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July 4-September 16, 1809.

[20. July. 1809]

Tunbridge Wells

Waldie: XX, 132

... I went to the Play, attracted by King Richard the 3^d & Who Wins? The theatre is decent enough, but very small stage. It is managed by Mr. Baker. It was very thin, & a more wretched set cannot be conceived. Mrs. Stanwell, with whom Mrs. Stuart, John Pringle's cidevant flame, lives, acted the Queen, but, tho' rather a fine woman, has not the most distant idea of acting: -- my attraction was Meggett in Richard. He is the hero of the Manchester Stage & I have often heard Conway speak of him. He is a capital actor -- quite the Massop of the present day: a tall stout man, with fine marked countenance something like both Kemble & Cooke -- he is about 34 or 35 at most -- very fine voice indeed: he reminded me of Cooke once or twice, but his general manner is far superior, tho' perhaps not equal to Cooke in the early scenes. I shall never forget his inimitable acting in the Tent scene & in the scenes with Buckingham.

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He is, in the line of villains & tyrants, exactly the figure, voice, & action for them -- it was a most delightful performance -- but he is not calculated for any thing tender or amiable. He is certainly a great & finished actor.

The rest were execrable & very often ludicrous, which took off the effect of the piece, tho' it could not damp the ardour & strength of Meggett, who does not however at all rant till the battle scene. He is an actor of great judgement as well as powers.

The farce of the Widow's Choice, or Who Wins? I had never before seen -- with Fawcett in the Poet & his capital songs -- with Liston in Caper, with his opera, dancing, &

singing -- & Mrs. C. Kemble in the Widow, it must be capital -- but so destitute of the smallest spark of humor are Mr. B's performers, that it was impossible to laugh. Delighted with Richard & disgusted with the rest.

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[31. July. 1809]

The Honeymoon ... Meggett is careless in dress, & too slow & pompous in the Duke, but is sensible & judicious, tho' it is not exactly his line -- his comedy I can see is not more than respectable. His tragedy excellent -- tho' perhaps not in pathetic parts. The rest were all one more

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one worse than another: I don't know where to give the palm of wretchedness.

The Recruiting Serjiant followed -- the pretty music & pointed rhymes of which are diverting. It was done with some spirit by the 4 young Downtons, & was certainly better than the farce of Of Age To-morrow -- which was most execrable. Mrs. Downton in Juliana & Maria is easy -- & not affected -- but does nothing -- sings horridly -- & is very ugly: & the rest are worse than nothing. Stapleton has good clothes -- but is a miserable actor. I could not help laughing at the folly of the farce, at the complete ridiculousness of the acting -- not one having a word of it.

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[2. August. 1809]

... The play was only just begun, having waited of the afternoon's race. It was the Mountaineers. Mrs. Meggett was tolerable in Agnes. She is much better than Mrs. Keys who does all the best parts & is most wretched. Mrs. Stanwell looked tolerable in Floranthe -- the rest all bad -- except Meggett, who played Octavian with great force & judgement,

& with admirable stage-business: but rather wants softness. He is, however, far superior to what I expected -- & is indeed a very capital actor -- certainly far superior to Cooke in general powers, tho' he resembles him in some degree, in his own parts of Richard, &c.

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[3. August. 1809]

... Got a letter from Miss Kell -- all well in town -- it enclosed a letter from Conway, who is now getting better -- but has been very ill of a feverish complaint. He is, he says, quite convalescent -- so I hope will soon be quite well: & is in very good spirits. It contains no news of importance.

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[9. August. 1809] Brighton

Dined alone at St. James Hotel -- as I thought it too late to go to the Scotts. There being only the School for Scandal by Mr. Brunton & Miss Norton, I did not go to the play.

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... Went to the Circus. Bespoke by Mrs. Hope. Very full. Got an excellent place in boxes, near some decent people, & next to Mrs. Henry Johnston, who was there with 4 fine children & some ladies & gents. Next box to her was Mrs. Siddons with a party. ... She looks thinner & most lovely. She seemed very pleased, especially with Miss Saunders, & went away soon after the Pantomime began. I was as much amused in watching her countenance & conversation, as any thing else. I knew all she said by the expression of her face. She seems in excellent health & spirits: a very pleasing woman was with her, & a large party of ladies & gentlemen besides. I am very sorry I

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missed seeing her last night in Mrs. Beverly.

The Circus is well worth seeing. It is a neat circular theatre with an arena. They have a very handsome troop of riders & horses, about a dozen of each. A Master Blackmore on the slack rope, which I never saw done before, is astonishing. He flies about in the air from one end of the stage to the other, or rather from back to front: & turns round like a piece of meat on a spit, does every kind of tumbling on it, & flying with hold only by feet. Several of the riders are capital. The flying African not amiss -- but young Saunders, apparently about 20, is the best -- he looks clumsy, but has the grace of Vestris, a very fine face, & is very strong. I never saw such astonishing horsemanship -- so quick, graceful, & wonderful -- ropes, balloons, &c., all the beauty & wonders of equestrian feats are combined in him -- but on the tight rope, he outdoes even his horsemanship. I do not think him quite so graceful as Richer, as he

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has not such a good figure, but he is far superior in certainty, strength, & agility. His dancing & tricks on the descending rope, his sudden changes & astonishing feats are beyond description. He is indeed truly wonderful, as is his sister, Miss Saunders, who performs most wonderfully on the slack wire. She lies back for a rest -- then walks along it -- then takes tea -- then is driven very fast from back to front of stage lying. It is beautiful & easy & elegant & very difficult: She exhibited also on horseback, & rode with wonderful grace, ease, & spirit -- but the beauty of the matter was to see her most lovely face, figure, & complexion. She has a profusion of light hair -- a most elegant figure -- the fairest skin, finest bloom -- most lovely eyes & most perfect

countenance of beauty I ever saw. She is a model.

