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February 1-July 3, 1809.

**The Journal of John Waldie
1809-1817**

[10. February. 1809] Newcastle

... went to B. Sorsbies music party ... Miss Robertson sung an air of Mayer's, "Che dice," & a German air with English words, & the "Manly heart" with Sorsbie. I sung "Should e'er I brave" and "Deep in my heart." We were both much applauded -- but really she sings with so much good humor, taste, & execution, that if her singing was not so correct, it would still be admired -- but she

XIX, 11

is a perfect well-taught singer, and has the highest taste & polish. I admired it extremely & was delighted with her science, execution, & feeling. She has every possible requisite except a perfect voice -- but the upper notes are rather shrill & too powerful for the lower part of her voice, which wants volume.

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[13. February. 1809]

... My Father, Mother, Maria, Jane, Miss Masterman & I went to the play. ... The play bespoke by Lady Collingwood. Good house, above £70. The Rivals badly acted -- Sir Anthony, Mr. Grove -- Capt. Absolute, Fawcett -- Falkland, Conway -- David, Tayleure -- Acres, Betterton -- Fag, Shaw -- Sir Lucius, Remington -- Lydia, Miss Macauley -- Julia, Miss Simpson. It was truly wretched. Mrs. Malaprop by Mrs. Dawes well dressed, but destitute of humor, & very noisy. -- We had singing by Miss King & Shaw -- & "Tim Stitch" by Mr. Tayleure, which is the most admirable comic song I ever heard: -- nothing can exceed his droll faces & gestures, & the beautiful burlesque cadences are truly charming.

[14. February. 1809]

... In the evening we had a very gay Music part. ... Overture, Gyrowitz, Mrs. Robertson accompanied by Monro on the violin and Griffith on the violincello. Song, "Pleasure my former ways," J. Waldie. Duett, "Bird duett," by J. Waldie & Miss Robertson. Song, "Che dice," Miss Robertson. Duett, "All I wish," Miss Griffith & Miss Kentish. Grand Concerto, Haydn, Miss Robertson accompanied by Griffith & Monro. Song, "Music's Fascination," Miss Robertson. Song, "The Daisied Mead," J. Waldie. Glee, "Friar of orders grey," J. Waldie, Monro, & Griffith. Song, "Dulce domum," Miss Robertson. Grand Sonata, Haydn, Mrs. Robertson accompanied by Griffith & Monro.

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[16. February. 1809]

... Looked in at the theatre -- Conway was playing most admirably the Earl of Warwick, with much passion, animation, & feeling -- & Margaret suited Miss Macaulay's manner. I should have liked to

XIX, 17

have seen it all. He played capitally, but seeing Miss M. in Margaret reminded me of Mrs. Siddons, whom I saw play it at York.

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[20. February. 1809]

... at the rehearsal of last act of Hamlet.... Made my long intended call on Mr. Conway -- he seemed most delighted to be noticed -- & his manners are most elegant, frank, & genteel. He is really a most amiable young man & certainly has great genius for the tragic art. He is so enthusiastically attached to the stage, that I think there can be no doubt of his success.

... Holman appeared tonight for the 1st time -- in Hamlet. He is a genteel man -- with a most flat, unmeaning, & uninteresting face -- & most studied, unnatural, quick, hurried style of acting -- with a sinking voice, which makes the last part of a sentence be quite lost -- not a spark of real energy or feeling -- in short, he is a noisy, whining, dull, ranting actor -- full of mouthing, starting, & grimace -- very like Pope, but inferior. He has great experience & some judgement: in the play scene he was very well & in his directions to the players. Conway was the Ghost

XIX, 24

and played it & looked it most capitally -- most impressive & feeling. The whole of it was most admirably done indeed. Miss Macaulay was Ophelia -- a dull business -- Miss Simpson should have been Ophelia, & Miss Macaulay should have played the Queen instead of Mrs. Dawes who was quite ludicrous. Tayleure in the Gravedigger was excellent -- so natural, & yet so comic -- there were some capital touches of nature & feeling: which might have given a lesson to Holman.

In the farce of Raising the Wind, Betterton played Didler admirably -- it suits his vacant, dull style, for Didler is so active & alert, that it was amusing to watch the actor try to keep apace with his part. Tayleure in Sam was most admirable -- real simplicity & cunning -- it was nature itself. He is an admirable performer.

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[21. February. 1809]

... Called on Mr. Conway about Macduff -- & had a long conversation -- he is a most amiable young man.

... went to the play to see a little of the Gamester. Saw the 3rd act -- very bad. Holman looked genteel & played the part with grace & elegance -- but in an undertone, & without any feeling. It produced no effect. Miss Macaulay was very absurd & stupid. Conway was as well as possible in the quiet part of Lewson. He spoke with feeling & propriety. The house was thin. I soon decamped.

XIX, 23[a]

[22. February. 1809]

... Macbeth was the play & went off well. The other characters were as before I saw it, but Miss Macaulay & Conway appeared to great advantage -- in Lady Macbeth & Macduff. The Music went off extremely well indeed. Conway was most impressive & affecting in Macduff -- nothing could exceed his scene, where he receives the news of his family's destruction, & in the scenes with Malcolm & the battle scene he was capital. Holman looked & played better than in Hamlet -- he was

XIX, 24[a]

most capitally drest -- but there is so much art & twisting & turning, & such terrible faces he makes -- & such a total want of feeling, that all the finer parts of the character were lost. I am sorry he has been engaged for so long, as it prevents Conway from shewing himself in the best parts, during the best part of the season.

After the play we had Tim Stitch which was admirable as usual -- then God save the King -- verse & chorus by all the Company: then Miss King sung a ballad & Tayleure, "There was an old woman" capitally indeed. We then had "Rule Britannia" verse & chorus. All this, with the full house and the fine music of the York band, made it a most gay evening indeed.

I left the theatre & did not stop for the Portrait of Cervantes. which was the farce.

[23. February. 1809]

... Went to Mr. Conway; he & I had a long walk together: of 5 miles. He improves every day -- he really is most amiable, amusing, & animated, & the most perfectly genteel & delicate young man in his manners & ideas -- his passion for the stage is quite enthusiastic -- so I hope & doubt not he will succeed.

XIX, 27

[24. February. 1809]

... Saw 3 acts of the Provoked Husband. Conway was sitting in the pit -- he & I exchanged our observations by looks.

Holman appeared to great advantage in Lord Townly -- he was dignified & manly -- & quite the nobleman. Miss Holman is an elegant girl -- rather stiff -- not handsome, but a good countenance & figure. She was very unbecomingly drest -- but acted extremely well -- a great deal of elegance, vivacity, & modesty. We were much pleased.

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I only regretted I could not stay till the end: -- Fawcett was very well in Sir Francis -- a silly old man suits him best. Grove was an excellent John Moody -- quite natural & not too violent -- a judicious actor. Miss Simpson in Miss Jenny was an excellent hoyden -- but Tayleure in Squire Richard was really comic -- I never saw natural sheepishness, boldness, rusticity, awkwardness, & booby appearance so completely hit off -- he was indeed capital -- the house was in a roar -- nothing could surpass it -- the other parts were wretchedly done.

XIX, 29

[25. February. 1809]

... Called on Conway & took a circuit with him by Waterside & Elswick. A great deal of most pleasing conversation on theatres, &c.

[27. February. 1809]

... Met Mr. Conway & had a stroll with him -- he introduced me to Mr.

XIX, 31

Holman -- & we all lamented the dismal news of the burning of Drury Lane on Friday night. It was a most sudden & rapid conflagration, being all over in 3 or 4 hours -- being a Lent Friday there had been no play. I fear no good account of its origin can be given. Nothing was saved -- the insurance is but £70,000 -- and most terrible will be the loss to every one concerned; & to the public -- as certainly in point of cost & size, it was the second building in London. Most melancholy event.

XIX, 33

[28. February. 1809]

... I went first to the play. Saw 3 acts of the Honeymoon.... Had a chat with Conway before the play -- he was in the pit, and too modest to come into the boxes. -- The play went off well. Holman wanted energy

XIX, 34

and animation & wanted feeling -- & was too comic & familiar -- but played it well on the whole & wore three beautiful dresses. Miss Holman was an excellent Juliana -- but a little too tragic -- a more easy cool air would have been better. -- Rolando, Betterton -- Zamora, Miss Simpson -- were tolerable. Balthasar, Montalban, & Volante were very badly done by Remington, Shaw, & Miss King. Grove in Jaques was very dry & comic -- he produced a great effect. -- & Tayleure in the Surgeon was truly excellent.

The farce was Youth, Love, & Folly -- the two lovers were murdered by Shaw & Fawcett -- Miss Simpson was a very pleasing "little Jockey" in Arinette -- Grove was capital in the Violent Benson --

& Tayleure irresistibly laughable in Antoine, the host. -- Miss King stupid in Clotilde: if Elliston's part of Florimond had been well acted, it would have gone off well -- but Fawcett roared terribly.

[1. March. 1809]

... Very little further details of the destruction of D. L. -- I fear it has been wilful. Dinner at home as usual. -- After, dressed & went to the play. Saw very near the whole (all but the 2 last scenes) of Venice Preserved -- Pierre, Betterton -- Jaffier, Holman -- Belvidera, Miss Holman --

XIX, 36

Betterton looked like an assassin -- but got thro' Pierre better than usual -- he was perfect. Holman has some delightful tones -- his starts -- his whispers -- the workings of the mind were admirable -- far the best part I have seen him in -- but a want of pathos in his acting which nothing can make up for. Miss H. was very great in Belvidera -- she has great judgement -- her voice is low & fine & powerful -- in the agonizing parts she is very great -- her sobs reach the heart -- but in every pathetic turn, she as well as Holman fails -- she reminds me much of Miss Smith. -- very much delighted on the whole with the play.

XIX, 42

[4. March. 1809]

... Took a ride on new Mare of 3 miles. -- Too fidgetty. -- Walked with Mr. Holman over the Moor. Met him by chance -- he is really a most intelligent amusing man, and quite a gentleman. I never met with any one more communicative of his situation, &c. We had a most entertaining theatrical conversation. Called & sat near an hour with Conway & discussed various matters.

[6. March. 1809]

... Went to the play. Saw above two acts of Romeo & Juliet. Juliet very bad by Miss Macaulay. Mercutio a braggart not genteel by Betterton. Holman was beautifully drest in Romeo. He played some parts admirably, with graceful action & such capital art. I admired his scene with the firar after his banishment -- but in the pathetic part, how far short of Roscius. Conway & I looked at each other & made remarks.

XIX, 46

[7. March. 1809]

... Called on Conway. Had a long theatrical chat with him.

XIX, 47

Went to the play. Saw the 2 last acts of Much ado about Nothing. Conway in the scene where he publically accuses Hero played with real feeling & sense & judgement: he looked uncommonly well in Claudio. Miss Simpson as Hero was very decent. Mr. Holman was a capital Benedict -- his easy gentlemanly air & humorous manner in comedy just suited it. Miss Holman was spirited & clever in Beatrice. She is really a charming girl. Nothing could be more capital than Tayleure & Grove in Dogberry & Verges -- it was hilarious: Grove's childish old age & the other conceited silliness were well done -- the other characters were bad -- but it went off capitally on the whole.

XIX, 48

[8. March. 1809]

... Went to the play at 7. Most delightful. Othello. Betterton had his part off in Iago, but played it very ill. Miss Macaulay decent in Emilia. Tayleure in Rodrigo was

very excellent. His vacant face was inimitable -- nothing could be

XIX, 49

better than his odd vacant manner. Remington in Cassio was decent enough. Miss Holman looked lovely in Desdemona & played with loving simplicity -- she was most beautifully drest, & very interesting. Mr. Holman's Othello was the Grand attraction -- the house was good & for Miss Holman's benefit, so he exerted his utmost skill. I shall never forget his grave dignity & the grandeur of his manner in the first & second acts -- but the third & 4th containing the jealous scenes with Iago & with Desdemona were the very representation of the green-eyed monster ravaging the noble soul. I never saw any thing so affecting & striking: -- his scene when he is worked up by the artifice of the handkerchief to resolve his wife's Murder, was the finest thing I ever saw. I shall never forget -- every point -- every line -- & every action told -- his face being black was a great addition as it concealed the cold dullness of his face.

