (and without notice of any major reconstruction there) 27 suggests that now he merely closed that section or combined it with the middle gallery. The reason is not far to seek. At this very time Sheridan was having more than his usual trouble with the upper gallery at Smock Alley. Early in the fall of 1749 "evil minded Persons" there had once more been throwing "Stones and other Things at the Band of Musick, during the Time of Performance, to the great Disturbance of the Audience, and Peril to the Musicians." For the discovery of any such offender Victor, as treasurer, had offered a reward of ten guineas.28 But the violence went from bad to worse, and two months later Sheridan had to step in with his old threat to close the section, hoping, vainly, that the offenders were "not so much his Enemies, as to do him so great an Injury, to answer no good Purpose to themselves, and, at the same Time, be the Means of depriving a Number of Persons of a rational Entertainment." 29 Instead of closing the Smock-Alley gallery, however, Sheridan tried a plan less injurious to 24

[Sheridan], State oj the Case, pp. 12, 20—21. Dublin Journal, October 31—November 4, 1749. 26 Ibid., February 3-6, 1750. 27 Ibid., February 13-17, 1753. 28 Ibid., October 3-7, 1749. 29 Ibid., January 9—13, 1750. The notice runs to about the 20th. 25

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1J49—1J 50 himself: he doubled the price of the seats there on January 17, and then on January 27 he revoked the rise with a warning that "the same Cause continued will produce the same Effect" again. His notice concludes: It will therefore be incumbent on all such as wish to have the Gallery kept open on the usual Terms, if the same Behaviour be continued, to use their utmost Endeavours to detect those Persons, who clandestinely are in Effect injuring them, by robbing them of a Right which they might otherwise possess, and depriving them of an Entertainment which they might otherwise enjoy. N.B. No Money or Tickets paid into the upper Gallery will be returned.30 It is no surprise, then, when Aungier-Street opened a month later, that it was advertised as without an upper gallery. The postscript in Sheridan's notice was aimed at eliminating another disruptive custom. Earlier, in his fight against odd money, Sheridan had refused to admit latecomers at reduced prices or to return any part of the admission fee after the curtain had gone up. But idle people could still come, sit with

friends, contribute to the uproar until the play began, and then leave. These people Sheridan had begun discouraging in the fall of 1748 by the following regulation: “No Persons will be admitted into the Pit or Galleries without Tickets, which are to be sold at the Offices.”31 For a time after this, people apparently could still circumvent Sheridan’s purpose by buying a ticket and then getting their money back if they left before the curtain. This new regulation that “no Money or Tickets paid into the upper Gallery” would be returned kept some of the troublemakers out and plugged up another loophole. About this time Sheridan ran into another problem connected with admissions. The crowds in Smock-Alley before the doors opened were always barely manageable; but if, as happened once in January, the doorkeepers were late, even the gentlemen, who had come early for good places in the pit, got out of hand. On this particular occasion some found a way in through “a private Passage,” while the better behaved waited outside and lost their chances for seats. Sheridan in a public notice apologized for the treatment these met with and assured them that he had “punished the Door-keepers, whose neglect of coming in proper Time was the Occasion of it, in a most exemplary 30

31

Ibid., January 23-27, 1750. l

Ibid., September 27-October 1, 1748.

So

King Tom Manner.” 32

In trying to keep his theater orderly, Sheridan found it easier to discipline his employees than his audience. The Smock-Alley company this year grew in size and stature although Sheridan lost the Macklins in March in what must have been an especially disagreeable explosion, one which, if Victor is right, had been building up for a year and a half, or almost from the beginning of their two-year contract. Victor reports that Macklin had not been in Dublin a month before he was calling Sheridan “manager-mad.” 83 But Macklin, according to his own biographer, Cooke, was overambitious, unconciliatory, and suspicious in his dealings with Sheridan.34 As a comedian he resented Sheridan’s emphasis on tragedy; and he was particularly offended by Sheridan’s practice of printing his own name, on advertisements and bills, in larger type than Macklin’s—a custom which Sheridan had followed for years with all his fellow actors. In any event, Macklin’s resentment reached the point where he began to measure the print, so determined was he not to yield “a hair’s breadth to the manager!” Sheridan gave in on this matter, Victor says, and the Dublin Journal advertisements amusingly reflect his concession:35 the Macklins and Sheridan share the same typographical effects for a while. But Macklin, obsessed by what he called “marketable fame,” continued to abuse Sheridan in the greenroom, his temper doubtless unimproved by the addition of a rival comedian—none other than Theophilus Cibber—in the fall of 1749, at a time when Sheridan was the only tragic actor of any importance. Matters came to a head sometime in March 1750, when Macklin went on stage one night after the play and announced a z2 Ibid.,

January 9-13, 1750. Original Letters, 1, 160. This was in a letter to Garrick, who had asked him about the quarrel. 34Cooke, Macklin, pp. 195—197. Macklin’s quarrelsome disposition had before this caused breaks with Fleetwood and Garrick and was later to lead to conflict with Barry and Woodward, a lawsuit with Mossop and trouble with Reddish (see Parry’s and Appleton’s biographies of Macklin). Molloy records a story of Macklin’s violence with a well-meaning prompter (1, 239). 35After November 15, 1748, the type changes, Sheridan, Pasquali, and the two Macklins sharing the same largest print. Before that, only Sheridan and Pasquali were so distinguished, the two Macklins appearing in the smaller capitals allotted to the other members of the cast. Later not only was Macklin’s name printed in larger type but it was sometimes shifted to last position in the listing of the cast, the position normally occupied by the name of the leading actress. For the peculiar effect of this, see Smock-Alley Calendar, Pt. 11, Oroonoko, October 27, 1749. 33Victor,

 comedy for his wife’s benefit without first settling the play or the date with Sheridan. Harassed at this very time by his much publicized dispute with Dr. Mosse, Sheridan found Macklin’s breach of theatrical etiquette unforgivable, and he discharged both husband and wife.36 The Smock-Alley Calendar shows how sudden (and inconvenient) this action must have been; hasty substitutions had to be made in plays or roles, and Mrs. Macklin’s benefit with Twelfth Night had to be withdrawn entirely.37 Dismissed from Smock-Alley, Macklin “filed a bill in Chancery against his

manager," claiming that Sheridan had discharged him in mid-season without notice or cause and had withheld money (£800) due him according to agreement.38 But rather than stay in Dublin with nothing to do, he was forced to take the £300 which Sheridan had paid into court.39 Both Macklins then left for Chester and, the following season, for Covent Garden. But if Sheridan made an enemy in Macklin, he regained a friend in Theophilus Cibber, their quarrel over Cato's robe now conveniently forgotten. After Macklin left, Cibber became the principal comedian and stayed at Smock-Alley for three peaceful years. The elaborate advertisements for his benefits reflect his ingenious turn of mind.40 Most notable for this year's company, however, was Sheridan's discovery of two new talents, which so strengthened his troupe that the season almost rivaled the Garrick-Barry-Sheridan winter of 1745. Many times during his career as manager Sheridan was accused of tolerating no rivalry in his own field of tragedy. His engagement of Cibber rather than of a tragic player may have supported the suspicions of other people besides Macklin on this subject. But from England Cibber had brought with him a young gentleman "who never yet appeared upon any Stage," 41 yet who was immediately en3eVictor

5 Original Letters, i, 160-161. Victor's letter to Garrick, in which much of this gossip appears, is undated but it must have been written after March 1750. 37For example, Sullivan's benefit play for March 14 (The Merchant of Venice with Macklin) was changed to The Careless Husband with Cibber and Sheridan. The Alchymist on March 8 seems to have been Macklin's last performance. Possibly Macklin's benefit on March 5 was the occasion of his speech to the audience on his wife's behalf. It is significant that Mn. Macklin's benefit had once before inspired her husband to curious behavior (see Genest, iv, 244-245). 38Parry, pp. 105-106; Appleton, p. 91. 3eMolloy, i, 240; Parry, p. 106; Appleton, p. 91. 40See Smock-Alley Calendar, for example, for March 12, 1750. 41 Dublin Journal, November 4—7, 1749.

King Tom gaged to perform at Smock-Alley. He had come at Cibber's urging to try his fortune "under the auspices of so liberal a manager." 42 He played his first role as Jaffier in Venice Preserved on November 29. And the next night another untried unknown—this time an Irishman —appeared as Zanga in The Revenged From then on, Sheridan had two first-rate competitors in his company—West Digges from England and Henry Mossop the Irishman. There is no evidence from the advertisements that he held these two down in order to preserve his own fame. Within two weeks Mossop played Othello and Digges Lear, both favorite Sheridan roles, and after that, plays with these actors "by Desire" frequently replaced others, sometimes plays that had been scheduled with Sheridan.44 Mossop, Digges, and Sheridan played together sometimes—in Julius Caesar, for example. During the season both newcomers enlarged their repertory, taking over other Sheridan roles, Hamlet (Digges), Macbeth (Mossop), et cetera. That both men became immediately popular is clear from several poems appearing in the press during December 1749—two to Digges and two to Mossop, who is flatteringly compared to Sheridan in one.45 The equal balance of favor shown the two in these poems seems to have been carefully maintained by the manager, in distribution of parts, in advertising, in timing of benefits, and so on. In this delicate situation Sheridan—for some time, at least—was more successful than usual. It is significant that both Digges and Mossop were welleducated gentlemen from good families. Digges's background was excellent, his breeding "Chesterfieldian"; 46 it will be remembered that young Boswell in planning his personality wished to achieve "Mr. Addison's character in sentiment, mixed with a little of the 42 Hitchcock, 1, 204. Hitchcock (ibid., p. 205) gives the wrong date for Digges's opening. i3 Dublin Journal, November 21-25, 1749. It is interesting that, contrary to usual custom, neither actor appeared anonymously. 44 For example, The Careless Husband with Sheridan (December 16) was replaced by King Lear with Digges; Mossop's Othello substitutes for Much Ado About 'Nothing on December 19. 45See Dublin Journal issues from December 9 to 19, 1749. The poem to Mossop, signed "F. R.," declares, "We now a Sheridan, in Mossop find, / To every Act of Nature, like inclin'd." Another poem to Mossop, signed "J. M.," also manages to compliment Sheridan. Victor writes to C. Cibber in December 1749 that he is much impressed with Digges as Jaffier, but as Lothario, although he supported the role "with the necessary accomplishments," he did not appear so advantageously because of "the superior strength of Mr. Sheridan, in Horatio" (Original Letters, 1, 151-15 2). 48 Hitchcock, i, 204.

 gaiety of Sir Richard Steele and the manners of Mr. Digges."47 Mossop was the son of a clergyman and had been liberally educated at Sheridan's university, Trinity College.48 The fact that such men now felt it possible to make an honorable career in the theater was due largely to Sheridan's victory in the Kelly dispute and to the sobriety and decorum which he had instituted

on both sides of the curtain at Smock-Alley. Mossop gained his start through Sheridan, after having been rejected by Garrick and Rich.49 By improving the position of actors, Sheridan could attract men like Digges and Mossopj by recognizing their possibilities and hiring them, he could further improve the position of actors. Although Sheridan's company was more brilliant this season, the record of performances seems somewhat less exciting than for the preceding year. Or perhaps the advertisements merely reflect fewer attempts at originality. The main plays new to Smock-Alley were not new plays except for The Earl of Essex, written by Henry Brooke "upon the Plan of the old one." For a special attraction the characters were "new dress'd, in the Habits of the Times [italics mine]." 50 Notices that plays were "new dressed" are frequent ·, indeed, Sheridan's constant efforts to keep his productions inviting raised the worth of the Smock-Alley wardrobe from £200 when he took over to £4,000 when he left.51 But, despite these announcements and such tag-lines as "with Habits, Scenes and Decorations proper to the Play," we know that normally there was little attempt at historical accuracy in costuming. Both Barrington and O'Keeffe describe the anachronisms here in a most amusing way: Sheridan as Cato in a bright armor under a "fine laced scarlet cloak," topped by a "white, bushy" wig like Dr. Johnson's, surmounted by a helmet;52 Sheridan as Macbeth in a scarlet-and-gold English uniform.53 Sheridan's learning and his respect for the past would have inclined him to prefer historical accuracy. But the price was high. At times he tried mixing modern and ancient dress, outfitting his casts of Richard 111 and Henry VIII in modern clothes but himself in period, and so, O'Keeffe says, looking like a "Merry-Andrew" among his perform47Boswell,

48 Hitchcock, 1, 206; DNB. London Journal, p. 62. Hitchcock, i, 206—208. 60 Dublin Journal, April 17—21, 1750. Brooke adapted from Ralph, who adapted from Banks (Sichel, 1, 244). Victor (History, 1, 146) reports that Brooke "made no Alteration but in the last Act." 51 Mr. Sheridan's Sfeech, 1772, p. 11. 62Barrington, 11, 201. 53 O'Keeffe, n, m. 49

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King Tom ers.64 With The Earl of Essex Sheridan seems to have taken the next step and dressed his whole cast "in the Habits of the Times." Wilkes commends Sheridan for "his cloaths elegant and in character." 55 Of the three plays written by Irishmen and premiered during Sheridan's management at Smock-Alley, The Earl of Essex was the only one to have much success in spite of a rather inauspicious beginning late in the spring of 1750. With Sheridan in the role of Essex— a favorite of his—it soon became part of the regular repertory at Smock-Alley and eventually was the one play from this time which crossed the Irish Sea to London, taken by Sheridan himself to Drury Lane, where it made a good showing as his vehicle in 1761 and without him saw a few performances almost annually for a decade or more thereafter.56 For his "new" plays of the season Sheridan was satisfied to follow Garrick; 57 and his record of new roles for himself seems to have dropped to three.58 But the season's performances are outstanding in one way—their emphasis on Shakespeare. Sheridan's special contribution to his favorite playwright, his Shakespeare series, had been growing in popularity since 1747. Almost every season of his management saw at least two such series and sometimes three. Advance notices placed prominently in the newspapers and headed "SHAKESPEAR" alerted Dubliners that a series of six (or eight or nine) plays would be given at the rate of one or two a week; titles were named; readers were assured that Mr. Sheridan would act the leading roles; and ladies were advised to send their commands to the boxkeeper as soon as possible "to prevent Disappointments." The idea of such a series in Dublin was not Sheridan's. The fall before his debut Aungier-Street Manager Swan had tried a Shake5i Ibid.

65Wilkes,

General View of the Stage, p. 313. to the Drury Lane Calendar (p. 238), the Brooke play may have been revised by Garrick for Drury Lane. 67 In opening Shirley's Edward the Black Prince, Smock-Alley was a month behind Drury Lane. Likewise The Alchemist, "never acted in this Kingdom," had been one of Garrick's best plays for three seasons. Of the two "new" afterpieces, The Chaflet is advertised as "as it was performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane for forty Nights with Universal Applause"; Mock Pamela was not presented at Drury Lane, although it was given in Richmond in 1750 (see Nicoll, m, 402). 58 Essex, the Black Prince, and the King in 2 Henry IV. I can find no record of an earlier performance in this last role, although it is not advertised as his first appearance in that character. The play is a revived one (first time in seven years). 5eAccording

 speare series on the model of the London practice,59 but without success apparently. Perhaps for this reason, when Sheridan offered his first series in 1747, he oifered it cautiously, planning to give it only if the boxes were taken for each play. The importance he gave to the occasion is shown by his press announcement that the plays would be performed with the "utmost Regularity" and that nothing would be wanting to the "Elegance of the Entertainment," even to the use of wax candles, instead of tallow, throughout the whole house.60 The response was heartening enough for a second series a month later. By the following season (1748-49) the "extraordinary Demand . . . from Numbers of Persons who could not get Room in the Theatre" for the first series,61 was so great that a new series was immediately planned and the number of plays raised from six to eight. As early as this, Sheridan had made his Shakespeare series the event of his theatrical season. This took considerable doing, for the plays which were given series after series varied little. Hamlet, Richard III, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice were the staples, with Julius Caesar, Much Ado About 'Nothing, As You Like It, and some six or seven others providing only occasional variation. Nor was there much variety in the principal actor, except once or twice when other actors—Mossop, Digges, Macklin—were given a chance or when the series included The Merry Wives of Windsor, in which Sheridan never acted. Then the principal role of Falstaff was usually played by Isaac Sparks. Sheridan's acting in the Shakespeare series, even in the most familiar roles, continued to be the great attraction. In the last year of his management, after he had played Richard III it would seem almost to nausea, the play was performed with such applause that the Duke and Duchess of Bedford, hearing of its success apparently, commanded it for the next Saturday "as they never saw Mr. Sheridan in that Character." And this, the Dublin Journal is "sorry to add," was to be "the last Time of his acting it" for the season.62 Once, to spark interest in the series, Sheridan allowed the ladies to determine the order of the plays (though not the plays themselves) by the demand they made for places. The results, announced in the newspapers, show a preference for tragedy and for Sheridan's favorite vehicles.63 59

Dublin Journal, November 13—16, 1742. 6 l Ibid., December 3 I-January 3, 1749. Ibid., November 3-7, 1747. 6 2 Ibid., February 28-March 4, 1758. 8 3 Ibid., October 29—November 2, 1751. 60

King Tom Sheridan's organization of Shakespeare into a series, which had the advantage of keeping the dramatist's name prominent and of giving the manager some indication of his house, did not mean that there was no Shakespeare at other times. The same plays recur abundantly throughout the season, and others like The Temfest, never included in the series, were played. In these extra-series productions other principal actors were given more opportunities to take leads; and often actors chose and acted in Shakespeare plays for their benefits, encouraged, we can be sure, by Sheridan. Thus the total of Shakespearean plays during Sheridan's early years increased spectacularly. The 1749-50 season represents the peak of Sheridan's efforts in bringing Shakespeare to Dublin. In 1747-48, when Burke was criticizing Smock-Alley offerings and audiences, advertised Shakespearean performances had numbered only 20. The next season (174849) the figure had risen to 29—the beginning of Sheridan's quiet response to Burke and Hiffernan. Now, in 1749-50, an unprecedented 44 performances out of 143 were of Shakespeare's plays. This year's percentage, about one third of the plays performed, seems to have exceeded the London percentage for the five-year period of 1746-50,64 and gives some measure of Sheridan's achievement. In the variety of the plays too the 1749-50 season is unusual. The year before, with only about two thirds as many plays given throughout the season as at Drury Lane, Sheridan had produced thirteen different Shakespeare plays to Garrick's eleven. This 174950 season he raised the number to fourteen and put three of Shakespeare's tragedies—Othelloi Julius Caesar, and Lear—among his six most frequent plays. Assisting him in passing this miracle were Macklin, whose Iago was almost as famous as his Shylock, and Sheridan's two new discoveries, Digges and Mossop. The popularity of these two, who brought fresh talent to Shakespearean tragic roles, attracted great crowds to plays not normally among the most popular. Digges did six performances of Lear; Mossop, four of Othello. And with Sheridan as Brutus, Mossop as Cassius, and Digges as Anthony, Julius Caesar became a new and irresistible experience. On the staging of these productions Sheridan lavished money, energy, and imagination—the last sometimes so excessively as to provoke outbursts from his critics. Burke decried the burlesque of 64 Hogan (1, 459) for the five years 1746—50 estimates Shakespearean performances at 483 out of 1,814.

 the witches scene in Macbeth, which featured brooms, buffooneries, and jigs65 (Irish, presumably). The witches' parts were often performed by men; and sometimes as many as ten dancing and singing witches romped over the stage. The advertisements for this

great tragedy make strange reading now: “Macbeth . . . with all the Songs, Dances, Sinkings, and Decorations proper to the Play.”ββ Hamlet was interrupted between the fourth and fifth acts by “The Country Revels,” given by Italian dancers whom Sheridan happened to have in his troupe.67 The singing and dancing introduced into both tragedy and comedy depended upon the talent in the company at the time. In the 1749-50 season he had an especially wide range of extra entertainers, who now included not only the familiar musicians and singers but two leading dancers, Mons. Granier and Mile. Vandersluys, both new this season from Covent Garden. Since Dublin audiences were especially taken with processions, processions were provided with every possible Shakespeare play. The funeral procession in Romeo and Juliet was especially admired and frequently improved with solemn dirges; advertisements for Henry VIII stressed Anne Bullen’s coronation ceremony as well as “the Ceremony of the Champion in Westminster-hall.”68 Admirer of Aristotle though he was, Sheridan did not overlook the chance for spectacle. This pardonable emphasis on the lurid, underlined in the public notices (e.g., “Containing, The Death of the Duke of Buckingham; the Fall and Death of Cardinal Wolsey; the Divorce and Death of Queen Catherine”),69 attracted the uninitiated to Smock-Alley. Once there, they stayed to have Shakespeare’s other virtues impressed on them, spelled out in a special tribute which sometimes accompanied an important performance of some tragedy. This might be a recitation of “Milton’s Epitaph to the Memory of Shakespear” by West Digges, “representing the Shade of Shakespear as figured on his Monument erected in Westminster abbey.”70 Or it might be “a Eulogim on Shakespear, the Stage and the Admirers of both,” 71 spoken by the actor Robert Montgomery, a gentleman, scholar, and poet, who undoubtedly had written the eulogism himself. Through 65

Burke, Reformer, No. 3 (Samuels, p. 303). Journal, December 31—January 4, 1746. 6 7 Ibid., March 8-12, 1757. 68 Ibid., April 4-8, 1758. 6 8 Ibid., May 9-12, 1752. 70 Ibid., March 27-31, 1750. 1 1 Ibid., March 27-31, 1753.

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King Tom such encomia Dublin audiences were made to feel their debt to the greatest poet of them all. Not all of the poet’s works were presented by Sheridan, nor were those that were presented always pure Shakespeare. In the eleven seasons of Sheridan’s management, a total of 18 plays—a little more than half of the corpus—was distributed over approximately 295 performances. Most played were three tragedies, Hamlet (some 35 times)} Romeo and Juliet (about 30 times); Richard III (about 29 times). Least played was 2 Henry IV (with only one performance). Among those not played at all were, surprisingly, such now familiar comedies as Midsummer Nighfs Dream, The Taming of the Shrew, Twelfth Night, and All’s Well That Ends Well. Two of these, Dubliners saw extracts from in shortened versions played as afterpieces. Pyramus and Thisbe, a musical afterpiece, ran a few times, enlivened with music by Lampe.72 A Cure for a Scold, a ballad opera taken from The Taming of the Shrew, was revived briefly but had less success in Dublin than another version, Garrick’s Catherine and Petruchio. Still another afterpiece, Florizel and Perdita, gave Dubliners a taste of A Winter’s Tale. Dryden’s All for Love took the place of the more diiEcult-to-stage Antony and Cleofatra. In general, the Shakespeare which Sheridan popularized in Dublin was that which did best at Drury Lane too. But Twelfth Night, given by Garrick in his first season’s management, was never produced by Sheridan. Planned once for Mrs. Macklin’s benefit (she had played in the Drury Lane performance earlier), it was canceled when her husband whisked her off after his quarrel with Sheridan. One Shakespeare play which Garrick seems never to have staged or played in, Julius Caesar, owes much of its popularity during this period to Sheridan. And in reviving Shakespeare plays that had not been acted for some time, Sheridan often set the pace for Garrick. As at Drury Lane, the Shakespeare produced at Smock-Alley was not always as Shakespeare wrote it. The Temf est, which had a great vogue in Dublin, especially during stormy winters, was proudly announced as having been revised by Dryden and Davenant. Not announced as such, but clear from other evidence, was Cibber’s Richard III; and the Lear was in Tate’s version. Other Shakespeare plays 72

Before the Lampe version a performance which was to have included “a celebrated Cantata, The Words by Dean Swift, The Musick by the late Dr. Sheridan” was advertised for May 14, 1746, but canceled when the whole evening was canceled.

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Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1749—1750 are advertised "with Additions and Alterations," the additions probably consisting of the processions, dances, and songs, rather than actual interpolations; the alterations, probably slight changes often made by Sheridan himself to adapt the play to his stage or company. To Sheridan's credit is his early revival of King John (in 1745-46) rather than Cibber's popular Pa-pal Tyranny, a revival encouraged by Garrick's presence in the company and probably inspired by Garrick's performance the year before when Sheridan was acting at Drury Lane. To Sheridan too the eighteenth-century theater owed the restoration of a scene to Hamlet (Act iv, Scene iv), one which, as Davies says, had been "for a long time disused."73 Freighted as the 1749-50 season was with Shakespeare (Sheridan never again achieved forty-four performances a year, though he kept the figure well up in the twenties from then on), it was still the kind of season that delighted Victor most—a financial success. He calls it "the most profitable Season to the Manager; the Sum total was encreased two thousand Pounds beyond any of the preceding Years." 74 Sheridan had accomplished the unbelievable in eighteenthcentury Dublin, a Shakespeare revival,75 without any loss—indeed, with a gain—in his audience and his treasury. Also during this season Sheridan met and scotched the last threat to his monopoly until his return in 1756. For a time during the winter the Capel-Street Theater had again raised this threat by reopening with a company which may or may not have been the Hiffernan group of the year before. Their nature and activities are obscure; no announcements appear in the Dublin Journal because, one critic claims, Sheridan had given a mandate not to advertise any play there. But remarks by this same critic in his Play-House Journal76 and a few notices in the Courant indicate performances of some old plays and Hiffernan's new comedy, The Self-Enamoured, which ran six nights in February and March. Prices were lower than at Smock73Davies, Dramatic Miscellanies, HI, 1 20-121. See G. W. Stone, "Garrick's Alteration of Hamlet," PMLA, XLIX (1934), 910, where the Fortinbras-Hamlet scene with the Hamlet soliloquy is reported as having been missing since the Restoration. 74 Victor, History, 1, 148. 78During the 1670's the Dublin theater had an extensive Shakespeare repertoire, as Clark shows (p. 73). 76 The Play-House Journal, No. I (Thursday, January 18, 1750). This may have been its only issue. Miss Stockwell (p. 109) quotes three paragraphs from this piece.

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Alley and, with Smock-Alley in mind, the prologue spoken at the beginning of their season lamented the decay of the stage when Otway and Shakespeare had to stoop for aid from Madam Vandersluys and foreign fiddlers. Most of the players were people who had been (or were to be) connected with Smock-Alley; 78 they had expected to be joined, says the Play-House Journal, by "two auxiliary princes from England" but "the French King, of Smock Alley" bribed them to come over to him "in modest violation of any sign'd contract." (Were the two princes Cibber and Digges?) By spring the Capel-Street Theater was closed again, Sheridan having crushed the rivalry by more ways than one. Most of the Capel-Street group turn up soon as members of the Smock-Alley company; furthermore, Sheridan himself took a lease around this time on the Capel-Street Theater for twenty-one years, and closed it down except for rare exhibitions.79 Fragmentary glimpses such as these show that Sheridan's struggle to keep a monopoly, although it did not erupt into public notice until after his return in 1756, was being carried on intermittently and under the surface until 1750. From then on until 1754, he ruled without threat of rivalry and became, in fact, what his enemies dreaded most—"Monarch of the Stage." And whereas in 1744, as head of a second company, he had favored financial competition between rival theaters, these years free from that extra harassment were to make him feel that the Dublin stage flourished best when there was only one theater for the limited public to support. WITH THE Dublin public won—not by the monopoly but by Sheri-

dan's own vigorous efforts—the season of 1750-51 was marred only by the unexpected departure of Mossop, who left in mid-March and 77For

The Recruiting Officer, boxes 3/3; pit 2/3; first gallery 1/7; upper gallery I/I. Prices for The Selj-Enamoured were slightly higher: boxes 4/4; pit 2/8Y2·, first gallery I /7/4; upper gallery 1/1. "No Spectator on what account soever will be admitted behind the Scenes; and no Ticket will be returned at the Pit Door after the Play begins" (Dublin Courant, February 17-20, 1750). 78 For example, GifFard, Layfield, Mr. and Miss Mason, Heaphy, Morgan, Pitt, Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Rowley. (Listed in The Play-

House Journal, p. 2). 7 6 M r . S h e r i d a n ‘ s S f e e c h, 1772, p. 11. On December 4, 1753, Mr. Powell the Fire-Eater was scheduled to perform there (Dublin Journal, November 27— December I, 1753). Since he had come from London to perform at the TheaterRoyal (see ibid., November 17-20), possibly Sheridan, if he had the CapelStreet Theater in lease at this time, arranged to open it for him. l6l

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1750-1751 so suddenly that several benefits and plays in which he was to act had to be replaced. Both Victor80 and Hitchcock say that he left after a quarrel with Sheridan, but they fail to record the cause or the date. If Hitchcock’s story of the contretemps over Mossop’s costume as Richard III is true, it must belong to this time, although Hitchcock dates it over a year earlier and speaks of a friendly settlement. For Mossop never played Richard III until March 13, 1751—the day of his last performance at Smock-Alley under Sheridan. Hitchcock says that, as Richard, Mossop “unaccountably dressed . . . in white satin puckered.” Sheridan’s observation that it gave “a most coxcombly appearance” reached Mossop, and the next morning in the manager’s room Mossop spoke to Sheridan emphatically: “Mr. Shew-dan, I hear you said I dressed Richard like a Cox-comb: that is an af-front; you wear a sword, pull it out of the scab-bard; I’ll draw mine, and thrust it into your bo-dy.” Sheridan, according to Hitchcock, is supposed merely to have smiled at this furious onslaught and, by timely explanations, to have brought the affair to a peaceful conclusion.81 But, since Mossop’s first Richard was his last performance under Sheridan, it seems likely that Hitchcock’s story, if it has a basis in fact, was wrong in its conclusion. In any event, Mossop’s temper, unstable at best, could not have been improved by the fact that Digges’s benefit performance had preceded his this spring and had been so successful that five rows in the pit had had to be railed in as extra boxes for the ladies, whereas only four rows had accommodated them at Mossop’s benefit.82 There is other evidence that, after the year and a half of rivalry between the two men, Digges was pulling ahead. But the novelty of both, according to Victor, had begun to wane by this time.83 Because of this and to support Cibber, Sheridan had brought over 80Victor,

History, i, 149. Victor says, “Mr. Mossop went off for London before the Season was closed, on some Dispute with the Manager.” 81Hitchcock, i, 215. Hitchcock’s account of Mossop contains several errors. He says that Mossop performed Zanga three successive nights at his first onset in the fall of 1749. Notices in the press contradict this, The Revenge playing on November 30 and December 7 only. Then for his fourth appearance Hitchcock says that Mossop chose Richard III and it was after this performance that the contretemps with its happy ending occurred. But, according to Dublin Journal notices, in the one performance of Richard after Mossop’s debut in the 1749—50 season Sheridan played Richard. Over a year later Mossop is announced as playing Richard for “the first time.” 82See Smock-Alley Calendar, March 11 and 13, 1751. When Mossop left he went to London and Drury Lane. 83Victor, History, 1, 149. The preceding season Victor had compared these