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[11. August. 1809]

... went to dine at the Scotts -- only Mr. & Mrs. Scott, Mr. Graham & I. Mr. Scott, Harriet, Maria, Henry, & William went to the boxes, but they not having good places, Mr. Graham & I went to the Pit: & got excellent seats in the centre. We were just in time, for it was soon quite full. House full as it could hold. It is really a neat little theatre -- about as large as Newcastle -- rather deeper

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and not quite so wide as Newcastle. It was Mrs. Siddons' second appearance. She had played Mrs. Beverly on Tuesday. To night she played Lady Randolph & never did it better. I cried most bitterly & was indeed nearly choked. It was truly affecting. I shall never forget her in the scene with Old Norval in the 3^d act, her first scene with Glenalvon, her first interview with Douglas, her discovery to him. also her narrative to Anna -- but above all, her affection in the last act -- and frantic grief at his loss. She is the first actress in the world. I shall never forget the exquisite feelings which every line of it produced: All the points, the action, the face, voice -- every thing was perfect. She looks uncommonly well. Brunton was Douglas. He has feeling & gave great effect to many parts of it, tho' he is awkward & at times bustling & insignificant, especially in action. Anna was excellent by Miss Boyce. Old Norval very good by Mr. Murray

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of Covent Garden -- but Creswell of C. G. was truly wretched in Glenalvon. Lord Randolph by Mr. Stanley very decent.

Altogether the play was most affecting. I don't know when I have been so delighted. Every look, tone, & action of Mrs. Siddons is fixed in my mind. I enjoyed the idea of it during the farce of Raising the Wind, which Mr. Graham wished to see, but to which I paid very little attention, as I was thinking all the time of Mrs. Siddons.

Diddler by Brunton -- made it too like a Madman -- wanted humour very much. Loveday wretched in Sam. Russel decent in Plainway. Mr. W. Murray (Mrs. H. Siddons' brother) is a fine boy -- he was Fainwould -- he is very like his sister. Miss Boyce is to grave for Peggy. She is excellent in pathetic, sentimental parts. Mrs. Loveday is a clever actress -- rather humorous & dressed Miss Durable admirably: but tho' I observed, I could not laugh at it. "My thoughts on tragic flights were bent."

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[12. August. 1809]

... I called on Oaks & went with him to the play. Tolerable good house. The Exile. I paid no attention. Miss Norton was violent & unnatural in Alexina: & Brunton could not do Daran with any effect. It was pretty well supported throughout -- except by the chief parts -- & excellently got up. Kelly, whom I remember at Newcastle, as ridiculous as ever, played Altradorff & Snacks in the Farce of Fortune's Frolic. Roughhead by Loveday -- shocking bad.

Blacket & Fane came to me at the end of the 1st act, & he & I talked all the time. He is going on terribly -- spending money dreadfully -- & losing his health -- & in fact getting

into every kind of fashionable folly: -- in which he has no enjoyment. He & Fane went off to the Pavilion at 10 -- I envied them.

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[14. August. 1809]

... went with Capt. Oakes to the Circus. We got good places.all the same as on the last night I was there. Saunders & his sister danced together on 2 tightropes, placed parallel at a short distance from each other. They walked down the rope & up, &c. -- it was

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very pretty to see her neatness & his strength & skill in managing both for her & himself: of course it was done without poles. ... Miss Saunders also looked lovely on the slack wire, tight rope, & horseback. Signor Belzoni next displayed his philosophical experiments with fire & water Previous to this, Mr. Clarke came on to say -- that he had it in command to state to the audience from his Royal Highness at the Pavilion, that he had just received dispatches

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from London to inform him of a glorious victory gained by Sir Arthur Wellesley & Cuesta with a very inferior force over Victor & Sebastiani -- the French force is stated at 44,000, the English & Spanish at 28,000: our troops were victorious -- & the enemy lost 10,000 -- but we have lost above 5,000 -- which may be reckoned at 7,000: General Mackenzie & General Langwerth are killed: -- besides many others. Many are the acquaintances that I have there -- but Lluellyn I reckon my first friend -- & he, I think, must have been in the action. Heaven protect him. He is, I hope, safe -- but it is a most awful idea to think how many are lost, &

what anxiety & suspense must prevail at home.

The News was received with cheers & God save the King played: audience standing. I joined Mr. Fane, who came in at 9 -- & went with him after the experiments, leaving the pantomime, to the Castle ball before 11.