XIX, 53

[10. March. 1809]

... I went to the play. Saw 2 acts of the Fair Penitent -- then went to the rout for a little while ... & then back to the play. Saw the last scene of the 4th & all the 5th act. Holman too calm in Horatio -- he wanted feeling & animation. Betterton a vulgar braggart in Lothario. Conway pleasing in Altamont; but it was not a sufficiently animated part for him -- he was pleasing & graceful -- but the great attraction was Miss Holman in Calista. She was

inimitable -- her want of pathetic power was hardly felt -- in the more violent emotions of this illgoverned character, she was truly great -- her action, voice, & gesture were delightful: nothing could be better than her last act -- I saw all the best of the play

XIX, 54

except the interview of Lothario & Calista where they are surprised by Altamont, & the quarrel of Altamont & Horatio -- it went off with great applause. Fawcett endeavored not to be offensive in Sciolto & in some degree succeeded -- we all enjoyed it much. Miss King sung a ballad -- then Tayleure sung twice amidst thunders of applause "Tim Stitch" -- he sings it inimitably, quite different & with a most charming variety of beautiful cadences. The Agreeable Surprise followed -- Grove in Sir Felix excellent -- Miss King sung the Lark most beautifully. She is always best in tune in the most difficult songs. Miss Simpson a pleasing Cowslip, but it reminded me too much of Mrs. Kemble. Mr. Tayleure was the life of the business. His Lingo was inimitable -- his face I shall never forget -- in every scene the house,

XIX, 55

which was very good, was in a roar -- his populorum jig hey jiggo populorum was really too comic -- he staid on after the rest, till the drop scene fell -- & then said

"While I've been singing populorum jig

Sir Felix & party have hopped the twig."

[11. March. 1809]

... Called & sat a while with Conway -- he & I had a long chat about Holman, &c.

XIX, 57

[13. March. 1809]

... Holman's benefit -- Alexander the Great. I have seen it before, but

XIX, 58

so many years ago, that I don't remember it. He was very great in Alexander, beautifully drest, & in the scenes with Statira, Lysimachus -- the murder of Clytus, but above all in the dying scene he was very grand. I did not think he was in such spirits as the night of Othello -- certainly, it did not produce the same delight, tho' he was much applauded & his acting very much admired. Miss Holman was a charming Statira, & played it most beautifully -- her dying scene was lovely -- her manner of falling was most elegant. Miss Macaulay looked ugly, but played tolerably. Conway was as good as possible in Lysimachus -- the rest all bad. Fawcett stupid in Clytus, tho' he died decently.

XIX, 59

The play went off well. Tayleure in the Comic song of Forty thieves was capital -- & No Song, No Supper followed & went off very well -- the music of it is lovely.

[14. March. 1809]

... Went to the play soon after 9. Sat with R. Selby & Whyte. The play of Man & Wife was over. The farce of the Portrait of Cervantes, or

XIX, 60

the Plotting Lovers followed. Grove in Murillo the Painter was capital. Miss Simpson very well in the part of Lucetta. Fawcett in the valet Scipio was diverting, but Tayleure in

Sancho was irresistible. I thought I should have rolled on the floor with laughing. His ludicrous fears & distress at being caught in the early scenes, & the whole scene in the Painting room where Sancho & Scipio are introduced as dead bodies, were inimitably comic. I never was so much delighted with farce. Every gesture, look, & turn of Tayleure was inimitable. The house, tho' not full, was in a continual roar all the evening.

XIX, 63

[15. March. 1809]

... The play was the Africans: bespoke by Col. Wilson & Col. Debutto -- very full boxes: quite a brilliant house. The Africans -- Conway was great in Selico -- great feeling & some turns of real genius -- his exclamation "Am I awake" was astonishing -- in the earlier scenes, I thought him rather too violent, tho' his situation is truly distressing, yet it comes on us too suddenly: there is a want of incident in the play. It was well done -- nothing could equal Tayleure's drollery in Henry Augustus Mug. Fawcett was rather

XIX, 64

more tolerable than usual in Madiboo. Miss Macaulay very well in Darina -- & Miss Simpson in Berissa -- Grove good in Fetterwell. The play went off well & I was highly pleased, & every body near me.

[16. March. 1809]

Walked. Breakfast. Read out American Lady. Most elegant, natural, & pleasing book, with a beautiful character exhibited & a great deal of information about America. ... Called on Conway & had a walk with him by Sandyford, &c., to avoid the wind. We had a most agreeable conversation about employment of time, education, books, machines, officers, & actors.

[17. March. 1809]

... Called on Conway. Had a talk over with him about his benefit which is fixed for next friday -- & I fear it will be injured by Mrs. Williamson's party. He is fixed to have Oroonoko, Two Strings to your Bow & the Tale of Mystery.

XIX, 67

... In the evening Maria, Jane, & I walked to Gateshead to a rout at the Headlam's -- about 50.... We staid till 9, & walked to the theatre, & joined the Herons, Lady Collingwood, &c. ... It was for Boxkeeper's benefit, about £65. Wild Oats & the Turnpike Gate. We saw the last act of the play, which seemed to be tolerably done. Conway looked extremely well as Harry. Betterton as Rover was ridiculously in a court dress.

XIX, 74

[22. March. 1809]

... It was but a poor house for the benefit of the Infirmary, £35. The Road to Ruin -- Miss Simpson was too violent in Sophia -- the rest were shocking bad, except Conway & Grove. Grove in Silky was inimitable, both in the scene with Harry & the Widow. Conway in Harry was really pleasing -- he was not equal in every scene, but his mirth & gaiety were natural -- & his transitions when convinced of the fatal effect of his folly was admirable -- but his finest scene was that with Silky -- it was inimitable -- it was impossible not to feel every

XIX, 75

point. I was delighted, and all the audience also. Last night also he played in the Exile admirably for Remington's benefit.

[24. March. 1809]

... May father went to Mrs. Williamson's rout, where I looked in at the end of the play for five minutes, & returned to the theatre with T. Cookson. I also went behind to Conway, who was delighted with his house. At Mrs. Williamson's 2 large rooms very humdrum -- not well filled -- glad to get away again. The house was very good at the theatre, but would have been better if it had not been for the rout: -- however the boxes were very elegant; full of ladies -- there was £75.10 -- which as it was friday, & a rout against it, was much more than I expected -- it has been the best house of the season. Pit & gallery both well filled. Oroonoko was most inimitably done by Conway. It is his best part -- such feeling & elegance -- such transitions -- & Imoinda by Miss Macaulay was very well -- York in Aboan was better than I expected.

XIX, 80

It had a great effect -- but it is certainly a dreadful play. Miss Macaulay decent in Imoinda throughout, & as if truly touched by Conway's passion her trembling voice in the last scene was admirable -- the inflexions of his voice in the place where he kills her were irresistible. Every one was delighted.

Two Strings to your Bow followed. Miss Simpson very good, but too noisy, in Donna Clara. Tayleure in Lazarillo was most admirable. He kept the house in a roar the whole time -- his action is the most comic of any I ever saw, tho' his face is inferior to Liston.

The Tale of Mystery succeeded -- & was well acted -- it was given with great effect. Remington I never saw so good as in dumb Francisco. Miss Macaulay in Selina tolerable. Mrs. Remington played Fiametta well -- she shewed both humor & feeling. Tayleure & Shaw were very well in Piero &

Stephano -- & the other characters were well supported.

XIX, 81

The grand attraction was Romaldi -- Conway played it very finely. His action was great indeed -- & his feeling in the latter scenes very affecting. His scene with the Miller & his agonizing remorse at meeting his brother at the end -- also the scene with Malvolio in the 1st act, & the group at its end were capital. Every thing went off well -- our box was quite full.

XIX, 62[a]

[25. March. 1809]

... Called on Conway -- long chat with him -- & a short walk with him -- agreeable talk over. He in ecstasies about his benefit. Dinner. Read Oroonoko.

XIX, 63[a]

[28. March. 1809]

Walked. Breakfast. Read All for Love. Rode out. Walked. Dined with Conway at his lodging, quietly -- tête a tête -- most pleasant conversation: -- we walked out for an hour -- tea -- & then went thro' Hamlet, the first 2 acts -- I giving the other parts & he Hamlet. He does it most beautifully -- with elegance, judgement, & feeling very much like Roscius. We sung together a little.

XIX, 64[a]

He makes a tolerable second. After a most agreeable evening, home at 10.

XIX, 65[a]

[31. March. 1809]

Breakfasted early. Before 10, Conway came & he & I set off on horseback to Lemington to spend the day. The day was fine. We had a pleasant ride. Saw all the glassworks & the

Manufacture -- he was highly pleased -- & delighted. We then walked to Ryton & explored all its Lions. Came back to Lemington & dined, & settled various matters. Had most

XIX, 66[a]

interesting converse about various actors. We then went to see the Iron works -- & saw the whole curious process: -- then rode round by Fenham in our way home. Beautiful evening. We walked 4 miles & rode 9. Most delightful day. We got back at 7. He went home to study -- I went home also to write.

XIX, 67[a]

[1. April. 1809]

Read Coelebs in Search of a Wife -- dull discussions on religion by Miss Hannah More. Walked. Went after tea to spend the evening with Conway & staid till near 12 -- partly hearing Hamlet & Marc Antony -- & talking over plans -- & giving advice of studies in history, languages, &c., for him -- his long residence in Barbadoes prevented his

XIX, 68[a]

education being properly finished. -- After a long conversation, home to bed at 12.

XIX, 69[a]

[3. April. 1809]

... Went to the play at 7. Saw All for Love, which I never saw before -- a great house except the boxes, which were thin. -- above 70. ... A fine play -- Antony is a very fatiguing part & very long; without any very grand situations: but there are a few touches of passion & feeling, and much richness of language -- the 1st scene with Ventidius is capital -- & where he yields to Cleopatra -- the scenes with Octavia & Dolabella

are not so effective -- the last scene is the best. Conway made a great deal of it -- he played it with elegance, feeling, & propriety -- & gave some great proofs of fine conception -- he looked remarkably well. His dying is too protracted from his first stabbing himself -- & he as yet wants that complete knowledge

XIX, 70[a]

of the stage, which can render a dying scene pleasing -- where the part is natural he is sure to succeed.

XIX, 73[a]

[5. April. 1809]

... Jane & I went to the play -- Maria staid with my Mother, as she had seen Roscius in Barnwell.

George Barnwell was the play. Miss Simpson very well in Maria -- Shaw stupid in Trueman -- Remington very decent in Thoroughgood -- but Conway in Barnwell was beyond himself -- he looked & spoke & felt the part so completely that it seemed like nature itself -- the whole house was in tears -- such passion, animation, elegance, & modesty -- & frantic grief in his last scene with Milwood -- the contrast of his placid yet pathetic prison scene was delightful -- the whole part indeed was admirable & we were all most bitterly affected. Jane cried for half an hour after it was over.

XIX, 74[a]

On the whole he was very nearly equal to Roscius -- certainly his face far superior in expression. -- We were all delighted.

Tom Thumb followed -- Little Miss Parr in Tom Thumb is very good: & it went off well. Grove & Tayleure in Noodle & Grizzle were capital -- the rest but indifferent -- it is scarcely possible not to laugh at it.

The Death of Capt. Cook, a pantomime revived, followed. It was tolerable -- Conway did as much as possible with the Captain, & Fawcett in Koab & Miss Simpson in Emai were very good.

XIX, 75[a]

[7. April. 1809]

... Maria, Jane, & I went to the play.-- that they might see the

XIX, 76[a]

Africans -- a very good house -- & it went off very well. Conway was greater than ever -- especially in the second act. They were delighted.

XIX, 78[a]

[10. April. 1809]

.. Called on Conway: & had a walk. Dinner. Went to the play -- the Iron Chest. ... Fawcett was truly ridiculous in Sir Edward -- all rant, folly, & absurdity -- it was impossible not to laugh. Conway was charming in Wilford. I had no idea he could have made so much of the part -- it was very interesting. Tayleure in Samson was capital: & Miss Simpson very good in Blanch. It was all decent enough except Fawcett.

XIX, 79[a]

[11. April. 1809]

... Went to the Meeting of the Proprietors of the theatre. It was agreed that he should be allowed as long as he requires to pay the rent -- & that the Proprietors were

XIX, 80[a]

satisfied with his exertions. -- So it seems all settled that he is to continue: -- & suit his own convenience. Called on Conway. Had a short walk with him. The Proprietors bespeak The World & Ella Rosenberg next Tuesday.