King Tom this season from Drury Lane the comedian Thomas King, a promising young actor84 who over thirty years later (Sheridan would have been surprised to foresee) was to assist Richard Sheridan, as yet unborn, in the management of Drury Lane. King was good at mimicry and noted as “a great wit” and joker. According to O’Keeffe, he kept the company in lively spirits—sometimes too lively to suit Sheridan, who on tragedy nights preferred his actors properly serious.85 King’s benefit shows his interest in mimicry; he interspersed his part in The Rehearsal with Chocolate and did other imitations of Foote.86 Like Digges, King stayed with Sheridan until the end of 1754; and he was with him again after he returned in 1756. Of the two discoveries Sheridan made this season—Robertson and Montgomery—Montgomery added the more strength to the company, although his career never reached the success of Mossop’s or Digges’s, cut off as it was by a lengthy illness and then death. His obituary recalls that he was not only a celebrated Irish player but a scholar, a poet, and a “Gentleman of exceeding good Character.” 87 To reinforce his women, Sheridan hired Miss Cole, who like King was from Drury Lane. From the preceding season he had, among others, Miss Danvers and his leading actress, Mrs. Bland, who was kept so very busy that when her benefit came round on March 8, 1751, she had no leisure to “wait on the Ladies in Person, her Time being wholly taken up in the Business of the Theatre.”88 Her popularity as well as her activity was at its peak this season. A poem in the Dublin Journal celebrates her efforts and her assiduity: But of real Perfection no Mortal e’er tired, Bland is seen every Night, every Night is admired.89 two actors of five months’ standing in a letter to Garrick (Original Letters, 1, 157). Mossop had at first seemed a “wild, awkward youth” given to imitating Quin; but he was improving, as Digges, more promising at the onset, was not. Mossop had been much supported by the college and the town “to the mortification of Digges, who seems to be a great way beyond him, at fresent, in merit.” Victor’s expectation that Mossop would surpass Digges in the end seems not to have been realized, for the 1750—

51 season anyhow; support for Mossop was apparently falling off. 84 Victor, History, 1, 149. 85 O'Keeffe, Recollections, 1, 360. O'Keeffe's story that King used to open the greenroom door, pop in a joke, and then leave the tragedians untragedized and in a roar of laughter, to the manager's indignation, is retold in Stockwell (p. 107). 88See Smock-Alley Calendar, March 20, 1751. 87 Dublin Journal, April 17-21, 1753. 88 Ibid., March 2-5, 1751. 89 Ibid., January 15—19, 1751. Mrs. Delany reports having been well enter-

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1750—1751 But this season's company was most distinguished by its extra entertainers: its dancers, its equilibrists, and its fireworks' operator. Last season's music, after the affair with Mosse, was to give way to dancing. With the opening of the theater in September, the arrival of Miss Baker, a celebrated dancer from Drury Lane, was announced and two famous dancers were awaited from Paris.90 When these arrived—a Mons. Billioni, first dancer and ballet master to Count Saxe, and a Mile. Pajot from the Royal Opera House in Paris91— they raised the number of capital dancers to five.92 Except for a rare song and an occasional violin solo by Pasquali (the Lampes93 and Mrs. Storer had left), the extra entertainment was provided by these five, supported by other less noted dancers. For some time during the spring the dancers even replaced the afterpiece. Some indication of the importance Sheridan gave them is to be gathered from the place of their benefits in the Smock-Alley Calendar.94 The performer of the year, however, was the equilibrist, Mahomet Caratta, rarely mentioned without the epithet "celebrated." His coming is announced in early November: "Last Sunday arrived in the Packet Boat from Holyhead, the celebrated Turk, known all over Europe for his extraordinary Performances on the Slack Rope. He is to exhibit on Tuesdays and Saturdays, at the Opera House in Aungier-Street."95 With his "apprentice," Giovanni Baptista Perghen,96 who did tricks on the tightrope, he entranced Dublin for tained at a performance of Macbeth (November 9, 1750). "Sheridan acted Macbeth very well, the other parts very tolerably done. Lady Macbeth by Mrs. Bland—a very handsome clever woman, acts with spirit, but wants judgment" (Delany, n, 615). 90 Dublin Journal, September 15—18 and 11—15, 1750. 91Their arrival is announced in the Dublin Journal, November 24—27, 1750. As is to be expected, their names are spelled in a variety of ways, e.g., Billiony and Pachos. 92Mons. Granier was still in the company; Mile. Granier replaced Mile. Vandersluys. 93 The following summer Lampe's death at forty-eight in Edinburgh on July 25, 1751, is reported in the Dublin Journal. He was buried in Edinburgh. 94 Benefits were normally scheduled according to the importance of the performer, with the leading performers fint, the least important toward the end of the period. Second benefits for a few of the most important actors were given after the first round was over. 95 Dublin Journal, November 3-6, 1750. 96 There still exists in Sheridan's handwriting a "check" made out to this assistant of the celebrated Turk: "Be pleased to pay to Mr. Giovanni Baptista Perghen or order the Sum of twenty-five Pounds Irish Money which place to

King Tom nearly three months (from mid-November till February) by balancing almost everything—from nineteen glasses on his chin to himself on the wire, blindfolded with a sack over his head. He stood upside down on the slack rope; and to the particular suspense of the audience he wheeled a child in a wheelbarrow. Most of his performances were on the larger stage of Aungier-Street on evenings when there was no play at Smock-Alley. In December, according to a notice in the Journal, he went through his whole course of equilibres in six nights, because his stay was to be short; 97 but he was still performing in January, even moving into Smock-Alley to complete the offerings there.98 After numerous notices of his positively last appearance, he finally departed for Cork, Limerick, and Kilkenny,89 only to return to Dublin and Smock-Alley in late March for some more last performances. So pervading was his influence that at the end of May the comedian Messink, for his own benefit, advertises performances on the wire after the manner of the celebrated Mahomet Caratta, "being his first Attempt of that Kind in Publick." 100 He survived to give another on the last night of the season. This last performance of the year was climaxed by a new dance featuring Billioni and Pajot, and by fireworks exploded by Signior Gillio "from the Theatre Royal in London." Gillio had taken over at Smock-Alley soon after Caratta finally left.101 When the Smockthe Account of/Your humble Servant/Thomas Sheridan," (quoted by permission of the Harvard College Library). Sheridan's order is dated March 30, 1751; the check is endorsed to John Hincks in Chester on April 6, 1751. 97 Dublin Journal, December 8—11, 1750. 98See Smock-Alley Calendar for January 1751. 98 Dublin Journal, March 9—12, 1751. Even in January Sheridan was promising Caratta's departure: "We hear that Mr. Sheridan intends to appear in the Character of the Earl of Essex on Monday se'nnight the 4th of February, being the first Time of his performing since the Holydays. We can assure the Publick that the celebrated Mahomet Caratta will not perform any longer in

this city than the ensuing week, and that his Departure is absolutely fixed for Monday se'nnight" (ibid., January 22-26, 1751). Although the last sentence was written to lure the public to the equilibrist's final performances, its somehow apologetic tone suggests Sheridan's true attitude. 100 Smock-Alley Calendar, May 21, 1751. 101 His first notice for Smock-Alley calls it the second time of his showing in this kingdom (Smock-Alley Calendar, April 27, 1751). Gillio continued his fireworks during the summer at Marlborough Green, after the theater closed. A touching note to the press (Dublin Journal, August 13—17, 1751) says that because Gillio was unfamiliar with the language he could not pay his respects before his benefit.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1750—1751 Alley stage proved too small for his best efforts, the company moved over to Aungier-Street for "Fireworks of a more magnificent Kind than any hitherto performed, as the Largeness of the Stage will admit of it."102 Equilibrists and fireworks may have fascinated the town this season, but they were not to Sheridan's taste. The important accomplishment for him must have been the increase in the number of performances and the opening of more new plays than in any previous season. Starting with only two and three performances a week in 1746-47, Sheridan was able to make this announcement by October 1750: "There will be performed for the future, at the TheatreRoyal, four Plays each Week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, besides occasional Plays other Nights." 103 With the occasional plays on other nights (often at Aungier-Street), Sheridan actually achieved a five-night week regularly, and frequently (especially from mid-November to Christmas and during the spring benefits) a six-night week. In all, despite a two-week closing in April because of Prince Frederick's death, Sheridan raised the number of performances to 157 for this year, some fourteen over the number of the preceding season, which was itself a record. In the number of new plays this season sets another record—six main plays and three afterpieces. Two, at most three, new main plays a year were normal both at Smock-Alley and Drury Lane during this period. As usual, most of the new plays in this season of 1750-51 were "new" to Smock-Alley rather than performed for the first time. But even in three of these Sheridan led the way for Garrick. Edmund Smith's Phaedra and Hiffolitus and Nicholas Rowe's Lady Jane Grey were not produced by Garrick until the following year, Mossop, then at Drury Lane, having apparently reported favorably on them. (He played the lead in both there, and, curiously, was supported by George Anne Bellamy.) The Chances, by Fletcher, altered by Buckingham, did not show under Garrick until two seasons later. Sheridan followed Garrick in Aaron Hill's Merofei which he opened late in the season (May 11) and in Whitehead's Roman Father, to become one of his favorites. Happily, an Englishman who had seen the Drury Lane performance was at Smock-Alley for the opening of The Roman Father and writes his reaction in a rare letter 102Smock-Alley 103

Calendar, May 18, 1751. October 13—16, 1750.

Dublin Journal,

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King Tom to the Dublin Journal. Surprised to have seen so much justice done this noble tragedy, he found it as well performed at Smock-Alley as at Drury Lane. Yet he wonders at the different response of the audience: the glorious sentiments of patriotism had been clapped vigorously in London, but in Dublin "though the Actor received the Applause due to his Merit . . . the poor Author was entirely neglected, and some of his most masterly Strokes passed unheeded by." The letter writer himself tried to lead applause for them but was not supported, indeed was eyed as singular. In conclusion, he hopes that all patriots will be at the play next Thursday to have the pleasure of hearing such sentiments and sharing the joy which comes from knowing that such sentiments "produce proper Fruits in the Hearts of their Fellow-hearers." 104 But not all Irishmen were so wildly enthusiastic about their government, as their behavior three years later (almost to the day) would show. Then a Smock-Alley audience was to respond to some patriotic sentiments for a reason unimagined by this loyal Englishman—and in a manner unforeseen by the loyal Sheridan himself. The only play advertised as "never acted before" was Don Sebastian, altered from Dryden not by Sheridan this time, but by someone else employed to bring it into bounds.105 Five years earlier Sheridan's curtailment of this overlong play had had only one night. This later revision was not much better received, with three performances. Very successful, however, was a new afterpiece, Garrick's Lethe, which became as popular in Dublin as in London. Sheridan, who hardly ever performed in afterpieces, took no part in Lethe; but, since he acted the leads in most new main plays, he added more than the usual number of new roles to his repertoire this season—perhaps as many as seven.106 All this was made less of wi Ibid., February 23—26, 1751. The letter writer must have had in mind such passages

as “All private Duties are subordinate/To what we owe the Public . . “Yet still superior must that Heroe prove/Whose first, best Passion is his Country’s Love.” 105 A letter to ibid., March 12-16, 1751, signed “J. K.,” tells about the revision. It is not clear that J. K. is the reviser, but cuts, additions, and a change in the catastrophe are mentioned. ioe Theseus in Phaedra and Hiffolitus ·, the Roman Father; Eumenes in Merofe·, Pembroke in Lady Jane Grey; Dorax in the new version of Don Sebastian; and the surprisingly minor role of Trusty in the revived Funeral. He also acted Ventidius in All for Love for the first time in six years. And apparently the part of Strictland in The Susficious Husband was new to him, although not so advertised.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1750—1751 a burden by the fact that he himself did not start the season until almost a month after the theater opened, and he took an unusually long rest after Christmas107—more possible than hitherto because of the support from Mossop and Digges. In addition, he began the practice of not acting in his players’ benefits, which were exceptionally numerous this season, occupying four nights a week from early March to the end of May. This new policy must have relieved company tensions as well as Sheridan’s acting burden ·, but this year, for the second benefits taken by a few top players in May, he relaxed his new policy. Although in the future he almost undeviatingly abstained from players’ benefits, he was always generous toward charitable performances and he made it a habit to appear for one of his actors—Isaac Sparks, the Captain O’Blunder of his Brave Irishman. Although the Shakespeare series fell off, the usual spring series having been abandoned perhaps because of the two weeks of mourning or perhaps from a Shakespeare surfeit the year before, this season rivaled the 1748-49 one for the variety and interest of its offerings. Writing in December 1750 to Sir William Wolseley, Victor exclaims: “The entertainments of Dublin were never in so high a tide as now. We have the famous Turk from London, who exhibits at Aungierstreet Theatre, on Tuesday and Saturdays; and we have four plays a week, at Smock-alley Theatre, from all which I have received six hundred pounds a week, for many weeks past—great doings for Dublin!”108 If the average of £100 a night suggested by Victor’s letter was maintained through the 157 performances of the season (and the steady playing would seem to show a steady demand), this was hardly a losing season financially, in spite of the mourning period in April and the numerous benefits. “Great doings for Dublin!” Although Victor’s later History lacks enthusiasm for this season,109 the spontaneity of his on-the-spot re107His first performance in the fall was October 15; after Christmas, February 6. 108 Victor, Original Letters, 1, 164. 109 victor, History, 1, 149. Here Victor reports from memory not only that Digges and Mossop had lost their novelty, but that Mrs. Bland was unable to support all the characters, and, even worse, that Mossop had left for London before the end of the season. “This therefore,” he concludes, “may be supposed (if compared with the last) to be a losing Winter.” Victor seems to have in mind the stature of the company rather than the financial record of the year; and his vague “may be supposed” implies a backward guess rather than a factual remembrance.

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King Tom action conveys the excitement Sheridan had aroused in his public. This, more than great financial success, was important to him. His rivals and critics having at last subsided, he was now giving himself totally to his task, withdrawing, he later claims, so far from all other interests that he became “almost a Stranger in the City of his Birth.”110 His reward, he points out, was the riot of 1754 and the destruction of all his work. But in the meantime as “Monarch of the Stage” he was to enjoy several peacefully productive seasons notable for the variety of their performances and the brilliance of their casts. 110

Sheridan, A n Humble A f f e a l, p. 23.

CHAPTER VII

Qalm cBefore Storm, 1751-1753

T HE SEASON of 1751-52 became one of Smock-Alley’s most brilliant for several reasons. A new Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Dorset, returned (he had been Irish viceroy before) to replace the socially moribund Harrington, whose recall to England Dubliners celebrated with bonfires.1 Sheridan must have done a bit of celebrating too, for the chronically ailing Harrington had given the theater minimal support, commanding—with few exceptions— only the performances required of the theater-royal, those for royal anniversaries. Victor, early in Harrington’s five-year viceroyalty, complained of this neglect in a letter to Colley Cibber: “Our present Lord

Lieutenant remains in the utmost Obscurity; he has been at no one Place of Entertainment since he came." 2 But Dorset, his lady, and his son, Lord George Sackville, in their support of the theater and other arts, were to bring back the glories of the Chesterfieldian era some six years earlier. Indeed, although Chesterfield was more noted for his patronage, Dorset was probably more loyal in fact. In mid-October the viceregal couple made their first appearance at the theater, which was illuminated with wax and packed with nobility and gentry for the occasion. They were greeted with "uncommon Testimonies of Joy" and treated to a special prologue on the event spoken by Sheridan himself, and apparently written by him. The gist of this piece was that Dorset had come to dispel night: His Presence here fresh Vigour shall inspire New warm the Poet's Lay, new rouze the Actor's fire. The stage, in turn, would offer him relief from his weightier cares; and even our youth (here we see Sheridan's hand) would profit as they saw the hero on the stage materialized in the person of the Duke.3 Dorset may have been pleased with this effort but The Nettle was not. This little sheet in its only issue, dated October 24, shows what Sheridan critics had been reduced to by 1751—attacks not on 1 CMahony,

p. 156. History, 11, 214 (Letter of November 17, 1748). 8 Dublin Journal, October 15-19, 1751. 2 Victor,

Calm Before Storm Sheridan's offerings, company, acting, or person, but on his poetic abilities. Sheridan was no Alexander Pope. To demonstrate this, The Nettle dissects the prologue, "spoken and said to have been written by the Manager," line by line, because "nothing serves to instruct young Geniuses in the poetic way so much as the unfolding the mechanism of any original work to them, and shewing whence the auxiliary images are drawn." For example, commenting on the first line of the couplet quoted above, The Nettle has this to say about "fresh vigour": "Heaven grant it, for it is much wanted." But particularly wonderful to The Nettle is the Alexandrine which follows (in the second line above), "wonderful for the down-hill familiarity of the images." For, "Be it known to you, O Reader we are now in the profoundity of the Kitchen. 'New warm the poet's lay' excites the necessary idea of a sauce-pan, to new-warm soup, milk, or any substance in a cool, phlegmatic, and vapid state, such as the poets lay, is commonly served in, to us from Smock-Alley stage. 'New rouze the actor's fire.' Admonished by this expression who does not find his fingers impatient to seize the recreant poker, and with its fire-proof point rouze the dormant coals from their inactive lethargy. . . ." Recited in a hobbling, abject manner, this travesty of Pope, says The Nettle, would have been bad enough if it had been allowed to pass into deserved obscurity unnoticed} but its publication (in the Dublin Journal, regularly exported to England) was unpardonable. "What must they think in London when they read such a prologue. . . ." One amusing passage in The Nettle describes an important moment in a Smock-Alley evening. The prologue begins with Dorset metaphorically dispelling the Harrington pall: "Our tedious night/ At length is broke by a meridian light." But the image itself, The Nettle japes, is borrowed from "the heaving up of the lamps on the stage . . . which affords great joy to those benighted in the galleries from three to seven in the evening." This blazing spectacle regularly brings a response from the audience recorded by The Nettle in two lines of its own, which, the author says, could be added to the prologue without hurt: ". . . our Gallerians view the rising lamps/ Hailing them with an universal—0." Relief at last from boredom, restlessness—and semidarkness! The word "benighted" in the quotation above is to be taken literally. From mid-October 1751 on, the Lord Lieutenant not only commanded the usual anniversary plays, but he and the duchess ordered

 a play almost weekly. How much part those who "commanded" plays took in the selection of them is problematical. Some viceroys, among them Dorset, seem to have used their right of choice more than others j Victor, as deputy manager, waited on the Duke of Dorset every Friday morning to receive his commands for the next week.4 For other, less interested Lord Lieutenants the manager may have planned the program and been grateful for the chance to advertise that it was by command. The viceregal presence must have had a sobering effect on the upper gallery, for in these later years, when command performances are numerous, we hear nothing about that section. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the duke and duchess would have attended so frequently if the house had been the "bear-baiting" arena it was before Sheridan's time. Thus the benefits were probably reciprocal. Some idea of the splendor with which the Dorsets surrounded themselves can be imagined from the description of a grand and superb ball attended by the viceregal couple, the nobility, and the gentry, and given at Aungier-Street Theater in March of this year. As on the earlier occasions of festinos and ridottos, the pit must have been floored over; and the room, illuminated by twelve hundred large wax candles, was

decorated lavishly with “Orange Groves, Myrtles, Bays, Jessamins, Trees in Blossom and full grown, Fruits of all Sorts,” to say nothing of statues, rocks, grottoes, caverns, and cascades with perfumed water. Above, the ceiling was painted with the moon and stars to imitate night but there was also a representation of the morning with the rising sun. Instrumental and vocal bands provided music from different parts of the house. After an elegant supper, the ball was opened.® There had been a viceregal command performance of The Distrest Mother earlier that night at Smock-Alley, with Sheridan playing the leading role. With both his theaters utilized in one evening, and with himself probably an important figure at both functions, this must have been as gratifying a night for Sheridan as for the ducal couple. The other leading player in The Oistrest “Mother that evening was Mrs. Peg WofEngton, and she even more than the viceroy added luster to the 1751-52 season. When she came to Dublin a few months 4

Victor, History, i, 203. Journal, March 3—7, 1752. The month before, on February 15, Mrs. Delany wrote, “On Thursday morning we went to see the ball-room, that is the great play-house converted into a ball-room.” Lord Belford, her stepsoni n l a w, w a s “ c h i e f m a n a g e r a n d c o n t r i v e r “ (A u t o b i o g r a f h y, 111, 8 8) . 6 Dublin

Calm Before Storm earlier after disagreements with Quin and Rich,6 it was not at Sheridan’s invitation. And strangely enough, according to Victor, though she intended to stay in Dublin the next winter, Sheridan had “no thoughts of making her any overtures.”7 He had other plans and other prospects for the season: a new dancer, Mr. McNeil from Drury Lane, to replace Mons. Granier; Italian singers and operas8 (these did not materialize); and a large variety of new players. The new players included Mr. and Mrs. Davies (Davies later was to introduce Boswell to Johnson and to become Gar rick’s editor and biographer) j Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy (Mrs. Kennedy, as Miss Orfeur, had been with Sheridan before); Tottenham Heaphy, who made his first attempt on Smock-Alley stage in October and who was to become important in Dublin theatrical affairs j and Mrs. Lee, who with Mrs. Bland was to play the leading female roles, beginning with Juliet to Digges’s Romeo.9 Again according to Victor, Sheridan was not easily persuaded to believe Mrs. Woffington superior to Mrs. Bland, but, pushed by friends, his “good genius” prevailed and he hired Woffington for the one season only, at £400. The “Happy Consequences of that Engagement,” Victor elsewhere remarks, “are recent in the Knowledge of everyone who frequented the Theatre of that Time.” 10 Whether Victor is right or not in his observation and memory of Sheridan’s attitude, one thing is clear. From the moment he hired her, Sheridan behaved as though he had secured a great prize. Her first performances received special notice by extra large advertisements and type 11 (all this before she had appeared at all). Her first e The Dublin Journal (August 13—17, 1751) reports that on August 15 “the celebrated Mrs. Woffington arrived here from England.” Speaking of her de-

parture from Covent Garden, Bellamy (1, 171) says that “she took dudgeon, and set off for Dublin; where her beauty alone would insure her success.” With Drury Lane closed to her, Garrick, “her quondam admirer,” choosing rathor to appear with Mrs. Pritchard (Bellamy, 1, 124) and with Covent Garden now unavailable, it was natural for her to go back to her home city, where she had first acted as a child, where her mother still lived, and where she had made an earlier triumph when she returned with Garrick in the summer of 1742. Sheridan had known her from this time, if not before. (See Ch. 1.) 7 Victor,

s Ibid., p. 185. Original Letters, 1, 174. Smock-Alley Calendar, October 7 for Heaphy’s debut; September 30 for Mrs. Lee’s. 9 See

10 Victor,

Original Letters, 1, 185; History, 1, 151. for The Distrest Mother (see Dublin Journal, October 1—5,

11 Particularly

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Sheridan of Smock-Alley · /75/-/752 role was as Lady Townley in The Provoked, Husband (Sheridan played Lord Townley); two nights later she appeared as Andromache to Sheridan’s Orestes in The Distrest Mother. In less than a week the Dublin Journal was reporting that Mrs. Woffington’s performances continued to draw “the most crowded Audiences hitherto known.”12 Sheridan’s engagement of Peg was even luckier than it seemed on the surface, for Mrs. Lee did not work out as expected. From the beginning, WofEngton took over the leading female parts and appeared almost nightly. Mrs. Bland continued to play, in secondary parts or on rare nights when Mrs. WoiEngton did not. One wonders how Mrs. Bland took her decline from public favor, especially how she felt when after

being advertised for the leading role, now rare for her, in a viceregal command performance of Richard III, she was replaced “by Desire” by Mrs. WoiEngton, who had never played the part before.13 The four players—Sheridan, Digges, Woffington, and Bland—appeared together frequently. With these four actors at the top the Smock-Alley company was stronger than it had been for some time. To say that Peg WoiEngton was a success in Dublin is a pale understatement; she was a sensation. The fever which she, and the theater too, generated this season reechoes in the press. She is praised effusively for many talents: for her elegant deportment, her unaffected ease and vivacity in comedy, her majestic pathos in tragedy; for her beauty, her eyes, her goddesslike form; for her skill in making every character her own. She is hailed for her portrayal of Constance in King John, of Andromache and Hermione in The Distrest Mother, of Lady Townley, of Coriolanus’ mother.14 Especially noteworthy in view of Sheridan’s interests is mention of WofEngton’s distinct, articulate pronunciation, observed by one correspondent who describes her as a “compleat . . . Mistress” of “Oratory or Declamation.”15 These encomia appear in all forms: in press items, in letters, in poems. One verse writer sings in Latin about the worth of “WofEngtonia,” who herself could hardly have been expected to appreciate his effort; fortunately an English translation of the piece was provided in a later issue, which perhaps indicates that the interest 12 Ibid., October 8—12, 1751.

13 This was on February 13, 1752. Journal, October 8—12; October 19-22; November 30—December 3, 1751; February 29-March 3, 1752. 16 Ibid., February 29—March 3, 1752. 14 Dublift

Calm Before Storm in Peg was felt to be general and not confined to the educated classes.16 The other actors of the company were overshadowed, although Sheridan received his usual share of tributes. One of these is amusing if Victor was right in his picture of a reluctant Sheridan, engaging Woifington only through pressure from friends. As an afterthought in a fulsome poem to the actress, Sheridan was thanked for the reformations he had brought to the stage after the dark ages of the Goths and Vandals: For this we owe you much, but more is due, We owe our darling WOFFINGTON to you.17 During this first season at Smock-Alley her two benefits18 were gala affairs, both commanded by the Duke and Duchess of Dorset, and, even more unusual, both supported by Sheridan, who otherwise was tightening his custom of not acting for his players. At the first benefit she spoke a special epilogue; and the demand for places was so great that the whole pit was “laid open to the Boxes for the Convenience of the Ladies.” 19 Not all the actors, we gather from Dublin Journal notices, were so successful in getting together an audience for their special performances. But Woffington herself had the reputation of being most generous in giving her time and talents to the benefits of others. During this year, for example, she is advertised as playing in twenty-two benefits out of a total of twenty-six.20 Both Hitchcock and Victor report Woffington’s contribution to Smock-Alley in terms of cold cash. In this 1751-52 season she played the lead in The Non-Juror, The Provoked Husband, The Constant Coufle, and The Distrest Mother and kept them going for ten nights apiece. The receipts of these forty nights were “upwards of £4,000”—”an instance never known at that time, or perhaps since, on the Irish Stage, to four old stock plays, as in the dramatic phrase they are denominated.”21 Mrs. Lee, it will be recalled, had not worked out as Sheridan had hoped. Her first appearance, as Juliet, took place just a week before 16 Ibid.,

December 31-January 4 and January 11-14, 1752. Ibid., October 19-22, 1751. 18See Smock-Alley Calendar, March 9 and April 20, 1752. 19 Dublin Journal, February 29—March 3, 1752. 20Not, as Hitchcock reports, twenty-four out of twenty-six (1, 221). 21 Ibid., p. 220. See also Victor (History, 1, 151), who is especially surprised that these four did so well when “the Manager acted no Part” in two of them. 17

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 Mrs. Woffington’s. But she failed to please,22 and, even more than Mrs. Bland, fell into obscurity and minor roles. We can judge her status by the fact that her benefit, as originally planned, was to be shared with the very subordinate Mrs. Rowley. But from this ignominy she was saved when her husband, John Lee, made arrangements to come to Dublin from Drury Lane, where he was finishing out a stormy contract with Garrick.23 Her benefit was deferred until his arrival in May and together they acted Romeo and Juliet, advertised as “With Alterations, as performed at the Theatres in England.”24 Hitchcock’s rare sneer that Mrs. Lee “chose to treat the town with an exhibition of her own Juliet” 25 tells something of the company’s reaction to Mrs. Lee and her ideas. After the benefit, which was Lee’s only appearance at Smock-Alley for the time being, he and his wife left for Edinburgh, where he was to manage a new theater. But Sheridan had not seen the last of them. Five years

later a public quarrel with Lee, back again in Dublin with his wife, added to Sheridan's troubles when he was fighting for his managerial life.26 And even after that their careers crossed occasionally. When the theater opened in the autumn of this season, the galleries had been made "more Spacious and Commodious" than before.27 The changes there, which had occupied part of the summer and which seem to have been the most elaborate in three years, came none too soon to accommodate the growing crowds. Even so, the demand for gallery seats at Victor's benefit (March 20) and again at Sparks's benefit (April 15) was so extraordinary that both men seized the chance to double upper gallery prices, at the suggestion of their "Friends." 28 This was not an outstanding year for new plays, either at Smock Alley or at Drury Lane. At Smock-Alley three plays acted elsewhere first but never there were produced: Zaraj by Voltaire and Hill, not produced by Garrick until 17545 The Rover, by Mrs. Aphra Behn; 22 A Letter from Mr. Lee to Mr. Sheridan, 1757, quotes a letter from Sheridan to Lee in which Sheridan indicates that Mrs. Lee had not been well received in Dublin during this 1751—52 season (pp. 3-5). 23 DNB, v. "Lee, John." The Rowley-Mrs. Lee benefit had been scheduled for April 22. 24 Lee's arrival is announced in the Dublin Journal, May 2-5, 1752; the Romeo and Juliet notice appears in the May 9-12 issue. 25 Hitchcock, i, 221. 26 See below, Ch. ix. 27 Dublin Journal, August 27—31, 1751. 28 See Smock-Alley Calendar for those dates.