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The rooms are very magnificent -- & were as full as they could hold -- above [blank] people -- certainly a great mixture; but a most brilliant display of diamonds, gold, jewels, &c. We had not been there above 10 minutes, till the Prince & royal Dukes arrived -- & a long suite of noblemen & gentlemen. The Prince was in plain clothes with a star. He looked very well & was surrounded by people. I heard him tell a great many particulars of the News we had just received -- his manner of speaking has a rattling sort of apoplectic sound in the throat -- but his manners are truly elegant, and conciliating. I admired his speaking to all he knew -- & tho' pressed on all sides, looking so good-humoured & not seeming to be at all annoyed. ...

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Heard a long converse, & put in a word now & then, between Mr. Sheridan & Mr. Scott. Mr. Sheridan said that "tho' he disapproved of the plan of carrying on the war, yet that though we no lost troops by foreign expedition, it was of such use in teaching actual service to those who remained, that it could not be too dearly bought, & taught discipline to our army, so that if ever we were invaded, we might be able to get the better" -- & a great deal more, which if war is inevitable, is certainly reasonable.

[15. August. 1809]

[et]

... went to the Library to me^[et] Oakes. We went together to the pit of the theatre to see Macbeth. Got seats in the front row -- as the pit is much sunk, it is too low: but saw Mrs. Siddons' face to advantage. Macbeth, Barrymore -- looked like a fool, imperfect in his part, & was almost [always] making blunders. His dress was ridiculous -- his action stalking & unnatural -- his second dress, a Spanish habit & trunk breeches -- he had not sword, but used a foil. He gave the words in an unvaried monotonous rant. Of all the principal actors I ever saw, he is the worst. He is unnatural, stiff, & bombastic, & his iron voice & face are never graced by a spark of feeling. How he could be so long tolerated in London is to me surprising. I longed for Meggett or anybody but Barrymore. Macduff, Brunton. He made very little of it -- violent & puerile by turns -- how inferior to Conway! Banquo, Murray -- very good. Witches, Kelly, Russel, & Loveday. Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Siddons. She looked admirably well --

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I never knew her to play it so well -- every look, tone, & action were full of meaning -- & her sleeping scene is exquisite perfection. She is certainly not so large as she was, & looked most lovely. She is truly inimitable. Never were such indescribable tones & looks as she gave in the dagger, banquet, & sleeping scenes. I shall never forget her. She was often obliged to prompt Barrymore who made sad havoc.

The farce was the Sultan. Sultan, Mr. Stanley -- he looked well, but was not animated or elegant. Osmyrn, Loveday -- a fool as usual. Elmira, Miss Sharp -- a fine looking girl

& beautifully drest. Ismeria, Mrs. Brunton. She screamed thro' the Soldier Tired, most terribly out of time. Roxalana, Miss Norton. Her face, figure, & manner are well adapted for comedy, which she plays very well -- in tragedy she is unnatural & violent & unmeaning. She overacts too much & her transitions are too sudden -- but she looked the part well & played it on the whole with spirit & vivacity. The farce went off well.

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[18. August. 1809]

... Called on Capt. Oakes. Drank tea with him. He & I went to the play together, to the pit, first sauntering about the Steyne. The house was very full, but not so crammed as on Tuesday. The play was Isabella. Cresswell was a poor Biron -- but was decent & perfect. Brunton was too tame in Villeroy. Stanley very bad in Carlos. Murray pretty well in Baldwin, but too wild at first. Mrs. Siddons has it all to herself in this play -- and I saw her in it for the fourth time with undiminished pleasure. Her solemn resignation, grief, tenderness, & maternal affection -- her distress from the creditor, her beautiful acceptance of Villeroy's offer -- the Marriage -- her horror after it -- the scene of the ring --

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the interview & recognition of Biron -- the scene between her & Villeroy where she attempts her life -- the scene where Biron is asleep & she in a fit of madness attempts his life -- then the scene where he dies -- her agonies in being torn from him -- & her dying scene -- are all scenes of every different variety of passion & horror -- all portrayed with inimitable judgement. I was not affected so much by tears -- but more

by a horrid feeling, most unpleasant. Her looks in madness -- her scream -- her laugh -- most dreadful portaitures of deep & varied misery. The wrapt attention of the house during the 2 last acts was awful.

Very judiciously after so horrifying a play, they acted the pretty, interesting piece of the Young Hussar -- Florian, Brunton -- Larole, Kelly -- the Father, Murray -- Madame Larole, Mrs. Swendal -- Ninette, Miss Chapman -- Caroline, Mrs. Brunton.

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The Music is pretty & it went off very well. It is quite in the French opera style -- elegant & pleasing -- with trios, duets, quartetts, & odd situations. It was really well performed. Kelly had a great deal of humor in Larole. Miss Chapman was very well, tho' too violent, in Ninette, & the rest tolerable.

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[21. August. 1809] Lancing and Worthing

Pain in my side very bad this morning. It prevented my going to Worthing after breakfast -- indeed the rainy morning would also have hindered me. Read out the Life of Mrs. Bellamy, which, though I had read before, I found very amusing -- it contains a great deal of theatrical anecdotes, & it is impossible not to take a strong interest in

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the fate of so amiable tho' so unfortunate & imprudent a woman. ... After dinner, it being quite fine & I rather better, I got ready & went with Frank [Clark] to Worthing.