[14. April. 1809]

... went to the play -- a very full house -- Tayleure's benefit: all the world -- £103 -- which he certainly well deserves. ... The Heir at Law -- Fawcett comical in Lord Duberly -- it just suited him -- he looked vacant & queer & was laughable. Grove in Pangloss failed -- it was not in his line -- he was comic, but not precise enough -- but Tayleure in Zekiel was inimitable. He was nature itself -- his countenance so simple & ingenuous -- his manner so natural -- & his feelings so strong -- in the scene where Dick behaves ill to him, he was most affecting -- I cried most bitterly -- I have not been so delighted since G. Barnwell,

XIX, 88

indeed I never saw any thing so affecting. His feeling of so high a nature in addition to all his comic fun, music, silliness, & odd gestures was admirable -- & quite a surprise. He is really quite superior to any performer we ever had -- & I think equal to any in London. He ought to be with the D. L. Company. Conway looked well -- & played Henry with great elegance & animation. The rest are not worth mentioning, but got through their parts tolerably.

We had a lot of songs: Miss King sung "Hope told" extremely well -- Tim Stitch was more odd than ever: & he [Tayleure] sung Bob Cranky a pitman's song in the Newcastle style admirably.

The farce of the Honest Yorkshireman followed -- Tayleure very good in Sapsull -- but a foolish thing.

XIX, 92

[17. April. 1809]

... Went to the play -- before 8. Miss Macaulay's benefit, £90. The Castle Spectre -- changed from the Orphan

-- shockingly acted. Tayleure in Motley, good. Conway in Osmand made more of it than I expected, and played the scenes with Kenrick & Angela very finely -- in the dream he has not violence enough & wanted force -- but it produced a great effect, & he looked admirable in Widdington's dressing gown & pantaloons which were lent him for the occasion. -- Widdington had come from Durham and had called on me, but I being out, he went

XIX, 93

alone to Conway -- & offered him his dress: -- which was very civil. Miss Macaulay was wretched in Angela. There was no scenery, & altogether the play was completely murdered.

The farce of Catherine & Petruchio. Grove in Grumio & Tayleure in the Taylor were excellent: & very laughable -- Remington & Miss Macaulay in Catherine & Petruchio were most wretched.

XIX, 94

[18. April. 1809]

... thin house -- only £22 -- by desire of the Proprietors. The World -- & Ella Rosenberg -- very beautifully acted. I don't know when I've been more amused.

XIX, 95

Conway in Cheviot was admirable -- & very graceful, easy, animated, & elegant. I never saw him in Comedy to such advantage. He was very interesting. Fawcett is in Echo -- it requires little more than his mimicking the types he encounters, yet he did quite well in his bargaining for Cheviot's poetry & playing Cheviot's rival. Grove excellent in Withers -- & Tayleure in Index gave the part polish, wisdom, & compassion -- he was more than just a repository of gossip -- indeed both Conway & Tayleur succeeded in making more of their roles than

Kenney's limited talent could provide them -- Cheviot's natural affection & integrity, and his scenes of modesty & surprise were done with the best control & feeling. Miss Macaulay more tolerable than usual -- on the whole it went off well. ... Ella Rosenberg the farce -- interesting -- also by Kenney. I never saw it before. Miss M. is tolerable in Ella & Conway very interesting in Rosenberg. We were all much amused.

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[19. April. 1809]

Walked. Got a most agreeable letter from Mrs. Kemble who is well at Carlisle & will give me letters to her brother in law in London. Read. Wrote &c. Called on Widdington. He & I went to theatre & got Fawcett's leave for him to act. Had a chat with Miss Simpson & Miss King: & afterwards a walk with Conway. Widdington & I walked & called on various, to persuade them to act. I think Graham, Whyte, & J. Lamb perhaps will: -- however it must be fixed to-morrow.

Dinner at home. We all went to Miss King's benefit except William & my Aunt -- & sat with the G. Clarkes. A very good house, £72. Two faces under a hood -- Tayleure being ill, Remington was obliged to read his part,

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which spoiled the piece much. It was very dull -- some of the music is pretty -- but it was sadly murdered. ... Miss King sung her songs well. Mr. J. Shaw played Sebastian & sung well. Miss Macaulay sung & acted wretchedly. Miss Simpson played Ursula extremely well -- it is just the part for her: a pert simple chambermaid. A very heavy unintelligible piece.

Conway, after the play, recited Dryden's Ode. It was

delightful -- such force, feeling, & transition -- the verse of Darius, and the change to the trumpet of war, were felt to the soul. He gave it admirably. ...

The farce was High Life below Stairs -- which we left in the middle.

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[20. April. 1809]

... Widdington, Conway, R. Selby, Dealtry, & I met at theatre & arranged matters with Mr. Fawcett & Remington. I hope they will get up the play & farce. I & Widdington & J. Lamb & Conway & Fawcett are appointed a Committee for conducting it. We made various arrangements.

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[21. April. 1809]

... At 11 I went to Capt. Widdington's & found him & Major Teasdale & Conway & Capt. Davis -- various plans were thought of. Walked with Conway. After his rehearsal at 2, he & I & Selby & Dealtry & Widdington began the rehearsal of Pizarro,

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I merely as Conductor of the business, for I promised my father not to take part, as he is much against it. Mr. Fawcett & Mr. Remington also conducted matters. Mr. Day & Mr. Barrington of the Suffolk M. came up and took the parts of Atoliba & Las Casas: so it is fixed to go on. The Tale of Mystery was then cast -- with the help of 2 or 3 actors -- of course Conway is included in both pieces. They went thro' the business. We then went to Widdington's lodgings & wrote the bills & advertisements. ... I shall stand at the wing and sing all the Choruses. Home soon after 6 -- Tea. Dressed. Went to the play. Fawcett's benefit -- above £100.

The play, the laughable comedy of Who wants a Guinea -- wretchedly done except by Betterton, Conway, & Miss Simpson, who were very well: -- but I was so busy talking & making arrangements that I paid no attention. Sat with Widdington & the Stephensons, and he & I went for ice behind the scenes & had a long chat with Miss King, Miss Simpson, & Conway & Fawcett.

The farce was the Critic -- Remington in Puff & Miss Simpson in Tilburina were very good -- the rest wretched. Walked home with Walker, who I hope will attend tomorrow at 11 for Almago & Montano.

[22. April. 1809]

Walked. After breakfast, went to Capt. Widdington's & Conway's -- & with them

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arranged several matters. We went to the theatre and began our first rehearsal -- the bills were printed & corrected & the dresses sorted out and arranged. I had all the trouble of the business: & got thro' it with the help of Fawcett & Miss Booth, while Remington was conducting the Stage concerns. The rehearsal of both pieces went off well: -- & we got it over by half past 3. Had a great deal of chat with Miss Simpson, Miss Macaulay, Mr. Grove, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Remington, Mrs. Remington, Mr. & Mrs. O'Keefe, &c. Walker, Dealtry, Day, Birmingham, Selby, & Widdington all got on well.

Pizarro & Tale of Mystery & Dryden's Ode between.

After business was over at 1/2 past 3,

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Widdington, Conway, & I had a walk upon the Moor. We separated for dinner. ... Went to theatre soon after 7.

Rehearsal began directly [after] I got there -- with scenes, choruses, &c., all the same, except dresses, as it will be Monday -- lamps lighted, &c. It went off extremely well & we had a great deal of fun & chat. Conway & I had an interesting confab. Miss Simpson being ill of a cold did not come. All looks prosperous. At 11, we finished the Tale of Mystery and went home.

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[24. April. 1809]

Walked. Breakfast. Went to theatre. Rehearsal -- it went off extremely well & with great effect. I as usual had a great deal of fun with Miss Macaulay, Miss Simpson, Conway, &c. The bills are up & posted -- & all is settled. The dresses arranged, &c. Conway & I had a walk & a talk over -- about various matters. I shall regret extremely losing his society. He is the best creature in the world & so amiable,

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unaffected, & goodhumored -- so happy & gay yet modest & respectful -- & has such a fund of agreeable conversation that I never met with any one who suited me so well.

... at 1/2 past 5 went to the theatre -- & found the dressing just begun -- it was a most amusing scene -- I don't know when I've laughed so much. Rolla did not come till near the end of 1st act, ready dressed as we fixed, but the fun of dressing Selby, Walker, Dealtry, Birmingham, Day, & Hodgson was very comical -- at last they got fitted & with some help of some things of their own & Fawcett's & Conway's & little Shaw's, got well drest.

The scene of action began at last, to a most crowded house -- £147.10. The boxes were 5/-- but

no other place was raised. The house looked beautiful. The play went off uncommonly well -- there was a sad want of energy in Rolla -- very tame -- the other amateurs got thro' much better than I expected. Rolla's stage-business was very good -- he died finely -- & in Francisco he was graceful & affecting: but he has no fire, no spirit.

The cast of the play was Ataliba by Capt, Day -- Rolla by Capt. Widdington -- Orozembo by Mr. R. Selby -- Old Man, Mr. Grove -- Orano, Mr. Shaw -- Cora, Miss Simpson -- Pizarro by Mr. Hodgson -- Almagro by Mr. J. Walker -- Davila, Mr. Cushing -- Valverde by Mr. Dealtry -- Alonzo, Mr. Conway -- & Elvira, Miss Macaulay. She plays it better than any other part. Miss Simpson tolerable in Cora. Conway made a great deal of Alonzo. He was so impassioned & animated.

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The choruses &c. got on very well.

In the farce of the Tale of Mystery -- Francisco by Capt. Widdington -- Romaldi, Mr. Conway -- Bonarno, Mr. Fawcett -- Stephano, by Mr. R. Selby -- Piero, by Mr. Hodgson -- Michelli, Mr. Grove -- Malvoglio, Mr. Cushing -- Selina, Miss Macaulay -- & Fiametta, Mrs. Remington. The piece went off very well indeed, and all the business was well managed. Conway was charming in Romaldi. Between the play & farce we had Dryden's Ode by Conway again -- he spoke it even better than before, especially the "louder strain." After the play ... [we] had a most amusing evening at the Shakespeare.

Home at 1/2 past 2 -- to bed at 3.

[25. April. 1809]

... Went at 12 to the Theatre & met Widdington, Major Teasdale &c. and Fawcett & Conway. We settled every thing -- paid off all the performers -- gave Miss Macaulay & Miss Simpson each £5 -- Conway & Fawcett each £10.10 -- they having offered gratis: -- having paid every one liberally & left £35 for Mr. Macready which Fawcett took for the house, tho', as we paid actors, there was not a fourth of that sum incurred as expences -- there remained out of £146.18.6 only £53.2.6 -- which I paid Mr. Lloyd for the use of the Fever House. Had a long walk with Conway & most interesting talk over.

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... Widdington has a great deal of feeling, & is a very fine tempered amiable young man, but wants energy. He & I agree very well in tastes & I really begin already to feel a regard for him. He seems so much taken with me that I cannot fail to like him -- & we are both so attached, I by long acquaintance, & he by sudden admiration, to Conway that he is a bond of union. Widdington & I went to tea -- & had a talk over with the ladies. We then went to sit with Conway til 12 -- for 2 hours & had a most agreeable conversation about every thing interesting to the drama. Conway is to write to me in London. I took leave of him with the deepest regret. I feel now from our intimacy so attached to him, & am so delighted with his temper, manners, & genius that I shall feel a sad loss

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in the want of his society. I shall be delighted to hear that he succeeds in the world, & hope sincerely that he may always be as happy as he is at present. I took him this morning to

our house & introduced him to my Sisters, who were delighted with him, & he with them.

[26. April. 1809]

Wrote to Mrs. Kemble & to Miss Kell. After breakfast packed up -- & arranged matters at home. ...

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Had a great deal of chat with Widdington about Conway & other pleasing subjects. He is really a nice young man, tho' a little effeminate in manner -- & not very bright -- but such good principles & liberal ideas, & fine temper & disposition, that I cannot help liking him.

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[28. April. 1809]

... Here ends my Winter in Newcastle, and next will come a Spring in London. I never had so gay, and certainly never a more pleasant Winter than the last has been. Many things most pleasant have occurred during its course,

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but the best is the acquisition of Conway's acquaintance, & the commencement of an intimacy with him which I doubt not will be lasting, & I am sure will be delightful: -- as his character appears to me truly amiable, his principles correct, & manners delicate & pleasing.

On the whole I recollect no period that I look back upon with more pleasure than the last four months -- but I shall not enlarge further on its perpetual round of variety, but proceed to my Journey to London.

[1. May. 1809]

London

... The house was brilliant & crowded. I got an excellent seat in the centre of the gallery, 5 or 6 from the front, saw & heard most perfectly. The gallery was quite full, & hot, not an empty box & no room in the pit.