Calm Before Storm and Southerne's Fatal Marriage, altered by Garrick and produced by him two years earlier.29 The only really new play given at Smock-Alley was Coriolanus. Three years before, in the late spring of 1749, Sheridan had planned to stage Thomson's version of the Coriolanus tragedy and had in fact brought the piece almost to production, deferring it once and then postponing it till next season "because of an Indisposition of a principal Player."30 But the next season nothing was heard of the play, which had been a failure at Covent Garden. Now, in February of 1752, Sheridan announced a new tragedy never before performed called Coriolanus and taken partly from Shakespeare and partly from Thomson.31 Sheridan himself had been the surgeon who had grafted the two versions together. Although we know from press reports and contemporaries' comments that Sheridan altered, less extensively, a number of other plays, this combination of two very different works into one play is the only one of his revisions to come down to us. It was first published in 1755.32 The play ran five nights at Smock-Alley during the spring of 1752 and was revived successfully in later seasons, doing well even at Covent Garden when Sheridan was there to play in it in 1755. As the basis for John Philip Kemble's version, which restores more of Shakespeare but keeps some of Sheridan's excisions and additions, it had an influence well down into the nineteenth century. Sheridan always staged it with a most elaborate spectacle, representing on stage a Roman ovation and employing, at some performances, as many as 118 persons.33 An eighteenth-century reaction to its opening night in Dublin, recorded in a letter to the Journal, expresses surprised enthusiasm. The writer admits that after reading the advertised descriptions of the work he had had his doubts (as who wouldn't?), but he was delighted to find that the play had "its own 29 Of the three new afterplays apiece for each theater, Woodward's Harlequin Ranger was the only one produced by both. The Constant Caftives and A Lass to be Let were new at Smock-Alley; both were pantomimes, the first very popular. zlIbid., February 1-4, 1752. 30 Dublin Journal, May 23-27, 1749. 32 [Thomas Sheridan], Coriolanus: or, the Roman Matron. A Tragedy Taken from Shakespear and Thomson. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in CoventGarden: To which is added, the Order of the Ovation, London: A Millar, 1755. 83 For a fuller analysis of how Sheridan combined the two plays, how he staged the ovation, and what significance the work has for the eighteenth and nineteenth century, see my article "Sheridan's Coriolanus: An EighteenthCentury Compromise," Shakesfeare Quarterly, xiv (Spring), 1963.

 intrinsick Merit" and was "intitled to the greatest Applause." The "very Striking" character of Coriolanus was "incomparably well performed" by Sheridan. The letter ends in a climax of praise for the achievement of that inimitable actress Mrs. Woffington,34 who played the part of Coriolanus' heroic mother. February was a particularly busy month for Sheridan, with the production and acting of Coriolanus and "first appearances" in three new Congreve roles,35 all three within ten days. The Congreve series of five plays, which Sheridan offered for the first time this year, was more of a success than his Jonson series of two years earlier (when three Jonson plays had been planned but only two given).36 Experimenting in another way, he ran this first Congreve series concurrently with a Shakespeare series, and provided his audience with a pleasant alternation. The Congreve went so well that as the series came to an end four of the original five plays were announced for a rerun the following week.87 One of these, The Mourning Bridei had not been acted at Smock-Alley for eight years.88 Partly because of the excitement stimulated by Mrs. Woffington, this season saw a few welcome theatrical

reviews in the press, written in the form of unsolicited letters by anonymous playgoers. One gentleman who saw The Mourning Bride, a play generally thought inferior, had not been more agreeably entertained all winter: the ending of the play had often been criticized as labored, but this never could have been gathered from the Smock-Alley representation} it was hard to decide who had the greater merit, Osmyn (played by Sheridan) or Almeria (a first for Woffington) at the tomb of Anselmo. Sheridan had never appeared to more advantage; he played with heroic ardor; his horror and rage were gloriously performed and he did surprisingly well as a lover. All in all, The Mourning Bride was a noble entertainment which the town should see again! 89 (It did, a few days later by command of the Duke and Duchess of Dorset.) 84

Dublin Journal, February 29—March 3, 1752. Valentine, Osmyn, and Fondlewife. His other new roles for the season were Coriolanus; Osman in Zara; Sir John Brute in The Provoked Wife; Dorimant in T h e Man of Mode; and apparently Leon in Rule A Wife. 88See Smock-Alley Calendar, February 15 and March 8, 1750. 87 Dublin Journal, February 11-15, 1752. 88 There were three other important revivals this year—Cibber's Non-Juror and Etherege's Man of Mode, neither of which appeared at Drury Lane until 1753, and Henry VHI, in which Drury Lane preceded Smock-Alley by a month. The Non-Juror became particularly popular in Dublin. 88 Dublin Journal, March 10-14, 1752. 85

Calm Before Storm In another letter Sheridan does not have to share the glory with Peg; the role was Hamlet, Sheridan's favorite and best. Never was a single part so well written, "never was any so well performed." At his first entrance, Sheridan appeared with "such solemnity of Woe" that he drew the audience's earnest attention. In "0 that this too too solid Flesh," he was so affected that he seemed to be the one he performed. In the scene with Ophelia, "he was Great," with the players "admirable," but with the queen "beyond all Imitation." Perhaps never were words so emphatically spoken as "0 there be Players." The whole part was performed almost without a fault; several gentlemen present who had visited most European theaters "never were so pleased with any Performance whatsoever."40 These embryo reviewers of eighteenth-century Dublin are more unrestrained and panegyric than their full-grown, more jaded descendants. Never was Sheridan in such high esteem as this season. For two years now, nothing had occurred to disrupt his relations with the public. Critics of his person, his behavior, his theatrical offerings had subsided; the Mosse affair had been forgotten. This happy position Sheridan undertook to consolidate by two public-spirited benefit performances. The first, given on December 13, in conjunction with a worthy charitable group, the Society for the Relief of Clergymen's Widows and Children,41 was apparently a success. The other, a public benefaction initiated by Sheridan and certainly important to him out of sentiment, brought him only annoyance and disappointment. In the 1750's commemorative monuments to dead heroes had a great vogue in Dublin; in 1751 and 1752 collections were afoot for a monument to Thomas Prior, patriot, and to the virtuoso musician Sign. Castrucci, whose funeral in Dublin in that year attracted such 40 Ibid., November 23—26, 1751. The letter is signed "A.B." The following winter the praises continue. Sheridan is saluted—rather unusually—for his comedy. A letter writer saw his "inimitable Performance" as Archer and is inspired to a poem "To Thomas Sheridan Esq." In this are commended his grace, ease, gentility, passion, and particularly his voice: "Tho' manly, clear; tho' Steddy, yet not dull; Soft, without weakness; without Hoarseness, full." The total effect is electric:

"Won by thy Air, how ev'ry Bosom thrills! We view the Eye, that fires! the Smile, that kills! But when thou speaks't, how female Breasts rebound! The Angel Choir have taught their Songs, the Sound." A similarly fulsome tribute to the inimitable WofEngton follows (Dublin Journal, November 21-25, 1752). 41See Smock-Alley Calendar, Pt. 1, 1751-52, footnote 3.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley • /75/-/752 a crowd that a St. Mary's beadle was crushed to death.42 The thought of monuments to such as these when the greatest Irishman of them all had none must have galled Sheridan. So Dubliners picking up the Journal of January 21-25 read in a news item, the first under Dublin news, that Thomas Sheridan, Esq., Manager of the Theater Royal, was planning a benefit play to raise funds toward a monument for "that glorious Patriot and great Genius, the late Jonathan Swift." This example, it was hoped, would set other lovers of Ireland to raising more money for this purpose. Faulkner, Swift's printer, was accepting private contributions and already had received over £60. Later issues carry notices of further contributions. And Mrs. Delany reports to her friend Mrs. Dewes, along with her judgment that Sheridan is a just actor but rather a dull one, "he is going to give a play gratis to raise a sum of money to erect a monument to Swift 5 he has many of the Dean of St. Patrick's letters, that

show he was a most friendly and generous man." 43 The benefit play, The Conscious Lovers, with the very best the company could offer—Sheridan, Digges, King, and Woffington—was scheduled for March 23; and the Journal announced that most of the ladies, who had bought a great number of tickets, had agreed not to wear hoops that night, with the result that the boxes would hold more than double and those sitting elsewhere would fit into the pit and other parts with more "Ease and Satisfaction." 44 The evening began with a Prologue on the occasion spoken by Sheridan and probably written by him (a copy in what may be his handwriting still exists). Sheridan's Prologue to Dorset the season before had been a namby-pamby piece; now his more worthy subject and his love for it inspired him. The result was not great poetry; indeed, there are feeble verses and confused passages. But some rousing eighteenthcentury lines begin the tribute: When public Gratitude erects the Bust, Where public Worth has dignified the Dust; When Nations strive the Patriots Fame to save, It speaks them worthy of the Good he gave. The whole concludes with lines equally forceful: Dullness be dumb, Detraction drop thy Quill, A people lov'd, a People love him still.45 42 Maxwell,

43 Delany, 111, 80. p. 104. Journal, March 14—17, 1752. 45 From British Museum MS Collection, Egerton Add.26036.

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Calm Before Storm These vigorously expressed thoughts, spoken in Sheridan's clear, emphatic way to a house already enthusiastic, must have evoked considerable applause. A news item after the play indicates "a very full Audience." 46 A month later, however, a letter to Faulkner signed "Hibernicus" sounds a warning note. The undertaking, the first of its kind attempted here, is no less than Swift deserved, but the success of it depends upon the conduct of its undertakers. Hibernicus fears "lest the Management of a few, may bring a Reflection upon the Nation." He proposes a meeting of all subscribers and would-be subscribers for the selection of trustees to handle the money.47 Nothing more is heard on the subject for almost a year and then Sheridan apparently took Hibernicus' advice. All persons subscribing to Swift's monument are asked to meet at the Great House adjoining the theater to choose trustees to carry on "that laudable Undertaking." 48 From that time on, Swift's monument once more drops out of the news, although we read the next April of a most elegant marble structure being finished to the memory of Thomas Prior, patriot.49 The following season Thomas Sheridan left Dublin. In 1758 when Sheridan, back as Smock-Alley manager but now more interested in education, was trying to get financial as well as spiritual backing for his new academy, one of his anonymous critics remembered Sheridan's earlier fund-raising and asked an embarrassing though somewhat confused question: What happened to the money collected for the monument to Shakespeare? 50 The confusion was understandable; Sheridan had done much to keep Shakespeare's name before the public. But, Swift or Shakespeare, the question was one that needed answering. A letter to the Dublin Journal, written not by Sheridan but by a friend, gives this explanation: Sheridan had contributed the receipts of the play (£101), and he had arranged the meeting to select trustees. But the shocking truth was that only three people showed up, among them George Faulkner. After waiting nearly three hours, these three felt that it was unwise to push the design further at that time. Sheridan agreed to give another benefit play for the monument the next season; but the next season Sheridan had had to leave the country. He has not, however, lost sight of the monument, the letter avers. "He stands indebted in the Theatrical 47 Ibid,., April 25-28, Dublin Journal, March 21-24, 1752. 49 Ibid., January 9-13, 1753. Ibid., April 17-21, 1753. 50 The Case of the Stage in Ireland, p. 28.

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Sheridan of Smock-Alley • /752-/753 Books for the Receipt of that Night"; he will pay the money in an hour to any group taking up the cause. If no group materializes, he must be allowed to pursue his present course, as the largest contributor j those who saw the play received full value for their money. In a final affidavit the facts of this explanation are sworn to by Faulkner,51 who, incidentally, as collector of the outright donations, would seem to have owed more of an explanation than Sheridan. The conclusion to the whole unfortunate story comes in the form of a quip, made by another anonymous critic at Sheridan's

expense: the money is on the books of the theater, we are told—as safe as in the Bank of England! 52 Thus Sheridan's plan for improving the city and honoring Swift's memory was to come to nothing but embarrassment, although in 1752 he could not know this. The idea was part of Sheridan's attitude toward his work: the theater was to be his means for public improvement. At the end of the season, at the performance honoring the new Prince of Wales' birthday, the prologue spoken (and printed in the Journal because it was so well received) reflects another side of this same thought. The great virtue of acting is that it teaches people} mainly it teaches people their blessings and shows to whom they owe them.53 Whether Sheridan wrote this prologue or not, he approved the role it gave to his profession. of 1752-53, the most uneventful of Sheridan's regime, opened at a later date than usual (October 16). The loss of the eleven days in September when the calendar changed to new style was partly responsible, but alterations and improvements in the theater and perhaps the late arrival of Sowdon from Drury Lane caused extra deferrals.54 The Dorsets were not in Dublin this season -y command performances fell back to the minimum and were by order of the Lords Justices. Much of last year's excitement had faded, although Sheridan had brought over a flock of new players, most of them from Drury Lane. Despite the continued popularity of Mrs. Woffington, he added more leading women than men; he had lost THE SEASON

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Dublin Journal, February 4-7, 1758. 63 Dublin Journal, May 23-26, 1752. Shea, A Full Vindication, p. 21. 54 The plan first was to open October 9, then on October 14, finally on October 16 (ibid., September 30—October 3, 1752, n.s., and following issues. All dates given from now on are in New Style.) I find no announcement of Sowdon's arrival in Ireland, but his first performance, scheduled for October 14, a date the theater was to have opened, had to be postponed to October 18. 52

Calm Before Storm Mrs. Bland at last and Mrs. Lee. Miss Danvers too had dropped out for the time being.55 To replace these, he hired three actresses, only one of whom made any stir in the Dublin papers and that by an extratheatrical event. A press item which records it explains why her appearance on the stage was delayed until late in November: Last Wednesday Morning Mrs. Ward, who is engaged to perform this Season, at the Theatre Royal in Smock-Alley, was safely delivered of a Daughter, and is in a fair Way of Recovery.56 Mrs. Ward's pregnancies achieved considerable publicity, it seems. George Anne Bellamy tells in her memoirs how, when she first met her at Cowley, Rich's country home, Mrs. Ward was pregnant. Bellamy says of her that she had "one of the most beautiful faces I ever beheld," but her figure was vulgar, her shoulders large and stooped.57 Among the men Sheridan still had Digges and King, but Cibber had left. In his place Sheridan hired not a comedian but a predominantly tragic actor, John Sowdon from Drury Lane. Sowdon had accepted the invitation, according to Victor, with the hope of becoming joint manager with Sheridan.58 His first appearance was in a favorite Sheridan role, Othello. At the end of May, John Dexter, having finished out his Drury Lane contract, appeared at Smock-Alley in two roles and stayed on for the following season. One other addition to the acting troupe must be specially mentioned: George Stayley, whose playing contributed little (he took small roles after his first appearance on October 19), but whose later writings touch often on Dublin theatrical matters. In his Life and Ofinions of an Actor he tells how, when he joined the Smock-Alley company in 1752 as a minor actor, he wanted to render himself useful and, "contrary to general custom, laboured and studied the Man55

The Davies left too—for Drury Lane. Journal, October 24—28, 1752. The other two actresses were Miss Falkner, who became Mrs. Donaldson, from Covent Garden, and Mrs. Green, who, like Mrs. Ward, was from Drury Lane. Hitchcock calls Mrs. Green "an excellent comic actress" (1, 224). She enlivened many an afterplay, as the Smock Alley Calendar shows. 57 Bellamy, 1, 123. 58Victor, Original Letters, 1, 232. John Sowdon came of a good family, being brother to "Thomas Otway of Castle Otway, Esq." (Dublin Journal, June 5—9, 1753). He came to Smock-Alley from Drury Lane and earlier Covent Garden, where he had made his debut probably on December 4, 1747 (Genest, iv, 247248). 66 Dublin

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Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1752—1J53 ager's interest, more than mine own advancement." Perhaps because of this and because he had more of a flair for writing than for acting, he was made poet laureate of the company in 1753: he wrote state prologues for nothing, he says—and spoke them for the same price.89 But, in spite of his seeming bitterness here, he later became a Sheridan partisan and indeed attributes his dismissal by Mossop from Smock-Alley in 1760 to his "particular Benevolence, on all

Occasions expressed, for a late worthy Manager,—even so far as to wish to see him once more re-established in the Theatre." Such talk, he feels (and with some reason), may have lost him Mossop's heart. But, he continues, "if I were to repeat it again now, I do not think I should wish Harm to any-body; for Mr. Sheridan and the Irish Stage never did better than when he was a Manager." 60 Stayley's play, The Rival Theatres, 1759, satirizes the destructive rivalry between CrowStreet and Smock-Alley predicted by Sheridan before he left Dublin in 1758. This year Sheridan featured singing more than he had for some time. His two chief dancers, Mr. McNeil and Miss Baker, were still with him (having been joined by a Mr. Pitt), but he needed more variation: Mr. Sullivan and Miss Falkner, who became Mrs. Donaldson, were engaged primarily to sing, and the extra entertainment often consisted of both dancing and singing. Sickness and death plagued the company throughout this season. Digges was ill intermittently during February, the all-important term time, and finally was forced to drop out entirely most of March. His benefit on March 16 featured him in the leading role, but he had to apologize for not waiting on his friends in "a personal Application." By April 1 he was well enough to perform Hamlet in Robert Montgomery's benefit, Montgomery himself being too weak to do more than attempt the Prologue, "a Eulogim on Shakespear, the Stage and the Admirers of both." 61 In April, Montgomery, who had been discovered by Sheridan three years before and whose first year had been so notable as to provide him with two benefit performances, died after a long indisposition.82 Montgomery's death was the second in the company that year. Earlier, in February, Sheridan lost loyal John Beamsley, a minor actor, who had been with him from the beginning. His death, appar89

Stayley, Life and Opinions, p. 24. Stayley, Reference to the Public, p. 7. 61 See Smock-Alley Calendar, March 26 and April 2, 1753. 62 Dublin Journal, April 17—21, 1753. 80

Calm Before Storm ently quite sudden, came at the time that Digges was incapacitated, and must have caused Sheridan more grief and harassment. The Dublin Journal calls Beamsley "a very honest Man," who from the small size of his income left a widow and several young children unprovided for.63 We read therefore with relief that a benefit assembly for the Beamsley family, by desire of some ladies of quality, was to be held at the Music-Hail in Fishamble-Street; 64 and a share in a benefit play seems to have been arranged for the widow by Sheridan.65 Sheridan's generous salaries to his top people have been recorded, and deplored, by Victor. Mrs. Woffington, who had joined the company at £400 the preceding season, was lavishly rewarded for her success by an increase, this next year, to double that amount, £8oo,6e to which must be added the income from two benefits (over £200 more). Even Sheridan's normal contracts of £300 and £400 a season for his principal players were regarded as high by Treasurer Victor. Cibber, one recalls, described Sheridan to Digges as a "liberal" manager—a fine tribute from a onetime enemy, whether he was thinking in terms of acting opportunities or of money. Sheridan's instincts were to pay employees wellj the salaries he set up later for his professors in the Hibernian Academy were reported as fantastic.67 But Smock-Alley income was still too small to permit more than a modest wage, probably well under £100 a year, to the minor players (benefit money would be additional). Twenty years later, in 1771, Snagg, a minor player of the Dublin company, received a guinea and a half a week, exclusive of benefits. On this sum he could save money, so reasonable was living then, but he was a single man at the time.68 Beamsley, with a family, would feel pinched and, dying unexpectedly, would leave his family poor. But for the past seven years of his life employment had been steady, at least; before Sheridan, playing had often been uncertain and actors often destitute. If Sheridan's salaries to his minor players were small, at least they were paid. A es Iiid.,

ei Ibid., March 20-24, 1753. February 20-24, 1753. a May 24 performance of Ulysses with Sheridan and Woffington: "Tickets delivered out by the Widow Beamsley, Mr. Pit, Mr. Costello, Mr. Maurice, and Tickets delivered out by Mr. Hamilton for Jane Shore, and all other Tickets for the above Play will be taken this Night" (ibid., May 19-22, 1753)68 Victor, History, 1, 152. 67 SicheI, 1, 242. 68 Snagg, Recollections of Occurrences, p. 76; see also introduction, p. xiii. Sheridan's pension fund seems to have been planned—at first, anyhow—for incapacitated players only and not for bereaved families. Even for incapacitated players, it would hardly have been adequate enough yet. 65 For

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · ITS 2 1 ISS glance at the company rolls shows that many actors remained with him year after year: Beamsley, Sparks, Mr. and Mrs. Mynitt, and others. Even principal actors, among whom there would naturally be more turnover, stayed two, three, and sometimes more seasons. This fact and the loyalty of his minor players speak well for Sheridan's management. Much evidence shows that Sheridan continued to improve the conditions and position of his actors. In enforcing a new

regularity he exercised considerable strictness over his company's professional activities and possibly even over their private lives. Burke's grudging compliment that under Sheridan actors had to know their parts and be more regular in their exits and entrances gives some idea of what Irish acting had been like before Sheridan.69 Much has been made of Sheridan's custom of marching his company, two by two, on Sundays to St. John's church, where he had "purchased a Pew . . . for the Accommodation of the Actors and Actresses under his Care." But no one has noticed that the source for this story is a bitter satire on Sheridan and therefore not entirely reliable as a true report.70 On the other hand, his company was, in general, quite "respectable." Bellamy and Woffington, it is true, were in the old tradition—and perhaps this accounts for Sheridan's initial reluctance to engage the latter—but no scandal attaches to the others, and one is impressed with the large number of married couples: the Macklins, the Mynitts, the Dyers, the Storers, the Greens, the Kennedys, some even with children handy to play children's roles. Master Mynitt appears regularly and shares in his parents' benefits; and later we note his successor, a boy with an equally engaging name, Master Pye, whose mother played minor roles. Of further help in improving the reputation of the actor was, as we have seen, the "gentlemanly" origin of many of Sheridan's stars, for example, Mossop, Digges, Montgomery. Throughout this period, in spite of jibes from Hiffernan, Burke, and other Sheridan enemies, the evidence grows, in letters and verses to the paper, that Sheridan's company had the enthusiasm and even the respect of much of the Irish public. This increased status was extended to the minor players too. As time went on, Sheridan expanded the details of the notices so that even the less important actors saw their names in public print and knew the pleasures of fame. The number of benefits was extended to 69

Burke, Reformer 2 (Samuels, p. 299). A Full Vindication, pp. 21—22.

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Calm Before Storm include these same less important people. Although not all of them could sell a houseful of tickets, and sometimes benefits had to be combined or canceled, at least each had his opportunity. During this season of 1752-53 the shining attraction was still Peg WofEngton, dimmed hardly at all. One of her most popular roles the year before had been Sir Harry Wildair in The Constant Cowplei a play commanded by the Dorsets and performed repeatedly throughout the season. This year Peg had considerable success in another male role, which she played by desire and for the first time—Lothario in The Fair 'Penitent,71 a part usually acted by Digges. Although not quite the success of The Constant Couflei The Fair Penitent with its new and charming Lothario had several performances during the spring. Dublin audiences especially enjoyed seeing women actors "in Boy's Cloaths" or "in Breeches." A special note of these occasions was taken in the advertisements.72 During Woffington's three years as Sheridan's leading lady the two worked together without friction, even amicably. The place he arranged for her in his Beefsteake Club may have seemed socially expedient at the time (although how terribly inexpedient he later learned), but the part he played in her religious conversion could have been possible only between close friends. Indeed, Dublin gossips suspected the worst when, during Christmas week of 1752, Sheridan and Woffington took off together on a public journey to Quilca, the site of the Sheridan country home, leaving Mrs. Sheridan behind, possessed—again according to Dublin gossip—by "raging Fits of Jealousy." The truth was that Sheridan was conducting Peg to a place less embarrassingly public than Dublin for her recantation. Although a sound churchman himself, Sheridan probably had little to do with the actual change in Peg's religion (the will of an old admirer offering her a yearly income if she would convert seems to have accomplished that), but he knew "a worthy clergyman" near Quilca who would officiate. Mrs. Sheridan had been privy all along to the plan and, besides, was a lady of "such distinguished good Sense" as to be "at all Times, fully satisfied with the Conduct of her Husband." Well she might be, for he was a model of respectability. Indeed, he had found it impossible, Alicia Lefanu reports, to introduce to his wife this woman whose "moral character was such as to exclude her 71

First played on January 29, 1753. On March 22, for example, Mrs. Ward appeared as Fribble, "being the first Time of her appearing in Boy's Cloaths" (Dublin Journal, March 17—20, 72

1753)·

 from the society of her own sex." Moreover, by this time, Victor hints, WofEngton had lost much of her physical attractiveness; both Sheridan and he felt that she "had captivating Charms as a jovial, witty Bottle-Companion, but very few remaining as a mere Female." As a

"bottle-companion," she officiated in the Beefsteake Club, formed this same season (1752-53) with herself as the only woman member because, says Alicia Lefanu, Sheridan, unable to introduce her to his wife, wished in some way to pay tribute to her genius.73 Another sign of his appreciation was, as we have seen, his custom of playing in her benefits against his established policy. Sheridan's offerings this years were less impressive than in some former seasons. The new sensation was an equilibrist from Covent Garden named Maddox. Maddox performed for a while at Smock Alley, and then Sheridan opened Aungier-Street, reported early in December as "now preparing" for the equilibrist; 74 and Comus was revived to accompany the equilibres. But Sheridan's customers needed reassurance about the condition of the disused Aungier-Street Theater. The day of the opening the audience was notified that "the whole House is compleatly well aired, as there have been several Stoves kept constantly burning there for more than a Fortnight past." On the larger stage of this comfortably warm and well-aired house Maddox performed Thursdays and Saturdays.75 So successful were his performances that he evoked a complimentary poem, printed in the Journal and hailing him as "amazing Creature!"76 Like Mahomet Caratta, he ended up "by Desire" in a succession of nights at Smock Alley and was given a benefit. And, as with Caratta, Sheridan kept 73 Victor,

History, i, 154—156; Lefanu, p. 53. See especially W.J. Lawrence, "Peg Woffington's Recantation and its Sequel," Dublin Magazine, N.S. xiv (July—Sept. 1939), 25—33. As for Woffington's physical attractiveness at this period, it must be remembered that she was nearly forty and considerably older than Sheridan. But on stage apparently she was timeless. The praises in the newspapers rarely fail to mention her beauty, and Bellamy's comment that this alone would ensure her success in Ireland comes from one who was otherwise disposed to judge her harshly. 7i Dublin Journal, November 28—December 2, 1752. 75 Ibid., February 3-6 and 13—17, 1753. In the latter notice we read: "The Passage to the Upper Gallery is opened to Longford-street Side, and the Gallery rendered very commodious," an announcement which implies that the AungierStreet upper gallery had never been "intirely removed," as Sheridan had reported three years before. (See Ch. vi.) 76 Ibid., January 2—6, 1753. This appeared even before Maddox moved to Aungier-Street.

Calm Before Storm promising his early departure.77 Before he left, Maddox accomplished the feat of balancing a straw and playing a violin at the same time j and when Maddox was not balancing and fiddling, a ten-yearold boy-organist was playing a concerto at the Aungier-Street production of Comus.78 The quality of Sheridan's instrumental offerings this year was not, one suspects, what it was in the time of Pasquali and Lampe. The "new" plays this year, those "never acted here before," numbered two main plays and one afterpiece,79 Sheridan's lowest showing so far. In presenting John Hughes' Siege of Damascus for the first time in Dublin Sheridan anticipated Garrick by six years. Rowe's Ulysses, the other main play, never became a part of Garrick's repertoire. For both of these plays Sheridan learned the leading roles. The only other roles which he seems to have mastered this season were Wolsey in King Henry VIII and Hastings in Jane Shore. The latter play had long been a Sheridan favorite, but he had played Dumont, with Digges as Hastings; Digges's indisposition may have had something to do with this change. A Congreve series seems to have met with less success than in the preceding season; it ran sporadically from December to March and was not repeated. All through his time as manager the problem of admission had concerned Sheridan. As Miss Stockwell shows, the practice of reserving specific seats was not introduced until long after his day.80 Ordinarily, as in the local movie house today, people bought, at the door, the mere right to enter and to find what seats they could, a hazard which could be somewhat obviated by coming hours early oneself or by sending a servant to hold a place. An advance sale of tickets allowing these same privileges was introduced through the benefits, the 11 Ibid., March 3—6, 1753: "By desire, Mr. Maddox will perform the few remaining Nights at Smock-alley." March 10—13 ^ssue reports that Mr. Maddox's engagement expired last Saturday, but that "upon his Application to the Manager since that Time," he was given Love's Last Shift as his benefit on March 24. 78See Smock-Alley Calendar, February 17, 1753, for example. 79 The afterpiece was Mrs. Cibber's Oracle, which had debuted at Covent Garden the preceding season and which now opened at Smock-Alley the day before it was first given at Drury Lane (where it was performed by children). In Dublin it was (by Desire) the afterpiece for Mrs. Green's benefit; she and King played the leads. The only revived play of interest this year was The Pilgrim by Fletcher, altered by Vanbrugh and revived two years earlier at Drury Lane. 80 Stockwell, pp. 243 ff.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1752—1753 particular beneficiary peddling space in the theater to his friends and patrons. But either way people could arrive at the theater and find it full} for, in the case of the benefits, more tickets were often sold than the house could absorb. Then apologies had to be made to the people who were "disappointed" because of the "overflow" crowds, and the tickets had to be "taken up" at later performances.81 To spare ladies this disappointment in his growingly popular Shakespeare series, Sheridan had early introduced a special arrangement, which he describes as the custom in London theaters:82 There will be a Book opened by Mr. Neil, Boxkeeper . . . to whom such Ladies as are desirous to secure Places at any of the above Plays, are requested to send their Commands as soon as possible, as he is under a Necessity of always letting the Boxes in the Order of sending.83 By these means a lady could be sure of getting into the theater and even into a particular box; but apparently she still could not reserve a particular seat, if the following notice means what it seems to mean, i.e., that a servant was needed to hold the seat desired: It is requested that the Ladies who have engaged Places in the Boxes will send their Servants at Half an Hour after four, to prevent Confusion.84 The box book kept by Mr. Neil served another purpose; through it Sheridan could partly foretell the demand. His early Shakespeare series had been offered only on the provision that the boxes were taken for each play. Later the number of requests for places was used to determine the order of the plays.85 An amusing side light to this advance arrangement is that Mr. Neil became one of the most popular members of Sheridan's company. His annual benefit always provoked an extraordinary demand for tickets, the boxes had to be laid open to the pit to accommodate the many ladies springing to his support, and his evenings became gala affairs.86 81 For example, "As there were a Number of Persons who had Tickets of Mr. Mossop's that were obliged to go from the Theatre last Night, the play of the Distrest Mother is again to be performed this Night for his Benefit" (Dublin Journal, March 6—10, 1750). 8 2 Ibid., January 23—27, 1750. a 3 Ibtd., December 31—January 3, 1749. siIbid., November 21-25, 1749. 66Ibid., October 22—26, 1751. 88See Smock-Alley Calendar, April 4, 1753, for example.

Calm Before Storm Most interesting is the evidence that in 1752-53 Sheridan extended the advance sale of tickets to all parts of the house, not just the boxes, for an ordinary performance, not a benefit or series. After the usual notice of the play The Susficious Husband for January 5, 1753, this N.B. follows: All Persons who want to purchase Tickets for any Part of the Theatre, before the Doors are open, may have them at Mr. Esdall's, Bookseller, on the Blind-quay, and no where else.87 Since early playbills for the fall of 1753 show a similar notice, the practice was continued for a while and may have become permanent. Either way, it represented a move in a wise direction. Financially, the 1752-53 season was not a bad one, even though Woffington's salary rose by an extra £400. "If my Memory does not greatly fail me," says Victor (thereby revealing that his conclusions about the financial success or failure of these years depended on his memory and not on any records he had preserved), "the Profit at closing the Account did not fall more than 300 Pounds, short of the first Season"88—meaning the preceding very profitable year, Woffington's first season. Writing to Lucas in April 1753, Victor reports, with considerable satiric exaggeration, that Sheridan was transforming his little inheritance at Quilca into "a falace in miniature," buying eight hundred acres of bog and stone around it, "all of which by theatrical art, and Smock Alley chemistry, is to be transformed into fine arable land, to be an establishment for his younger children."89 The October before this, Sheridan had apparently expanded Smock Alley's territory by leasing an adjacent house or part of it, where meetings could be held and other theatrical business more comfortably accommodated.90 The efforts Sheridan had put into the theater were beginning to pay off financially, in a small way. In many ways Sheridan's situation seemed enviable at the end of the !752-53 season, the last full year between riots. His theater might 87

88Victor, History, 1, 152. Dublin Journal, December 26-30, 1752. Victor, Original Letters, i, 199. 90The deed of 1754 between Victor and Sheridan, in addition to referring to the two theaters, their buildings, wardrobe, scenes, et cetera, mentions a room and passage leading thereto to hold the wardrobe. This room, "among other premisses," was leased to Sheridan on October 1, 1752, for twenty-three years. (MS 169/356/114101. Off. Reg. Deeds, Dub.) Subscribers to the Swift Monument were asked to convene at the Great House adjoining the theater, and the Beefsteake Club held meetings there. 89

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · / 7 5 2 / 7 5 5 not quite have been responsible for all the improvements that lyrical Hibernicus, writing in 1754 to defend Sheridan, claimed: the growth of Dublin, the construction of many elegant homes for persons of quality, the great concourse of people attracted principally by the enhanced "State of the Stage."91 Even Hitchcock, not speaking from firsthand knowledge, is to be suspected of exaggeration when he says that Smock-Alley was crowded nightly with all levels of people,

especially with “the first characters of the kingdom” and that its exhibitions might have graced “a Greek or Roman stage.”92 But, as our history has shown so far, the Dublin theater had greatly prospered under Sheridan. The number of annual performances had more than doubled: from some seventy during Sheridan’s first season (with Garrick and Barry) to about 162 in 1751-52,93 only a score fewer than Drury Lane’s for this time.94 The population of Dublin, though growing, had made no such spectacular increase over the seven years. Sheridan himself had enlarged his audiences by ways that we have seen—by improving his theaters, his productions, his company, and by giving himself totally to his work. Increased performances meant an increase in income. Sheridan’s Humble Affeal, 1758, a pamphlet which denies charges of his extravagance at the same time that it shows his improvements to the theater, reports his first season as having grossed £3,400, £400 of which went to Garrick. In less than four years, Sheridan says, the annual income—and this seems to have been a gross figure exclusive of benefits—rose to over £9,000.95 If this £9,000 applies to the fourth season after Sheridan took command, 1749-50, when approximately no nonbenefit performances were played, we can estimate that the theater averaged between £80 and £90 a night. This tallies with what contemporaries suggest when they say that £110 represented an unusually successful evening (Lucas collected that much for his charity showing, and Woffington’s £4,000 for forty nights comes slightly 81 Dublin Journal, February 19-23, 1754.. He continues, “This Concourse of Company and those Number of Buildings [have been brought about] since the Theatre has been under the Conduct of the present Manager.” 92 Hitchcock, i, 227. 93 Because of the late opening in 1752—53, the number for that year, the last of our period, drops slightly, so that I have used the figures from the preceding year, which represented the peak. 94 Pedicord, p. 15. 95 Sheridan, An Humble Affed, p. 21. Lefanu’s statistics are even rougher; she says (pp. 28—29) that from 1743 to 1758 the sums (benefits excluded) increased from £2,000 to £10,000 a year.