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... Frank & I went to the play to see Hamlet. It is a neat theatre but far too narrow -- quite out of proportion,

a fault unpardonable in a new theatre. The Scenery & dresses are really very good. Mr. Cresswell & Mr. Murray played the King & Horatio, so it was quite Covent Garden. Laertes was done by Mr. Thomson, a man of considerable feeling & spirit, tho' inexperienced & awkward. Polonius, by a Mr. Lewis, bad. Ghost by Barrymore. He is quite stupified -- & made blunders in the long speech -- but looked it well. Gravedigger, Mr. Owen -- very poor. Ostrick, Mr. W. Murray -- good. Queen, Mrs. Trotter, decent. Ophelia, Mrs. C. Kemble. She is far advanced in pregnancy, her "chaste treasure opened to unmastered importunity," but looked well -- her eyes were very effective in Ophelia --

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and she played it with more simplicity than I thought she could: but it is not exactly her forte. C. Kemble in Hamlet was the object of attraction, and I never saw it played in a more interesting manner. At first I thought him, tho' pathetic, too measured & tame in the scene at first & the Ghost scene -- but in the subsequent soliloquy, and the scene with Horatio &c., he outdid my expectation -- tho' nothing was so charming as the play-scene -- & with Ophelia he was really great -- but in the closet scene he far surpassed any actor I ever saw. His "Is it the King?" -- after killing Polonius -- was a glorious burst -- thro' the whole indeed he was truly great, & as much superior to Young & John Kemble as possible in all the pathetic & passionate parts of the character -- in the sententious parts perhaps he was inferior -- but his pretended madness was admirable

and his countenance, truly Siddonian, expressed every change of the interesting character. I never was more delighted -- it was one of those performances which seem like realities & of which the recollection can never fail to delight the mind. I should enjoy much seeing it over again. It reminded me excessively of the Young Roscius. Elliston would be great, I dare say, but I think too violent & not sufficiently pensive. C. Kemble, if Young were out of the way, would soon shew his superiority in parts of feeling.

Mr. Webber sung Blackeyed Susan. He has a very fine strong loud natural tenor -- but a bad falsetto. He played Sir John Loverule in the Devil to Pay, & introduced a capital hunting song. Miss Bristow played Lady Loverule -- but tho' she looked pretty, she had not a grain of spirit. Jobson was spoiled by Mr. Owen. Nell was very good by Mrs. C. Kemble -- quietly played, but very effective. She could not look the part, but played

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it much more naturally than Miss Duncan who was too violent. The farce went off well.

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[22. August. 1809] Brighton

... We went to the theatre at 7. Luckily met Capt. & Mrs. Buckoll, Mrs. Fish & the Miss Fishes, who offered us places in their box, which I was very glad of -- as the house was full as it could hold. We had excellent seats. Mrs. Fish & Capt. Buckoll talked a great deal & were very pleasant, Mr. Fish, the young ladies, & Mrs. Banger very milk & water.

The play was Pizarro -- and Mrs. Siddon's last appearance. Pizarro, Cresswell -- Valverde, Stanley, decent -- Ataliba, Murray -- Alonzo, Brunton -- Cora, Miss Norton -- Orozembo, Mr. Palmer of D. L. -- Rolla, Mr. Trotter of Worthing theatre, a good figure & beautifully drest. He is married, but Lady Brisco, a widow of fortune, makes a third in the party, having been captivated by Mr. T.'s charms. She is rich, & it is for him a very beneficial connection. He is manager of the Worthing theatre. ... so much enamoured is the Lady that she has given up her family,

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character, & friends to live with Mr. Trotter -- he got very decently thro' the part, tho' no great actor -- nor did he appear to me handsome, tho' a good figure & tall. Las Casas was played by Mr. Swendal. He spoke with a great deal of feeling & propriety. I remember him well in former times. The play was well got up & tolerably acted throughout. Mrs Siddons great as ever -- her voice at times is lost at the end of a violent sentence; but to hear her give the sonorous periods, & portray the scornful indignant feelings, & the desire of revenge & fame, is truly delightful. It is a character exactly suited to her powers, and she plays it most inimitably: it is only a pity it is so short. It is a poor play, defective in every thing. The more one sees it, the more one feels its faults.

The farce was All the World's a Stage -- which I never happened to see before. It is a very laughable one, consisting

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of the eccentricities of a stagestruck clownish butler -- &

the stupidity of an old country squire & his maiden sister. Kelly should have done the Squire, Sir Gilbert Pumpkin -- it was spoiled by a Mr. Russel. Mrs. Loveday was most finely drest in Miss Bridget. Diggery, the butler, by Loveday was very bad indeed, which spoiled the piece.