The opera was Mitridate. I never saw Catalani act before: if her singing is sometimes cold, her acting is not -- she is a most elegant & feeling actress & gives the recitative admirably. She sung O quanto l'anima -- a duet with Righi -- a trio with Righi & Madame Pucitta -- a quartett with them & Rovedino. She also sung exquisite variations to "Away with melancholy" -- & the admirable bravura of "Trenar vorrei" -- delicious -- I enjoyed this last more than any, as I know it. She also sung a new, grand, difficult bravura -- most inimitably, the variations she sung twice. She is a most

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charming woman, & her voice is more & more strong & clear. She was in excellent voice. I enjoyed it more than I can express. -- The dance of La Fete Chinoise, which is pretty, was between the acts. I came away before 11, after the opera was over, & did not stay for the ballet. I would not have missed Catalani for the world.

Had a chat with Miss Kells. Unpacked & settled myself & to bed before 1 -- pretty well tired. I had no dinner except our luncheon at Wademill. 72 miles today.

[2. May. 1809]

... Arranged various matters with Miss Kell. I think I shall stay here, as it seems much more comfortable than before, & is cheaper than a hotel.

... Went alone to the Haymarket theatre. Mr. Young's benefit -- very full -- got an excellent seat in the pit. Sat next a very communicative clever woman of 34 or 35, a Mrs. Ainsley, who told me all her theatrical life -- she has played first line of business for 2 years past at Belfast, Cork, &c., and is evidently clever & sensible & a good judge. She has good eyes & face, & tho' new to the stage seems quite up to it. I walked home with her to St. Martins lane where she lodges, & where she gave me an invitation to visit her.

The play was Pizarro, & she & I amused each other with our remarks

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very much. It is beautifully got up, but not well acted. A Mrs. Eyre from Edinburgh made her first appearance -- she has a harsh voice, vulgar face & figure, no eyes, no action, very little sense & not a spark of feeling. She is even worse than Miss Macaulay. Pope was imperfect in Pizarro -- he had not 3 lines of it -- he looked it well & gave some passages with effect, but in the latter scenes was very tame. Mrs. H. Johnstone looked lovely in Cora -- but she is so very awkward & ungraceful & so very unnatural, so devoid of feeling, & so gauche that she is even worse than Miss Simpson. C. Kemble in Alonzo was very tame indeed -- he sadly wanted some of Conway's fire -- yet occasionally some lines were given in a most affecting manner. Orozamba by Chapman was wretched -- Mr. Murray is very heavy in Ataliba. Rolla by Mr. Young was the attraction. He is indeed a first rate actor. His neck & head are Roman, his figure very fine -- he has just

enough of dignity & action, & his walk is the most beautiful I ever saw -- his voice grand & capacious -- his solemn declamation inimitable: -- his energy when called forth, as in his calling back the Peruvians to rescue of Ataliba, is most affecting & astonishingly powerful. There he is far before Mr. Kemble -- but in the prison scene & with the centinel, he is much inferior -- he is too solemn & measured, & wants that persuasive feeling, those sudden bursts that Kemble shines in -- his "Did Rolla ever counsel" was exquisite in a fine whisper -- & his aside whisper at the end of "Then with this sword, Heaven's gift" were very judicious -- he has the highest judgement, voice, & manner & action -- & in solemn or energetic parts is truly great -- but in the softer, nicer touches of the soul,

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he fails -- he is altogether much like Mr. Holman, but has less flourish, more dignity, a finer figure & face -- & a more tragic air. I was highly pleased, tho' I expected more feeling & find pathos is his great want.

The farce of Tom Thumb -- Fawcett plays King Arthur quite different to Munden. He is more noisy, but less comical. Taylor, Simmons, Mrs. Liston, & Miss Bolton are as good as ever -- but Liston is grown more comical than ever. I never saw any thing to equal his face in the dying scene.

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[3. May. 1809]

... Before dinner returning home took a survey of the Melancholy ruins of Drury Lane Theatre -- and of the new building at Covent Garden, which is quite insulated -- and will have a fine effect -- it is massy & grand -- it is now

got as high all round as it is to be -- the east & west fronts are not so high as the centre nor so long: -- it only wants the roof to complete the outside work....

Went in the evg. to the Haymarket Theatre -- so full I could get no place in pit, but got a very good one in the front boxes -- very hot & crowded. Munden's benefit -- The English Fleet.

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Dickens
My attraction was Mrs. Dickens, who is a most enchanting singer & clever, lively, easy, natural, unaffected actress -- she is a most elegant woman, & her singing is far superior to any I have ever heard except from Mara, Billington, or Catalani. She has such taste & expression -- a thorough knowledge -- & so clear a voice -- & such astonishing distinctness & precision. Like Mrs. B. her lower notes are indifferent, but her cadences rise to f & g in alt with ease. She sung all the songs & duets both serious & comic most inimitably -- but her song of "And can he bear" was rapturous: and the cadence at the end truly delicious. Blanchard in Philip tolerable. Bellamy is a pleasing singer but wants power & energy, & has too much falsetto. Taylor is a very bad singer -- they took the parts of Braham & Incledon. Munden is the support of the piece & in the drunken sailor Mainmast was highly ludicrous.

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Miss Bolton looked pretty -- & Mrs. Davenport acted admirably in the old woman. It is a ridiculous piece.

The Rival Soldiers next. Munden's excellence in Nippekin is truly engaging -- such simplicity, drollery, & nature. We then had Lock & Key -- the music of which is delicious -- the

sestetto at the end of the 1st act in the dark, is inimitable & was delightfully done. Munden in Brummagem -- admirable -- his listening to the story was nature itself -- irresistibly ludicrous. Fawcett is very clever in Ralph, but I cannot admire him on the whole -- he has in every thing the same grunt. Miss Bolton looked pretty in Laura -- she is a very pleasing singer. Farley in Vain was admirable -- highly amused.

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[4. May. 1809]

... Miss K[ell] went with me to see the Exile &c. for Mr. Fawcett's benefit at the Haymarket. As full nearly as last night, but we got charming places in the 4th row of the Pit. I was delighted with the play, which is got up in great style.

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It is a beautiful piece. Mrs. H. Johnstone's pantomime action is capital, but her speaking is unmeaning & spoils the piece. She was even inferior to Miss Simpson. Young in Daran has more force of action & his capital walk -- he does it in copper color, with a turban & Moorish dress, which increases its effect much -- in the first scene with Welzien hé is great -- but at the latter part where he offers himself to Alexina & begs favor from the Empress, & even in his appeal to the Russian suitors, he was deficient in feeling. It is too tender & impassioned for him -- he is no lover -- energy, violence, action, & declamation are for his powers -- never tenderness, or amiable passion, or pathetic appeal. Liston in the Fop is quiet, apathetic, & admirably droll. Fawcett in Servitz is very comic & gives the songs admirably. Munden

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looks inimitable in the Governor & makes a great deal out of a poor part. Bellamy is dull in Calmar but sung very well. Mrs. Dickens is most inimitable in Catherine -- she is so lively, natural, & pleasing -- such animation, ease, and gaiety. She is a charming & most elegant woman -- but her sing of the songs and duets is really beyond every thing delicious -- such a richness yet chastity of style, such complete rapidity & ease, such cadences, & spirit -- her Soldier Tired I shall never forget -- it was rapturous -- her beautiful variations were really enchanting. She is quite a second Billington. The processions &c. are most magnificent -- altogether I don't know when I have been more delighted.

Bludevils, a short interlude, came next -- Fawcett, Liston, & Mrs. Gibbs in Megrin, James, & Annette capital. Liston's face was irresistible -- nobody can keep their own countenance at the sight of it --

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in the character of a simple country boy in love.

The pantomime of La Perouse followed. I never saw any thing so delightful -- at once so interesting, well contrived, & well got up. Bologna is a very fine figure & face & capital actor; in Perouse he was most interesting & affecting. Kanko the savage by Grimaldi was inimitable -- & Chimpanzee the Ape by Oscar Byrne was really wonderful -- the rocks, sea, bears, ships, huts, drawbridges, &c. most exquisitely done. I never saw a more interesting delightful piece. Miss Briston was a lovely Madame Perouse. Miss Adams very good in Umba the savage -- the action is so plain & interesting it is truly a delight. I never saw any thing of a pantomime so capital -- it was near 1 when we got home.

[5. May. 1809]

... I went to the Haymarket theatre -- C. Kemble's benefit, tho' not in the bills. Venice Preserved -- far the most delightful night I have yet had. Cooke in Pierre was great -- cold & firm yet effective -- but in the latter scenes he wanted feeling & was too quiet & sarcastic -- he is no favorite of mine. I cannot

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do justice to C. Kemble in Jaffier -- love, softness, rage, wildness, despair, & grief were most forcibly depicted -- if he would but be less careless in second parts, he would do himself good -- for in a great part, his powers & feeling & genius shine most conspicuous -- in the parting scene he was inimitable -- such transitions, such affecting tones, & such looks of anguish -- the house were drowned in tears. Belvidera by Mrs. Siddons -- she is not so large as when I saw her last -- her face is fine as ever -- her first separation, her love, her history of Renault's villainy, her fears & love when he offers to kill her, her parting, her scene with her father, & her madness -- all were great -- admirable indeed -- some changes of countenance & voice, some sudden bursts, almost threw me into hysterics -- no actress ever

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can have the same powers over an audience. The play was most delightful. I don't know when I have enjoyed any thing like it. C. Kemble's Jaffier I shall never forget -- it stamps him a first rate actor indeed. It is like Conway's style, but more finished -- & graceful. Every speech went to the heart -- he was Jaffier & not C. Kemble.

After the play -- the amusing interlude of Personation was played by Mrs. C. Kemble & Brunton. She has it all & does it admirably -- just the same as she used to do. I have seen her play it twice before. She looks most lovely -- not being at all too large -- just the right size.

The farce was Plot & Counterplot -- which is the most laughable in the world. I have laughed at it at Newcastle -- but here I rolled on the floor almost. I don't think I ever suffered so much from laughing -- I was quite in agonies -- it was admirably acted:

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Hernandez, by permission, Mathews -- Don Leon, Brunton -- Don Fernando, Farley -- Fabio, Fawcett -- Pedrillo, Liston -- Juana, Mrs. Gibbs -- Deatrice, Mrs. Davenport -- & Leonora, Miss De Camp. Fawcett, Liston, & Mrs. Gibbs have it all, but Liston in the silly Pedrillo is irresistible -- his excessive folly, his face, his anguish, & contortions at the scrapes he is in, & his misery when made a corpse of -- with his pathetic looks & starts, when he is not observed -- altogether it is impossible to conceive any thing to equal it. I never saw any thing to compare with him -- the house was in a perpetual roar.

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[8. May. 1809]

... Went to the Haymarket theatre ... Hamlet & Mother Goose. -- Hamlet, Young -- sad want of feeling -- fine action, voice & manner -- in the pathetic & moral parts, tame & solemn & tedious -- but in the energetic scenes, very good -- the best by far was his scene of the Play -- the soliloquies, except "To be," were poor & without feeling -- but his solemn quiet manner suited the last. ...

Harlequin & Mother Goose admirable -- several new tricks -- & 3 beautiful new scenes -- one of the ruins of C. G. Theatre -- another of laying the Foundation stone -- & a third of the exterior of the New Theatre, which will be a perfect Grecian model of beauty -- most chastely & elegantly finished & surmounted by a dome. The design does great credit to Mr. Smirke the architect. -- Bologna, Grimaldi, King, & Miss Adams keep up the Pantomime & Simmons in Mother Goose. Grimaldi is inexpressibly comic indeed. His agility & tricks & humor are irresistible.

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[9. May. 1809]

... The opera La Caccia di Enrico 4to -- music by Pucitta -- full of brilliancy, spirit, and harmony, but a want of melody in single songs -- the duets, trios, sestettes, &c. were charming -- a storm at the end of the 1st act in which all the characters are on the stage at once singing a sestette, or rather "for 9" -- in which the thunder & lightning comes in at intervals, was most delicious harmony. I never heard any thing more spirited or enchanting. Signora Collini is lively, easy, gay, & animated -- & sings pleasantly but with little execution. Signora Pucitta's voice is still less powerful -- she is rather like Mrs. Bland, but not near so good a singer. Siboni is a large man

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& sings with taste, execution, & knowledge, but his natural voice is all thro' his nose -- & his falsetto is not loud. Righi, Naldi, & Morelli did what they could, but there was not enough for the 2^d to do. Miss Griglietti sings pleasantly enough, but there is a sad want of first rate talents --

neither Braham, Billington, Catalani, nor Grassini -- oh terrible -- the music however was really delightful.