Calm Before Storm Pedicord gives Drury Lane’s average daily receipts for this year as £134,97 higher than even the best Smock-Alley could do. The more commodious theater and the larger theatergoing public gave Garrick the advantage. But if Smock-Alley’s gross income continued to improve, expenses were high and going higher. Sheridan speaks of the incumbrances when he took over the management: £400 yearly for annuities to people who had given up their interests to accomplish the Smock Alley and Aungier-Street merger; £200 rent to the proprietors} and, of course, taxes and ground rent for the two houses.98 Top actors drew generous salaries. In 1749-50 we know of the Macklins’ £400; Pasquali received £300.” By 1749-50 the company had grown; some thirty-five people took benefits, and, although this number includes dancers and singers, it does not take in the musical band of twenty or more performers, the lowliest of whom received twenty shillings a week, the better ones reaching thirty to forty.100 When we add Sheridan’s other employees—the painters, machinists, doorkeepers, wardrobe mistresses, dressers, prompters, scene shifters, et cetera—the total roster may not come to the 140 given by Colley Cibber for a London house,101 but by 1750 it well exceeds the fifty-one who signed the Smock-Alley petition in 1747. If Smock-Alley employees totaled eighty and averaged £90 a year apiece in income (exclusive of benefits) there would have been little over £1,000 left for improving the theater, its wardrobe and scenery, staging new plays, paying for new music, and so on. Yet Sheridan reports that under his aegis the value of the wardrobe alone increased from £200 to £4,000.102 When we see such figures as these, we believe Sheridan’s claims that he personally made nothing out of Smock-Alley. Writing in 1758, he asserts that he never took more than five guineas a week for himself (this would come to less than £300 annually, while he was giving Woffington £800)} and sometimes he reduced his income to three guineas

lower) .96

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See above, p. 175. Recall also Victor’s glee at £600 a week for six evenings. Several years later, in 1757, £150 “was a great house indeed” at Dublin, according to Tate Wilkinson (iv, 123). Isaac Sparks’s benefit on April 11, 1753, which brought in over £165, provoked comment in the press (see the Smock-Alley Calendar for that date). 97 Pedicord, n Ibid.,

p. 15. p. 11.

98 Mr.

Sheridan’s Speech, 1772, pp. 10—11.

i w Ibid.

101 Cibber's description of the duties of a manager, quoted in The Life 0} Mr. James Quin, 1766, pp. 57—58. 1 0 2 Mr. Sheridan's Sfeech i 1772, p. 12.

a His property in Quilca was not the palace represented by his enemies but a modest thatched cabin on which he had spent only some £400.104 We conclude too that the way Smock-Alley prospered was through Sheridan's plowing back all surplus into his venture. As the income rose, the extra money was spent on higher salaries to attract better stars, on new sets, new costumes, new and lavish productions, all to attract larger houses and so more money to spend on improvements. As far as we can judge, Sheridan did not raise entrance fees during all this time, except for an occasional special performance. Sheridan's detractors railed against his "extravagance," and even Victor now and then protested. But Sheridan's extravagance this time was good business. His theater was thriving, and not simply because it was a monopoly. In the end causes other than extravagance brought about its ruin. And Sheridan paid in full for his only extravagance— the generous sacrifice of his own wages to bring about the improvement of the Dublin stage. 103

Sheridan, An Humble Af feal, p. 27.

104

Ibid., p. 28.

CHAPTER VIII

Qry Havoc cAgain,

1753-1754

HE SEASON of 1753-54, which was to become the most disastrous in Sheridan's career, promised well. In mid-September the Duke of Dorset returned to Dublin with his son and his duchess, the latter marking her arrival in an outfit of striped Irish poplin. In mid-October their first appearance at the theater after a year's absence was the occasion for a command performance and a special prologue, spoken by Peg WofEngton as the Tragic Muse and complimenting Dorset and Dublin on their patronage of the arts.1 From this time on, command performances in almost weekly succession began again. The Congreve and the Shakespeare series picked up; new plays and revivals 2 were projected in larger numbers and with more enthusiasm; and Sheridan appeared in more new parts.3 Many signs indicate the high place and well-being of Sheridan's theater. At a tremendous castle ball in November the celebrated Smock-Alley scene painter, Joseph Tudor, prepared the paintings and decorations; Benjamin Victor, later to be named the official poet laureate of Ireland, wrote the ode for the occasion.4 And the Smock Alley manager, who as a friend of the viceroy was frequently invited to the duke's private dinners and parties,5 must certainly have been an important figure at this celebration. Because of the still-growing theatrical audience Sheridan this season opened the slips, the section above the lattices, which had been closed since the Kelly riot. As we have noted, he restricted their occupancy to women since there was no passage to them except by the stage and he would not admit men there on any account. The slips 1

Dublin Journal, September 18-22 and October 16-20, 1753. During this season Sheridan anticipated Garrick by two years with Mrs. Centlivre's Wonder on January 14; by nine years with Mahomet, taken from Voltaire by Miller and Hoadly; by two years with Cibber's Lady's Last Stake. 8Oedipus; Celadon and Palamede in Dryden's Comical Lovers; Lord George Brilliant in Lady's Last Stake·, Zaphna in Mahomet·, Heartly in The Non-Juror. 4 The ball, on November 12, was reported in the Dublin Journal, November 10-13, 1753. Earlier the Journal had announced that there would be no play at the theater that night because of the ball at the castle (November 3—6). Victor became official Poet Laureate in 1755 (see his History, 1, 203, and the date of Dorset's recall from Ireland, D N B) . 5 Lefanu, p. 69. 2

 sold at middle gallery prices, 2/2,® and so brought in a little extra revenue. Sheridan's own high position and influence are inadvertently revealed in another way—in a satiric poem which recalls earlier attacks on the manager. Printed sometime in the fall of 1753 for its author, B—t B—n, The Stage: or Coronation of King Tom pictures full houses attracted just by new scenery, new dresses, and waxen tapers j fustian actors met by the plaudits of a thousand hands j and

Dublin engrossed in theatrical gossip: ‘Tis now the talk what Players wafted o’er, Forsake their own for a more tasteless shore. With what new singers does their chief engage, If Stuart still or Baker holds the stage? And now the bills set up, appoint the day; It is his fifth and a most tragick play.7 Over all rules Irish Tom, “A Prince as absolute in his domain/As Lewis once, or greater Charlemain. . . . A realm so rich in pleasures of the fool/What head so fit as S—s to rule?” Though Sheridan is crowned king by Dullness, he can console himself with the knowledge that Victor, shipped off to Ireland by a jealous Cibber, is an even worse fool: V—r whose dullness does all sots surpass, A blund’ring stiff incorigible ass. . . . Nor must you Tom! however large your share, Thy weak stupidity with his compare; V—r has parts to other fools unknown And in his art of sinking yields to none. This stale imitation of the Dunciadi and of earlier Smock-Alley satires themselves imitated from the Dunciad, must have amused rather than annoyed the Smock-Alley manager. From London sometime in 1753 came a sober estimate of Sheridan and his work. The Present State of the Stage in Great Britain and Ireland devotes eight of its fifty-five pages to Dublin. Here “Mr. Sherridan” is introduced to the reader as the manager who has done what nobody in England can do: he has cleared the stage. No longer are his exits and entrances “jammed up with an immoveable Country 6

Dublin Journal, September 2 2 — 2 5, ! 753· “It is his fifth and a most tragick play”—a sneer at Sheridan’s subscription series and his advertisements of them. 7

Sheridan as Theater Manager, resting his elbow on a Shakespeare folio

Frances Chamberlaine Sheridan, “. . . a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man.”—BOSWELL Reproduced b y permission of the Comtesse de Reneville

Sheridan as Cato, without and with the Robe (See the Cato’s R o b e Controversy

in C h a p t e r

II.)

Sheridan as Actor. “ H e went t h r o u g h O e d i p u s h a p p i l y, “ and as f o r his Brutus, “ t h e orations . . . were never better spoken.”—WILKES

Cry Havoc Again Squire” or with a fop made of lace and punctilio. Sheridan’s theater through his care and judgment presents an “Oeconomy, Elegance, and Decency unexpected.” No man “understands the Business of the Stage better” than Sheridan; “he is an Excellent Scholar, an exceedingly good Commentator on his Author, and very judicious in his Delivery.” 8 In the remarks which follow, Sheridan the actor receives almost as high praise as Sheridan the manager. But Sheridan was not entirely without annoyances. Something had happened between him and Victor, who records a mutual coldness which had been growing steadily worse for some time and which had now reached a point where the two men were barely speaking.® If Alicia Lefanu is to be credited, Sheridan had also made an enemy of Digges, his principal actor. Their dispute arose over a stage call which Sheridan accused Digges of ignoring and which Digges insisted had not been made. When Sheridan took the word of the caller (who, he said, had never told him a lie) rather than of the “gentleman” Digges, Digges was said to have boasted afterward to Mrs. Ward in the greenroom that he would “be revenged on Sheridan for doubting my word.” Miss Lefanu implies that this incident could account for Digges’s later contribution to Sheridan’s downfall. Her account is very circumstantial, with direct quotations, for example, but her purpose throughout is to extenuate Sheridan.10 Furthermore, according to Victor, the sentiments of the general public were being roused against Sheridan, because of his political activities in the Beefsteake Club,11 a group which he himself had founded about 1752.12 That it was established originally, as Victor says, with “no Party Intention” but merely to help the manager decide on future exhibitions and to support him in other ways seems probable in view of Sheridan’s apolitical years in the past.13 But his 8

The Present State of the Stage in Great Britain and Ireland, pp. 50—51. History, 1, 161. Could the rift have been caused or widened by Sheridan’s treatment of Miss Danvers, whose name does not appear after the 9 Victor,

175 1 —5 2 season? (She is back in the company by 1756, after an interlude in Edinburgh.) Or could the arrival of Sowdon with his prospects of becoming joint manager with Sheridan have disappointed certain hopes in Victor? 10 Lefanu, p. 59. This incident is not given in any other of the early accounts. Miss

Lefanu cites as her source for all anecdotes her mother, Sheridan's daughter. Although actually she leans heavily on Victor for many, this incident is not from him. 11

12 Gilbert, 11, 87. Victor, History, 1, 153-154.; 157-160. (History, 1, 153—158) says that clubs attached to theaters were an almost universal custom at the time, the members usually being the principal 13 Victor

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1753—1754 inclinations, as revealed earlier in the Lucas affair, lay with the court} he was a friend of the Duke of Dorset; and, unavoidably, the group of thirty or forty which gathered each week for dinner at Sheridan's expense and in his quarters next to the theater14 included the son of the Lord Lieutenant, Lord George Sackville;15 Lord Delawar, "a man of large fortune, great rank, and many temptations";16 Sir John Whiteford, commander of the Dragoon guards; Lord Lucan; the Provost of Trinity College, Dr. Andrews, a "fine, jolly, fresh looking man, very fond of the theatre" 17; and other persons of that first quality and distinction which Sheridan so admired. The political position of Peg Woffington, president of the club and the only female present at its meetings, is emphasized in the various accounts: her patron was the viceroy,18 and, according to Watkins, she was a favorite at the castle, engaged in intrigue and secretly in the viceroy's employ.18 So, though an actress sat at the head of the table and the host had no party intentions, "politics was the favourite dish, for which Thomas Sheridan . . . had his old house pulled over his ears —tMahomet' for that!" 20 All the commentators, perhaps following Victor, connect this second riotous destruction of Sheridan's house with his support of the Beefsteake Club, Victor describing how the toasts given there became the talk of the town,21 Alicia Lefanu insisting that Sheridan was accused "most falsely and injuriously" by the ill-humored "uninitiatedjealous at the distinction bestowed by the club on Peg Woffington 22 But the riot itself was certainly inspired by something larger than Sheridan or Sheridan's activities. performers, authors, "and other Geniuses." But Sheridan's club was unusual in being made up of «owtheatrical people. Both Sheridan and Victor felt that these people could be more useful to the theater. 14Victor (ibid ., p. 153) tells us that Sheridan paid for the dinners; Hitchcock (1, 223) describes the quarters: "A very large apartment in the manager's house, adjoining the theatre, was dedicated to this convivial meeting, where every thing was furnished in the most plenteous and elegant stile at his expence." This was not the Sheridan residence, but the house or part of a house Sheridan had recently leased (see Ch. vn). Victor (ibid., pp. 217—218) mentions this apartment ("contiguous to the Theatre") when describing events in the fall of 1758. 15 O'Keeffe, 1, 31. Sackville was later Lord George Germaine. O'Keeffe calls him the "soul of the party." leMolloy, 11, 7. 17 O'Keeffe, 1, 31. 18Molloy, 11, 2. 19Watkins, 1, 53. 20 O'Keeffe, 1, 31. 21Victor, History, 1, 159. 22 Lefanu, p. 54..

Cry Havoc Again For several months Ireland had been in great discontent, split into the Court Party and the Country Party over a clause in a money bill implying that the king had the power of consent over surplus Irish moneys. Those Irish who supported the king and the court were accused of betraying their country for bribes of gold or preferment. Pamphlets poured from the presses and so inflamed the people of Dublin with "the most outrageous spirit of party" that by January 1754 public entertainment had begun to fall off, and the great Woffington herself was playing to empty boxes.23 Even worse, every possible occasion was seized on as significant to the dispute. Victor tells us that, while it was only in rehearsal, the tragedy Mahomet, selected long before by Sheridan to be one of the season's revived plays, was discovered by the Country Party to contain lines pleasingly relevant to the present situation.24 This play opened on the very day the papers carried the inflammatory news that the king had prorogued the Irish parliament.25 Small wonder that the audience, predominantly Country Party (especially in the pit),26 responded clamorously to Digges as Alcanor, defender of the city and of the people's liberty, rather than to Sheridan or WofEngton in the leading roles of Zaphna and Palmira.27 Almost at the very beginning of the first act applause and cries for an encore greeted a speech by Alcanor in which the "Powers divine" 23Victor,

Original Letters, 1, 217. History, 1, 160. Hitchcock stresses that the play had been cast the season before but laid aside as too late and as interfering with the benefits (1, 228). Sheridan, in his Vindication, also says that the play had been "delivered out" toward the end of the preceding year for representation, but audiences were then too thin to hazard a new play (p. 6). An eight-page pamphlet, A Grand Debate between Court and Country, points out that almost every line had application to the present situation in Ireland (p. 6). But Victor says that nearly any tragedy of the type popular then could have been seen as relevant (History, i, 161). 25 The proclamation, issued by Lord Lieutenant Dorset, appeared in the Dublin

Journal, January 29-February 2, 1754: “Whereas his Majesty hath signified unto Us his Royal Pleasure, that the Parliament of this Kingdom be prorogued, We do therefore Publish and Declare, that the said Parliament be, and accordingly the said Parliament is hereby prorogued unto Tuesday the 2d Day of April next. . . .” 26 Hitchcock, i, 229. 27Victor (History, 1, 162—174) is a chief source for the account which follows. Hitchcock and Lefanu lean heavily on Victor without acknowledgement. Sheridan himself supplies some of the details in his Vindication. Pamphlets and newspaper material round out the picture. 24Victor,

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1753—1754 were called on to mark and bring to account “those vipers” who, entrusted with the protection of the people, “shall for a Grasp of Oar [Ore]/Or paltry Office, sell ‘em to the Foe!”28 Digges, taken by surprise perhaps by the earliness of the audience’s reaction, paused shortly and then repeated the speech, again to loud applause. Throughout the rest of the evening the other players received scant attention, but Alcanor’s lines were frequently clapped.29 The performance concluded without incident. Some little publicity followed this occurrence, a relatively modest part of all the political activity at the time. Readers of the next issue of the Dublin Journal were provided with An aff roved Recei-pt to make an English Tragedy in the f resent Taste: “Take the Words Liberty, Patrioti Country, Tyranny, Offressioni High-Priesti Priestcraft, Bribery, Corruftioni Pensions, Placemen; of each an equal quantity. Take out of the Dictionary as many Words as will make up two thousand Lines of English Verse, but take Care that at least one of those above-recited Words be in each Line. Divide these into five equal Parts; between each Part let there be a Chorus of Groans in the Upper Gallery.—Your Tragedy will do, depend on’t.” 30 Readers of the Dublin Sfy found a summary of the Mahomet plot and a commentary on the performance—from the Country point of view. The Sfy had remarked “several diabolical hisses” coming from the “tongue of two clergymen” at the time of the encore—proof of how “infamous is a Courtier’s heart.” 31 A Grand Debate between Court and Country may also have appeared during this interim and was designed to let the reader into “the Nature of this Quarrel between the Politest Audience in the World, and a Saucy Impudent Manager of a Theatre.” 32 Two letters, signed “Theatricus” and “Hibernicus” and printed in the Dublin Journal, protest party madness in a theater and praise Sheridan’s indefatigable work in raising the Irish stage from the lowest ebb to its present glorious position as “the only free 28 Mahomet, The Imfoster [by Voltaire, trans, by James Miller and John Hoadly], 1744, p. 2. 29 A Grand, Debate between Court and Country quotes three other such passages, all from Act 1 (pp. 7—8). 30 Dublin Journal, February 2-5, 1754. This item refers to the upper gallery, rather than the pit mentioned by Hitchcock, as the source of the trouble. The night of the riot Sheridan was more concerned about the upper gallery than about the pit. 31 Quoted by Stockwell, pp. 111—112. 32 P. 7. This pamphlet, not recorded in Loewenberg, could have been written after the riot.

Cry Havoc Again Stage now in the World, or that perhaps has been since the flourishing State of Athens.” It is Hibernicus who points out that Dublin owes everything to Sheridan: its recent growth, the decline in absenteeism (rich young gentlemen stay home in Ireland now), the increase in trade and industry—everything.33 An unfriendly reply by Libertus to these two letters assumes right away that they both were written by Sheridan, and indeed familiar echoes of Sheridan’s phrases and rhetoric ring through them, although in the Kelly affair he had made a point of not writing anonymously. Libertus ridicules the claim that Smock-Alley is the only free stage in the world, although it is true that at no other theater are more free tickets given to support shoddy entertainers and poor plays, many of them obscene. Through a mistake which must have galled Sheridan Libertus asserts that the year before Sheridan became manager all plays were better performed than ever since and at that time Garrick, Barry, Sheridan, and Bellamy acted together in the same play.34 This assemblage of actors was possible only in 1745 during Sheridan’s first year in charge of the theater. At any rate, the argument might well have petered out had Sheridan not made the fatal mistake of his career—he revived Mahomet a second time; no one can say why. Later, in his Vindication, Sheridan himself gave several inadequate reasons: His friends had advised that he had spent too much time and money preparing the play to lose the advantage of another performance; also, that since it was not a party play, not performing it would imply that Sheridan thought it was; also, that not more than twenty persons in the former audience had stamped the name of party on it. Furthermore, it had been requested by many and unless performed would have been “insisted on.” as Unfortunately, Sheridan himself had invited these requests by advertising, a fortnight after the first Mahomet, that to give “the greatest Variety of Plays,” he would repeat none but those “particularly bespoke.” Ladies were asked to “send their Commands to the Box Keeper” so that the manager could learn which plays were most in

demand.3® What an opportunity for the Country Party! And no wonder Mahomet had been bespoken by many! From his misjudgment here and elsewhere we must conclude that Sheridan simply had 33 Theatricus' letter appears in the Dublin Journal, February 9—12, 1754; Hibernicus' letter in the February 19—23 issue. 34 Libertus, Remarks on Two Letters Signed Theatricus and Hibernicus. 35 Sheridan, A Vindication, pp. 11—12. 36

Dublin Journal, February 12—16, 1754.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · ij53—1754 not gaged the forces involved in the larger struggle, insulated as he was by his theater and his Beefsteake Club. His idea that only about twenty persons had been active at the first revival shows how he minimized the event; his failure to grasp the significance of the "many requests" for the play's repetition shows how blind he was to the future. At the same time anyone reading more of the story than Victor's account and those accounts based on him must feel that Victor has exaggerated the political significance of Sheridan at this time. For, despite Victor, Sheridan seems less the carefully selected target of a revenge-thirsty group than an unlucky and almost accidental victim in a greater issue. It is certainly clear that, when he ordered a second performance of Mahomet, Sheridan could hardly have believed that his enemies were awaiting this chance for revenge, although, looking back on the events of that evening, he and Victor claimed that they were doing just that. The second Mahomet performance was planned for Saturday, March 2. But first, on Friday morning, occurred the famous meeting of the cast in the greenroom, assembled, at Sheridan's request, for instruction on the proper behavior of an actor—a step later given by Alicia Lefanu as another reason why Sheridan felt that the play could safely go on.87 Sheridan read to his actors from a paper in his hand; what he read is reproduced in his Vindication "from some Heads" which he had written down.38 He talked of the duties of an actor in the face of party spirit. An actor, he said, had an obligation to the character he represented; to step out of the character in order to please part of the public by emphasizing or repeating a passage could rightly be regarded as an incendiary act. Sheridan claimed that he himself in his public capacity had been careful to preserve "a strict Neutrality." The earlier repetition of the Mahomet passage was an innovation "never known before in the Theatre" and might set a dangerous precedent. For example, a performance might never get through the first act because every speech was encored; a player might incur great ill will for obliging one side and disobliging another. Some time ago, when the audience could call the music, the musicians, who could play only one request at a time, became the physical target of the dissatisfied party, so much so that they finally 37

Lefanu, p. 55. Sheridan, A Vindication, pp. 3-9. Hitchcock quotes this speech in toto; Victor summarizes briefly; Miss Lefanu quotes two paragraphs (pp. 55—56). 38

Cry Havoc Again had to play behind the scenes until the custom died down. But actors cannot act behind the scenes. In short [Sheridan concludes] this is a Blow struck at the very Vitals of the Stage, calculated to destroy all Taste in the Audience, and Spirit in the Performers; to breed perpetual Feuds, and Divisions amongst the Spectators, and entail perpetual Slavery upon the Actors. I hope you have all too great a Sense of Liberty, and have the Good of the Society too much at Heart, to encourage so fatal an Encroachment upon your Rights; and in that Hope I shall leave you entirely free, to act as you think proper, wishing that your Conduct may rather be the Result of a manly Sense of Freedom, than Obedience to an Order. In all new Cases, indeed, I would rather persuade than direct, convince than command.39 At the close, Digges, who had felt himself the target of Sheridan's remarks, asked for more exact guidance if requests for an encore arose again the next night. Sheridan told him that he would give him no directions but leave him to do as he thought proper. Digges persisted, "Sir, If I should comply with the Demand of the Audience, and repeat the Speech, as I did before, am I to incur your Censure for doing it?" To this Sheridan ambiguously replied, "Not at all; I leave you to act in that Matter as you think proper." 40 Ever-loyal Alicia Lefanu, the only one to defend Sheridan's confused and confusing behavior at this period, finds his lecture in the greenroom an instance of his "spirit of order and system," and of his desire to impress upon his company "a sense of moral responsibility, and of their duties" to the public. At the same time she says of Sheridan's ambiguous response to Digges: "Nothing could be more moderate or conciliatory than this answer, the meaning of which was apparent." Its obvious meaning, Lefanu implies as she continues, was that, though Sheridan could not authorize repetition of a speech, at the same time, "as Mr. Sheridan was no courtier, he assumed it as an incontrovertible position, that, should the audience take the responsibility into their own hands, by insisting on the repetition of their favourite speech, the actor, as the servant of the public, was bound to obey them." 41 If Lefanu is right, Sheridan openly

occupied two flatly contradictory positions that morning and it is no wonder that Digges was baffled 39 41

Quoted by Hitchcock, i, 239. Lefanu, p. 58.

40

Victor, History, 1, 166.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · i~j53—1754 then as well as on the following night, when the performance began. Even as the curtain rose and Digges made his appearance on stage, he was greeted with an uncommon round of applause, a token of what he was to expect. Yet a few moments later when the encore came, as come it did after the critical speech, Digges seemed confounded.42 Finally, stepping out of character, he said to the audience that, much as he would like to comply with their request, he had "Private Reasons" for asking to be excused, because "his Compliance would be greatly injurious to him." 43 At this statement the audience began calling for Sheridan. Outside of Shakespearean dramatic tragedy, it is not always easy to put one's finger on the turning point of a man's life. Especially when we look back over what we call real life, the changes seem so gradual that the moment might be here or here or here, and is probably nowhere. But Sheridan's career resembled the Shakespearean drama he admired so much—except that the denouement to come was more protracted and the conclusion less dramatic. When the audience began its call, Sheridan faced his life's climax. This was the fateful moment of decision. Victor remembered the words of that decision. "They have no Right to call upon me"—Sheridan spoke them with agitation—"I'll not obey their Call." 44 Digges had withdrawn.45 The curtain was lowered at the manager's order; the prompter, sent out to give the audience a choice of its money back or a quiet house for the rest of the play, could not make himself heard. Sheridan's friends, backstage, begged him to appear.46 Instead, he went to his room, changed his clothes, and took a chair home in much perturbation of mind. He was vowing even then that, since he could no longer support the stage upon a footing which the world had approved of for many years, he would give up his career as manager. At home, affairs were not in a much better state. Mrs. Sheridan, alarmed by exaggerated reports before her husband's arrival, endured such mental agony that the child she was carrying at the time (she was near her fifth confinement) was affected and died in con42 Hitchcock,

43 Vietor, History, 1, 167. i i Ibid., p. 168. i, 242. Heaphy, playing Pharon, was also on stage with Digges and must have left with him. 46 Hitchcock (1, 245) tells of the attempts of one friend in particular, Mr. Adderley, to persuade Sheridan to face the audience. He even would undertake that the pit should offer him no insult. When Sheridan refused his mediation, he too went home. 45

Cry Havoc Again vulsions three months after birth. So Alicia Lefanu reports, adding as another bit of family tradition that Mrs. Sheridan neither then nor later revealed that evening's shock to her husband. It is significant of Sheridan's political views that the blighted child when born was christened Sackville, after the viceroy, who stood godfather to the infant.47 Back in Smock-Alley, the house was still in an uproar; nor was it in the least pacified by Mrs. Woffington's appearance on stage or by Digges's belated explanation that he had been given free will by the manager, who had "laid him under no Injunction not to repeat the Speech." 48 Sheridan's presence was still demanded and the audience waited for over an hour while messengers were sent to his house in Dorset Street to try to persuade him to return. But no arguments could prevail, and after an hour the audience began to renew its call, whether because it had received word of Sheridan's refusal Victor does not say. When two persons "of Gravity and Condition" rose in the pit and went off over the boxes, this was the signal to fall to. Ironically, in view of the Country Party's attitude toward the court, a young fellow stood up and called, "God bless his Majesty King George, with three Huzzas!" And with three huzzas the demolition of the house began: the audience section was all to pieces in a few minutes, the "finely painted" curtain and the scenes slashed, the wardrobe attacked, but defended. A fire set in the boxroom by a grate of burning coals was luckily extinguished49 by six servants belonging to the theater, who in the end drove out the mob and fired out of the windows upon the crowd. But the riot lasted from eight o'clock until two.50 Victor tells of his vain attempts to get help—from the Lord Lieutenant at the castle, who passed the request to the ill Lord Mayor, who passed the request to the high sheriffs. Victor could find no magistrate till one o'clock, the implication being that all had designedly made themselves "unavailable." From this Victor concludes that Sheridan now had the public against him, while in the Kelly riot "all the Advantages were on his Side." 51 47 Lefanu,

48 Victor, History, 1, 169. pp. 67-68. 50 Sheridan, A Vindication, pp. 10—11. pp. 170—172. el Victor, History, 1, 172—174. Later on in his History (pp. 195-199), Victor gives an account of Mahomet after the riot. The next season, after Sheridan had left and when Victor and Sowdon were managing Smock-Alley, voices were 4 9 Ibid.,

raised for another showing of Mahomet. With trepidation it was produced, and performed—to a house less than half full (£60). The speech was encored and

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1753—1754 Later, in defending his refusal to face the audience, Sheridan said he had felt that the house was hostile to him, not so much the gentlemen in the pit as the crowd in the galleries. Stones and bottles had been seen there. Although Sheridan—we recall Bellamy's words—"possessed as much personal courage as any man breathing,"52 his memories of the Kelly riot were fresh; at that time his judicious withdrawal had not only saved him from physical injury but had paid well in other ways. And besides, when the audience called for him, Sheridan conjectured that he was being summoned for no other reason but to give Digges an order "to repeat that Speech." This he knew he could not do, especially after his advice to the players.53 It is useless to speculate on what would have happened had Sheridan gone on stage that night, either to comply with the audience's demands or to reason them away. All we know is that from this moment Sheridan's life was a falling action. As in a good drama, there were to be many periods of hope. He was to return to Dublin as manager again; his acting career was to have its triumphs; and his educational ventures right up to the end of his life seemed on the point of bringing him success and fortune. But he never again reached the same peak of secure achievement. He was thirty-five when the turning point came. In the next issue after the riot the Dublin Journal ran a notice, dated from the theater-royal and probably written by Sheridan, asking the public to suspend judgment of the whole disastrous affair until they saw a narrative to be published soon and to be "supported by the most authentick Persons." 54 But the next Saturday, March 9, Sheridan had to make this sad announcement: Mr. Sheridan, lately Manager of the Theatre Royal, thinks it necessary to acquaint the Publick, that he has entirely quitted the Stage, and will no more be concerned in the Direction of it. He has lent the House to the Performers during their Benefits, without any Emolument to himself. He hoped to have been able before this Time to have laid before the Publick, a full repeated, after which the audience sank into an apathy. A second demand produced a second performance, with so poor an audience that the house had to be dismissed. Party feeling had died away, "and so this famous Affair quietly ended." 62 Bellamy, i, 97. 83 Sheridan, A Vindication, pp. 12—13; 16—17. One wonders whether Alicia Lefanu ever saw this work of Sheridan's. 64 Dublin Journal, March 2—5, 1754.