[24. August. 1809]

Arundel

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Blackett & I walked back to the Inn and putting ourselves in order went to the play, which was bespoke by the Ladies of Arundel. We arrived at the beginning of the 2^d act of the Honey Moon. We joined Lady Newburgh, Mrs. Colonel Jones, Mrs. General White, & Capt. & Mrs. White, & Miss Swinburn -- of whom there are 4 live at Arundel. They are cousins of Sir John Swinburn. Fane was also with us -- and so the stage box was quite full. I was introduced to Mrs. Jones & sat near her or Lady Newburgh all the evening. Lady N. was very attentive to me indeed: & we had a great deal of talk. Mrs. Jones is a lively clever little musical Irish woman. I was much amused with her. The play was decently acted. Egerton, formerly of Newcastle & now of Bath, was the Duke. He is not improved in appearance,

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being got too stout -- his lively comedy is good -- but he has no feeling -- and his taming the lady by forcing her unwilling obedience was done in too contemptuous a manner. I have never seen it done to please me but by Elliston, whose Duke is a master of cajolerie. Juliana by a Miss Marsh -- a very clever sensible woman & rather pretty -- she is about 25 or 26 & will I think be an excellent comic actress, tho' perhaps she rather wants feeling. The other characters were as usual murdered. Miss Holloway, whom I recollect with

Macready at Newcastle, acted Zamora -- she sung prettily but is no actress. Mr. J. Smith of Drury Lane theatre being here by chance sung 2 songs -- "In Britain the sail" & "Deep in the Fountain." He sung the former most admirably & was encored -- & the latter verywell. He is like Incledon but much better in the style of his voice, & has more taste.

The theatre is neat & will hold, I fancy, about £70 at

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the 3/ 2/6 2/ & 1 prices. It is much like that of Worthing, but still more narrow.

The farce was Raising the Wind. Egerton was Jeremy Diddler, but was not animated enough -- indeed he is too large & heavy for it -- he was not so good as Betterton or Brunton, & far indeed from Lewis or Jones. The rest were wretched.

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[29. August. 1809]

... After dinner we soon moved off to the play -- which was bespoke by the officers of the 18th. Sat with Capt. White, young White, Mansfield, V. Jones, Fane, Blackett, &c. Very pleasant evg.

Time's a telltale -- of which I saw the 4 last acts -- Miss Marsh very well in Zelidy. Mr. Seymour,

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whom I well recollect at Newcastle & who is an elegant & genteel man & seems clever, played Blandford very well. Egerton was too violent in Hardacre -- the rest are wretched. Mr. J. Smith sung "He was tamed" admirably. Next came Paul & Virginia -- those parts by Mr. J. Smith & Miss Holloway: they sung very well, especially Mr. Smith. His voice is indeed very perfect -- so smooth, strong, loud, clear, & sweet,

& so well modulated. He is by far the best English stage singer after Braham -- having certainly a much better singing voice than either Phillips or Incledon can now boast. His "Wealth of the Cottage" was delightful.

After the play Blasket went home with me. Took leave of him with regret. He is a most amiable fellow, & just suits me -- but I wish he had more foresight & steadiness & was not so easily moved by every impulse. It would

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be better for himself: but he has so many pleasing qualities, so good a disposition, & such an original romantic oddity, with a lively imagination, that he is a most amusing companion, & a sincere friend. We separated with regret -- if I had not thought it right to go to town, on account of my father's wishes, I should certainly have staid another week.

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[31. August. 1809] London

... Went down to the city & sat an hour with John Chatto -- as I suspected my father had sent me no cash & prevented T. Potts doing so -- so went to the Dawsons & seeing John D. borrowed of him £50. ... After dinner I moved off to the Lyceum theatre. It was for the benefit of Mrs. Bishop. The new opera of Safe & Sound -- music by Mr. Hook & written by Mr. T. Hook. It is a most

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stupid piece, and the dialogue most flat & unprofitable -- and for the plot, it is totally absurd & a mere nothing -- the music trifling in the extreme -- only one song by Phillips, one by Hook, & a duet between him & Mrs. Mountain that was tolerable. Downton in the old gentleman, Penson in the Steward, Phillips in Lindor, Horn in Albert, Mrs. Mountain &

Mrs. Bishop in the 2 sisters did all they could: but it is wretched, & was universally hooted after it was over, so I hope it will be withdrawn.

Next came a Selection of the chief pieces of the Circassian Bride, the music of which was by Mr. Bishop, and owing to the conflagration of Drury Lane theatre has never been heard but once, they not having been able to get it up at the Lyceum. It is grand -- deep -- & scientific -- & in some parts most delightful -- it has many original & very beautiful passages & does him great credit -- & it was well sung by Phillips, Horn, Mrs. Bishop, Mr. Smith, Mr. Doyle, & Miss E. Bolton. I was most delighted with a song called "Lion's Power" --

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most glorious & magnificent, spirited & delightful -- it was sung at first by J. Smith at D. L. theatre who is now at Arundel, & in his hands must have been fully realized, but it was too loud for Horn, who is not calculated for that style of music -- in a duet with Mrs. Bishop of "Welcome Despair" he sung delightfully -- he is much improved in action & voice, & has a thorough knowledge & taste. He is indeed a delightful singer. Phillips has great taste & great execution, but his voice is not of a very pleasing quality. His song of the Lover's Story was most beautifully given, & deservedly eno^gred. The finest thing that I ever heard was the Quintetto & Chorus at the opening -- it was really sublime & shews Mr. Bishop to have a genius that may be improved to great works. The Music of the Circassian Bride appeared doubly delightful after Hook's trash in

"Safe & Sound" of which only the 3 I have mentioned were tolerable. After the Cento of Music given as a Concert, succeeded the ballet of the Nabob,

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or Indian Lovers. It is beautifully got up -- the scenery, dresses, & processions most magnificent. Mr. Robert in the Nabob is excellent -- his acting is so expressive & intelligible. Bourdin in Selim acted & danced well -- & Miss Lupino was truly charming in Aspasia -- a little child danced most astonishingly: such time, strength, & precision I never saw in so young a child -- not above 8 or 9 & very pretty -- I could not hear her name. Altogether it is a most beautiful piece, and very interesting -- and Robert, Bourdin, & Miss Lupino are capital. She is a beautiful girl: & very elegant, modest, & interesting.