We had the asiatic Divertisement & the Ballet of La Naissance de Flore -- Mr. & Mrs. Deshayes, Mr. Vestris (son to him I saw at Paris), Mademoiselle Lupino & Mr. Moreau are the chief dancers -- they are all different, tho' admirably good.

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[11. May. 1809]

... After dinner went for the first time to the Lyceum Theatre -- to see the Drury Lane Company. The new comedy of Grieving's a Folly, given to them by Mr. Lee -- his first production was played to night for the 15th time.

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It is neat, well written, & entertaining, with little plot. Sir Oliver Cypress, an old taylor made a baronet, has just lost his wife, & thinks it necessary to affect great grief lest the world should suspect his joy at his deliverance -- this with his passion for a young girl who comes to be his forgiveness of rent arrears from her father is very comical -- Downton's face, acting, & wig in the part are inimitable. Bannister, who plays an actor turned auctioneer & undertaker, is also very amusing. Mathews is excellent in an honest country boy who gives good advice to this thoughtless would-be gentleman, Irish, goodhearted, fox-hunting farmer, most admirably acted by Johnstone. Henry Siddons in Herbert speaks with feeling -- he has one good scene, when relating his story to Sedley: -- but all the serious parts are very weak. Herbert by Siddons -- Belford, Powell -- Sedley, Holland -- Mrs. Mordant,

Mrs. Powell -- & Ellen, Mrs. Hl. Siddons. Both these ladies deserved better parts. Mrs. P. is thinner & looks very well -- she is an actress of great power & feeling. On the whole the play is very well performed, tho' in many parts it rather flags -- however there is humor, feeling, & character in it, which give hope of future excellence, & no buffoonery or nonsense. The language is good.

The farce of the Mayor of Garrett followed -- a very foolish, low, & vulgar piece -- revived for Russel in Jerry Sneak, who is really great -- his idiot stare & quiet fidgetting attempts to please -- his patience, his energy, & his slender figure all make it a most capital performance. Downton in Major Sturgeon is very good, & Mrs. Harlowe in Mrs. Sneak. Penly in Sir Jacob poor -- the rest are nothing.

[16. May. 1809]

... Before 12, went with Miss Kell & the Mackenzies & Mrs. Smith to the opera house to the rehearsal of the new opera. We got a capital box close by stage -- several others filled with company -- several on the stage -- we were just above. Much amused by the variety of people on the stage -- singers, dancers, spectators, managers, prompter, sceneshifters, workmen, &c. -- the dancers were skipping about & practicing all the time of the opera in the back part of the stage. Mad^{l^e} le Claire, & Mad^{l^e} Lupino were very lavish of airs & graces. All the orchestra & Weichsel at the head --

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with candles -- & scenes -- tho' no lustres lighted of course. La Serva Raggiatrice -- the piece got up to display 2 new singers from Lisbon: Music by Guglielmi -- very pretty & some of it very delightful -- especially 2 solos by Signora Bussani, & 2 by Signor Pedrazzi. Those two with Naldi, Giovanni, Morelli, Braghetti, & Griglietti made up the piece. Pedrazzi is a most elegant singer -- very like Viganoni but younger: he has all his taste & sweetness & a good but not powerful voice. She is a most capital actress, near 40 -- & animated tho' not pretty -- but with inimitable vivacity & spirit. She is exactly Storace, but not so flat, vulgar, & broad, either in style or figure: & with a more pleasing voice, tho' not quite the execution or science -- but a very clear, clever, spirited singer, with a good deal of precision & great accuracy & distinctness,

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& her comic action is inimitable. I was delighted with her, & highly amused -- the music of the finales to both acts was

admirable & all the solos delightful. It has all Guglielmi's playfulness & fancy, but wants depth -- yet there is more variety in it, than in Pucitta's continued full harmony.

Highly amused & left the party after it, & going up the Haymarket, met Dealtry who came here yesterday & goes away tomorrow. Walked with him & had a Newcastle talk over. He says Widdington will be here by the end of the Month. ... After dinner at 7, went to Miss Pope's, where I drank tea with them,

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and then went with Jane Pope & a Miss Hall, a pleasant girl, in a coach (the Popes gave me a ticket) to the Argyle street rooms, to Master Cianchettini's Concert. ...

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Except for the want of Braham, I was even more delighted than last night. I walked home to Queen street with the ladies and talked over our evening, which was highly amusing, merry, & exquisitely musical.

[17. May. 1809]

... Got a most delightful letter from Conway, who retains the liveliest sense of our intimacy & friendship, & expresses himself in a manner truly natural & affecting -- & yet with most amusing naiveté & simplicity. He is an excellent young man, & is going on in the best possible way for self improvement: I hope that Fate will again throw us together -- certainly none of my friends ever suited me so well -- & I really feel a great regard for him.

... After dinner I moved off to the theatre at the Lyceum to Miss Duncan's benefit. Got a good place in the pit.

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House very full -- The Honeymoon. Elliston looks well & is as great as ever -- his spirit, force, & feeling are astonishing, his elegance, his love -- in short it is perfect. Miss D. is admirable also -- just the sort of part that suits her. Russel makes Rolando a fool, which was never meant -- far inferior to Bannister. Holland is very well in Montalban. Wroughton might have made much more of Balthasar. Mathews is inimitable in Lampedo. De Camp in Lopez, & Penley in the Mock Duke are far inferior to poor Purser & Collins. Miss Mellon is large & careless, but was very animated in Volante. Miss Boyce has feeling & looks interesting, but sadly wants animation in Zamora. On the whole it was delightful -- Elliston & Miss Duncan held it together.

A foolish interlude -- from Harlequin's Invasion -- by Mrs. Harlowe, Miss Kelly, & Mr. Penley. A dance of Love in a Tub -- by Mr. Degrille's pupils -- very pretty.

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The duet of the "Woodlands" by Douronset & Huckel -- the latter has a most charming voice -- he will be a capital singer.

Next the Devil to Pay -- Sir John, Dignum -- Lady Loverule, Mrs. Harlowe -- Jobson, Bannister -- Nell, Miss Duncan -- all very good -- I had an excellent laugh -- but Miss D. wants humor. Bannister & Mrs. Harlowe were admirable. Nothing could exceed his astonishment at Lady L's waking & behaving so oddly -- the whole scene was inimitable on both sides. Miss Duncan's wonder in her fine robes was great, but she looked

too like a lady, and the situation calls for incongruity of character. She will never be very effective in the vulgar line of parts, & should not attempt them.

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[18. May. 1809]

... went to the Haymarket theatre to Miss Norton's benefit

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to see Laugh when you can -- Gossamer by Lewis -- his last time in that part -- he is only to play 4 or 5 times more. His spirit & humour are great as ever, & his gaiety & goodnature, but he has not the same activity & agility upon the stage, & it seems to be now an exertion -- no wonder it should, for a man of 70 to act a gay rattling young man of 25 -- but he got through it admirably, & I was glad to have once more an opportunity of seeing his last beams of excellence. He leaves no one to supply his place -- like all the other great performers now declining. C. Kemble was affecting & elegant in Mortimer. Claremont was respectable in Delvile. Fawcett's strong feeling was admirable in some parts of Sambo. It was impossible to refrain from tears. Munden was most inimitable in Bonus --

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it is a very weak part in the play, but he contrived to make it most prominent, & was irresistibly comic with his city rurality. Mrs. Davenport in Miss Gloomly was capital, melancholy in every look, and her husky tones & tremor of voice made the best of a maudlin part. Miss Norton poor & affected in Emily -- & Miss Logan, tho' in a good part, was truly spiritless & uninteresting in Mrs. Mortimer. On the whole highly amused.

The Rival Soldiers next -- Munden as laughable as ever in Nipperkin -- tho' I only saw it a fortnight ago, it could

not be resisted. The farce was the Blind Boy. It is most inimitably got up & beautifully acted indeed -- it is made truly interesting by Fawcett, Farley, & Mrs. C. Kemble, who have it all. Fawcett in Aberto was admirable -- such energy, feeling, & spirit. Farley was most impressive & energetic in Kalig -- & Mrs. C. Kemble most affecting in Edmund -- tho' perhaps rather tame -- yet far superior to any I have yet seen.

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Mis Norton was very well in Elvina. She is only fit for such parts. Liston is truly comic in Molino. Rodolph was done by Brunton & Stanislaus by Creswell -- mere walking parts -- but it is a charming piece & admirably acted.

[19. May. 1809]

After breakfast went to Halfmoon street & got a second breakfast -- then set off with them for Epsom -- Sir John P[ringle] did not go, being obliged to go to the city on business, so I gallanted his old flame, Mrs. Stuart, all day....

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16 miles to the beautiful course -- near Lord Arden's fine seat. Very gay -- carriages & horses of all descriptions -- we drew up by the side -- the ladies got outside -- & Macleod & I on the top. The Oaks stakes were run for to-day -- a fine race of 7 or 8 -- won by General Gower's Maid of Orleans. Next was a sweepstakes of 3 heats. I was much amused with the variety of scenery, people, &c. -- the carriages & horses were very splendid indeed. ... I sa^w a great many grandees: Marquis of Ely, Lord Kingston, Mr. Stanhope, &c.

Our party was joined by 2 other carriages -- Mrs. Giles, a lady kept -- & a Mrs. Pajean, who keeps a gentleman -- & Mr. Durant & Mrs. D., a lady who has lived in that style with him for 7 or 8 years. After the races, our three carriages went in a string to Woodcote, a sweet retired & large house about 5 miles from the course. When all the ladies & gentlemen were collected at Woodcote, there were 13. We arrived in the midst of terrible thunder, lightning, & rain, which came on very suddenly after the races, but became much worse after we got to Woodcote -- & was indeed most grand & awful: but it ceased before 6 -- we got there at 5, & made ourselves as clean as possible: tho' we were very dusty -- at dinner soon after 6 -- 13 of us.

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Mr. & Mrs. Durant, & Mr. William Durant, a young man of 19 or 20, Mrs. Giles, Mrs. Pajean & her inamorato, Capt. Joe Kelly, younger brother to Michael K., Michael himself, complaining of the gout, and lamenting the destruction of Drury Lane -- Macleod, Mrs. Stuart, Miss Sylvester, & I -- a Mr. Russel, a well behaved man, & a Miss Williams who lives with Mrs. Durant. It is a fine house, 3 or 4 capital rooms, but wants that air of comfort which is not easily supplied.

We had a capital dinner & a great deal of noise -- & fun in their style. Nothing could be worse than Mrs. Giles & Mrs. Pajean -- & Mrs. Durant was most fatiguingly vulgar. Durant himself, a weather-beaten sailor of 5, is a very Drunken goodhearted Man, & his son a weak young man is drinking himself fast out of this world. Mr. D. is very rich.

Mrs. Giles is a kept woman of great celebrity & very fine figure, but most riotous & unpleasant. Pajeau is silly & fulsome. Michael Kelly is quiet -- & Joe Kelly, tho' an officer, & very genteel, is noisy & violent, tho' not coarse & vulgar. Mrs. Stuart & Miss Sylvester are far superior in manners to the other women. Mrs. S. is truly elegant & quiet, yet animated -- & the other has very good feelings, tho' she is young & inexperienced.

The 2 Kellys, Russel & I sung. Michael sung a song with great taste & Joe Kelly sung several with a charming voice & very great taste: his cadences & turns are really beautiful -- he has all his brother's science & perhaps a more pleasing voice, tho' not so powerful --

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but there is a feeling manner in Michael's singing, which is truly delightful -- & I had rather hear him than any one but Braham. Joe Kelly in sea songs is inimitable -- his Arethusa was the finest thing I ever heard. I never was more pleased than with the songs.

We went for a short time into the drawing room, but nothing but noise & racket took place. At length at 12 we set off -- I went inside with the two ladies as Macleod insisted upon it. We left them all completely drunk, except Michael Kelly who was as quiet as me, or Mrs. Stuart & Miss Sylvester. We were indeed the only 4 sober -- for the other 9, & Macleod as well as the rest, were completely drunk with Punch, wine, &c. We had a quiet pleasant ride home & I said good bye to them all at Halfmoon street at 1/4 past 2.