Cry Havoc Again Vindication of his Conduct, but a new domestick Concern has so far affected him for some Days past, that it was impossible for him to give that Attention to the Subject which is required. He hopes, however, to have it published on Thursday next; and, in the mean Time, earnestly intreats of all candid, and impartial Persons, that they will not give Ear to the many Stories and Falshoods [sic] which are industriously propagated to his Prejudice. He makes no Doubt of convincing all, (who are to be convinced) that he has done Nothing but what he ought to have done; and could not have acted otherwise consistent with the Character of a good Citizen, or a good Manager.55 It is challenging to speculate on the "domestic Concern" affecting the late manager. A "Mr. Sheridan's child," doubtless the Sackville described by Alicia Lefanu as living only three months, was buried on May 3, 1754.56 Perhaps it was born during this dreadful week; clearly it lived an even shorter time than Alicia allots to it. This was an unhappy time for all the Sheridans.57 Sheridan's Vindication was, however, published on March 15, about two weeks after the riot.58 In it Sheridan reconstructs the speech which he made to the actors before the play, describes some of the riot, explains why he repeated the play and why he did not appear upon the call of the audience, traces his earlier struggles with the theater, and concludes with four affidavits (two from repairmen) testifying to brickbats, glass bottles, stones, and oranges on stage after the riot. This pamphlet, Sheridan says, was "written in great Grief of Heart and Uneasiness of Mind." If he was wrong in what he did, his punishment has surely been too severe—the loss of eight years of incessant labor and sums of money up to £9,000. Now he must give it all up and start again, "except that his Constitution, formerly a good one, is greatly impaired and broken." This apologia 65

Ibid·., March 5-9, 1754. Parish Register, St. Mary's Church, Dublin. 57 Other troubles, especially in the Chamberlaine family, brought grief. The death "after a lingering Illness" of a Mrs. Anne "Chamberlain," relict of the late Rev. Dr. Philip "Chamberlain" is announced in the Dublin Journal of April 2-6. (Is Alicia Lefanu wrong in saying that Frances Chamberlaine Sheridan's mother died soon after Frances was born

[p. 4], or did the father remarry?) In July a favorite brother of Mrs. Sheridan, the Rev. Walter Chamberlaine, died too “after a tedious Indisposition” (ibid., July 2—6, 1754). 58 Dublin Journal notice, March 9-12, 1754. It was published by Faulkner, price 3 d. 56

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1753—1754 touched at least one heart. In a letter to the Journal, a person signing himself T.C.D. (Trinity College Dublin?) writes to say that he had been among those prejudiced against the manager, having exclaimed loudly at his behavior on the fatal night. But now he has been won over by the “Truth, good Sense, and honest Concern” breathing through the Vindication. Since, judged from their “public Principles,” the majority of the audience that night were honorable gentlemen who would scorn oppression and cruelty, let Sheridan appear on stage j his offense was undesigned, his punishment has already been too severe. He will be received with mercy by a public who remembers the delight he has given them and the regularity of his conduct.59 But Sheridan was not ready to take this chance. When the theater reopened on March 18 after two weeks of temporary repairs, he was not in the company. The actors’ benefits followed and the season ran into May. Sheridan, resolved that his company should not share his misfortune, had given them the use of the theater “not only without any emolument, but at a certain loss each night to himself.” 60 Even this generosity was besmirched by his enemies and another notice had to be given to the paper. This notice, signed by three leading actors, King, Sparks, and Dexter, denied reports that Sheridan was profiting by the receipt of £40 from each actor’s benefit, and certified, from examination of the actual expenses, that a night’s performance cost £42.14.5 without allowance for wear and tear on the wardrobe, scenes, et cetera, which Sheridan had freely lent to the company. Thus every benefit meant a loss to Sheridan of over £2 at the very least.61 In the meantime, advertisements, running for a month in the Dublin Journal (from March 9 to April 6) reinforce Sheridan’s intention : To be let, from the First Day of September, next, or the Interest to be sold, of a Lease of the two Theatres, in Aungier Street and Smock Alley, together with a large Wardrobe, and some Scenes belonging to Aungier Street, and some that escaped the Wreck in Smock Alley.62 59

eo Hitchcock, i, 250. Dublin Journal, March 16-19, 1754. Dublin Journal, March 12—16, 1754. 62 John Knowles, Sheridan’s brother-in-law connected with the financial side of the theater, was to receive proposals; any coming from England had to be postpaid. 61

Cry Havoc Again But it was not until early April that Sheridan irrevocably made up his mind. He had been waiting till then to learn the reaction to his Vindication. Although he had found it approved, and had heard no reasonable objection to it, he was surprised at the still warm resentment against him. Upon looking farther, he discovered that “infinite Pains had been taken to inflame the Minds of the People”; hence baseless accusations had gained wide belief, and vilest falsehoods had been spread under strict injunctions of secrecy. As the object of this whispering campaign, how could he meet with a good reception or be restored to public favor, regarded as he was with hate and contempt? With these sentiments, expressed in a pathetic Address to the Public,63 Sheridan took leave of his theater, resolved, Victor says, “to set his Foot there no more.” 64 Since the advertisements for leasing the theaters end just before this time, it is probable that Sheridan had worked out his agreement with Victor and Sowdon, to whom he sublet the houses for two years at the sum of £5 for every acting night; the two also agreed to lend Sheridan £2,000 upon a mortgage of the wardrobe, then valued at £4,000.65 This business was not finally completed until June ι.ββ The resentment which Sheridan sensed in Dublin weeks after the riot, had been kept warm not only by the whispering campaign but also by the writings which, although not so numerous as after the Kelly riot, were now more inimical to him. Mr. Sh—nys Apology to the Town . . . written by himself is, despite its title, a vicious attack on the manager, as is The Play-House Prorogued, which also pretends to be in his favor.67 The former blames Sheridan’s arrogance on the town, which has spoiled him by comparing him to Roscius and Shakespeare and by supporting him in his mistreatment of all rival actors such as Cibber, Barry, Dyer, and Mossop. Incidentally, the improvement in the actor’s lot accomplished through these years is 63 Dublin

64 Victor, History, 1, 175. Journal, April 6-9, 1754. Ibid., pp. 180-181. The deed, dated May 30, 1754, is between Victor and Sheridan only (it was registered August 15). On May 31 Victor declared in a deed poll that half the sum paid by him to Sheridan had belonged to Sowdon (see Stockwell, p. 382). In January 1755 a second deed, made by Victor, assigned one half interest in Smock-Alley and Aungier-Street to John Sowdon. Sowdon, it will be remembered, had come to Dublin in the hopes of assuming joint managership with Sheridan. 66 Victor, Original Letters, 1, 232 (Letter to Dorset, September, 1754). 67 This title had special significance since parliament had been prorogued not too long before. 65

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 17S3~ J 754 shown when the anonymous author has Sheridan say, We players are no longer the same scoundrels we were; we "are now Company for the best Lords in the Land," have "Access to Great Men's Chambers," are the center of all conversation and the superiors of the poets we recite. In conclusion, Sheridan is made to cry: If you drive me from Dublin where shall I go? Where shall I have a college at my beck to "vindicate my Fopperies," where will the ladies fight for my cause "with so much Acrimony," et cetera, et cetera? The PlayHouse Prorogued directs itself more toward Sheridan's political activity, satirically defending the actions of both the manager and Peg WofEngton, "best friends to the M—y for some years past." Much more diverting is another anonymous tract, Rules of Accommodation . . . to establish a right Understanding between the Town and the Manager of Smock Alley Theatre,68 which pretends to be the result of a meeting of blockheads to consider what shall be done if the manager should leave Smock-Alley. A committee is formed to prevent "so great and national a Calamity" and the rest of the piece consists of nine resolutions drawn up by this committee. In one of them the duty of a manager is defined as the obligation to domineer; to be fastidious and petulant to underlings, compliant and submissive to superiors; to mangle and castrate good plays, and so on. In another, it is declared unlawful to dispute the honor or virtue of an actor or actress, regardless of their infamy; they are to be entertained with highest respect and two or more are to sit with "a certain great Council" of state. The last resolution gives a final view of the cataclysm to be expected by Sheridan's departure: the exodus of our nobility, the decay of trade, the death of the arts, and the collapse of our constitution. A postscript of twenty-four toasts "to be drank by the Gentlemen assembled for the re-establishing of the Smock Alley Theatre" includes: "i. The Royal Family, not forgetting the Manager of Smock-Alley Theatre. 2. Confusion to the Kings, and all Mr. S—n's Enemies. 3. May Arts and Science never gain Footing in this Kingdom. . . . 8. The Scribblers of Ireland for ever! and the noble Earl or Earls who support them. . . . 10. The College in its present Situation. (And as the toasts presumably begin to take more and more effect) . . . 11. A groan for Shakespear. 12. Confusion to the Memory of Ben Johnson. 13. To the glorious and immortal Memory of Cibber and Farquhar. . . . 16. Licentiousness for ever! . . . 18. 68

This item (eight pages) is not in Loewenberg.

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Cry Havoc Again No bounds to Scurrility. . . . 20. Loyalty and Drunkenness," et cetera, et cetera. These Rules of Accommodation are clearly a satire on a meeting which did occur and which shows the concern of Dubliners—not all of it hostile to Sheridan—for the Irish theater. Shortly after the riot, a group of gentlemen got together to consider the deplorable situation of the stage and its possible destruction, which to them would be a national calamity.®9 Another larger meeting was planned and advertised, to which were invited all people who regarded the stage as important to the city and the nation. Particularly citizens were urged to attend, because noblemen and independent gentlemen could go to other countries for diversions, but those who by profession must remain in Ireland must get their diversions "here or nowhere." That this meeting was held and that it was friendly to Sheridan we gather from the satire in Rules of Accommodation. Otherwise, we hear nothing more of this group or their activities. Almost two months later, after Sheridan had made his decision, a letter written by a stranger to the manager and addressed "to Such as Esteem Theatrical Entertainments" speaks out for Sheridan. Readers are reminded of his industry and good taste and of his success as a result. They are asked to contrast the contempt for and infamy of the stage before him, the "unbecoming Lives of the Actors," the ignorance and dishonesty of earlier managers. Shall one error efface all the gain made under Sheridan? Moderates on all sides think he has suffered more than he deserves. "Justice bids Resentment cease, and Honour calls for Reparation." 70 It was too late. What reparations were offered, Sheridan refused. Without his knowledge the Earl of Shelburne and other friends had applied to the Lord Lieutenant, intending to request for Sheridan indemnities up to £1,000 for the destruction of his theater and also an annual pension of £300.71 Forestalling the offer, Sheridan told the Duke of Dorset that he wouldn't take a shilling. He wouldn't even let the duke subscribe heavily to four plays which were to have been performed to supply new scenes for those destroyed.72 In giving 69This

meeting is reported in the Dublin Journal, March 16—19, 1754, and the future meeting is advertised in the March 19—23 issue. 70 Ibid., May 4—7, 1754. 71 Sheridan, An Humble Affed, pp. 30—31. 72 There is mention of six subscription plays to repair damages and procure new scenery in the Journal of April

6—9, 1754. Apparently the plan lagged, for the time for subscribing had to be extended and then the number of plays had

Sheridan of Smock-Alley • 1753—1754 these deta i l s f our years later in his Humble Affeal to the Publici Sheridan explains that he had refused because he believed in a free stage. Alicia Lefanu gives other reasons: Sheridan felt that by accepting he would have merely confirmed his enemies' allegations. By refusing, he hoped that someday the public would see his conduct in its true light and provide him with another opportunity "by means of the theatre, to raise a fortune for his family." 73 Probably all of these motives had a place in Sheridan's refusal. His relations with the theater severed, Sheridan retired to the country (to Quilca undoubtedly), where he spent the summer peacefully and productively writing on "his academical project," 74 which was to replace the theater as his preoccupation and by which he hoped to save his falling fortunes. On September 15 he embarked for Holyhead, leaving his wife and family in Ireland 75 until he could be more certain of the future. It would be two years before he would return to Dublin again. With Victor and Sowdon running Smock-Alley, Dublin theatrical affairs, as might have been expected, began almost immediately to decline. For the financial falling-oïï, Victor gives the reason that no theater manager can prosper without being a capital actor himself or being connected with one who was.76 Sowdon apparently qualified on neither score. The kind of salaries Manager Victor had to pay Barry (£800) and Barry's protege, Miss Nossiter (£500) 77 had made Treasurer Victor writhe a few years before. To get full value from his actors Victor wrote into their contracts various niggling provisions which in the end brought grief and loss on him.78 In his dealings with his company he lacked Sheridan's generosity and breadth of spirit. In his productions he lacked Sheridan's imaginato be reduced to four, with only one of these at advanced prices. Sheridan, although he did not act in the plays and had withdrawn from the managership, may have had something to do with arranging the series. 73Lefanu, p. 71. 74Victor, Original Letters, 1, 233. 75When he did settle down in London, Mrs. Sheridan joined him with their oldest child, Charles Francis, leaving the two younger children, Richard and Alicia, in Dublin in the care of relatives (Lefanu, p. 74). In London the Sheridan family lived in lodgings, "next door to the Cross Keys, in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden" (given as the address where subscriptions for Sheridan's lectures were to be taken. Public Advertiser, February 13, 1756). Henrietta Street is also his address in the correspondence with Lee written in August of 1756. 76Victor, History, 1, 187. 77 Ibid., p. 186. 78 Ibid., pp. 188, 191-192.

Cry Havoc Again tion, so much so that he himself in his History could recall just three "remarkable Anecdotes," two of which were unsuccessful revivals of Mahomet and Jack the Giant Queller. Only one new play was memorable enough to be mentioned for the two seasons. Even in the first year of Sheridan's absence, an anonymous pamphlet, entitled A Letter to Messieurs Victor and Sowdoni revealed the deterioration that had set in in the audience. Because the same plays were being repeated too often, attendance had fallen off: "Dublin has never afforded above three different Audiences to most dramatic Entertainments. Nothing but Variety or Novelty can draw the Fair Ones from dear Cribbage and their Admirers from still dearer Claret and Politicks." 79 Still worse, for those who could be drawn, the curtain was not rising at the time promised, a laxity which encouraged late arrival, more after-dinner claret, and then inevitable disorders at the theater. The behavior of the rabble in the upper gallery, obstreperous as it had been at times before, worsened under the inadequate Victor. Their insolence and obscenity had become a scandal, exclaimed the anonymous pamphleteer, which "revives the Charge of Barbarism against us."80 and keeps many persons of distinction away from the play.81 The word "revives" suggests what Sheridan's firmness, efficiency, and superior entertainment had accomplished during his regime. Victor did not, however, cut himself off from Sheridan. Their friendship restored, a regular correspondence 82 kept Sheridan informed of the unrewarding activities of the new managers; and Victor in return received advice and even actual assistance from London, although some of Sheridan's friends were hoping for Smock Alley's decline in his absence. Not only did Sheridan manage to get Barry for Victor's first season; 83 when Barry left to return to Covent Garden, he secured Mossop for the second season.84 But though Victor consulted Sheridan on every step, the 1755-56 season—with Mossop ill during most of it—was even worse than the one before.85 When finally Victor's management drew to a close, he summed them 79

80 Ibid., p. 9. A Letter to Messieurs Victor and Sowdon i pp. 12—13. Sheridan, probably using Victor's records, reports that even Victor's leading actor, Barry, after the first month played only two nights to full houses up to the commencement of the benefits in the 1754—55 season under Victor (An Humble Affeali

p. 57). 82 Victor, History, 1, 208. 83 Sheridan, An Humble Affeal, p. 37. s i Ibid. 85 Victor, History, 1, 192. 81

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1753—1754 up as two years “full of Cares, Anxieties, and Dangers”; and he commented thus on “the envied Office of Managers of a Theatre Royal”: An honest Man so circumstanced, can stand no other Chance than that of losing his good Name. The many bad, envious, discontented Spirits that infest a Theatre, vent all their Malice against the Manager they cannot impose on, and must hate the Man who only treats them as they deserve.86 86

Ibid., pp.

206-207.

CHAPTER IX

zA cPlague on Έοώ Tou r c Dublin Houses,

1754-1758

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N THE meantime, Sheridan was having an uneasy two years in

England. When he had said that he was entirely quitting the stage, he had spoken too rashly. Debts, a wife, three children,1 and only embryo plans for improving English education were to drive him back where—at least consciously—he no longer wanted to be. By October of the first year he was acting on shares in Covent Garden under Rich, with whom he had negotiated a hasty agreement designed to put Barry out of the company and into Victor’s arms. At least this is the explanation given by Sheridan, in his Humble Affeali for Barry’s much-needed appearance in Dublin.2 With Sheridan at Covent Garden were Peg WofEngton and George Anne Bellamy among so many other former Smock-Alley3 figures that Sheridan’s awareness of his loss must have been heightened. Peg WoiEngton had had no proposals from Victor—somewhat to her chagrin, for she had wanted to stay in Ireland.4 But her presence at Covent Garden acting opposite Sheridan meant a better chance to use two plays from the Smock-Alley repertoire which would be new to London: Vhaedra and Hiffolitus (“short-lived” at Covent Garden, according to Bellamy) 5 and Sheridan’s own version of Coriolanus, which did well in competition with Shakespeare’s Coriolanusi revived by Garrick at the same time. Just one really new play, Moncrief’s Affius (with Sheridan as Virginius, his only new role) was all that Rich could manage to produce this year.® The season came to 1Their

last child, Betsy, was not born until 1758 (in London). This made four children who survived. 2Sheridan, An Humble Affeal i p. 37. Bellamy gives another reason for Barry’s departure from Covent Garden. He had left, she says, when Rich refused to comply with his exorbitant demands “relative to the engagement of Miss Nossiter,” then under his protection (1, 271). Victor had complied reluctantly, to the tune of £500 for this actress of only moderate ability. 8 For example, Cibber, Sparks, Dyer, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Vincent, Mrs. Hamilton (formerly Mrs. Bland). See London Stage (Pt. 4) for 1754—55 season. 4 Victor, Original Letters, 1, 232. B Bellamy, 1, 273. 6 London Stage (Pt. 4, 1754—55 season). Several new musical mainpieces were produced.

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Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1754—1756 an end early for Sheridan—on April 7. He took no benefit night, possibly as part of his original financial agreement. Although Sheridan acted with his usual force, some spark must have been lacking j the critics viewed his appearances as Covent Garden’s principal tragic actor and occasional comedian without enthusiasm. He had followed the popular Barry and he was competing with Garrick, who played to packed houses every night at Drury Lane.7 The rumor spread around Dublin by his enemies that Sheridan frequently acted to empty benches may have had a basis in fact.8 In Dublin, according to Wilkinson, no performer, not even “the Garrick,” would have been as “universally crowned with laurel” as Sheridan j but Rich was not happy enough about Sheridan’s London record this season to renew his contract, especially with Barry returning for the next season. Nor did Sheridan, according to Wilkinson, offer his services for the next year. Aside from the discomfort of his new subordinate position, he could hardly have been contented under the slapdash Rich, whose season commenced “with some . . . stock comedies, very ill acted indeed, and as dingily dressed.”9 Later he

came to regard this disappointment with Rich as a blessing in disguise, for it left him free to work on his educational writings.10 Sheridan's first achievement in this new field was British Education. Published late in December 1755,11 this 536-page book must have occupied most of his time from the end of his Covent Garden contract until its publication. Here he poured out, in a form and style showing his haste, a variety of ideas which his theatrical experience must have been shaping for some time. Basic among them was his discovery that the ability to speak English well could be taught by 7 Watkins,

8 Shea, A Full Vindication, p. 7. i, 58. iv, 206, 218, 204. 10 Sheridan, An Humble Appeal, Appendix, p. 38. 11 First notice of publication in the Public Advertiser, December 22, 1755: British Education·, or the Source oj the Disorders oj Great Britain laid open; being an Essay towards proving that the Immorality, Ignorance, and False Taste which so generally prevail are the natural and necessary Consequence oj the present dejective system of Education with an Attempt to show that a Revival oj the Art oj Speaking, and the Study oj our Language might contribute, in a great Measure, to the Cure of those Evils . . . by Thomas Sheridan, A. M. Preliminary notices show that the book was finished by mid-November. Sheridan claimed that the whole thing was begun and finished in the last summer (1755) but it probably had a first drafting when he was writing on education at Quilca in the summer of 1754. 9 Wilkinson,

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses rules and principles, without interfering with established educational institutions and without costing much. Two months later he tried to organize "by Subscription" a series of twelve lectures in which his plan for improving spoken English would be revealed.12 But, although in later years he was to have considerable success in lectures on the subject, this series seems not to have materialized, perhaps because he was premature in assessing public interest. By January, however, Smock-Alley Manager Sowdon, now sick of his bargain, had begun advertising for sale his share of the Dublin theaters' mortgage.18 Sheridan, at the same time, was getting word from Ireland that the party spirit of two years ago had abated and that Dubliners now regretted their oversevere treatment of him.14 When British Education emerged triumphantly from Faulkner's press early in February, Ireland was made to feel even more sensible of her loss by a letter to the Journal praising this book and recommending it to every Irishman of taste and learning.15 With Sheridan's stock thus rising and with many of his friends now ready to help in his restoration, Sowdon probably hoped that the former manager would buy up his share.16 And Sheridan himself must have had this possibility in mind when he set sail for Ireland late in April 1756,17 after the collapse of his lecture plan. A job—even in the theater—was imperative after a year's unemployment which had produced nothing more lucrative than his book and a lecture plan not yet ripe. If he returned to Smock-Alley, he would not give up this planj indeed, he would leave the theater—in good hands18—as soon as he could get his educational project underway} and Dublin was an even better place than London to launch it. It was more needed there.19 12

Public Advertiser, February 13, 1756. Victor, Original Letters, 1, 259—260 (Letter to James Donaldson, February, 1756). 14 Victor, History, 1, 207-208. 15 Dublin Journal, March 23—27, 1756. Notice of the impending publication of the Dublin edition appeared ibid., January 31—February 3. 16 Victor, Original Letters, 1, 260. 17 Dublin Journal, May 1-4, 1756, announces his arrival on May 1. 18 Indications that, although now Sheridan was thinking of Smock-Alley as only a stopgap, he still had the theater's interests at heart appear in a letter to John Lee, written in August 1756, and quoted in A Letter from Mr. Lee to Mr. Sheridan (p. 3). 19 Sheridan, An Humble Affeal, Appendix, pp. 39-40. 13

permanently; he had accepted the post of "Deputy Master of the Revels and Masques of this Kingdom" from Robert Wood, the patentee.20 Money—£ 1,000—was forthcoming somehow to buy back Sowdon's share of the mortgage.21 An agreement was worked out whereby Victor returned gladly to his former station of deputy manager and treasurer.22 By July Sheridan was sole manager of Smock-Alley Theater again.23 By August he was back in London,24 winding up his affairs there and organizing his company for the next season. Much as he wanted to leave the stage, his sense of respon20 Dublin Journal Mzy 25-29, 1756. (Wood's first name is erroneously given t as Thomas in this notice.) For the origin and history of the office of the Master of the Irish Revels, see Clark, pp. 71, 156, 169, et cetera, and his Appendix A, pp. 179—193. Miss Stockwell (p. 26) says that apparently around 1720 the precedent was established whereby the manager of the theater automatically took over the post of Deputy Master of the Revels and

actually conducted the business of the Office of the Master, since the latter had become a sinecure (with a fee of £300 a year). If so, then the announcement of his appointment to the post notified Dublin that Sheridan was returning as theater manager. The only time I have noted his using the title is in his 1758 Humble Affed1 "By Thomas Sheridan, Deputy Master of the Revels, and Manager of the Theatre-Royal." In this very work Sheridan tells that when, after the Mahomet riot, the viceroy asked what he could do for him, he declined all offers, requesting only the position of Master of the Revels. But the post was occupied then and, when it became vacant, a new viceroy was in the castle and Sheridan was in England. So Robert Wood was appointed, on January 29, 1756, just a few months before Sheridan's return. He held the office until 1771 (Stockwell, p. 309). 21 Victor (History, 1, 208) gives the figure £1,000 and reports that Sheridan borrowed it from a "Gentleman in London," to whom Sowdon's moiety of the mortgage was transferred and who, Sheridan told Victor, was to be concerned with him in the profits. Victor's statement here is very circumstantial except for the name of the lender. On the other hand, mortgages upon the two Dublin theaters held in trust for Mrs. Clotilda Tickell, show that Thomas Tickell's widow advanced money in 1756 to help Sheridan in his theatrical ventures (Tickell, p. 175). This same source shows that Sheridan on February 20, 1758, mortgaged Quilca to borrow £1,000 from Robert Wood of London (Robert Wood was the name of the Master of the Irish Revels). Perhaps this latter mortgage (of 1758) was what Victor remembered. 22 The terms of this interesting agreement are given in full by Victor (History, i, 209-214) but misdated July 15, 1755, for 1756. 23 The Dublin Journal, June 29—July 3, 1756, publishes a notice of a benefit performance for a child singer, concluding, "Mr. Sheridan has generously given the Theatre and the Company's Performance on that Occasion." 24 Letters to John Lee in Edinburgh are dated from London in August. They are quoted in A Letter from Mr. Lee to Mr. Sheridan, 1757.

 sibility—and his concern for his old theater—would allow no slackening in his renewed task. Sheridan's return in October 1756 was briefly triumphant: he crossed the Irish sea in the viceregal yacht The Dorset,25 a vessel reserved for persons of the highest quality. But the triumph was very brief. For, although all the commentators—Victor, Hitchcock, Lefanu —insist that by this time a repentant public now regarded him "as a much injured man"26 and wanted him back, his first appearance at Smock-Alley—and indeed his troubles through the next two years— show that there was still strong feeling against him. It was to be a hard and discouraging season in other ways too. Smock-Alley had now to be built up again. Performances had to be restored to that punctuality for which Sheridan was noted; full houses had to be rewon by the variety and novelty which had marked his former programs. Much physical improvement was needed too. Immediately upon his return Sheridan set to work with his usual vigor to refurbish the stage, repair the theater, freshen up the wardrobe, and have new sets made by Mr. Lewis, the scene painter.27 Even before he returned he had met the problem of what to do with the upper gallery, probably through instructions to Victor. Early in October, with the opening of the theater still two weeks away, the Dublin Journal informed the public that as several ladies had applied "to have some Part of the Theatre allotted to them where they might see and hear well, without being at the constant Trouble of Dressing for the Boxes," and as there were objections to the slips, the middle gallery, and the pit, "no Part of the House remained which could effectually answer the End but the Upper Gallery." That part had therefore been formed into boxes, where the admission price was to be raised from 1/1 to an English half crown.28 With this crafty maneuver Sheridan ousted the ruffians in a body j and onus for the move was borne by the ladies rather than by the manager, who could not afford the ill will it might arouse. Thus a long-cherished aim of Sheridan's was realized: the upper gallery now became the quietest place in the house.29 The only trouble was 25Announced in the Dublin Journal, October 16—19, 1756. Mrs. Sheridan was with him. This was, so far as I know, Sheridan's first trip in this style. seHitchcock, i, 270. 27 Ibid., p. 273; Victor, History, 1, 214-215. 28 Dublin Journal, October 2—5, 1756. 29 A final show of ruffianly resistance was cleared out about a month later when servants were barred from keeping places in these upper boxes (ibid., November 2—6, 1756).

ıJ that it proved to be a mistake financially. The section grew popular with the ladies, then naturally with the gentlemen, so that the higherpriced pit was "much thinned." 30 Indeed, all of Sheridan's diligence and attention would be required, Mrs. Sheridan wrote to Samuel Richardson in late November, to get through the season with any profit, so unfavorable did things look by then: a most depopulated town (it was an off-winter for parliament), able to support only a small audience, though a "constant genteel" one, Mrs. Sheridan hastened to add.31 In this same letter is also

described, in muted terms, Mr. Sheridan's first appearance that fall on Smock-Alley stage.32 The theater opened on October 18 with King and without Sheridan, who, as usual, was waiting until somewhat later in the season to make his appearance. After an uneventful first act, the audience— or some few in the audience—began to shout for an apology from the manager. (Victor reports that even before this opening evening rumors linking Sheridan and Afology had been spread around the town.) Dexter, then on stage, retired to consult Victor, who sent him on again to say that Sheridan was in his apartment next to the theater and ill with a cold. But by this time the audience wanted a promise from the manager that he would apologize. Eventually Victor and Dexter went next door to Sheridan, who, though much upset, bowed to Victor's urging and agreed to make the audience an apology at his first appearance. When Dexter returned with this news, the performance proceeded without further disturbance. In spite of his shocked surprise, Sheridan may have expected trouble at his return and perhaps even worse trouble than this.33 From London, at the end of August, he had written to John Lee, whom he had just engaged as his principal performer: "It is a Matter of more Consequence to me than I can now represent to you, that you should be in Dublin before the Opening of the Campaign. . . . The least Delay might disconcert my Plan in such a Manner that it couldn't easily be remedied. When we meet you will be fully convinced of the Cause of my urging this on you with so much 30

Sheridan, An Humble Affed, p. 40. Richardson, Corresfondence, iv, 145-150 (Letter of November 20, 1756). 32 My account of this first appearance is drawn also from Victor, History, 1, 215-221; Hitchcock, i, 275-279; Lefanu, p. 75. 33 Sheridan says (An Humble Affeal p. 39) rumors in London before his i return that he would never be permitted to appear on stage kept good performers from signing with him. 31

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses Importunity."34 From these dark hints, never really explained, Lee later concluded that Sheridan wanted his foremost player on hand to take over in case of trouble.35 To pay for the chance to rebuild Smock-Alley stage Sheridan was first to be made to crawl before those who had brought it down. He was a proud man; his feelings, as he saw the injustice of this, can be imagined. But so important was the work to him and so desperate his position, that crawl he would—and properly. Even the advertisement announcing his apology for October 25 is touching: NB. Before the Play begins Mr. Sheridan intends to make an humble Tender of his Duty to the publick. He is sorry that his present weak State, occasioned by his Indisposition, will not suffer him to perform on the same Night; but he chose not to defer it longer, that he might take the first Opportunity of shewing to the Publick his Readiness to pay an implicit Obedience to their Commands.36 Despite the poor play, The Suspicious Husband, chosen at Victor's canny suggestion to capitalize on Sheridan's unavoidable mortification, this notice packed the house with over a thousand people.37 As the curtain rose, Sheridan advanced with paper in hand and spoke modestly and briefly, denying that he had ever "intended to give public offence."38 Tears, says the ordinarily matter-of-fact Victor, streamed from the eyes of some of the men in the audience and the speech was accepted with the loudest acclamations, so continually reiterated that Sheridan returned to the audience as he was withdrawing and "with broken, fault'ring, Accents" spoke: "Your Goodness to me at this important Crisis has so deeply affected me, that I want Powers to express myself; my future Actions shall shew my Gratitude." 39 Mrs. Sheridan's account to Samuel Richardson is, interestingly, the least indignant at Sheridan's abasement. In a protective, wifely fashion she omits mention of the demands made on him for an apology, saying only that her husband "thought it most prudent, be34

Quoted in A Letter from Mr. Lee to Mr. Sheridan, p. 10. 36 Dublin Journal, October 19—23, 1756. pp. 13-16. 37Victor, History, 1, 219—220. Victor recommended that some comedy be given that didn't normally "bring Charges." He also recommended that the apology be pompous—"to make them pay for it." 38 Richardson, Correspondence, iv, 147 (Mrs. Sheridan's letter of November 20, 1756). 39Victor, History, 1, 221. ss IbiJ.,

 fore he again launched out into a troubled sea, to conciliate the minds of the few remaining malecontents." She thinks almost everybody left in town was there that night, and Sheridan was scarcely permitted to finish what he had to say, so prompt and enthusiastic was the applause. From the results she finds verified that wise saying, "A word spoken in season, how good is it." 40 Victor, who had urged Sheridan to make the speech, feeling that it would act "like the Reconciliation of Lovers after a Quarrel," does observe that "in Sense and Reason" those persons (all known) who had destroyed the scenes at the Mahomet riot owed Sheridan the apology and more.41 Alicia Lefanu is

purposefully vague in her comment, saying merely, “It being thought necessary to address the audience with a few words of apology and explanation . . . Mr. Sheridan complied with this requisition.”42 But Hitchcock is outraged by the whole affair. A spectacle which perhaps “was never presented to the public before or since,” it represented the shameful triumph of despotism over right and reason. Posterity “must blush at the degeneracy of the times, which could reduce a man of Mr. Sheridan’s abilities and sentiments to the humiliating situation of apologizing to the destroyers of his property, for their ruining his fortune and demolishing the labours of so many years!”43 After this compliance Sheridan was allowed to provide Dublin with entertainment, an increasingly difficult task because the town was poor as well as thin. This winter was a time of great scarcity and suffering. Shortages caused by the renewed war with France were aggravated by a very destructive hurricane in the fall, other dreadful storms, and extreme cold, more extreme even than the remarkable frost of 1739. From early autumn into April the papers are full of calamity. Coal became scarce and expensive 5 heating the theater must have been a problem. The very severe weather forced the Sheridans back to their cramped town quarters44 from suburban 40Richardson,

41Victor, History, 1, 219, 216. Correspondence, iv, 147. 43 Hitchcock, 1, 277-279. Lefanu, p. 75. 44 Mrs. Sheridan had moved her family to Glasnevin in November to improve the health of her two younger children, Richard and Alicia, whom she had found ailing on her return from London, and also to give Sheridan a chance to be more “master of his time, such a portion of it . . . as he is not unavoidably obliged to pass in Dublin” (Richardson, Correspondence, JV, 148—149). The town quarters may not have been the Dorset-Street house, but Sheridan’s apartments adjoining the theater; that the family used these rooms is suggested several years later when Mrs. Sheridan wrote to Sam Whyte that if he needed extra beds he could use those from the Blind Quay (Whyte, p. 92). 42

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses Glasnevin, where the bitter air had threatened Mrs. Sheridan with a return of her “rheumatism in the head.” 45 Sheridan, she reported to Samuel Richardson in February, had had a heavy cold for over three weeks, with no time to nurse it.46 With his audiences small and growing smaller, Sheridan tried his old devices for luring a fuller house. Two Italian dancers from the opera house in London arrived in October, probably having been engaged by Sheridan during the summer. A dreadful mistake in the press announcing the arrival of five French dancers had to be hastily corrected to two less inimical Italians, the “Figure Dancers employed under them” all being “Natives of this Country or England.”47 (Sheridan had been in England the year before when the Chinese Festival riot at Drury Lane had expressed London’s disapproval of French dancers hired by Garrick from an enemy country.) Besides dancers, spectacles were stressed. When Coriolanus was revived in January, the Roman ovation conceived by Sheridan some years before was so elaborate that preparations for it caused one postponement and shut the theater entirely the night before it finally was staged. Then, because it occurred at the beginning of the play, Sheridan deferred the curtain by desire to seven o’clock:48 no one would want to miss the ovation. Even more publicity was given to a production of The Temfest which opened “with a Scene of a Ship at Sea in a Storm, and a Representation of a Shipwreck.” 49 At this very time in January, news of gales and shipwrecks filled the papers; Sheridan’s idea that Dubliners would feel a horrid fascination in seeing them reproduced on Smock-Alley stage was justified, for the play ran four nights that month and seven nights during the season. The spectacles this year were more impressive than the plays. In January Sheridan planned to revive old plays on Saturday nights,50 taking advantage of a gracious concession made by several Dublin ladies who had “entered into a Resolution not to have any Drums on 45Richardson,

Corresfondence, iv, 1 5 4, 1 4 8 .