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[2. September. 1809]

... to Haymarket theatre. --

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The play, the Iron Chest -- Young played Sir Edward with great force & effect -- in the violent agonies, & half smothered nervous irritability of the part, he was truly great & shewed himself to have great powers & greater sense & judgement -- but wherever he was to be pathetic and feeling, he was too measured & solemn, & commanded no sympathy. His face is terrible -- certainly. Jones has a great deal of energy -- but no variety -- & a total want of softness. His Wilford was poor indeed -- lively comedy is his forte. How much I longed for C. Kemble, or Conway! Mathews was perfection in Samoson,

G. Wilson
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so natural & easy, yet comic. Mrs. Glover will soon be in the straw -- but she is a most elegant charming lovely woman & all she does is marked by sense & elegance -- there is a peculiar charm in her countenance & manner admirably adapted for the first line of comedy. She is as much superior to Miss Duncan as that lady to Miss Norton or Mrs. H. Johnston --

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or any other of the wretched set they have at C. G. theatre. Mrs. Liston sung sweetly in Barbara -- Blanche, Mrs. Gibbs, very well -- Judith, Mrs. St. Leger, excellent. On the whole the play was well done -- I must not forget Grove in Adam. He was capital. Eyre in Fitzharding, very well -- but I longed for Elliston in Sir Ed & C. Kemble or Conway -- or even De Camp in Wilford.

The farce was Killing no Murder, for the 32^d time. It is all for Mathews & Liston -- & shews the former off at once in Buskin as an actor, valet, hairdresser, waiter, cook, & boots -- his ventriloquism in personating these parts is astonishing -- and his song of Bartlemy fair inimitable. Liston in Apollo Belvi is most irresistible -- his dancing -- his account of his courtship to Miss Buckram -- his pretending to give an account of his own death & bungling about it -- & his excessive silliness, & his grand dancing duett with Mathews singing, is really comic. I don't know when I have laughed so much.

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It is really admirably contrived to shew off Liston & Mathews. Grove in Sir Walter is very good -- & Mrs. Davenport in Mrs. Watchit. Mrs. Mathews sings a pretty song in Nancy -- &

Miss Kelly is tolerable in Patty -- altogether it is entertaining and does credit to Mr. T. Hook, who certainly has lively talents, if not profound.

[5. September. 1809] Haringay XX, 331

... I got into a coach and went to Haringay, with some things to stay till Thursday. Found Mr. & Mrs. Grey, Miss Grey, & Miss Satterthwaite & a Miss Susan Satterthwaite. Very kind reception -- and had a most agreeable day. Mr. Grey & I had a long talk after dinner -- he told me the marriage of Miss G. and Wright was to take place in about 3 or 4 months -- & spoke a good deal about it. I said nothing about having ever had any intentions, and indeed never spoke on the matter till he mentioned it.

Tea. Music -- by Miss G. & me.

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[7. September. 1809]

Breakfast. Miss Grey played -- I sung. Talked with all & had a long chat with Mrs. Grey, who talked to me quite as a friend about Miss G. and said she was so delicate, she feared she would never live if married -- but however it is to take place before the spring -- I hope they will be happy.

Took leave of them with regret -- tho' I shall probably see them for a few minutes to-morrow in the city. They go to the Isle of Wight next week.

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London

... Dined with Miss Kell.... After dinner we observed a party on the flags before the windows of 2 women, a lame boy, & a girl -- & some other ragamuffins -- one of the women had an infant in her arms, besmeared with filth -- & the woman herself was hideously frightful -- a great gash extended at

each corner of a monstrous half toothless mouth up to her nose -- her grin was horrid -- the boy had a bent leg & a most humorous ugly face -- he saw we were diverted by their horrid figures & grins (for they were merry, having been at some gin shop) & he

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brought forward a round hideous looking little fat brown woman like a pig exactly for us also to admire -- the girl was lean & gaunt, with bare legs, and a tattered scarlet pelisse. I never saw such a groupe -- they soon collected a mob round them & got some half pence. They seemed to be either the dregs of St. Giles's -- or gipsies.

After this sight I went to the play at the Haymarket theatre. The Foundling of the Forest. Sat next Mrs. Plowden, the author of Virginia, my old pit companion at the opera house. We had a great deal of amusing talk. The Foundling is a most interesting piece, perhaps Dimond's best -- the action admirably managed & not improbable. I was highly amused with it -- & even affected in some parts. Young in De Valmont played with great judgement -- but certainly with a want of pathos in some parts, & with too much solemnity. Jones in the lively Florian was very good, but he too in a great measure fails in the tender scenes.