[22. May. 1809]

...I went to Haymarket theatre to see Young in Othello & Cooke in Iago -- the play went off very well, but Mr. Young is far inferior to Mr. Holman in Othello -- he wants fire & power -- he is too much in an undertone of voice -- often not heard -- his dress was much more theatrical, being Moorish, than Holman's Venetian costume, but I think not so proper, as he is a Venetian General. His action was excellent -- but he was alike deficient in pathos & tenderness & in the violent expression

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of his sudden jealousy -- all the workings of the subtle insinuations of Iago were poor & tame -- none of that wildness & horror which infect the violent Moor -- & if Holman was not sufficiently solemn & pathetic in the murder scene, Young was far too steady & cool & solemn -- his action is quiet, energetic, noble & grand -- & his voice is good in violent declamation or level speech -- but in scenes of real passion & feeling -- no pity, terror, or agonies are excited. I was disappointed in Young, but pleased more than I expected by Cooke in Iago -- his crafty coolness, sarcastic looks, his quiet action, sober steady walk -- his artful manner of giving hints, & his affected candid action were inimitable. It is just the part to suit him. I never saw any thing so good -- & it may be added to his Sir Pertinax & Sir Archy & to some parts of his Richard, as a very capital & first rate performance.

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Miss Norton, whining & monotonous in Desdemona -- how far inferior to Miss Holman's elegance & interesting manner.

Farley excellent in Roderigo -- C. Kemble capital in Cassio, particularly in the drunken scene, & in his method of recovering from it. Mrs. St. Leger very ineffective in Emilia, which tho' a short part might be made much of, for she provides a counterpoint to her husband's machinations. On the whole it went off well -- the house was very full. I had an excellent place in the boxes.

Immediately after the play I rann off to Willis's rooms to Mrs. Billington's concert -- where I met the Greys, & Wilsons, & sat with them. Miss Grey was not there....

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I arrived in the middle of the 1st act, having only missed a duet by Braham & Naldi, & a song by Miss Parke, that was of any consequence.

Braham sung "Deeper & deeper" as admirably as on Saturday, a Quartette by him & Mrs. Billington & Miss Parke & Goss was beautifully done, same as last concert. Next a new & fine quintette by them & Naldi. Mrs. Billington sung a fine recitative & air from Cimarosa's Il Sacrificio de'Abramo. Braham sung a song by Hinsley -- new, very pretty -- most inimitably. Miss Parke & Mrs. Billington sung the same duet as last time, & Mrs. Billington & Mrs. Mountain the duet of "For thee I live" from Artaxerxes -- most lovely indeed.

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[26. May. 1809]

...After dinner we all set out 7 in a coach to go to the Haymarket -- but it was full, so we could get no places, which I did not much regret. We had a great deal of fun & soon got another coach to take us to the Circus -- where we arrived at 8. The dance was over, & the first piece just begun. It was Elizabeth, or the Exiles -- a most beautiful & interesting

spectacle taken from Madame Cottin's Novel. Elizabeth was played by a very elegant & fine woman, Mrs. Montgomery, with very fine action -- the scenery was most beautifully painted & much finer than at Haymarket. The house was very full -- & the action of the piece very interesting & went off with great effect.

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It ended with the Coronation of the Emperor & Empress, & the arrival at Moscow of the Governor, & the Father & Mother, who had come off after the daughter -- it formed a very grand scene indeed.

Next a Mr. Wilson danced on the tightrope -- he is very young & well made & a very elegant dancer, but has not yet quite the certainty & precision of Richer. -- Next came the comic pantomime of Harlequin Cockney -- but I should mention Montgomery the Clown of the Ropedancing getting up to the top of a very high ladder, & then walking about with it under him -- only holding by its two tops -- a most terrible appearance indeed. The Harlequinade was admirable -- abounding in capital leaps & transformations -- & representing a continual variety of scenes of the principal parts of London & the neighbourhood,

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most magnificently painted -- indeed done with high finish, taste, & elegance, as well as effect. Mr. Taylor made a very active Harlequin & Miss Giroux an excellent Columbine, & Montgomery a very good Clown. Some very fine dancing, & a great variety of capital scenes, with some very good music, catches, & choruses: Bow Church Belfry, Interior of the Bank, Custom House Quay, Albion fire office &c., Horse Guards from the Park,

Exhibition Room, Somerset House, View of Windsor, Cockpit Royal, Hustings Covent Garden, Westminster Abbey -- beautiful, Richmond Bridge &c., Westminster Hall, Interior of the fleet, Bartholemew fair at night, Doctors Commons, & London displayed.

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Vast numbers of people are employed -- sailors, boys, girls, villagers, soldiers, tradesmen of all sorts, mountebanks, London cries of all kinds, gods, witches, fairies, cupids, all the Harlequin characters, lawyers, Bellmen, sexton, devils, dancers, &c., &c., &c. -- a most grotesque business & at Bartholemew fair, these were increased by wild beasts, hurdy gurdys, colored lamps, booths, shews, theatres, roundabouts, & battles royal of all sorts -- it is a capital pantomime for tumbling, kicking, & rolling about -- at the end of the fair, monkeys, cows, bears, & dancing dogs were roaming about among the above crowd. I never saw a better scene in my life, & I don't know when I have laughed more. This soon changes to the last scene in which there is a grand representation of the finest buildings in London, each done on one of the wings,

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and with others at the back -- a most brilliant scene indeed. And a procession which crosses & recrosses often & at length is all brought on at once: Druids, Romans, Saxons, Danes, Normans, Alfred, Warriors, Thames, Naval Trophies, Officers, Trophies of Commerce, Ship, Compass & Quadrant, Merchants with goods of all sorts, Fleece, a Loom, Manufacturers, Military trophies, Globes, Students of all sorts, Chelsea & Greenwich Hospitals, all the charity boys & girls, City Arms, Westminster Arms & Southwark, Britannia in a Car drawn by Europe, Asia,

Africa, & America -- John Bull -- all the Harlequin characters, a most grand & beautiful scene, concluding with a grand chorus -- about 150 on the stage. It is a very large & beautiful theatre indeed -- much bigger than Covent Garden used to be, & thrice the size of the old Circus.

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[27. May. 1809]

The opera was I Villeggiatori Bizeri -- by Pucitta -- the music is even finer than La Caccia -- there are 2 trios, a quartette, & a piece for 8 at the end of the 1st act -- besides 3 solos, one for each of the ladies, all most admirable indeed. I was delighted with the music & with Collini's acting & looks. She is so lively & animated. Madame Pucitta is pretty -- but no more -- her voice is far too weak for the upper parts. Griglietti is very titumti, but has one very pretty song. Righi is wretched as usual. Naldi is the great attraction & his acting is charming -- he sings too much within his mouth, but is an admirable actor & most excellent musician. The divertimento was Les Jeux Floreaux -- beautiful dancing by Moreau, Miss Lupino, Vestris, & Mad^e. Angiolini -- but the Grand Attaction was the Calife de Bagdad,

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a ballet unequalled in splendor of dresses -- the Calife in Grand Court is a most splendid scene. Vestris was inimitable indeed -- & danced magnificently. Angiolini is a very strong capital dancer, but rather in the masculine style. Madame Deshayes is a clumsy figure, but I like her manner of dancing better -- and her modesty -- the other's so small that she shews her whole figure from top to toe, having merely a single transparent vesture above & her tight pantaloon shapes.

The Grand scene of the marriage at the end was very fine -- procession most brilliant -- & the dresses really beyond any any thing I have seen -- & the dancing by Vestris, Angiolini, Mr. & Mrs. Deshayes -- astonishing. Deshayes is more graceful in attitudes, but I think not so rapid or agile as Vestris. Vestris is so young, he will improve.

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[29. May. 1809]

... I went to the Haymarket theatre I was close to the stage & had a cool capital seat. It was crammed to suffocation & very hot. It was Mr. Lewis's last benefit & last appearance on any stage. Rule a Wife & Have a Wife -- the Copper Captain, Lewis -- Leon, Young -- Altea, Mrs. Humphries -- Estifania, Mrs. H. Johnston -- Cacafogo, Waddy -- Duke, Brunton -- Margaretta, Mrs. St. Leger.

Young played admirably. He mustered up all his powers & was really energetic & grand -- his idiotism was excellent -- the best thing I have seen him do -- only a want of emotion in his appeal at last to Margaretta's feelings -- yet he was quite the gentleman & played

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the part admirably -- especially in the scene where he discovers himself & chuses to be Master in his own house. Mrs. St. Leger was much better than usual in Margaretta -- she was natural & pleasing. Mrs. H. Johnston all qui vive & pantomime in Estifania -- it was poor: but she looked very pretty. Lewis was inimitable indeed in the Copper Captain. He roused up all his spirits -- and was indeed himself -- all drollery, fun & frolic -- his scenes with Estifania & where

he rejoices and triumphs over Cacafo's having also been cheated by her, were admirable. The play was delightful & went off with spirit; & Mr. Lewis's reception was grand indeed -- for 10 minutes, rounds of applause & repeated bravos.

Before the play, in order that a full house might cheer his entrance, The Ghost was done -- it is in one act -- Liston was capital in Roger: -- & it made Lewis's reception more brilliant, as the house was

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then completely packed.

After the play, he advanced to take leave of the audience for ever. There could not be so affecting a sight -- a man of 65 appearing in a gay young part with undiminished spirit & then advancing to proclaim his dramatic death & take leave of his partons for ever. He said, after the Tumult of applause, respect & regret, had subsided -- "Ladies and Gentlemen, I have now the honor to address you for the last time, & it is with deep regret & gratitude that I appear before you for this purpose. Were it not that I feel it a duty to express my thanks for the uniform favors I have received, I would willingly have foregone the pain of this task. This moment is the conclusion of my theatrical life, which during the course of 36 years has been marked only by unmerited tho' continued favor & approbation from you, both to the performances of my earlier years & equally to my later efforts. I now attempt to take leave of you for the last time -- &

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I do so with feelings which I cannot find words to express. Allow me to assure you that I shall to my latest hour retain

the most lively recollection of your kindness -- & to take my leave of you with the sincerest sentiments of gratitude & respect, & if I may be allowed the term, of affection. -- Ladies & Gentlemen, I now bid you adieu for ever."

This is the substance of all he said, but not so neatly, feelingly, or delicately expressed. It was delivered in a simple, touching, mournful, yet plain & manly manner that moved every heart to feel, & every eye to tears. He retired amid thunders of applause, & with the universal regret, respect, & esteem of a most brilliant & overflowing audience. In every tear my eye fancied an image: his Gossamer, his Jeremy Diddler, his Tom Shuffleton; & never will fade from my fancy the image of his stamping & striding, bowing & prancing Copper Captain.

I would not have missed the scene for the world, & never was so much affected at any thing. I went off immediately after. I composed my crying eyes before I made my appearance at

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Willis's rooms.... I joined the Greys, Mrs. & Miss Grey, Mrs. J. Grey, Mr. Harman, Mr. Vyvyan, & Miss D. Rawlinson. Had a most pleasant evening, & a great deal of talk. I arrived in the midst of the 1st act -- it was full -- I had missed nothing of consequence but a duet by Braham & Naldi. The most beautiful concertante by Weichsel & Lindley on violin & violincello I ever heard. I never heard any thing so bewitchingly delightful -- such melody, such tones -- such complete harmony. It was indeed the perfection of sound. Braham sung the "Soldier's dream" in the sweetest & smoothest manner I ever heard: then a grand sestet by Mrs. Billington, Mrs. Bianchi, Miss Hughes, Siboni, Rovedino, & Naldi -- very beautiful.

Act 2^d -- A delicious bravura by Himmel sung by Mrs. Billington -- inimitable. Delightful glee by Braham, Vaughan, & Bellamy -- "O never say" -- it was encored & is really lovely music

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by King, & sung with such perfection of harmony by Braham, & such smoothness, delicacy, & expression. Then a most lovely duet of 3 movements Mrs. Billington & Mrs. Bianchi -- charming indeed. Then a stupid song of Rauzinni most admirably sung by Braham -- then a fine trio by Cherubini, by Billington, Bianchi, & Braham -- then Naldi & Billington sung a fine comic duo -- but I think they should have finished with something better, or more striking. It was a delightful concert. I had a most pleasant Evg.