46

Ibid., pp. 1 5 3 1 5 4 (Letter of February 8, 1 7 5 7) . In this letter Mrs. Sheridan writes about dreadful weather and the high cost of living. 47

4 8 Ibid., February 5 8, 1 7 5 7 . Dublin Journal, November 6 9, 1 7 5 6 . Ibid., January 11—1 5, 1 7 5 7 . For a March 11 performance of The Temfest we note: “By Desire, the Curtain will not be drawn up till seven o’clock, on

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Account of the Shipwreck beginning the Play” (ibid., March 5-8, 1757). Incidentally, Hitchcock (1, 280) says that Sheridan was “excellent” as Prospero, but his name does not appear in any of the notices. 50

Dublin Journal, January 2 2 2 5, !757·

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1756— 1 J57 Mondays or Saturdays for the Encouragement of the Theatre Royal." 61 Ladies, as Sheridan always said, were his strongest supporters, a fact which his enemies wondered and railed at. This was the first time, though, that they had had to forego their private assemblies "for the Encouragement of the Theatre Royal." Victor attributes the season's small houses to the lack of a "capital Female Actress."52 Although Sheridan had many women in his company—Miss and Mrs. Kennedy, Miss Danvers, Mrs. Wilder, et cetera—and discovered the Misses Phillips53 in the fall, not one of these touched Woffington or Bellamy in drawing power, or even Mrs. Fitzhenry, now at Covent Garden after two successful years under Victor and Sowdon. His new men were Wilder, popular but limited, and John Lee, former stage manager in Edinburgh. These two could not have been more different. Wilder, bred to the business of painting, was attractive, easygoing, much esteemed by his employers as a dependable trouper j54 Lee was a man "of extreme and aggressive vanity and of a quarrelsome disposition." He had left Edinburgh under a cloud, his theater having been seized by creditors and he himself having spent time in prison.55 At about the time of his departure he seems to have started a suit (reported in the Dublin Journal) against Lord Elibank, his former supporter and benefactor.56 Like his wife a few years earlier, Lee was a failure this season at Smock-Alley, and a source of great embarrassment to Sheridan. The story goes back to the summer before Sheridan's return, when he was in London organizing his company for the season. The Edinburgh manager had impressed Pasquali, Sheridan's old bandmaster now Master of Music in the Scottish capital.57 Sheridan, who said later he had never seen Lee act, commissioned Pasquali to make him offers, which were afterward elaborated in a series of letters from Sheridan to Lee. This correspondence, published by Lee at the end of the season, reveals that from the beginning the situation called for much tact on Sheridan's part. He wanted to engage Lee, but not Mrs. Lee. The letter in which he explained this to Lee shows Sheridan's writing at its best: 51 Ibid., 53 54

62Victor, History, 1, 2 2 2 . January 1 8 2 2, 1 7 5 7 . Genest, x, 4 0 8 and Dublin Journal notices.

Thesfian Dictionary, v. "Wilder (James)."

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Be Dublin Journal, October 2 5, 1 7 5 6 . DNB, 0. "Lee, John." Remarks on Mr. Lee's Letter, p. 3 . Pasquali, incidentally, died in Edinburgh the next year (announcement in the Dublin Journal, October 2 9 57

November 1, 1757)Lampe had died in the same city just a few years before.

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses As you seem to like Candour in Dealings, it will not offend you if I speak my Mind frankly on this Occasion: Mrs. Lee was with me in Dublin during a Season; there was no one whose private Conduct I more esteemed; but I know in what Estimation she was held by the Town in her public Capacity, and consequently what Rank she must be placed in; this it is highly probable, from a very allowable Partiality, you would think inferior to her Merit, and hence might arise a Source of perpetual Discontent, to avoid which, were we to engage, I should think it a fundamental Article that Mrs. Lee should not play at all.58 Lee's "very candid and equitable" response in which he asked for no more for his wife "than her Merit palpably entitles her to" in the opinion of the Dublin manager, and suggested that "the Town's Acceptation . . . determine her Fate," so impressed Sheridan that it not only removed his former objection but persuaded him "to give her every fair Opportunity of standing or falling by her own Merit, as it shall be rated by the Town." He ended by raising his offer £100 to make a total of £400 salary for their joint performance. Lee would never have come to Dublin at this price, he later said, if Sheridan had not opened another prospect: the future managership of Smock-Alley Theater. "I have been long weary of the Stage," Sheridan wrote on August 12, 1756, "and as I have a much more important Point in View, am determin'd to quit it as soon as possible." At that time, he told Lee, he knew "no theatrical Person whom I would so readily chuse for a Successor." In another letter he said that it would be Lee's own fault if he did not come hereafter to have a share in the profits. There was, it soon turned out, another person whom Sheridan would as readily "chuse for a Successor"—Spranger Barry, just entering upon a second season at Covent Garden. Apparently about the time of Lee's engagement Sheridan learned that Barry, with some friends' help, had it in mind to build a new theater in Dublin. Such a catastrophe, which Sheridan knew would ruin Barry as well as himself, had to be averted. One way would be to engage Barry that season at Smock-Alley and promise to give him the stage after a year or two, by which time Sheridan

hoped to be in a position to give it up. Such an offer was made in London before Sheridan's return, 58 Sheridan's first letter to Lee in A Letter from Mr. Lee to Mr. Sheridan, p. 3. The other excerpts which follow are from other letters quoted in this same pamphlet.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1756— 1 J57 Sheridan at the same time pointing out to Barry the dangers of his other project. On Barry's promise to consider it, the offer was left in abeyance.59 When Sheridan returned to Smock-Alley after his two-year exile, it was with this sword hanging over his managership, and with the ill-omened Lee as his "foremost player." He should have known better, an Irish commentator said afterward, than to take the recommendation of an Italian fiddler in Scotland.60 Lee acted first as Lear. On the second night of his appearance (as Archer), he was almost hissed off the stage, and a representative of the audience was sent to Sheridan to ask that Lee not appear again in principal characters j in the opinion of many, he was so far from equipped to be head of a theater that "he was but indifferently qualified to be set at the Tail." Sheridan out of "Delicacy and Tenderness . . . could not bear to have him degraded."61 Yet Lee's unpopularity and Sheridan's hope that the idolized Barry would accept his offer must have colored the manager's behavior. For Lee claims that as soon as Sheridan found Dublin amenable to his apology and Lee unnecessary as a stopgap, he grew cool toward his foremost player, said nothing more about the managership, and tried to persecute him out of his agreement. "Your Conduct then thus nicely plann'd," Lee wrote later in his published pamphlet, "I was received with all the dignify'd Plausibility that constitutes your Character} mixed and foreign Conversation pass'd an Evening or two with strain'd Civilities, then Shyness spoke your Fraud: In short a total Breach of every Article ensued." One specific persecution mentioned by Lee was fixing his benefit "in a singular and most injurious Manner." 62 As the season progressed, the calen69 Sheridan, An Humble Afpeal, p. 38. If my conjectures are right, the offer must have been made after August, the time of Sheridan's letters to Lee. It will be remembered that Sheridan (perhaps occupied with this new problem) did not return to Dublin until mid-October. 60 Remarks on Mr. Lee's Letter, p. 3. 61 Ibid., p. 4. 62 A Letter jrom Mr. Lee to Mr. Sheridan, pp. 13—16. Just what this particular persecution involved is perhaps suggested by the Journal notices. The summer before, when the terms of Lee's engagement were being worked out, one of the points made in a letter from Lee to Sheridan was that as first player he should receive the first benefit. When benefit time came round in March, Lee was originally scheduled for the first night; but it was, unprecedentedly, a Tuesday night, on which Smock-Alley was normally closed. (This might have increased Lee's difficulty in selling tickets.) Then, when Signora Bugiani's benefit was suddenly slipped in on the Monday before his, Lee no longer had the first night. Possibly these slights are what Lee was complaining of.

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses dar shows that Lee was used less and less (perhaps in compliance to public demand) until in the end he dwindled to roles in the afterpiece, King and Dexter sharing the leads with Sheridan in the main plays. (Mrs. Lee played only a few times.) Lee explained his unpopularity by saying that followers of other players resented him, a stranger, in their favorites' parts.®3 But he was quickly reminded that he was no better received in the new tragedy Douglas, where he played an unfamiliar role; and that Wilder, also new that season and a stranger to Dublin, had become the support of Smock-Alley Theater.®4 In June, when his contract ran out, Lee aired his grievance by publishing, with commentary, the correspondence which had preceded his engagement. His failure to mention, as another breach of etiquette, Sheridan's offer to Barry seems to show that this was Dublin's best-kept secret, although Victor's trip to Barry in London in April 1757 should have tipped Lee off. Probably long before this, Sheridan had decided that, Barry or no Barry, Lee was not the man to succeed him. If Barry raised a rival theater, Lee could hardly have competed. If Barry came with Sheridan, there would be no place for Lee. Lee, then, was not encouraged to hope. Perhaps Sheridan should have been more candid with him, as he had been earlier on the subject of Mrs. Lee. But probably no amount of candor or tact could have soothed that "extreme and aggressive vanity," unavoidably crushed by the situation itself. Lee's publication aroused no response from Sheridan, but two anonymous pamphlets followed, one (Remarks on Mr. Lee S Letter) defending Sheridan on the whole, the other making fun of both sides in A Letter from Tom the First, King of Ireland, to John the Second, King of Scotland, with the King of Scotland's Answer Thereto. In this latter piece King Tom describes to Cousin John how he keeps the Dublin public in line: through "Shew and Pomp"; money spent on Regalia, Shipwrecks, and Burials; and by supporting a set of "turgid, unintelligible Poets" whose writings he "corrects" if they grow too clear. Shipwrecks (in The Temf est) and burials (in Romeo and Juliet) could go only so far. Late in the season, on May 12, a

"new" play supporting a poet was produced. John Home's Douglas, recommended for Drury Lane by Lord Bute, had been rejected by Gari

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According to Remarks on Mr. LeJs Letter, p. 5. Ibid., p. 6. This pamphlet is our source for Dublin's attitude toward Lee.

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Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1756—1757 rick the year before as dull and improbable.65 Yet with Barry in the leading part it had succeeded at Covent Garden; and when Sheridan received the printed copy of the play from London, he thought he had the perfect tragedy. Its first night in Dublin was "crammed," says Samuel Whyte; its second night (Whyte errs in reporting it as its third) was to be for the Scottish author's benefit, an "unprecedented act of liberality" from Sheridan, who was treating Home as though the play had been originally brought out at Smock-Alley. This night, however, "fell miserably short of Expences," 86 perhaps because Sheridan was unequipped (as Hitchcock says) to play the blooming young Norval67 and Lee, we recall, was no success in the secondary role of old Norval. Whyte gives another reason for its failure; word had gone round that the author was a dissenting clergyman "with an ecclesiastical anathema [from the presbytery] against him." 68 After the disappointment of the benefit, whatever its cause, Sheridan, still eager to do something for Home, took the advice of two friends who had suggested a piece of gold in the form of a medal. The medal, engraved with laurel, bore an inscription which Whyte remembers thus: Thomas Sheridan, Manager of the Theatre Royal, Smock-alley, Dublin, presents this small token of his gratitude to the Author of Douglas, for his having enriched the Stage with a Perfect Tragedy.69 Some years later, in an Oxford coffeehouse, Dr. Samuel Johnson called over to Sheridan, "Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Sheridan, how came 65Garrick,

Some Unpiblished Correspondence, pp. 108—112. Whyte, pp. 45-46. 67 Hitchcock, 1, 282. Young Norval seems to have been Sheridan's only new role this season. And my records show no new roles for the next season (1757—58). 68 Whyte, p. 46. When Douglas was produced in Edinburgh (after Garrick's rejection but before its production at Covent Garden), the presbytery ejected Home from the pulpit for having written a play (Garrick, Some Unfublished Correspondence, p. 107). Whyte says that in Dublin a faction was raised against the play, which was "considered as a profanation of the clerical character" (Whyte, p. 46). 69 Ibid., pp. 46-47. Whyte was commissioned by Sheridan to take the medal to London, where it was put in the hands of Lord Bute, who got it to the author. Whyte tells how on the road near London he was set upon by highwaymen, but preserved "the well-meant offering" at the sacrifice of his purse and the peril of his life. This must have been sometime before Sheridan himself went to London in the summer of 1758. 66

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses you to give a gold medal to Home, for writing that foolish play?" This question, he explained later, was "wanton and insolent" and meant to be so. For a "medal has no value but as a stamp of merit." And what right had Sheridan to give a stamp of merit? If he had wanted to make such an award, he should have asked a university to choose the recipient.70 Actually, as Whyte reports, the award did have intrinsic value, the gold in the medal amounting to about twenty guineas} the medal itself had been a second thought, Sheridan at first having planned a letter accompanied by "a handsome piece of plate"; but plate, he had soon realized, would have been superfluous to the young unmarried author. As Whyte says, Sheridan had meant only good; 71 for his pains, Boswell gave him the reputation for tasteless arrogance that still pursues his memory. The season dwindled off in early June, by all comments a poor one. Yet, while the record of performances did not reach his highest past score of 162, Sheridan had advertised about 130 performances this season, almost twice as many as during the Garrick winter of 1745-46. Even so, it could not have been a comfortable year for the Smock-Alley manager, in suspense all winter long over Barry's answer. This answer, when it finally came in April or early May via Victor in London was No. Barry claimed that he had gone too far in his plans to give them up then.72 On May 14 he took a lease on the old Crow-Street Music-Hall to be razed for his new Crow-Street Theater.73 In early July Victor returned—uncomfortably, one can imagine—on the same ship with Barry and his new associate, Macklin.74 The two men were in Dublin all summer until September 9, leasing additional land for their new building and raising mortgages.75 Sheridan's feelings as he contemplated these develop70 Boswell, Life of Johnson (Hill, ed.), 11, 320 (A.D. 1775, Friday, March 24). When most of London was acclaiming Douglas, Johnson was saying that there were not "ten good

lines in the whole play" (Garrick, Some Unpublished Correspondence, pp. 112— 113). 71 Whyte, p. 47. 72 Victor, History, 1, 223-224. In An Humble Affeol (p. 45), Sheridan says that Barry's lease on the Crow-Street Music-Hall wasn't signed till a long time after he had been approached by Victor. Victor went to England in April and Barry signed the lease in mid-May. 73 Stockwell, p. 121. Actually the Crow-Street Theater was in Cecilia-Street near Crow-Street (Stephenson, P. J., Dublin Theatre Notes, MS read before the Old Dublin Society now in possession of Pearse Street Library, Dublin). 74 Dublin Journal, July 5-9, 1757. 75 Notice of their departure ibid., September 6—10, 1757.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757—1758 ments can be easily imagined. For some time he had been thoroughly sick of the stage, its ingratitude, its uncertainties, its internal bickerings, its exposure to never-ending attacks from outside. Now Barry's blindness, the unfavorable reply through Victor, the growing certainty of a rival theater—these new threats must have seemed beyond bearing. With what a sense of urgency must he have turned to his educational plan, in abeyance during the pressing months of the past season! If he were ever to escape the theater, this had to be the way, and the time had to be soon. Yet, even with the possibility of his own escape, his concern over the future of the Dublin theater remained. As it turned out, progress on Crow-Street's construction was to be slow, and the theater was not to open until October 1758. Sheridan had, therefore, almost a year and a half to launch his academical project and to try to circumvent, by some means, the theatrical rivalry which would ruin one or both of the theaters. He also had to carry on his main job—that of running Smock-Alley. THE SEASON of 1757-58 was one of incredible activity. Sheridan spent

most of the summer at Quilca, "immersed in turf-bogs" and probably writing on his elocution lectures, since by December he was compiling "another" course.76 But frequent trips to Dublin must have been required by another extensive and costly redecoration going on at Smock-Alley under Lewis, who was redoing the sounding board, ceiling, lattices, et cetera, "in a new Taste."77 When the theater opened on October 6, it was not for a performance, but for a reception of distinguished Dubliners "to see the new Scenes, fine Paintings, Decorations, Silver Branches [for candles], &c.," which all allowed to be superior to any ever seen in Ireland or even in England,78 and which, if the worst came, should outdo anything CrowStreet could offer.79 A visitor to Dublin, attending the season's first performance a few nights later, was struck by the beautiful and unusual decorations, the wax lights, the regularity and decorum on stage, and in general "the decent and polite Behaviour of the Audience." One trace of barbarism, however, remained—a strange custom 7e Richardson, Corresfondence, iv, 164 (Letter of July 24, 1757); p. 165 (Letter of December 18, 1757). 77 Dublin Journal, August 16-20, 1757. 78 Ibid., October 4-8, 1757. 79 At about the time these elegant decorations were put on view, Sheridan received a new distinction: he was appointed "Deputy Master of his Majesty's Band of Music" in Ireland (ibid., October 4-8, 1757). The Smock-Alley reception may have been partly in celebration of this honor.

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses he had heard about incredulously in London: Dubliners stood on the pit benches between the acts—apparently to see the boxes better. If Sheridan could have adopted this Englishman's waggish suggestion and limited the practice to men under five feet,80 much wear and tear on his pit benches would have been saved. Shortly before this opening, the arrival of the Duke of Bedford as the new viceroy—it was to be a parliament year—had reactivated the city, slowly recovering, with the help of a good harvest, from its terrible winter. A round of social activities and celebrations began.81 And, not surprisingly, Smock-Alley improved during this season.82 The duke was an enthusiastic playgoer. He and his duchess were on hand at the season's first performance (October 10); they commanded many nights, and once at least asked for a special repetition of Richard III because they had missed Sheridan in the leading role a few nights before and had never seen him in that character.83 Foote's reappearance from mid-November to Christmas (he had acted at Smock-Alley a few nights the preceding spring) 84 was a grand success. His benefit on December 21 brought a full house by three o'clock; "half Guineas and Guineas [were being] offered for Places in any Part of the House. The uncommon Success this Gentleman hath met with," adds the Journal, "is more than ever was known in Ireland."88 He played no new roles, but he did give his 80

Ibid., October 25-29, 1757. The duke and his wife were noted for their hospitality, opening the castle to people of all ranks (O'Mahony, pp. 161-162). For a description of the lavish celebrations on November 4 and the king's birthday, see Dublin Journal, November 1-5, 8-12, 1757. 82 In November Victor reports the audiences as middling, having been cut into by the warm parliamentary debates at that time (Original

Letters, 1, 277278. Letter to Garrick); but the next April Sheridan, reviewing the season, says, “The Play-House was hardly ever more frequented.” The 1757-58 receipts, he continues, were likely to exceed Barry’s (under Victor in 1754—55) by nearly £2,000 (An Humble Afpeal, pp. 64—65). 83 Dublin Journal, February 28—March 4, 1758. 84 At that time Foote had appeared a few times in May, Sheridan having “embraced” the offer of his services. His appeal then, with the nobility and viceroy absent, may not have been so great as had been hoped, since his new Englishman returned, from Paris seems to have been given only one performance during his stay; and The Author and The Knights, with Foote playing in both, were advertised only twice each. 85 Dublin Journal, December 20-24, 1 757While in Ireland this time, Foote was enthusiastically entertained by the nobility and the viceroy. His last appearance was on December 26 in The Double Dealer. 81

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757— 1 758 always popular “Tea.” One performance of his farce The Author provoked an amusing newspaper notice, probably written by Sheridan, still smarting from the Mahomet riot: As there were some Things said in the Farce of the Author last Friday Night, which might be considered as Party Strokes; lest any Blame should be imputed to the Writer of that Piece, it is thought necessary to acquaint the Publick, that those Passages were ignorantly and impudently put in by the Person who played the Part of the Poet. On which Account, the Manager, after the Entertainment was over, reprimanded him very severely in Presence of the Company, and that very Night put the highest Mulct upon him which Theatrical Usage will permit.86 Many years before, Burke had complained of Irish actors ad-libbing in their parts to attract applause;87 Sheridan, who would hate this practice on all grounds, was still trying to stamp it out. While Foote was at Smock-Alley, two young actors made their first stage appearance. One of these, Thomas Ryder, was later to become a Dublin theater manager and, along with other troubles, to bring a suit on himself for pirating and producing under another title a play enthralling London—The Duenna by Richard Brinsley Sheridan.88 The other beginner (he was only eighteen) was Tate Wilkinson, whose memoirs of the season provide us with lively reading. He had come to Dublin with Foote, who had promised to fix him “on genteel terms with Mr. Sheridan.” 89 After an illness which lasted almost until Christmas and then a dinner party at which Sheridan was “all politeness,” Wilkinson appeared first as a “pupil” in Foote’s tea, giving imitations of Luke Sparks (not Isaac), Barry, Mrs. WofEngton, and even, unexpectedly to his master’s pained surprise, of Foote himself.90 So promising was this debut that he was 88

Ibid., November 19—22, 1 7 5 7 . Burke, Reformer, No. 3 (Samuels, p. 3 0 3) . 88 Thesfian Dictionary, v. “Ryder (Thomas).” 89Wilkinson, 1, 1 4 8 . Although Wilkinson, during May of the season before, had gone on stage twice unsuccessfully at Covent Garden, the Dublin Journal (December 3—6, 1757) advertises his Smock-Alley performances as first on any stage—perhaps because he wanted to forget the Covent Garden disaster. Also, he had acted just the summer before in a “wooden booth at Maidstone” (ibid., pp. I23, !33)And in the early fall of 1757 he had had walk-on parts at Drury Lane, but Garrick had released him to go to Dublin with Foote. 90 Ibid., pp. 1 5 9, 1 6 9 1 7 5 . 87

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses promptly engaged by Sheridan at three guineas a week until the end of February. When Foote left, Wilkinson took over his comic roles, often doing them “after the Manner of the Original” and he even attempted serious parts—Othello, Hastings, and so on.91 His benefit, late in February, aroused such a demand that part of the pit was railed into boxes.92 Wilkinson’s cruelly amusing account of what happened when he and Sheridan were planning this benefit has probably been retouched and has often been retold, but it is worth summarizing here. After some discussion between the two men in which Wilkinson saw deep plots for self-aggrandizement in Sheridan’s attempts to save the young actor money, and after the benefit had been settled for a Saturday (a bad night), Sheridan suggested that it would be better for Wilkinson to “take off” performers in the present Smock Alley company rather than other actors whom Dubliners perhaps had not seen. Wilkinson demurred, saying that he had not had time to study them nor did he wish to offend those who could help him in his benefit. As Sheridan persisted, Wilkinson asked if he could use Sheridan’s name and say that he “did not do it” of his own accord. This request displeased Sheridan, who felt that the mimicry should come before the audience as Wilkinson’s spontaneous and voluntary act} after that, the audience’s demands would be so enthusiastic that no performer, angry as he might be, could prevent it. For, Sheridan observed, the more it vexed the players, the greater relish it would give the audience—an observation which Wilkinson had found only too true. At this point Wilkinson conceived his famous idea, which he broached in these terms: My good Mr. Sheridan, I have hit upon the very thing to establish myself as a favourite with you, and the town. . . . My dear Sir, a thought has just entered my pate, which I think will draw money, and be

of infinite service to myself.—What is it! What is it! says Sheridan, with the utmost eagerness.—Why, Sir, says I, your rank in the theatre, and a gentleman so well known in Dublin, on and off the stage, must naturally occasion any striking imitation of yourself, to have a wonderful effect. I have paid great attention to your whole mode of acting, not only since I have been in Dublin; but two years before, when you played the whole season at Covent-Garden theatre; and do actually think, 91 92

Ibid., January 3-7, 1758. See also the Smock-Alley Calendar. Dublin Journal, February 14—18, 1758.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757—1758 I can do a great deal on your stage with you alone, without interfering with any other actor's manner whatever. As Wilkinson describes Sheridan's reaction, Hogarth could never have caught his look of astonishment; he turned white and red, his lips shook, but he couldn't speak. Snatching a candle from the table, he showed Wilkinson the door and then finally found words: "he never was so insulted. What! to be taken off by a buffoon upon his own stage! etc. etc." Politely desiring Wilkinson to walk downstairs, he lighted him only to the first landing (the meeting may have occurred in Sheridan's quarters next to the theater). From there he let him stumble his way out, while he turned back upstairs, "grumbling and squeaking to himself." Wilkinson claims that, from this moment on, Sheridan neither spoke to him nor permitted him to play "my own night excepted." 93 This night, incidentally, included no mimicry. This episode is a favorite among those who have presented Richard Sheridan's father in a few revealing scenes. Perhaps they did not know that, months before this Sheridan interview in which Wilkinson's famous idea occurred to him so spontaneously, Garrick and Foote had laughed themselves ill over Wilkinson's imitations of Barry, Sparks, WofEngton, and Sheridan·, 94 that Garrick would never permit anyone to take him off on Drury Lane stage; and that Samuel Johnson once threatened to cane Foote if he "mimicked" him.95 As for Sheridan, Wilkinson's proposal came at a time when he was trying to establish himself as an educator in the public eye; buffoonish ridicule on his own stage by his own employee would have shattered this image. Not that his behavior with Wilkinson can be completely extenuated, but mimics bring out the worst in others, even in good men. Wilkinson himself was hardly without malice in proposing the take-off or in printing the story years later. As for the rest of the Smock-Alley company this season, it remained much the same, except for a desirable strengthening of the female side by Mrs. Fitzhenry. Victor tells of his excited discovery of this actress several years before, when she was Mrs. Gregory.96 He had sent her to Covent Garden for her training and then, when he was Dublin manager in 1754, had engaged her at Smock-Alley. Now she was back again under Sheridan, the two of them, Victor says, making an excellent pair.97 The episode summarized here appears in Wilkinson, ι, 184—189. 98 Cooke, Foote, 1, 66. Ibid., p. 148. ee Victor, History, 1, 184-186. 97 Ibid., p. 233.

93 94

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses Another woman, who was not in the company but wanted to be, gave Sheridan much trouble this season. The Irish manager's reputation for recognizing and encouraging ability for some years had been attracting would-be players from as far away as London. Mrs. Beauclerk, a lady with no theatrical experience, had come to Dublin the preceding May in the hopes of appearing on the stage there. But by this time in his managerial career Sheridan, "on Account of repeated and continual Disappointments,"98 was offering no terms to performers he had not seen in three or four characters on the stage. Finally, after calling on Mrs. Beauclerk twice at her lodgings to hear her read (as a preliminary test, apparently) and each time being disappointed because she had a cold and could not, Sheridan turned the matter over to Victor, who made arrangements for her to appear during November. The terms of the arrangement are interesting: Mrs. Beauclerk was to perform the same play twice at weekly intervals without salary, and then to treat for terms. If none were agreed upon, her third appearance, a week later, was to be for her benefit, she to pay forty guineas for the house. Mrs. Beauclerk's first performance, as Andromache in The Distrest Mothery acted, Victor says," to a dissatisfied, half-filled house, was such a disaster that Sheridan refused to permit her a second performance of that play. So she played Zara in The Mourning Bride, with applause and approval, she claims, though dressed in rags and insufficiently rehearsed. Sheridan, who had discouraged her from the beginning, offered her no contract. But in February she was permitted her benefit, all through which, she asserts, the manager practiced endless chicanery. To have her revenge, she published Mrs. Beauclerk's Letters. Here she accused Sheridan of countless inhumanities to his players and railed on in such a sordid and incoherent way that the details merit no more than a short footnote.100 98

From a letter written by Sheridan on April 16, 1757, and quoted by Mrs. Beauclert in Mrs. Beauclerk's Letters, February 27, 1758. 99 In Victor's letter reprinted ibid., p. 20. x°° The facts which have been given are from letters reprinted ibid. Her accusations against Sheridan include turning Mrs. Hopkins out to starve just after she had "lain in"; ill-using Mr. Mossop; holding back £300 to £400 on Mrs. WofEngton; forcing Macklin to go to law to get his salary; breaking agreements with Wilkinson, Lee, et cetera. As for his treatment of her, he overcharged her for her benefit (forty guineas instead of the usual £40), refused to change the inconvenient night, and then failed to open the doors until four forty-five, all the while he was sitting in his window gleefully watching her subscribers go away rather than stand outside in the cold and rain!