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Eyre was monotonous & dull in the unnatural character of the villain Longueville, who seems to me to have no adequate motive for all his villainies, & this I think the great defect of the play -- which is, however, full of real feeling & most admirable dramatic situations, without any of that

unnatural melodramatic forming of groupes. Grove makes as much as possible of old Gaspard. Liston in L'Eclair is highly comic as usual, & Farley in Bertrand is capital -- his action is inimitable & he played most admirably -- his is indeed, I think, the best part in the piece. Mrs. Gibbs does not exactly look the young lady Geraldine: her voice is better adapted for a chambermaid -- but it is not a part of great moment. Mrs. Liston is excellent & sings sweetly in Rosabelle -- & Mrs. Davenport's acting in Monica is really very fine -- she is like Mrs. Matlocks & at once possesses a loud & violent humor, digging emphatically into words, & can give a most impressive narrative, with most pathetic enthusiastic feelings.

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She is an excellent actress. Mrs. Glover in Eugenia, in madness & dramatic effect, was great & looks it finely -- but her voice is unfit for any tragic affecting part. She ought to keep to genteel comedy. Tragedy is out of her line, tho' she has great sense & judgement. On the whole I was delighted with the piece, which keeps up the attention, & is admirably got up as to scenery &c.

The Interlude of a Day after the Wedding -- done almost entirely by Jones in Colonel Freelove and Mrs. Gibbs in Lady Eliz. Freelove. It is intended to correct the foible of an excessive passionate temper in an otherwise charming woman -- & her husband succeeds by pretending to be more violent than she. It was most comically done by Mrs. Gibbs -- her sharp voice & violent action made it inexpressibly funny. I laughed excessively. Jones was very good in Colonel Freelove.

I was extremely diverted.

Next came the Waterman -- Tom Tug, Mr. Taylor. He sung it well -- & looked it well. Mrs. Mathews in Welhelmina looked pretty & sung tolerably a pretty air, but is very inanimate. Mrs. Bundle by Mrs. Davenport -- admirably done -- nothing could exceed her vulgar manner & dress & violence. Liston in the fop Robin making love & repeating play-speeches is irresistibly comic -- the house were in a roar -- it went off altogether admirably.

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[9. September. 1809]

... Called on Mr. Taylor of the Sun, who promised to take me to the opening of C. G. theatre when it is opened

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for the Manager & his friends previous to its being opened to the public: but I begin to fear it will not be open in any way before I leave town.

... I went at 7 to Lyceum Theatre to see the Duenna. Quick is truly comic -- but not so young & powerful as he was once -- yet he still has a quiet chaste odd laughable manner, that cannot be resisted -- what a contrast was his judicious & capital acting in Isaac to Mrs. Spark's noise & vulgarity in the Duenna. She is certainly one of the worst I ever saw. Mr. Marshall in Antonio looked by no means like a lover -- & sung indifferently. The songs of Ferdinand are bad -- so that Horn could do little -- but he made a good deal out of little. Penson in Don Jerome is just tolerable -- he is very monotonous & heavy -- a sad want of variety & humor.

Mrs. Bishop should have played Louisa. Mrs. Orger looked very pretty, but she is a poor singer. Mrs. Mountain looked & sung well in Clara -- but unaccountably she always misses out "Adieu, thou dreary pile" certainly the best song in the piece. She is certainly become very indolent. Phillips was the grand attraction in Carlos. He sung "Had I a heart" most exquisitely & equally in a fine natural voice in G -- & with great taste -- his voice is a fine high tenor -- his low notes are bad -- but in "Gentle Maid" he was very inferior to Braham, whom I well remember -- he sung "Ah sure a pair" very well & was encored in it and "Had I a heart" -- but even in the former was inferior far to Braham.-- in "Had I a heart" I liked him quite as well -- it was so equal, simple, & full of taste: the music went off well altogether. I did not stay to see the Nabob, which I had seen before.

Home & read, wrote.

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[10. September. 1809]

Up at 1/2 past 8. Breakfast. Read out Miss Edgeworth's Tales of Fashionable Life -- most admirably written & very amusing. Nothing can be more charming & characteristic than Ennui, Almeria, & Manoeuvring. I've known several whose memoirs might rival in follies even those of the Earl of Glenthorn. Madame de Fleury is pathetic -- & the Dun is, I think, almost repugant from the feelings it excites -- but I think they cannot fail to be of great use: the 3 are really inimitable.

[11. September. 1809]

... Coles & I went to Lyceum Theatre to Mrs. Mountain's benefit -- could not get any room in the pit -- so Mr. Mountain, to whom I spoke, sent us behind to the stage door to get us places in Mr. Raymond's box -- of which, however, the key could not be got, so I spoke to Mrs. Mountain, with whom I had a long converse about Wilsons, Herons, Popes &c. She was very civil & chatty, but could offer us no other places than to remain at the wing. There we staid amidst the bustle of all the performers -- Quick, Mathews, Mrs. Mountain, Mrs. Billington, Mrs. Bishop & Miss Lyon, Miss E. Bolton, Mr. Phillips. Mr. Horn, Mr. Miller, Mr. Doyle, Mr. Downton, Mr. Greville, Mr. Arnold, Mr. T. Hook, &c.