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[30. May. 1809]

... I went to the Lyceum theatre to Braham's benefit, very full. Got good place in pit, close by orchestra. Cabinet -- Marquis, Mathews-- Count, Wewitzer -- Whimsiculo, Bannister -- Manikin, Fisher -- Orlando, Braham -- Lorenzo, J. Smith -- Constantia, Mrs. Bishop -- Curiosa, Mrs. Harlow -- Floretta, Miss Kelly -- Leonora, Mrs. Mathews. Mrs. Mountain having differed with the Manager is a great loss to this & all other operas -- & Mrs. Bland has no part in it -- so the women are bad except Mrs. Bishop, who is pleasing & interesting, but not a great singer, tho' an elegant woman. She & Braham sung a beautiful duet from Kais of "I love thee" -- and she introduced a sweet song by Bishop -- and "Sad is my breast" from Kais -- also the Scena from Semiramide which

she sung & acted in great taste -- "L'asciami" -- it is a sweet air. Smith is a clumsy man

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and a heavy actor, but has a charming voice. I heard him at Liverpool. He sung "All's well" with Braham. It was really delightful: & was encored, as was Braham's duo with Mrs. Bishop: -- Smith introduced besides the two fine songs of the piece -- "Let Fame Sound" & sung it capitally. Miss Kelly got on better than I expected in the Prize, but in Floretta she was indeed poor after Storace or even Mrs. Mountain, for she is so weak & bad a singer. They walked through the Bird duett. Dowton in Peter had several comic songs. Mathews after the play sung the Humours of Bartlemy fair -- admirably -- his imitation of Punch -- the best thing I ever heard -- twice. Braham was the grand attraction. He sung the Beautiful Maid twice -- Fair Ellen -- & the Pollacca twice most astonishingly. I never heard any thing so delicious as his grand style of playing the Pollacca -- & the astonishing

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swells of voice -- and grand ascent of semitones -- the beautiful runs & the ease & distinctness of his returning to the air. I shall never forget him in it -- it is after all his chef d'oeuvre. In Heartwell in the Prize, he sung the Trumpet of Victory -- and the Death of Anercromby -- both exquisitely, especially the latter. Bannister & Mathews in Lenitive & Label capital -- but Miss Kelly -- very so so -- tho' better in the french Song than I expected. It was a poor imitation of Storace. Both play & farce on the whole were ill acted, but Braham's songs made up for all.

[1. June. 1809]

... Ferrand & I went to the opera. Naldi's Benefit -- full -- but not very genteel -- Princess of Wales & Duchess of York. The burletta of Amor vuol gioventu' -- the first piece -- Siboni, Naldi, Griglietti, & Pucitta -- the latter sung with great taste but has no voice -- the former sung charmingly -- & Naldi as odd as ever. It is most delightful music & full of airs, duets, & quartetts -- it is really most pleasing -- the accompaniments are beautiful. Next we had the divertisement of Dancing in China -- before which we went behind the scenes -- and had a good look of Vestris & Angiolini -- they are both handsome -- but he is little. The first act of Il fanatico per la Musica was the next piece. Music by Mayer. Naldi is very great & the music is pretty. Collini is ignorant of music & often gets it wrong -- her voice is charming for a second, but she has not flexibility for Che dice -- in which she was far inferior to Miss Robertson. Griglietti & Miss Darby had nothing

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to do -- the latter was only brought on to be shewn -- which was a pity -- as she has the finest voice of the party, tho' unused to acting. Next came the Ballet of the Naissance de Flore -- which is finer for dancing than the Calife de Bagdad, but not so splendid.

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[2. June. 1809]

... Mr. Graham called for me at 1/2 past 5, & we went together to Kelly's benefit at the opera house. Got excellent places in the pit near the orchestra. It was soon full -- very crowded house. I never saw a play before at the opera

house. -- It was the Revenge. Zanga, Mr. Young -- Alonzo, C. Kemble -- Carlos, Lambert -- Alvarez, Murray -- Leonora, Miss Bristow -- Isabella, Mrs. St. Leger. The opera house is not well adapted for plays, but Young & C. Kemble surmounted every difficulty. Young was really great -- in the few parts where

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Zanga breaks out into feeling of real pathos, he failed -- but in the energy & painting expression of revenge in his playing on & moulding Alonzo -- & above all in his dramatic "Know then 'twas I" -- he was very fine -- but grand as he was, he wanted real feeling -- tho' full of energy. C. Kemble had a great deal to do in Alonzo -- he played it with energy & feeling, & it was truly affecting -- his dispair & rage at the last. -- I cried copiously, for nothing could be better managed than it was by Young & C. Kemble. Leonora -- very weakly done by Miss Bristow, who looked pretty & spoke with feeling, but seemed to be reading rather than acting. Isabella, Mrs. St. Leger, tolerable -- & Murray in Alvarez -- rest wretched as usual.

After the play -- a concert. The stage had a screen put in front: -- & the overture to Zaire was played by the opera band --

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then Braham & Mrs. Billington sung a fine duet bravura at the end. She sung a solo of Cimarosa's, which I have heard before, most beautifully. Braham & Naldi sung a duet of Cimarosa's -- very fine music. Bellamy sung a good solo -- & Mrs. Bianch sung "Oh Nanny" to a piano-forte accompaniment by herself most

sweetly. Siboni sung a solo. It went off well.

The Ballet of the Calife of Bagdad succeeded, which I did not stay to see, having seen it before -- but left Mr. Graham delighted -- & proceeded home for my hat, & then walked to Lincoln's inn fields to Mr. & Mrs. R. Wilson's party -- which of all the parties I was ever at in my life was the most delightful.

A great Rout -- 3 rooms open and full of people. One half staid to supper which was at 6 or 7 round tables in the dining room below. It was really delightful -- I staid to the last.

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Such company -- such singing -- such improvisatores -- such imitations! I shall never forget it. I got there before the music began

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Braham sung "Fair Ellen" -- Storace & Lanza sung a duet, & Lanza a solo buffo song admirably, & a duet with Miss Wilson, who sings with taste. Mrs. Billington & Lady Hamilton a duet. Mrs. B. & Braham the duet of "Fair Aurora" -- Miss Parke, most charmingly, "Nel cor nou pillone sentsu" -- Mrs. Mountain, 2 songs, lovely -- Mr. Arnold, a ballad, most lovely voice & fine taste --

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in short; I can hardly recollect all the charms of this impromptu concert -- by the end of which half had gone -- but almost all the public characters -- & all the great people of rank & talent -- staid supper. ... we were very merry -- after the confusion had subsided & servants out, & we had all got stuck in somehow, half sitting, half standing & wedged in

all ways, the grand scene began: -- & commended by Mr. Joe Kelly singing a ballad in a fine style -- next succeeded Lady Hamilton who sung a beautiful air with all her fascinating graces. Next, Mr. Arnold sung Sally in our Alley -- next Mrs. Opie a ballad, with taste but affected -- next, Mathews sung

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the Humours of Bartlemy fair most admirably indeed: -- his imitation of Punch inimitable. Next, a dispute arising whether Lady H. should sing Black-eyed Susan, or a glee -- Mathews as a ventriloquist astonished the room by calling out for the former in 20 different voices -- & in different parts of the room. After she had sung it sweetly, he sung the Yorkshire Assizes capitally, & Joe Kelly "Pretty Fanny" -- but after that came the 1st grand treat -- which consisted of Mathews giving us his imitations of the different performers, prefaced by a dialogue between them in which each accuses the other of the fault which he himself is most guilty of -- & all exactly in the voice of each. It ends by their agreeing each to try & give the words of "How happy could I be" as a recitation -- but nothing could be so irresistibly natural and characteristic as their conversation -- Kemble, Pope,

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Holman, Lewis, Munden, Fawcett, Suett, Incledon, Braham, Blanchard, & Cooke are the chief speakers, & all of them, both in the words of the song, and in their previous talk, are exact -- I never heard any thing so truly astonishing in my life: & could not have conceived imitation could go

so far: the face, voice, manner, accent, gesture, & even the countenance were hit off to a nicety. I shall never forget it -- it is very long, about 1/2 an hour -- but we were in peals of laughter all the time. The next treat was Theodore Hook, who was desired to sing extempore -- & having asked Mr. Wilson what was to be his subject, Mr. W. said he must celebrate the company at Mr. W's table -- which consisted of 16 or 17 -- Theodore Hook was at another table. He began to the tune of Rumti -- & sung a verse in perfect rhyme & measure appropriate for each -- some of them contained admirable

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points: especially those addressed to Sheridan, Lady Hamilton, Mrs. Billington, Lord Erskine, Mrs. Wilson, Miss Good, Mr. Horace Twiss, Sir Samuel Romilly, Lady Romilly, &c. I never heard any thing so clever in the same style, and it was highly laughable & amusing. Next Mathews's admirable song of the Yorkshire Assizes, & the Mail Coach -- the last inimitable indeed -- his descriptions of the setting off of the coaches never to be forgotten. Next, multitudes of songs from Lady H., Mrs. Opie, J. Kelly, & Arnold -- & last & not least Mrs. Horace Twiss, at the desire of Sheridan & Lord Erskine, who both said many good things about the talents & reform, made a speech in the character of Mr. Pitt against a motion supposed to be made by Sir F. Burdett for parliamentary reform.

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I once heard Pitt, and I was reminded immediately of his action and manner and pronunciation: the language was most beautiful, & never for a moment stopped from the most rapid flow of diction

& real argument with some very fine images. He spoke above 20 minutes with astonishing fluency & energy -- & Mr. Sheridan said he hoped one day to hear him in a different house & on a different side of the argument, with equal ability. He & Hook both "improvisatore" on any subject that is proposed -- the one as a serious speaker -- the other as a burlesque singer: it is a wonderful talent. After a glee or two in the jovial style, we all dispersed.

[3. June. 1809]

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...Blackett & I went to the Lyceum with 2 box tickets Miss Kells gave us, which were sent them & for which a front row was kept in the 2^d tier, where we saw & heard admirably, tho' it was very hot -- for the house was packed to the very utmost.

The Critic -- very well got up -- Dangle, Palmer -- Sneer, Powell -- Sir Fretful, Mathews -- a most wonderful inimitable performance. Elliston in Puff is astonishingly great -- he is all life, bustle, & fun -- but it is a terrible exertion. Whiskerandos by De Camp -- very good comic bluster. Tilburnia, Miss Harlowe -- very good -- & Lord Burleigh, Raymond -- admirable -- his dress, look, & attitudes & walk are inimitable in his short, but most effective part. It went off extremely well.

The Three & the Deuce followed. Elliston great as ever --

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a most astonishing exertion -- to be continually talking & dressing for 4 hours, for the 2 pieces took fully that. Mathews in Humphrey is capital -- & his song of the Mail Coach put them all in a roar -- his second edition of it was even superior to his singing it last night. Next came the Devil to pay -- in which Bannister & Miss Duncan & Mrs. Harlowe were as well as before.

[4 June. 1809]

... Dressed & went at 1/2 past 8 to Miss Pope's, where I had a chat with them. The three Miss P's & I then set off in a coach for the Countess Mengden's in Upper Harley street.

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... Lady Hamilton sung a ballad & I sung "the Gondoliers" which was received with great applause. Mrs. Bianchi said some civil things. We then all moved off & the Popes & I pretending we had ordered our carriage to wait in Weymouth street, all set off to walk till we could get a coach, which we did in Oxford street -- at the end of Holles street. We talked over our adventures & I was delighted with the evening. They set me down at the end of Charles street, Soho -- & I got home at 1/2 past 1 -- to bed at 2 -- after a delightful day.

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[5. June. 1809]

... Ferrand & I went to Astley's which was very crowded -- but we got capital places in a front row of side boxes -- being early --

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the pit & gallery were stuffed -- and the boxes after were very full.

The acting & contrivances of the pieces is not near so good as at the Circus -- the theatre is larger & lighter, not quite so freshly painted, but far more elegant -- and a better design. It is really a very magnificent theatre. Mr. Smith gave us some good horsemanship. Next came The Arab -- a new piece, very fine -- the scenery is equally fine as at the Circus: & there were a large number of most beautiful views of Egypt &

Arabia: among a great many others, I was most struck with the View of the Arab's Castle -- the fall of the Nile -- Exterior of Grand Gairo -- Arabian Landscape -- Egyptian View with Nile & a Mosque -- very fine interior of the Robber's Cave -- Entrance of the Desert -- & Resting place of Caravan,

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where a grand procession of Camels, Dromedaries, guards foot & horse, women, travellers, merchants, &c., is brought on -- & after winding across two or three times, they are all brought in front and rest -- but are instantly attacked by the Robber army -- mounted on fine horses -- the Caravan horseguards & the robbers have a grand battle with real horses; nothing can be more magnificent -- horse -- foot -- women -- camels -- horses & men all scampering about & overthrowing each other -- 2 or 3 horses laid down as if dead -- men killed -- & as far as we could see by the false stages, they were fighting on horseback in the back, & going across perpetually at full gallop: it was a most grand scene indeed: & gave me more the idea of a real battle than any thing I ever saw -- indeed it was exactly like

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one of Wouwerman's horse battles. The horses, beautiful bay, chesnut, & white -- the Arab, Mr. Crossman -- Zulima, Miss Greville, a much handsomer woman than Joe Lamb's Miss Greville whom I expected to see -- Selim, Mr. Bologna Jun^r -- Chief Officer, Mr. Laurent -- & Father of Zulima, Mr. Norman. It is exactly like Bluebeard in story.