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757—1758 As in the preceding season, dancers provided the extra entertainment,101 supported in January by an equilibrist, supposedly a Laplander with the impossible name of Ulan Smolenzco Czernznigorf.102 In the number of "new" plays and special series this season recalls Sheridan's earlier efforts: two Shakespeare series, three main plays,103 and several afterpieces. Sheridan himself learned no new roles this year and his number of performances declined, not much but enough so that in January he issued a public apology for his absence from the stage during the preceding weeks.104 His popularity in old roles was still unshaken, as a table of statistics given in his Humble Affeal shows. The income from twenty-one nights of his acting during this winter averaged £77, a figure which may not seem large compared to later statistics for Dublin theaters and Drury Lane, but which Sheridan uses to contrast with the £69 average made by the fresh and popular Barry under Victor in 1755, with two new actresses to assist him.105 Running Smock-Alley Theater at such a pitch all fall would have kept any ordinary man fully occupied, but Sheridan had, as we know, two more important concerns which claimed his chief energies: starting his educational venture, and saving the Dublin stage from the ruin theatrical rivalry would surely bring. These two projects kept not only Sheridan but Dublin in a fever all season. The uproar caused by the Kelly riot dies into a murmur in comparison} its excitement was over in a few weeks and its battle easily won. This time the activity lasted for months, all kinds of important people became involved, and the fight itself was the hardest and most crucial of Sheridan's career. Because this book is a theatrical biography only, Sheridan's educational plan is not relevant here, except where in a strange way it touches the theater. But to Sheridan it had become paramount. Early 101

Signor Tioli and Signora Ricci from Italy replaced the two Italian dancers of the year before, although in April Signor Maranesi returned with a new partner Signora Provencale (Dublin Journal, April II—15, 1758). 102 Ibid,., December 31—January 3, 1758. 103 Most successful of these was Dryden's Amphitryon, with all exceptionable passages cleared (the press notice does not say whether by Hawkesworth, whose version had run eleven nights the year before at Drury Lane, or by someone like Sheridan). The Gamester, "never acted here," ran only two nights, with the roles never specified in the press notice. Isabella, Garrick's version of The Fatal Marriage, was given for Dexter's benefit. 10i Dublin Journal, January 28—31, 1758. 105Sheridan, An Humble Afpeal, Appendix, pp. 44—45.

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses in the fall a demand, perhaps planted by friends, had come for him to explain how Ireland could be saved by a new kind of education.106 He responded, during the winter, in two well-attended orations at the Music-Hall in Fishamble-Street. At the first, on December 6, "the Hibernian Society for the Improvement of Education" was formed to promote Sheridan's ideas. This group, even Sheridan's enemies had to admit, was most impressive} and indeed the list of subscribers, well over two hundred and including "Lords, both Spiritual and Temporal, Privy-Counsellors, Members of Parliament, Doctors of Divinity, Fellows of the College, and Gentlemen of Fortune," 107 reads like a WhoyS Who of Ireland in the mid-eighteenth century. Nor were most of these merely lay figures} frequent meetings were held and a very active committee formed, which convened almost weekly at Mr. Sheridan's quarters next to the theater. For them Sheridan prepared many long reports, developing his ideas down to the last penny. By late spring the society had completed plans to open the Hibernian Academy, a public school to prepare youths for the university in a new style; terms of admission were set; some of the staff was engaged; parents and guardians were notified; and during the next summer Sheridan was sent by the society to London "to execute an important Commission" for their opening on October i. (Apparently he was to hire additional instructors.) The curriculum of the Hibernian Academy incorporated Sheridan's new ideas: the English language and oratory were stressed; 108 a variety of courses was to be offered to suit the interests and vocational aims of a variety of students; diet, sports, and recreation were to receive attention; and no corporal punishment was to be permitted. In other words, Sheridan's educational ideas were advanced—too advanced for some tastes. 106 In case this sounds like

more of Sheridan's grandiose language, the reader should hear briefly his argument: Ireland's great source of misery is absenteeism; the number of youths being sent to England for their education has increased (over a hundred are now at Westminster and Eton, where recently there were fewer than ten); these boys will be anglicized and estranged from Ireland, with the resulting decay of all noble improvements here. The important reason for all this is the want of reputable schools in Ireland. In the October 22—25, 1757J Journal, an anonymous paragraph had stressed the need for an educational academy in Ireland, where oratory, arts, and sciences would be learned, "to save the Nation from impending Ruin." 107 Dublin Journal, January 14—17, 1758. 108 Latin and Greek were not to be minimized, but were to be strengthened by this knowledge of English.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley • 1757—1758 Although Sheridan's first oration at the Music-Hail was enthusiastically received,109 he made one bad mistake in it: he suggested that a proper theater might supply helps to the right kind of educational institution. The theater bandmaster might, for example, be its music instructor; the scene designer, its drawing master; the actors, its models of eloquence.110 These ideas, Sheridan implied, grew out of an earlier plan to open a small academy for training young people with stage talent. Later Sheridan saw that the theater could become "an admirable Assistant to the School of Oratory," 111 which he now hoped to incorporate into the educational background of all young gentlemen. It can be imagined what Sheridan's critics made of this tentative proposal. Writing seriously, they protested that young gentlemen would be seduced and debauched by the "ladies" of the theater, or at least led into idleness and folly by the men; that the stage was the worst school of oratory extant, its pompous diction and ridiculous delivery justly known by the name of "theatrical"; that younger sons of honorable families would be encouraged to become players; and that oldest sons and heirs might be drawn to marry actresses "to the heart-breaking disappointment of their parents, the disgrace of their families, and the total ruin of themselves." 112 Writing humorously, they joked that Sheridan's plan would improve the eloquence of the young blood visiting a brothel. Now his speech is inarticulate: "Damn my Eyes, you are a fine Piece, come Buss me Slut, Dam me, we'll Pig together to Night." After instruction by our great orator, the young Academic will breathe out in "moving and persuasive Accents": Thou Nature's whole Perfection in one Piece, Thou yeilding [sic] Softness, Down of all my Care, O let me fly into thy twining Arms! And riot in the Soft luxurious Fold, Till, lost in Extacy, I dye in Joys, Greater, than any I can guess hereafter. 108At this meeting a motion was unanimously passed that Mr. Sheridan should be desired to print his Oration (Dublin Journal, December 6—10, 1757). This was speedily done. Sheridan's second Oration (reported ibid., January 24—28, 175®) "t°ok up almost two Hours," was heard with profound attention, and received uncommon applause. 110 Sheridan, An Oration, pp. 23—24. 111 Ibid.., p. 24. us The Case of the Stage in Ireland, pp. 18—20.

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses Sheridan himself, rumor has it, will teach the dancing by delineating figures on the floor with chalk. In music, solos and sonatas on the broomstick will be featured} and Signor Gillwayboni, who imitates an organ with his voice, will instruct in church music. In architecture, scholars will study the structure of the city Tholsel and of Quilca.113 From the handle it supplied his enemies and from the failure of his supporters to develop this side of his plan, it is clear that Sheridan had overrated the social standing of the theater and that his attempt to combine the projected academy and the stage was a grave mistake. For, despite his well-behaved houses, his gentlemanly and ladylike players with their pew in St. John's Church, the old feeling against the theater still survived. Smock-Alley stage, much as it needed to be saved from Crow-Street threats, could not be saved this way. Other ways, Sheridan soon learned, had to be tried. The proprietors of Smock-Alley and Aungier-Street took the first step. At several meetings held in November they had drawn up a petition to be submitted to the Irish parliament at its winter session.114 They reminded parliament that their two theaters were combined in response to public demand because two theaters could not operate profitably in Dublin} and that the united theaters were still encumbered with debt, the proprietors even now making no profit. In conclusion, they asked parliament to confine "all Dramatic Representations" to the united theaters.115 Victor accurately foresaw the result. Since some of the owners were old members of parliament and all were men of property, he predicted that Crow-Street would "get a little sweating at least" but that the petition would come to nothing in the end.118 113Shea,

A Full Vindication, pp. 13—16. Two meetings of the proprietors are advertised in the Journal, November 8—12 and 22—26, 1757. Victor summarizes their petition to Garrick in December (Original Letters, 1, 282). Another meeting was held on April 3, 1758, "to consider of some Affairs in which their Interests are nearly concerned" (Dublin Journal, March 21—25). Perhaps they heard Sheridan's petition and proposal

at this last meeting. 11.5 TJle proprietors' petition, which is undated, is headed thus: "To the Honourable the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses, in Parliament assembled: The humble Petition of John Putland, Esquire, and Thomas Desbrisay On Behalf of Themselves and the other Proprietors of the united Theatres of AungierStreet and Smock-Alley, in the City of Dublin." lie victor, Original Letters, 1, 276. As early as November 1757 Victor reports to Garrick that now that Barry's theater is being organized the proprietors are planning to meet and propose to lay the state of their case before parliament, offering reasons against an increase of theaters. 114

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757—1758 In January Sheridan took over the fight, burdened though he was by the management of the theater and many duties to the even more important Hibernian Society. After this season he had "no Intention," he announced, "of continuing any longer in the same Situation," but he could not be indifferent to the future of the stage and, before quitting it, he wanted to prevent the ruin with which it was threatened.117 The week after he made this announcement, carpenters began to roof over the new theater in Crow-Street. Measurements given in the newspaper compare the new building to Aungier-Street,118 Smock-Alley figures being unavailable. These measurements show that the new Crow-Street stage was almost as deep as the whole of the Aungier-Street house. When we remember that Aungier-Street stage was larger than Smock-Alley's, we echo the Dublin Journal's question about this huge Crow-Street stage: "What proportion then must it bear to that in Smock-Alley?" In addition, it was formed to admit machinery never attempted in Dublin, whereby twenty different views of scenes could be shifted in less than a minute by one man.119 Structurally at least, Crow-Street would be a formidable rival. Sheridan's side of the case is presented mainly by himself, although this time he had many supporters, even according to his enemies, who grant that "the Friends of Mr. Sheridan . . . are undoubtedly in the Majority." 120 The several anonymous letters which appear in the Journal are favorable to the Smock-Alley manager. One of these, written by Romanus, defends Sheridan against charges that he hired a man to play on a broomstick (this was during Victor and Sowdon's regime) and that he had rejected Mrs. Fitzhenry 117

Dublin Journal, January 28-31, 1758. January 31-February 4, 1758. The figures are as follows:

118 Ibid.,

Crow-Street length in clear . . . 131' Aungier-Street. . . .94' breadth 50'9" 46' stage breadth 36'6" 29' stage depth 90' 54' (to which may be added 45') pit depth 26' 26' (to which may be added 9') The new house was exactly the same height as Covent Garden. was quick to point out that no play required such fast shifting; the machinery would be used only for certain kinds of pantomime (An Humble Affeal, pp. 57-58). 120 The Case of the Stage in Ireland, p. 5. 119Sheridan

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A Plague on Both Your Oublin Houses when she first attempted the stage (denied by Mrs. Fitzhenry herself).121 When the proprietors drew up their petition for the winter term, Sheridan at first planned to offer one too. But perhaps waiting to see what success the proprietors would have, he saved his till the spring term,122 submitting it sometime in April after parliament had taken no action on the proprietors' request. Sheridan's petition is short, rather ordinary and unpersuasive. Parliament is told that the new Crow-Street Theater would be the ruin of the Irish stage as well as of Sheridan himself, whose past efforts surely have deserved a better reward; the legislature is reminded that it has the power to limit the number of theaters, as the English parliament recently did. But Sheridan does not repeat the proprietors' request for a monopoly; he prays only for "such Relief . . . as to your great Wisdom shall seem meet."123 The bombshell—the relief he was hoping for—was planted in a proposal expressed in The Case of Thomas Sheridan . . . and apparently designed to accompany the petition. Here Sheridan doesn't ask for a monopoly; he asks parliament to buy his lease and theatrical property. "Is not this a homestroke in policy?" Victor exclaims, after describing the proposal in a letter to Garrick.124 Sheridan's plan is, as usual, complex and specific. Parliament would turn over its purchase to the Dublin Society (this was not the Hibernian Society, but 121 Dublin Journal, January 31-February 4, 1758. Another letter from Romanus had preceded this one (see ibid·., January 21—24). February an anonymous letter defends Sheridan against the base libel that he defrauded the public of money collected for a Swift monument (ibid., February 4—7, 1758). 122 Victor, writing to Garrick in December, describes its contents and also some accompanying proposals of Sheridan's (Original Letters, 1, 283). A Barry supporter suggests that Sheridan postponed submitting his petition because the arguments against monopoly in the anonymous

forty-eight-page pamphlet The Case of the Stage in Ireland, published soon after Sheridan's first oration in December and sent to all members of parliament, had made such an impression that he wanted to wait till its effects had worn off (An Answer In Behalf of Sfranger Barry, p. i). But, if he had thought this, Sheridan was the sort to have taken immediate steps to counteract the impression. 123 "To the Honourable the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses, in Parliament assembled: The humble Petition of Thomas Sheridan, Manager and Lessee of the united Theatres of Aungier-Street and Smock-Alley." (This item is misdated 1756 in Loewenberg.) 124 Victor, Original Letters, i, 284.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757—1758 an older group formed to promote improvements of all lands).125 The Dublin Society would rent out the theater to Sheridan for £3 every playing night.12® Another pound for each playing night would be laid aside for the upkeep of the theater. And four plays each year would be performed absolutely free for four public charities. If this proposal were to be accepted, Sheridan would be able to realize some long concerted plans, among them that of making the Dublin theater a pleasing school of manners and instruction to youth. Victor concludes his comments to Garrick on this proposal thus: "This may be called another sweater! Here is really some invention—but, perhaps, you will say, a little too chimerical." 127 Yet Victor, reading the paper a month earlier, might have learned that parliament had addressed the king to grant, among other large sums, £2,000 to Dr. Mosse for his "Care and Inspection" of the Lying-in Hospital} £1,000 to build galleries in St. Mark's Church j £4,000 to Bottle and Glass Manufacture} £300 to Robert Randall, papermaker} £500 to two men for gold and silver lace manufacture} £2,000 to build the parish church of St. Thomas; £5,000 for nurseries.128 To Sheridan, the theater was as important and as useful as any of Ireland's manufactures, and perhaps even as necessary as galleries in St. Mark's Church, although he was a religious man. Victor had noticed that, by Sheridan's proposal, "almost the whole body of the people become interested to support" his theater, and frequenters of Crow-Street would "ĩε looked on as enemies to their country." 129 A Barry representative too, in An Answer In Behalf of Sfranger Barry (p. 3), points out that if parliament grants Sheridan's request, the ruined Barry, who has laid out several thousand pounds on his almost finished building, would be thrown into jail, where he would die of disappointment and despair. Such an outcome would hardly appeal to Sheridan, who was, no matter what his enemies said, 125The Dublin Society was founded in 1731 to foster improvements in husbandry, manufactures, the arts, et cetera. Premiums were given to persons responsible for new inventions and outstanding achievements. In 1746 the society was, by the king's letter, granted an allowance of £500 per year. It was chartered in 1750; in 1758 an art academy was established in its building (Gilbert, 11, 281 IT.) 128 The income of £3 every playing night would be used by the society for the encouragement of the arts or other worthy projects, Sheridan points out. 127 Victor, Original Letters, 1, 284. i2a DuMin Journal, November 12—15, 1757129 victor, Original Letters, 1, 283—284.

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses a generous and decent man. His next step, then, was to extend his plan to save Crow-Street and Barry. In his Humble Affealy a ninetypage pamphlet published in April,130 Sheridan includes "A Proposal Offered to the Consideration of the Subscribers to the Theatre in Crow-Street." Assuming that parliament accepts his earlier plan for subsidizing Smock-Alley, Sheridan suggests that all work on CrowStreet be stopped temporarily, that Smock-Alley be opened to Barry next winter at a superior salary or "let to him at a Reasonable Rent," and that the subscribers and Sheridan then apply to parliament for a fund to establish "one good Company of Actors in Dublin." Sheridan will make over his £9,000 investment to the public for £4,000 (this was probably the amount which parliament was to be asked to pay for Sheridan's lease and properties); the Crow-Street subscribers will ask parliament for £2,000 to finish their house. There, on the grander stage, tragedies will be played; comedies will be confined to Smock Alley. But one company will play both houses. All this will cost parliament only £6,000, a sum which couldn't be laid out better to the Benefit of the Nation and of the City.131 By this plan all the Dublin theaters would be saved and brought together as a national stage. Unlike the earlier controversies, which had followed some event (a riot, for example), the battle this time was being fought over future possibilities and it had an urgent seriousness lacking in the earlier skirmishes. Pamphlets on both sides are longer and weightier, 130

An Humble Affeal also contains an historical survey of Sheridan's experiences as manager. Details which Sheridan gives of Smock-Alley's financial condition at various times, of salaries paid to players, of reforms effected, and of the two famous riots have been incorporated at appropriate places in the preceding chapters. In the rest of the paper Sheridan refutes lies told about him and argues against a new theater. He has not been extravagant; he has not been jealous of eminent actors, and so on. In answer to

those who pity Barry, Sheridan points out that Barry left Ireland and now wants to return to reap Sheridan's harvest. As for the suffering of Barry's family, Sheridan has twice as many children, all young. "Nor will he yield to Mr. Barry in parental Tenderness" (p. 73). The forty-six-page appendix includes passages from Colley Cibber and Chetwood on the evil effects of rival theaters; a reprint of Sheridan's Vindication first published in 1754; "Extracts from a Letter written by Mr. Sheridan, to a Gentleman of Consequence in this Country, at a time when he had no Expectation of returning to Ireland"; and a table of statistics showing Sheridan's average intake as compared to Barry's, designed to reveal, apparently, the relative popularity of the two men. 131Sheridan, An Humble Affeal, pp. 88—91.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757—1758 a few running from fifty to ninety pages. This time Sheridan could be attacked on two flanks, and his educational ideas drew as much fire as his theatrical plans. Some critics covered both, especially his suggestion that the theater be used by the academy. Those who concentrate on the theatrical issue revive the old criticisms of Sheridan—his use of cheap spectaculars, his mangling of good plays, his mistreatment of actors, and so on. The misconception that he had nothing to do with the success of the Garrick winter is repeated.132 Thus, as his defenders note,133 the technique of the bold lie is freely used. For another obviously absurd example: Sheridan himself planned the Mahomet riot "to enhance his own merit with a party that disclaimed him." 134 New arguments focus on Sheridan's attempts to keep a monopoly. Competition, his critics claim, will revive a dying interest in the stage and encourage fresh efforts in the complacent Sheridan as well as in his competitors; it will give Dublin a new and magnificent theater with all the latest equipment; and, best of all, it will take the Smock-Alley manager down a peg. Attacking the proprietors' petition and Sheridan's proposals, one Barry supporter points out that the very proprietors who are petitioning for a monopoly originally built or rebuilt two theaters to compete against each other; so why should they complain of others for following their example? Finally, if, as Sheridan claims, his theatrical contributions have been made at a financial loss, how could he have offered Barry a share in the -profits or how can he now offer to run the theater for the Dublin Society at a frofit for them or for himself? The present encumbrances on Smock-Alley can be explained, according to the critics, by Sheridan's personal extravagance. And, as for Sheridan's assertion that he is the first to establish a regular theater, Dubliners have only to recall "Ashberry" and Thomas Elrington.135 Not all of the writing is serious.136 Swiftian irony137 and light parody relieve the heavy artillery. The Humble Petition of Thomas 132

An Answer In Behalf of Sfranger Barry, p. i. Journal, January 31—February 4, 1758. 134 The Case of the Stage in Ireland, pp. 44—45. 13s An Answer In Behalf of Sfranger Barry, pp. 1—2. 136 Additional changes and additions to be made in Loewenberg's bibliography of the writings at this time (pp. 21—22) are: [Sheridan, Thomas]: The Case of Thomas Sheridan, Lessee and Manager . . . should be dated 1758 rather than 1750. An Answer In Behalf of Sfranger Barry was written not by Barry but by a person "who transacts his Affairs in this Kingdom." It was issued in April 1758 (not in 1756). ls3 Dublin

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses Punch, Esq. informs parliament that the petitioner, who has lost his whole fortune and impaired his constitution in his puppet show, is anxious to make a present of the same to the D.bl.n S.c..ty for £1,500, which will then give same back to him with an act prohibiting all other puppet shows. If the proposal (which is developed in comic detail) is not complied with, "The Stage is in Danger! The Stage is in Danger! oh! The Stage is in Danger! and, of Consequence, the Church, the State, the Academy are in Danger! and your Petitioner is in such Danger, that he knows not of any other Power that can relieve him." 138 The satiric piece which must have pained Sheridan most, considering his happy marriage and his efforts to protect Mrs. Sheridan from theatrical involvements, was an eight-page poem called "The Curtain Lecture . . . A Dialogue between a Stage-Director and his Wife." In it, Sheridan is pictured as saying to his wife, "I'd rather be hissed than lye by your side," and his wife, who in reality seems never to have reproached her husband, is pictured as berating him for abandoning his true friends, "the people," in hopes of a pension from the castle 5 for afterward skulking to London, where he provoked such hissing, scorn, and derision as had never been known before; for putting himself on a level with Garrick: You'd with Garrick compare, with Garrick be seen! Compare me as well with Sheba's famed queen, For beauty and knowledge . . The Case of the Stage in Ireland is an attack on Sheridan, his management of the theater, and his educational ideas. Shea, P.: A Full Vindication of Thomas Sheridan is an ironic piece pretending to defend Sheridan against The Case of the Stage, but actually continuing the attack. An Enquiry into the Plan and Pretensions of Mr. Sheridan is concerned with Sheridan's educational plan and not with the theater. The Curtain Lecture: or, The Manager Run Mad. A Dialogue between a Stage Manager fc? his Wife, London, 1758. 137 Shea's A Full Vindication of Thomas

Sheridan, for example. 138 “To the Honourable the K—s, C—s and B—s assembled. The Humble Petition of Thomas Punch, Esq: Principal Performer and Sole Manager of the Still-Life-Theatre in Caple-Street.” (This item is misdated 1756 in Loewenberg; it must have followed Sheridan’s petition, and belongs therefore in 1758.) Punch’s list of the wardrobe of his theater amusingly includes: 1 Banner, inscribed Io Triumfhel 1 ditto, inscribed Io Sheridan!, 1 triumphal Chariot, one long-concerted Scheme, An excellent Peal of Thunder, Adam and Eve, the Fig-Leaf wanting.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757—1758 and for—of all things—not being a gentleman like Manager Rich: He [Rich] wants not true feelings:—a gentleman too. Would Tommy, with truth, I could say so of you! If the poet had been Sheridan’s best friend, he could not have touched his sensitive spots more unerringly. But this was not all. His book “that’s cry’d up so fine” (British Education, no doubt)—the wife claims that she wrote half of it, the best half; and the rest was stolen from his daddy’s papers and from Swift. When the manager speaks again, the reader is brought back to Sheridan’s present project, which unquestionably provoked this whole scurrilous piece: I will have the Theatre tack’d to my plan, I will have it tack’d:—forbid it who can! In the end Knowles, Sheridan’s brother-in-law employed with the theater’s finances, enters to report the failure of Sheridan’s petition and to ask for a recommendation to Barry. As the poem closes, Sheridan runs mad. Sheridan’s answer to all such attacks and all arguments is simple. Dublin, as history shows, cannot support two theaters; it can barely support one, with performers’ salaries double and sometimes triple what they were. Even in vastly more populous London, an increase in theaters has been prevented by law and still that city cannot “keep up two in credit”: when one rises, the other declines, and today one London theater subsists “entirely upon the Strength of Pantomime.” Is it not well known, that Mr. Garrick, with all his Merit, all his Popularity, all his Skill as a Manager (and never Man shewed more) notwithstanding he takes care always to secure the best Actors, and to exhibit the greatest Variety of Plays, and the best adapted to the Taste of the Times, yet, without the Assistance of those same living Puppet shews, would not long be able to keep open his Doors with any Profit to himself.139 Sheridan’s Humble Afpeali embodying these points amid a mass of other material, went quickly into a second edition. Pamphlets from both sides were reprinted in London, where many people were interested in this greatest battle of Sheridan’s career. In writing of this controversy which divided most of Dublin, Hitchcock observes that each side “had an appearance of reason.” 140 189

Sheridan, An Humble Affeal, pp. 54-55.

140

Hitchcock, 1, 295.

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses But it should be noted that Sheridan alone attempted to work out a compromise, one by which Crow-Street would profit along with Smock-Alley. Whether his proposal was sound is another question. One is tempted to ask: if the government does subsidize the theater, what happens to Sheridan’s much vaunted Free Stage? Was the Dublin Society trusteeship devised by him because it could be counted on to keep hands off? But, right or wrong in his solution, Sheridan was quite right in his contention that Dublin then could not support two theaters, as Victor, Barry, Woodward, Mossop, and others found to their ruin. Sheridan’s petition was presented to parliament in April 1758. Writing to Samuel Richardson in March, Sheridan reported that, although important men in London were supporting Crow-Street and were sending letters to powerful people in Ireland, he had the Lord Primate on his side and possibly the speaker of the Irish House of Commons. He was writing to ask Richardson’s influence in persuading the latter.141 That Richardson did try is clear from a letter of Mrs. Sheridan’s, thanking him for his help, which did her husband honor although “it did not gain the full intent of it.”142 Parliament’s rejection of Sheridan’s petition and proposal was no surprise to Victor, aware that “many of the leading Members . . . were Subscribers to the new Building in Crow-Street, and many more were Well-wishers to it.”143 But Sheridan, in An Humble Address, written on May 6, ascribed his failure to the lateness of his application. Far from discouraged, he intended to appeal again at the next session. Meantime, Dubliners were asked to show their support of him by subscribing to a series, paying what price they thought proper (this was a novel idea!) and selecting the plays by majority decision. Well-filled houses would encourage him to fight on. The Dublin Journal, reporting the meeting of subscribers, says that “in less than an Hour there was near 200 Guineas subscribed upon this Occasion.” 144 During much of the season and even as late as May, Sheridan had expected to give up the stage, hoping no doubt to head the new Hibernian Academy. By early June, however, it had become clear to 141Richardson,

iv, 167-174 (Letter of March 16, 1758). pp. 174—175 (Letter of April 11, 1758). 143Victor, History, 1, 236. lii Dublin Journal, May 16—20, 1758. The four subscription plays, given the last week of May, apparently met with success, in spite of "the Thinness of the Town, and the uncommon Heat of the Weather" (ibid., June 6—10, 1758). 142 Ibid.,

 him that, if this institution were to prosper, he should hold no prominent position in it: an announcement at that time informed the public that he would continue to manage the theater next season. His educational undertaking, he added, would not interfere, since only part of his scheme would materialize and his job would be merely general inspection.145 Much as he must have hated the idea of returning to face thin houses and a triumphant rival, Sheridan could not yet give up the stage. The Smock-Alley company had to be strengthened if Crow-Street was opening with the people's idol, Barry, and with the almost equally popular Woodward replacing Macklin as Barry's partner.146 An earlier blunder of Sheridan's had lost him his two best actors, King and Dexter, to Barry for the next fall.147 To recoup this loss Victor was quickly dispatched to London to hire Mrs. Ward, Theophilus Cibber, and, more crucially, Digges, the only performer Sheridan felt could stand up to Barry.148 He himself went over soon after for the Hibernian Society and to engage other performers for Smock-Alley (especially, by request, a company of singers for operas and burlettas). When Victor returned to Dublin, Sheridan stayed in Englandj Victor was to manage the company until January 1 7 5 9, when Sheridan's appearance would be the more welcome with the novelty of Barry at Crow-Street somewhat worn off.149 Crow-Street opened on October 23, only moderately successful the first few nights without Barry. Smock-Alley's first night, the evening before, had been dismal (£12 in receipts)} and a series of disasters followed which were climaxed by the loss of Theophilus Cibber and Maddox, the equilibrist, in a shipwreck off the Scottish coast.150 To 145 Ibid., June 6—10, 1758. In speaking of the part of his educational scheme which had not yet materialized, Sheridan may have been referring to the postgraduate course which he had projected for students just out of the university. I4β XJle actual contract of partnership between Barry and Woodward was not drawn until July (Stockwell, p. 342), but it seems likely that the change in command was known in Dublin earlier than this. The reason for Macklin's withdrawal may have been a quarrel with Barry (Kirkman, 1, 391) or the fatal illness of his wife (Cooke, pp. 220-221) or a combination of both (Appleton, pp. 113-114). 147Victor, History, 1, 237. They had defected when Sheridan, upset at Mrs. Fitzhenry S hesitation over his offer of a next year's contract with a £100 raise, had refused for a time to sign contracts with anyone. 148 Hitchcock, i, 306. 149Victor, Original Letters, 1, 288 (Letter to Dorset, February 1759). 150Victor, History, 1, 248-251. 1

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses Victor this was the beginning of the end. Recalling that he had persuaded Cibber into the fatal engagement, he was much affected}151 and Sheridan, remembering Cato's robe, must have been heartsick. Then sometime in November Victor had word that Sheridan, detained in London by his oratorical scheme, probably would not come over in January.152 This news drove the hitherto "neuter"153 Mrs. Fitzhenry over into Crow-Street's already attractive company, which now included Barry, Woodward, King, Dexter, Sowdon, and a new discovery from York, Mrs. Dancer.154 Against this array Digges and Mrs. Ward at Smock-Alley could hardly prevail. By February Sheridan had decided to sell all his Irish property and "return no more." 155 Another, lesser disappointment finished Victor's last hope: Macklin and his daughter, who were to come in March, failed him because of illness.156 At about this same time Sheridan sent Victor orders to "dissolve the Company from acting any longer on his Account," but if the actors wished to, they could continue to use the theater on their own account.187 The company accepted this offer, publishing their intention in a "pompous"158 advertisement on May 2, wherein they declared themselves "unexpectedly deserted and abandoned," the victims of "Irregularity and Confusion" and a "Variety of Disappointments." 159 Less censorious was Victor. By Sheridan's decision, as he says, "no Man was more hurt than I . . . nor had more seeming Reason to resent it} but when I was informed of the true Cause, I lamented, that a Man of his Abilities should meet with such hard Fate." 160 The "true Cause," we must conclude, was Sheridan's fear of his 15i Ibid., pp. 250—252. Also lost was "the Man who played on the twelve Bells fastened to his Head, Hands, and Feet." The pantomime machinery was saved because it came another way; and the pantomime carpenter because he missed the boat. 162 Ibid., pp. 254-255. 153The word is Hitchcock's (1, 310). 154 Mrs. Dancer became Mrs. Barry and then Mrs. Crawford. 155Victor, Original Letters, 1, 290. As early as November 11, 1758, Mrs. Sheridan, writing to Whyte from London, had said, "I doubt Mr. Sheridan, without a much better prospect than the present, will hardly be induced to take the burthen again upon his shoulders; for my own part I think we have had a sufficient proof how far Dublin is to be depended upon;