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It was very amusing, & we heard quite close, tho' did not see the performers faces very well. Artaxerxes was played in 2 acts, as a concert -- but with the recitative. It was most charmingly done. Mrs. Mountain in Arbaces sung "Amid a thousand" and "Water parted" delightfully -- also the duets of "Fair Aurora" & "For thee I live" with Mrs. Billington were most delicious. Phillips sung the songs of Artabanes well -- but they never tell. Horn sung beautifully "Fair Semira" -- Miss Bolton made nothing of Semira -- indeed she had nothing to do -- but I have never heard Billington in better voice than to-night: it was far better than at the Pantheon, when she did it before -- for I was so much nearer. In "Adieu then lovely" -- In "If o'er the cruel tyrant" -- the bravura song, "Monster away" & the "Soldier tired" -- she was indeed inimitable. I never was more delighted. After it was over, I, being tired with standing, & Coles tired of music, we moved off -- & did not stay to see the stupid opera of Safe & Sound.

[12. September. 1809]

... I took a walk ... to Covent Garden theatre, & admired that most noble & astonishing building. It is on the model of the Temple of Theseus at Athens -- the grand front is to Bow Street. It forms a fine oblong square -- & is clear all round it, not joined to any other building -- except by a covered passage on the south east corner to the Piazzas of C. G. Market. The Grand Front consists of 5 divisions -- a noble portico & pediment with a doric entablature & fluted doric pillars -- under this the chief entrance of the boxes -- on each side, a glorious division with a basement, & 3 windows in each division,

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above which, nearly all the length, are capital bas reliefs -- at each end, the divisions project -- and here the entablature, which was broken to make room for the bas relief, is again resumed -- with a magnificent effect. The whole of this immense length is gradually overtopped by a second higher building rising at some distance behind & seeming to be supported by the grand & massive entablature & portico &c. I never saw any thing so imposing. Its first glance is truly majestic -- it is indeed in every respect a noble monument of architectural simplicity and beauty -- & shews how wrong it is to make things for ornament: that are not useful -- here every thing that is solid & useful is grand & sublimely imposing.

The other front, into the open space between it & the sides of the south-side houses of Hart street, is merely plain & neat -- & the north & south ends, or fronts, are also very fine, & rise to a great height,

taking in all the galleries, centre roof of the theatre, & scene painting rooms above the stage. The stage is on the north side, facing Hart street, & looks on the audience who are on the south side. There are 3 tiers of boxes -- & two galleries -- each tier has behind it to the south, a fine saloon. The third tier is entirely private boxes. The grand entrance to the boxes is under the Portico in Bow street -- that to the private boxes, by separate stairs -- there is also a stairs to communicate with a box door in the opening, which communicates between the theatre & C. G. Piazzas. The dressing rooms & Green rooms are on each side of the stage, looking north & south -- of course part of them occupy the 2' divisions of the grand bow street front, which are on the right in going into the portico, or at the north east corner. It is a most admirably planned theatre, & I only wish to see it opened, & to go thro' all the interior.

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[14. September. 1809] Rumford

... Parade was over at the Barracks. ... Went back to the Inn. Dressed. & went to Knipe's room. Read out Gertrude of Wyoming -- it is too short, too broken -- & not connected enough & perhaps here & there a little obscure -- but it is a most affecting, simple, & enchanting poem -- every truly feeling mind must delight in its pathos, wild grandeur, & soft feeling. It is delightful & to me perhaps more congenial

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than Campbell's more famous work of Pleasures of Hope.

At dinner 9: Griffith^h, Thackwell, Buckley -- a decent man rose from the ranks to be Lieut., Phillips, Clotey -- a young Dutchman from the Cape, a fine lad enough, and another

I forget, Knipe & I -- but the principal figure was Colonel Grant -- a man of 35 or 36, a Scotsman, but very frank & pleasant, very shrewd & clever, very unassuming -- full of sensible conversation & strong feelings of taste about Shakespeare, Sterne, Kemble, Holman, &c., and tells wonderful amusing interesting stories: -- one in particular of a beautiful Irish woman in London whose goodfornothing husband left her, & she, to keep up her station in society, had the address to go privately to Mrs. O--'s in Berkley Street, & meet gentleman -- merely for the sake of money. He once met her there & knows her still as a lady who is visited by the most correct people in London, & when he first met her at Mrs. O's house,

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he recognised her as the daughter of a gentleman in Co. Limerick of genteel fortune, a house he was intimate at, when quartered there. She told him her history, & then went away veiled as she came: whether or not she still pursues the trade of courtesan, he does not know, but she continued it for some time, & is still visited by the correct people in town -- every gentleman who has ever met her at Mrs. O's making a point to keep her secret. It is a singular circumstance, & worthy of record.

Colonel Grant is a most amusing man, & he & Knipe & I had a very long conversation. He was particularly attentive & civil to me, & is really a goodhearted intelligent man, who has seen a great deal of the world, with a quiet gravity which unbends into sensible loquacity in a most agreeable manner. I was much pleased & entertained by his conversation -- we talked about books & theatres &c.