I speak in general, for I am sure we have some very worthy friends there" (Whyte, p. 92). 156Victor, History, 1, 265-266. 157 Ibid., pp. 266-267. 158The word is Victor's (ibid., p. 269). 159 Ibid., p. 268. 160 Ibid., p. 265.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757—1758 Irish creditors.161 The manager who had generously lent his theater for the benefit of many an insolvent debtor was in danger now of the Dublin Marshalsea himself. Whyte estimates that at this time Sheridan's obligations amounted to about £7,000, of which the £5,687 named as exclusive of mortgages on Quilca must have been theatrical debts. (Sheridan's Dublin printer, for example, is mentioned as a particularly obdurate creditor.) 162 This sum was large; but with several undisturbed seasons to reap the harvest which Sheridan felt he had sown at Smock-Alley, the obligation might have been discharged. Crow-Street finished that possibility. Sheridan's career as Dublin theater manager ended in 1758. The eleven years of his control had brought the Irish stage many benefits, the more striking of which have been noted by himself and by later writers. Perhaps because he had a schoolmaster for a father, he was determined to run a disciplined house. His well-known, pioneer reforms, such as clearing the stage, eliminating odd money, and turning his upper gallery into boxes for ladies were all to this end. Most, but not all, Dubliners were grateful for the quiet which permitted them to hear and enjoy the better programs now being devised by their tireless manager. His improvements here and in the acting increased performances from two and three a week to five and sometimes six; the Dublin theater became a source of almost nightly entertainment, as it had never been before, and achieved a steadiness that raised it, for the first time, to a level with the London theaters. It became a national institution under Sheridan. As such, it elevated the standard of taste in Dublin—not spectacularly (for tastes change gradually), but considerably. Shakespeare, as we have seen, began to dominate Smock-Alley's stage; tragedies on noble themes grew as frequent as farces. Tightwire performers and fire-eaters were still needed and Sheridan knew better than to ielThis

is also indicated by something else in Victor (History, i, 265): ". . . that he [Sheridan] was prevented, by the unhappy Situation of his AiFairs, from coming to serve himself as well as his Company, must be called his Misfortune, and not his Fault." At one time, when Victor first learned that Sheridan would not return and was planning to sell his Irish property, he thought, mistakenly, that the proceeds would clear Sheridan's debts (Original Letters, 1, 290). By a £2,000 mortgage to Robert Patrick of Dublin, drawn in February 1758, Sheridan had given Quilca as security, having borrowed £1,000 from Robert Wood of London. Patrick was apparently acting as trustee for Wood at this time. John Sheen already held a mortgage on Quilca from 1752 (Tickell, 175; MS 192/127543 Off. Reg. Deeds, Dub.). 182 Whyte, p. 80. 25O

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses throw them out, as Burke had advised, but, once attracted by Mahomet Caratta, the audience listened to Othello. Victor stressed the need for novelty in Dublin companies; new actors, he said, kept Irish interest awake.1®3 Sheridan's forte was providing variety in frogram, within the limits of an eighteenth-century repertory theater. Not that he neglected his company. Perhaps his now least-known but most creative contributions were in this area. His gift for discovering theatrical talent and encouraging it was famous in his own day. An example of his lifelong interest in helping less experienced actors is given by a young comedian with the stage name of Wilks (later under his real name, Thomas Snagg, he was to write Recollections of Occurrences'). In 1772 Sheridan and Wilks were both playing in Ryder's company in Dublin, Wilks in his late twenties, Sheridan in his mid-fifties. From Sheridan, says Wilks, "I received every friendly acknowledgment for my services in his pieces and likewise several instructions in particular characters that he had remembered in the acting of great performers. He pointed out strokes in Sir Henry Wildair practised by Mrs. WofHngton, stage effects in the Fops of Colley and Theophilus Cibber and communicated his own great judgment and long usage of the stage."164 This same interest had inspired Sheridan earlier with the idea of establishing a school for acting to be attached to his theater and to train young players with ability. For aged and incapacitated actors he conceived a theatrical fund in an attempt to bring security to lives then tragically insecure, as any eighteenth-century biografhia dramatica will show. And always he worked to raise the status of the profession. As a universitybred gentleman, the first to manage a Dublin theater, Sheridan brought prestige to the Irish actor and encouraged other gentlemen and even ladies to "attempt the Stage," until he could say that "during the space of a few Years there were more Gentlemen, who were such both by Birth and a liberal Education, upon his Stage, than all the Theatres in England had produced, from the Time of Booth, Wilks, and Cibber to that; as also a greater Number of Actresses, whose Characters were entirely free from Stain."165 Thus a giant step was made in the player's slow, difficult progress from vagabond to

knight. Sheridan sometimes overestimated this progress; and sometimes he undercut it by arguing that his own status had been saved because he had never accepted a salary. But that the profession 163 165

164 Snagg (Wilks), p. 83. Victor, History, 1, 232. Sheridan, An Humble Affeal, p. 21.

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757—1758 rose under his rule is clear from his enemies, who resented the social place and even political power held by Smock-Alley actors. The idea that a man no longer lost rank by turning player began to be accepted outside the theater; and from this gain all actors—upper class or lower, major or minor—profited. For the public's contempt was no longer universal and automatic; a new feeling of worth could reach down to the lowest member of the company. This gain was strengthened by Sheridan's insistence on acting as an art, one good enough to rank with literature, music, painting, and by his scholarly knowledge of theatrical history. The latter inspired him and gave him an aim beyond the routine achievement of a well-run business, an aim which sustained his great expense of energy, otherwise so ill-rewarded. And for those who listened to him or read his writings, Sheridan's scholarly knowledge added perspective. His audiences were often ridiculed by his critics for their blind enslavement to him: he had only to call them the most enlightened public since Greece or Rome and they supinely accepted his orders and his offerings. Actually, they seem to have caught his purpose; they saw themselves as helping to raise the kingdom's cultural level. And, besides, they had never been better or more consistently entertained. Dubliners who, before Sheridan, had shunned the theater began to come and add their respectability; troublemakers were discouraged; and finally Sheridan did have a public he could boast about. As for the acting, Sheridan was the only Dublin manager up to his time to have been a first-rate actor too, one ranked near the top by London critics. From the beginning he demanded that his players give as much to their acting as he did; he would not tolerate careless, half-learned performances; he fined irregularity, tardiness—and adlibbing. Improved acting not only meant better, more attentive audiences; it meant more respect for the actor. Smock-Alley's reputation as a disciplined training ground for young players spread abroad. Where, in the past, Irish beginners had looked toward London, now new actors came from England to learn under Sheridan. And experienced actors were drawn to Dublin by another inducement—money. In the end, all but a few of the mid-century's great players appeared at Sheridan's Smock-Alley: Garrick, Barry, Macklin, Woodward, Digges, Mossop, King, T. Cibber, Foote, Woffington, Bellamy, Ward, Green. Some of these had made their start there. Only a few of London's important actors declined: Mrs. Cibber, for example, who dreaded the crossing, and Mrs. Clive, Garrick's leading lady

A Plague on Both Your Dublin Houses during these years. It was not easy to lure snugly placed Londoners across the unpredictable Irish Sea for a strange and often uncomfortable Dublin winter. For no longer were London actors permitted to use Smock-Alley as a summer stopgap. Sheridan had done away with that harmful practice almost from the first when he saw how Dubliners shunned local winter performers after a summer of superior importations. He closed Smock-Alley during summers, and imported foreign talent for the regular winter season. The high salaries he used as bait not only brought talent good enough to raise a provincial stage to a national theater, but coming at a time when money had begun to challenge birth as the measure of importance, they helped the actor up another step of the social ladder. A fellow who couldn't count on his dinner until a few admission fees had been collected was only a mouthful away from a vagabond; but a man making £800 a year—why, some gentlemen couldn't be sure of that much! Sheridan's misfortune as a manager was that he himself could never be sure of that much. Unlike Ashbury or Garrick, he did not— could not—make money. He was not interested in money. Ashbury, by letting the Smock-Alley building run down and by being satisfied with fewer and cheaper productions, had wrung a satisfactory living out of his monopoly. But Sheridan could not be content with this businesslike point of view. Instead, he spent his proceeds and energy on, as he would say, "raising the Dublin stage," not letting it stand still or fall back. Some gains were temporary, since cyclic regressions were inevitable. But others were permanent. In almost all ways he set a higher standard than before. He made Irishmen see that the Dublin theater could rival London theaters, perhaps even surpass them. This new idea—that Ireland could support a great theater of her own—faded at times in the centuries to come; it never died. Sheridan would have been pleased, but not surprised, at the Abbey Theater. Why, then, with all his improvements to the Dublin stage, did Dublin let him go? Why was he not more supported in his struggle against the rival theater? This was the question Sheridan asked, forgetting that his friends were busy with what they, and he, felt a more important project—his Hibernian Academy. His enemies were busy too, writing their attacks and distributing their "states of the case"

among MP's. To the few neutral people left, the arguments for a new theater must have seemed plausible. They had forgotten what had happened to the rival houses fifteen years ago; competition

Sheridan of Smock-Alley · 1757—1758 would be exciting for them and stimulating for the rivals; Barry was popular; Crow-Street, on its way to completion, would be an ornament; and if one theater had entertained them well, two might be even better. The arguments for a theatrical monopoly, on the other hand, seemed academic: Sheridan, who might have deserved their support, was quitting the stage; and his plan for one Dublin company under Barry might be realized in the natural course of events without the new complication and expense of nationalization. Sheridan and the Smock-Alley proprietors would lose money, of course; but this consideration alone seldom rouses others to action. The academical project would, it was to be hoped, repay him better. The neutrals saw nothing to fight for. By the time Sheridan had decided to remain as Smock-Alley manager, the fight was over. Crow-Street had been built and Barry's company was almost organized. Sheridan had lost.

CHAPTER X

The cReluctant Trincolo, King; Prosferoi Heaphy; Caliban, Sparks; Ariel, "with the Songs," Mrs. Storer; Hiffolito, Mrs. Kennedy; Donnda, Mrs. Green; Jan. 9; Jan. 29, plus Stefhano, Layfield; Neftune, Butler; Miranda, Miss Mason; Amfhitrite, Mrs. Pye; and Grand Dancing Devils, McNeil and Miss Baker. 1756—57: Jan. 7, Trincolo, King; Prosfero, Heaphy; Stefhano, Glover; Caliban, Layfield; Hiffolito, Miss Kennedy; Dorinda, "with the Song of Dear pretty Youth," Mrs. Wilder; Ariel, Miss Young; Neftune, Corry; Amfhitrite, Miss Spencer; Jan. 13, plus Vocal Parts by Corry, Layfield, Miss Spencer, and others; Lillifutian Dancers, Master Blake, Garman, Pike, Rayner, Steggeldolt, Mrs. Garman, Mrs. Packenham, Miss Jones; and Singing Triton, Wilder; Jan. 20; Jan. 28; Feb. 10; Mar. 11; Apr. 29, principal characters by King, Heaphy, Glover, Sparks, Miss Kennedy, Mrs. Wilder, Miss Wells. 1757—58: Jan. 11, principal characters by King, Sparks, Heaphy, Glover, Miss Kennedy, Mrs. Wilder, Miss Storer; Lillifutian Dancers, Harvey, Garman, Rayner, Masset, Mrs. Masset, Mrs. Packenham, Mrs. Godwin, and Mrs. Garman; Vocal Parts by Corry, Mrs. Storer, Mrs. Wilder, Mrs. Pye, Miss Wells, and others; Neftune, Corry; Amfhitrite, Mrs. Storer; Jan. 20, plus principal parts by Kennedy, Hamilton, and Mrs. Pye; Feb. i.

The Tern-pie of Peace (Masque) 1748—49: Feb. 9, Mars, Howard; Venus, Mrs. Storer, "in which Character she will introduce the Song of O Peace by Mr. Arne"; Cufid, Miss Pocklington; Peace, Mrs. Mozeen, "with the Song of Rosey Chaplets" by Pasquali; Ceres, Mrs. Mynitt; First Attendant on Ceres, Dyer, "with the Song of Harvest Home; the Words by Mr. Dryden, the Musick by Mr. Purcel"; Silenus, Morris; Pan, Sparks; Bacchus, Sullivan, "with the Song, Let the deep Bowl, by Mr. Handel"; Diana, Mrs. Lampe, "with the Song, with Hounds and with Horns"; Feb. 15; Feb. 20; Feb. 22; Apr. 27, no cast.

The Tender Husband, or The Accomflish'd Fools, "by the late Sir Richard Steele" 1748—49: Apr. 10, Humfhry Gubbin, Macklin; Caft. Clerimont, Dyer; Mr. Clerimont, Beamsley; Sir Harry Gubbin, Sparks; Tifkin,

Part II • The Plays Mynitt; Pounce, Morris; Jenny, Miss Minors; Mrs. Clerimont, Mrs. Bland; Mrs. Fainlove, Miss Jones; Niece, Mrs. Vincent; Aunt, Mrs. Macklin. 1750—51: Mar. 11, Cap. Clerimont, Digges (first time); Mr. Clerimont, Ross; Sir Harry Gubbin, Sparks; Tifkin, Mynitt; Pounce, Beamsley; Numfs, King (first time); Fainlove, Miss Cole; Biddy Tifkin (Niece), Mrs. Lindley; Aunt, Mrs. Mynitt; Mrs. Clerimont, Mrs. Bland. Theodosius, or The Force of Love, by Nathaniel Lee 1745—46: Feb. 10, Varanes, Barry "who is recovered from his late Illness"; Athenais, Miss Bellamy. 1747—48: Jan. 25, Varanes, Sheridan (first time); Athenais, Miss Bellamy; Feb. 3. 1748—49: Apr. 29, Varanes, Sheridan; Theodosius, Dyer; Pulcheria, Mrs. Bland; Athenais, Miss Danvers; May 22. 1749—50: Oct. 23, Varanes, Sheridan; Pulcheria, Mrs. Bland; Athenais, Miss Danvers; Apr. 2, plus Theodosius, Ross. 1750—51: Nov. 12, Varanes, Sheridan; Theodosius, Digges; Athenais, Mrs. Bland; Marcian, Mossop; Nov. 21; Mar. 9, plus Leontine, Beamsley; and Pulcheria, Miss Griffith; Mar. 12, without Leontine. 1757—58: Apr. 7, Theodosius, Dexter; Marcian, Stayley; Leontine, Heaphy; Varanes, Ryder; Pulcheria, Mrs. Kennedy; Athenais, Miss G. Phillips (first time). Tom Thumb the Great, by Henry Fielding. "Set to Musick by Mr. Lampe." (Mock Opera) 1748—49: May 11, Tom Thumb, Mrs. Lampe; King, Sullivan; Queen, Mrs. Storer; Huncamunca, Mrs. Mozeen; May 18, principal characters by Mrs. Lampe, Mrs. Storer, Mrs. Mozeen, Sullivan, Dyer, Sparks, Mynitt, Howard; May 29, only Tom Thumb, Mrs. Lampe, listed. 1749—50: Nov. 1, Tom Thumb, Mrs. Lampe; King, Sullivan; Queen, Mrs. Storer; Queen of the Giants (Glumdalca), Sparks; Huncamunca, Mrs. Mozeen; Nov. 8; Nov. 15; Jan. 29, no cast; Feb. 14, as on Nov.

1; Mar. 16; May 15, no cast. 1751—52: Feb. 20, Tom Thumb, Master Mynitt; Queen of the Giants, Sparks; Feb. 26; Mar. 6; Mar. 12, no cast; Apr. 8, as on Feb. 20. 1756-57: Apr. I, Tom Thumb, Master Kennedy. 1757-58: Feb. 25, Queen Dollalolla, Wilkinson.

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Smock-Alley Calendar Trick Upon Trick, or The Adventures of Three Quarters of an Hour, or Harlequin Skeleton l74-7—48: Dec. 9, Harlequin, Woodward; Columbine, Madem. Mechel; Jan. 8, only Harlequin listed; Jan. 26, plus Columbine; May XI, plus Pierrot, Morris; and without Columbine; May 16. 1748-49: Jan. 4, no cast; Apr. 21. 1749-50:

J a n I) Columbine, Madem. Vandersluys; Pierrot, Sparks.

The Triumphs of Hibernia (Masque) 1748-49: Nov. 4, no cast; Nov. 7, principal performers, Sullivan, Howard, Mrs. Storer, Mrs. Lampe, Mrs. Mozeen; Nov. 9; Nov. 14; Nov. 28, no cast; Dec. 12; Dec. 23. 1749—50: Nov. 4, principal performers, Sullivan, Howard, Mrs. Lampe, Mrs. Storer, Mrs. Mozeen; Nov. 10; Apr. 16 [see Part 1]. Tunbridge Walks, or The Yeoman of Kent, by Thomas Baker 1 757 _ 58: May 1, principal parts by King, Sparks, Glover, Ryder, Stayley, Mrs. Kennedy; May 18, Reynard, King; Squib, Glover; Maiden, Ryder; Loveworth, Stayley; Woodcock, the Yeoman, Sparks; Mrs. Goodfellow, Mrs. Farrell; Hillaria, Mrs. Kennedy. The Twin Rivals, by George Farquhar 1747-48: May 11, Young Wouldbe, Woodward; Teague, Morris, “from the Theatre Royal in London.” 1748—49: Apr. 21, Young Wouldbe, Dyer; Teague, Barrington; Constance, Mrs. Vincent; Aurelia, Mrs. Bland. 1750-51: Apr. 24, Elder Wouldbe, Digges; Young Wouldbe, Cibber; Trueman, King; Richmore, Ross; Teague, Sparks, “in which Character he will introduce an humorous Epilogue”; Subtleman, Watson; Balderdash, Mynitt; Constable, Williams; Midnight, Miss Copen; Steward’s Wife, Mrs. Leslie; Constance, Mrs. Lindley; Aurelia, Mrs. Bland; May 23, plus Fairbank, Falkner; and Steward, Morris. 1751-52: Sept. 27, Elder Wouldbe, Digges; Young Wouldbe, Cibber; Trueman, King; Richmore, Stevens, “being the first Time of appearing on this Stage”; Teague, Sparks; Constance, Miss Cole; Aurelia, Mrs. Bland; Oct. 30, without Richmore; Apr. 2, plus Richmore. 1752—53: Jan. 4, Elder Wouldbe, Digges; Young Wouldbe, King; Teague, Sparks; Aurelia, Mrs. Ward. 1753—54: Jan. 18, Elder Wouldbe, Digges; Young Wouldbe, King; Teague, Sparks; Trueman, Heaphy; Richmore, Stayley; Subtleman, Green; Fairbank, Layfield; Constance, Miss Mason; Mrs. Midnight, Mrs. Mynitt; Aurelia, Mrs. Ward.

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Part II • The Plays 1756—57: Mar. 31, Elder Wouldbe, Dexter; Richmore, Stayley; Trueman, Heaphy; Young Wouldbe, King; Balderdash, Mynitt; Steward, Hurst; Alderman, Glover; Fairbank, Layfield; Teague, “with a new Song in Character,” Sparks; Constance, Mrs. Kennedy; Mrs. Midnight, Mrs. Mynitt; Aurelia, Miss G. Phillips (first time); May 24, plus Subtleman, Kennedy. 1757—58: Jan. 4, Young Wouldbe, King; Richmore, Stayley; Trueman, Heaphy; Fairbank, Hurst; Elder Wouldbe, Dexter; Balderdash, Lewis; Steward, Preston; Subtleman, Storer; Alderman, Glover; Teague, Sparks; Constance, Mrs. Kennedy; Steward’s Wife, Mrs. Packenham; Mrs. Midnight, Mrs. Farrell; Aurelia, Miss G. Phillips; May 12, without Balderdash, Steward, and Steward’s Wife. Ulysses, by Nicholas Rowe 1752—53: Mar. 5, Ulysses, Sheridan; Eurymachus, Sowdon; Telemachus, Heaphy; Mentor, Layfield; Semanthe, Mrs. Ward; Penelofe, Mrs. Woffington; Mar. 12; Mar. 16; May 24, but Telemack,us, Digges. 1753—54: Oct. 18, Ulysses, Sheridan; Eurymachus, Sowdon; Telemachus, Digges; Semanthe, Mrs. Ward; Penelofe, Mrs. Woffington. The Upholsterer, or What News? “written by M r . [Arthur] Murphy, Author of the Apprentice, etc.” (Farce) 1757-58: Apr. 27, no cast; May 10, principal parts by King, Sparks, Glover, Mrs. Kennedy. Venice Preserved, or The Plot Discover’d, by Thomas Otway 1745-46: June 2, Pierre, Barry; Belvidera, Mrs. Furnival. 1746-47: May 25, Pierre, Sheridan; Belvidera, Miss Bellamy (first time). 1747 48: Feb. 12, Pierre, Sheridan; Belvidera, Miss Bellamy; Feb. 15. 1749—50: Nov. 29, Pierre, Sheridan; Renault, Cibber; Belvidera, Miss Danvers; Jaffier, Digges, “a Gentleman lately arrived from England, who never yet appeared on any Stage”; Dec. 6, without Renault and Belvidera; May 10, plus Renault and Belvidera. 1750—51: Oct. 19, Pierre, Sheridan; Jaffier, Digges; Renault, Cibber; Belvidera, Mrs. Bland (first time); Mar. 15, but Pierre, Montgomery; Apr. 26, but Pierre, Sheridan; and plus Priuli, Watson; Duke, Sparks; Sfinosa, R. Elrington; Bedamar, Falkner; Theodore, Hamilton; and Eliot, Maurice.

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Smock-Alley Calendar 1751-52: Nov. 11, Pierre, Sheridan; Jaffier, Digges; Renault, Cibber; Belvidera, Mrs. Woffington (first time); Jan. 20. 1752-53:

Oct. 25, Pierre, Sheridan; Jaffier, Digges; Belvidera, Mrs. Woffington; Apr. 27, but Pierre, Sowdon; and plus Renault, Kennedy; and Priuli, Layfield. 1753 54 : Oct. 15, Pierre, Sheridan; Jaffier, Digges; Belindera, Mrs. Woffington. 1756—57: Jan. 14, Pierre, Sheridan; Jaffier, Dexter; Belvidera, Mrs. Glen. 1757—58: Feb. 2, Pierre, Sheridan; Priuli, Heaphy; Renault, Stayley; Bedamar, Kennedy; Jaffier, Dexter; Duke, Lewis; Sfinosa, Watson; Elliot, Preston; Durand, R. Elrington; Officer, Williams; Belvidera, Mrs. Fitzhenry; May 19, only Pierre, Jaffier, and Belvidera listed. The Vintner Tricked, or The White Fox Chac'd, by Henry Ward. (Farce) 1745-46: Apr. 17, no cast. 1747-48: Mar. 28, no cast. 1748-49: Apr. 18, Vizard, Dyer; Vintner, Sparks. 1749-50: Jan. 11, no cast; Apr. 23. 1751-52: Jan. 20, Mixum {Vintner), Sparks; Vizard, Stevens; Mrs. Mixum, Mrs. Kennedy. 1753-54: Mar. I, Vizard, King; Mixum, Sparks; Padwell, Layfield; Mrs. Mixum, Mrs. Mynitt. 1757-58: Oct. 27, Vizard, King; Mixum, Sparks; Mrs. Mixum, Mrs. Farrell; Jan. 23, no cast; Mar. 10, as on Oct. 27. The Virgin Unmasked, by Henry Fielding. (Farce) 1745—46: Dec. 4, Lucy, Mrs. Storer; June 2. 1747-48: Apr. 15, Coufee, Woodward. 1748-49: Mar. 10, Lucy, Mrs. Mozeen; Apr. 8; Apr. 19; May 9. 1749-50: Mar. 14, Quaver, Sullivan; Lucy, Mrs. Mozeen; May 2. 1750-51: Sept. 19, Lucy, Miss Cole; Sept. 24; Mar. 15, plus Coufee, King; Blister, Sparks; Quaver, Ross; Apr. 17; Apr. 27. 1751-52: Nov. 14, Lucy, Miss Cole; Blister, Sparks; Quaver, Kennedy; Coufee, King; Apr. 24, only Coufee and Lucy listed. 1752-53: Nov. 17, Coufee, King; Lucy, Mrs. Green; Nov. 24; Dec. 16; Jan. 15, plus Quaver, Sullivan; and Blister, Sparks; Feb. 21. 1753-54: Oct. 3, Coufee, King; Lucy, Mrs. Green. 1 756—57: Oct. 20, Coufee, King; Quaver, Corry; Goodwill, Mynitt; Blister, Sparks; Wormwood, Stayley; Thomas, Williams;

 Lucy, Mrs. Pye; Dec. 30, Coupee, King; Lucy, Mrs. Wilder; Quavery Wilder; June 4, plus Blister. 1757-58: Oct. 19, Coufee, King; Quaver, Wilder; Blister, Sparks; Goodwill, Lewis; Wormwood, Stayley; Thomas, Williams; Lucy, Mrs. Wilder; Dec. 10, without Goodwill, Wormwood, and Thomas; Jan. 28. The Way of the World, "written by [William] Congreve" 1747-48: Mar. 25, Witwould, Woodward; Millamant, Miss Bellamy; Lady Wishfor't, Miss Pitt. 1748-49: Mar. 3, Lady Wishfor't, Mrs. Macklin; Sir Willfull Witwould, Macklin; Apr. 12, plus Witwould, Dyer; Mrs. Marwood, Mrs. Bland; Millamant, Mrs. Vincent; and Foible, Miss Minors. 1749-50: Nov. 20, Sir Willfull Witwould, Macklin; Witwould, Cibber; Millamant, Mrs. Bland; Lady Wishfor't, Mrs. Macklin; Dec. 21; Jan. 20; Feb. 9, plus Fainall, R. Elrington; Mrs. Marwood, Mrs. Mynitt; and Mrs. Fainall, Mrs. Mozeen. 1750-51: Oct. 3, Witwould, Cibber; Millamant, Mrs. Bland; Marwood, Miss Cole; Fainall, R. Elrington; Mirabel, J. Elrington; Sir Willfull, Sparks; Petulant, Watson; Waitwell, Bardin; Lady Wishfor't, Mrs. Mynitt; Mrs. Fainall, Mrs. Lindley; Foible, Mrs. Rowley; Mincing, Miss Byrne; Peg, Mrs. Packenham; Apr. 22, but Mirabel, King; Fainall, Ross; Sir Willfull, Mynitt; Waitwell, Sparks; Mincing, Mrs. Leslie; and without Peg. 1751-52: Feb. 5, Mirabel, Digges; Witwould, Cibber; Petulant, King; Sir Willfull, Sparks; Fainall, Davies; Waitwell, Stevens; Marwood, Mrs. Bland; Mrs. Fainall, Mrs. Lee; Lady Wishfor't, Mrs. Mynitt; Foible, Miss Cole; Mincing, Mrs. Kennedy; Millamant, Mrs. Woffington. 1752-53:

Mar. 2, Fainall, Sowdon; Witwould, King; Sir Willfull, Sparks; Petulant, Costollo; Mirabel, J. Elrington; Waitwell, Stevens; Marwood, Mrs. Ward; Foible, Mrs. Green; Lady Wishfor't, Mrs. Mynitt; Mrs. Fainall, Mrs. Kennedy; Millamant, Mrs. Woffington; Mar. 22, but Mirabel, Digges. 1753-54: Oct. 19, Fainall, Sowdon; Mirabel, Dexter; Witwould, King; Sir Willfull, Sparks; Petulant, Green; Marwood, Mrs. Ward; Lady Wishfor't, Mrs. Mynitt; Mrs. Fainall, Mrs. Kennedy; Foible, Mrs. Green; Millamant, Mrs. Woffington; Mincing, Mrs. Leslie; Peg, Miss Comerford; Waitwell, Layfield; Dec. 14, without Mincing and Peg. 1756-57: Jan. 21, Mirabel, Dexter; Fainall, Wilder; Witwould, King; Sir Willfull, Sparks; Petulant, Glover; Lady Wishfor't, Mrs.

Mynitt; Mrs. Marwood, Mrs. Kennedy; Millamant, Mrs. Glen. 1757—58: Jan. 9, Mirabel, Dexter; Fainall, Wilder; Witwould, King; Petulant, Stayley; Sir Willful, Sparks; Waitwell, Glover; Millamant, Miss Kennedy; Mrs. Fainall, Mrs. Pye; Foible, Miss Mason; Mincing, Mrs. Kennedy. The WhatD'Ye

Call It, “wrote by Mess. Pope, Gay and Arbuthnot.” (A Tragi-Comi-Pastoral Farce) 1747-48: Mar. 21, Timothy Peascod, Woodward; Mar. 25; Mar. 30; Apr. 13, no cast. 1749—50: Dec. 8, Vocal Parts by Sullivan, Mrs. Storer, Mrs. Lampe, Howard, and others; Dec. 14, no cast. 1750—51: Oct. 3, Kitty Carrot, Miss Cole. 1751—52: Jan. 23, no cast. 1753—54: Nov. 17, Timothy Peascod, Sparks; Filbert, Green; Dorcas, Mrs. Storer; Kitty Carrot, Mrs. Green; Nov. 23. i757 — 58: Mar. 15, Timothy Peascod, Sparks; Filbert, Glover; Corf oral, Hamilton; Kitty Carrot, Mrs. Pye; Dorcas, “with the Songs in Character,” Mrs. Storer. The Whim, or Harlequin Villager (Pantomime Entertainment) 1757—58: Feb. 3, Harlequin, King; Clown, Sparks; Squire Gawky, Glover; Colombine, Mrs. Kennedy; Feb. 9, plus Pantaloon, Hamilton; Drawer, Messink; and Venus, Miss Mason; Feb. IX, as on Feb. 3; Feb. 16, as on Feb. 9; Feb. 24, as on Feb. 3; Mar. 2; Mar. 16; Apr. 14, as on Feb. 9; Apr. 22, as on Feb. 3; June 1. A Will and No Will, or A New Case for the Lawyers, “translated from the French by Mr. [Charles] Macklin.” (Farce) 1748-49: Dec. 19, no cast; May 2. 1749-50: Mar. 5, Shark, Macklin. The Wonder, a Woman Keeps a Secret, by Susannah Centlivre 1753—54: Jan. 14, Don Felix, Sowdon; Col. Briton, Dexter; Lissardo, King; Gibby, Sparks; Don Lofez, Layfield; Frederick, Kennedy; Don Pedro, Green; Isabella, Mrs. Pye; Flora, Mrs. Mynitt; Inis, Mrs. Kennedy; Violante, Mrs. Ward; Jan. 26. 1756—57: May 17, Col. Briton, Dexter; Don Lofez, Layfield; Frederick, Kennedy; Lissardo, King; Don Pedro, Glover; Gibby, Sparks; Vasquez, Messink; Alguazile, Mynitt; Don Felix, Hurst; Flora, Miss Wells; Inis, Miss Mason; Isabella, Mrs. Pye; Violante, Miss Kennedy; May 25.

Zara, “taken from the French of Voltaire by the late Aaron Hill, Esq.” 1751-52: Dec. 7, Osman, Sheridan; Nerestan, Digges; Lusignan, Heaphy; Chatilion, Beamsley; Orasmin, Stevens; Selima, Miss Cole; Zara, Mrs. Woffington; Dec. 11.

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