[6. June. 1809]

...Went at 1/2 past 7 to the concert at the Pantheon for Braham & Billington's benefit. It was very full, tho' a very large place -- it has a cold churchlike look, and is in bad taste, being

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a mixture of heavy grecian & gothic styles -- it is an immense place, & was not well lighted -- indeed, I don't see how it could be well lighted. The saloon in the middle was 10/6 -- but part of it was railed off in front at box price -- 14/ -- & chairs put there, this being just in front of the orchestra was the best place & there I sat: & heard delightfully, which no one could at a distance on account of the echo. It is a bad place for music. The Wilsons were in one of the boxes, which are down each side of the room -- and at one end is the Orchestra & at the other the entrance to the saloon.

The performance was Artaxerxes in 2 acts & a Miscellaneous act. Artaxerxes was done as a concert: -- & of course was flat -- tho' delightfully sung by Mrs. Billington in Mandane -- Braham in Arbaces -- Bellamy in Artabanes -- Madame Bianchi in Semira -- Mrs. Omoran very poor in Artaxerxes & Mr. Horn had nothing to do in Rimenes.

[8. June. 1809]

... Ferrand & I went to the opera. It was Siboni's benefit. Got good places in the pit -- very full. Don Juan -- the 1st act of it, with one or two pieces of the 2^d act. It was done as a concert -- but went off I thought much better than when I saw it at Hanover Square, because Mrs. Billington had more to do, & the rest were more perfect -- & I was close to the music. It was delicious indeed. Her solo of Non mi dir was inimitable, also her duet of Andiamo, & the duet with Siboni at first. It was really lovely: and the finale was exquisite. I don't know when I have been so delighted. Mrs. Billington, Mrs. Dupek, Miss Hughes, Siboni, Naldi, Marteni, & Lanza performed it.

The Chinese Divertisement was the next, with Vestris as great as ever. The opera of Pirro put into one act was the next -- the music is by Paesiello, whose genius is all comic -- for this serious opera was indeed seriously tiresome,

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tho' Siboni in Pirro sung with taste & Collini looked & acted admirably -- she is so good an actress, has such a fine face, & so much spirit, action, & animation, with a good clear voice for recitative, that she made a very good figure, but it appeared most humdrum after Mozart: the last scene between her & Siboni was excellently done. Griglietti, Righi, Rovedino, & Giovanni had the other parts -- & sad it was.

After the opera, went behind & found my way with one or two more into Angiolini's dressing room. She was dressed for the ballet, & looked most attractive -- the room was small & square, fitted up with tone, curtains in draperies, was elegantly lighted & carpeted, & a neat toilet & glass, with all sorts of ornaments, and a fine mirror slung -- before which she was

practicing. Got a peep into the Deshayes' room, which was in the same elegant style.

Went to Mrs. Defries, who had a box for to-night.

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Had a talk with her & Mr. D. -- two or three came in -- Mr. Burke, a pleasant man. She looked lovely. The Calife of Bagdad went off with great spirit. I never saw them dance better -- Vestris and Angiolini are most astonishing, & Mr. & Mrs. Deshayes most elegant. ... Put Mrs. Defries & Mr. D. into their carriage. Home at 1/2 past 12.

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[9. June. 1809]

... Dressed and went to dine at Countess Mengden's. She & Baron Stahnberg, Miss Rochfort, & Miss Milbanke. ... We had Lady Hamilton & Mrs. Bianchi, so altogether we had more French & Italian talked than English. I was very much amused.

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Every body had been abroad except Miss Milbanke & Mrs. Bianchi. Most splendid dinner of every kind of luxury. After it we had a long conversation about Sicily, America, &c. Then upstairs -- Lady Hamilton displayed her acting powers -- by portraying the gestures & dialogue of the Italian peasants, & especially diverted us by giving us the picture of a woman with a sucking infant (which she made of shawls) addressing the Virgin, in great grief for the loss of her husband -- and praying for another -- crossing herself, quieting the child, & giving it a rap on the knuckles when noisy -- & alternately praying to & scolding the Virgin in behalf of her misfortunes. It was

really excellent. She shewed off a great deal in that style & sung us some of the Lazzerini songs. She & Mrs. Bianchi sung some beautiful duets.

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Count Munster, Mr. & Mrs. Bevil, & Miss Brown came in the evg. -- the latter sung & has a fine voice. I also sung "No 'tis neither shape" -- with great applause.

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[12. June. 1809]

... I went to Yaniewicz's benefit concert at Hanover Square, where I got a good place by a very intelligent old Musical Man: with whom I had much talk. It was immensely full -- 700 or 800 -- every avenue crowded with listeners. Not a place to stir.

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Between the acts I met Mr. & Mrs. Coles of Penzance, almost the only people from thence I had no wish to see -- had a chat about various.

Catalani was the grand attraction: & most divinely did she sing. Her powers are really incomprehensible. I was quite entranced. She sung a grand recitative, slow air, & grand bravura by Paer, which shewed her off in full glory. Her voice is like an organ, & yet has all the softness of a flute -- sometimes the transitions are too rapid, from forte to piano. She can drown a full band -- & her runs of semitones. her grand display of bravura passages: the most rapid that can be conceived -- her sustained notes taken at once at 2 octaves distance, all are irresistibly exquisite. If she had exactly the regulate & taste & scientific ear & knowledge & superior feeling in expressive movements of Billington, she would be

complete perfection -- in voice, bravura style & recitative, she is infinitely beyond Mrs. B., & I dare say beyond any one that exists.

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It is impossible to conceive greater powers; so complete, so certain & instrumental is the effect, that it is quite ravishing, & she is a most elegant creature, full of spirit, animation, unaffected good nature, ease, & playfulness. Her duet from *Il fanatico* with Miarteni -- where she is learning music -- was irresistibly fascinating & playful -- & shewed off her wonderful voice to advantage. Her last song "La Preghiera" was too much in the style of pathetic feeling for her -- except the short bravura at the end of it, I did not approve of it, so much as the others. The playful, or sublime & violent -- not the pathetic & soft -- are what suits her. Highly delighted.

Miss Hughes, Lanza, Bellamy, & Miarteni sung an Epicedium in honor of Mozart, selected from his works -- very beautiful Music indeed. Miarteni & Lanza sung a comic duet of Paesiello's -- pretty.

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Miss Hughes & Bellamy each sung a song: -- but after Catalani the great attraction was Yaniewicz's concerto on the violin -- his brilliancy, softness completely in time, his fine tones, like bassoons & flageolets, his exquisite taste rendered it more delightful than any thing I ever heard: perhaps he has not the rapid force of Weichsel, but in a slow or elegant movement I should prefer him -- all the 3 movements were exquisite -- but I never heard any thing to equal the taste, or the inimitable satisfaction which his slow movement of "Oh

Nanny" inspired. It was beyond any thing I ever heard -- it seemed to come from heaven. His double notes too were truly delicious.

Saust played a concerto on the flute -- astonishing powers -- his runs of semitones & bravura passages are just like Madame Catalani's singing -- it was most delicious, & only inferior to Yaniewicz -- far beyond Ashe's powers, as well as I recollect. I don't think I ever was so much pleased at a Concert.

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[16. June. 1809]

... After dinner we went to the play: to join the Eliots at the Haymarket. ... The play, the Africans -- very well got up & acted throughout -- tho' Mr. Young is far too solemn in Selico, & makes very little of it -- he was far inferior to Conway. Jones is an energetic actor & does not want feeling, but I can see that lively bustle only is his forte. Madiboo has too much pathetic in it for him. Fawcett would have been much better. Farley makes a great deal of Torribal. Danna, Mrs. St. Leger. Berissa, Mrs. Gibbs. She looks well, but certainly is too old, notwithstanding her still beautiful face. Faruhlo, Eyre. Fetterwel, Grove. Henry Augustus Mug, Liston. In this part he is really irresistible. I was quite delighted with his curious looks & twists -- & he is so quiet & natural. In one or two parts I think he might make more of it, but his silent pose, his pause & stare, draw more laughter than the noisy antics of others. Tayleure plays the part quite as well,

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but Liston's face sets all rivals at defiance. Mrs. Liston

looks queer & sings prettily in Sutta. On the whole I was highly pleased.

Tom Thumb followed -- droll as ever. Liston & Mrs. Liston are really unrivalled. He is more & more ridiculous every time I see him. Mathews in the King has more vacant solemnity than Fawcett & on the whole is better -- but both are inferior to Munden. It went off with great eclat.

Next the Tale of Mystery. Farley in Francisco, Mrs. Davenport in Fiametta, Mrs. Gibbs in Selina -- were excellent. Malvoglio by Noble very good -- and Romaldi by Holland very bad. Michelli, by Grove.

[20. June. 1809]

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... After tea Mortimer & I went to the opera with an order which Miss Kell gave us. It was a new opera -- very full -- Princess of Wales, Duches of York, Duke of Cumberland, Lord & Lady Castlereagh, Lord & Lady H. Petty, Lord Liverpool & daughters. Saw Dalton, &c. Went behind with Mortimer & into Angiolini's dressing room: -- also Deshayes's.

The new opera of Sidagero -- a Danish piece -- not well got up -- some fine full Music, & 2 or 3 good songs, some beautiful chorus songs & fine choruses -- it is the story of Sidagero & his Queen who are taken captive by Ulmansor & his Queen in their city of Copenhagen. It gave some scope for the astonishing, inimitable, & feeling action of the new singer, Tremazzani. He was Sidagero

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and is a fine figure, good face -- most graceful action -- & great feeling -- his voice is full, round, loud & sweet, tho'

not of a great compass -- his singing elegant, correct, & energetic -- tho' no great powers -- but his acting is truly admirable. I have never seen any thing so strikingly expressive & affecting since the time of Grassini. He is indeed an acquisition to the serious opera, for which only he is adapted. Signora Calderini, the warlike Queen, is far from handsome, but full of good action -- her voice is very extensive & she has great powers of execution & great spirit -- but very little modulation either of voice or features. She attempts too much, tho' she can do a great deal -- if she would do less, she would be very good. She ascends beautifully to a very high clear note, but when she begins a passage on it. it produces a bad effect. Signora Bianchi -- the other Queen -- is a good desirable figure & has a fine hand & arm, but a vulgar face & tame action.

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She is inanimate -- but as good a second as we ever had. Collini sung in male attire with Calderini -- as the victorious general -- she was easy & natural as usual, & is indeed a most pleasing woman. On the whole I was much pleased with the opera. Tremazzani & Calderini are great acquisitions.

Les Jeux Floreaux -- & Le Calife de Bagdad -- Mad^{lle} Monroy a new dancer appeared in the last -- she is strong -- but clumsy -- like Madame Deshayes, without her elegance.

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[24. June. 1809]

... I went alone to the play to the pit of the Haymarket -- not very full, but comfortably so. Highly amused with the Beaux Stratagem -- a most spirited & laughable play & admirably acted. I am delighted with Jones in Archer -- so much life &

spirit & animation -- so natural, so gay & unconstrained. He is really quite a gentleman & is a very neat figure, only rather little. His face is animated tho' not handsome: & he dresses most beautifully,

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but clever as he is, Mrs. Glover is still more so. Her Mrs. Sullen is so easy, natural, & elegant. I was delighted with her -- none of Miss Duncan's violence & twice her animation. She is really a most charming actress & quite the elegant woman of fashion for genteel comedy: her figure unluckily is clumsy, which is the only thing against her -- her face is most expressive & pleasing. It is really a treat to see her & Jones together. Liston in Scrub was unparelled in oddity. I never saw any thing better -- the house were in convulsions with him & I don't know when I have laughed so much -- he was indeed inimitable: the other characters were just tolerable. Aimwell, Holland -- Dorinda, Mrs. Eyre -- Gypsey, Miss De Camp -- Cherry, Mrs. Gibbs -- Boniface, Grove -- 2 last good -- Gibbet, Noble, very good -- & Foigard, Waddy, decent.

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The Son in law succeeded -- Mathews in Cranky is too quiet: a bustling part is the thing for him -- he is too plain & easy -- & cannot make a good part out of nothing -- but Jones in Bowkitt is admirable -- his dress, dancing, &c. capital: & Grove in Mum, excellent -- but the beauty of it is Taylor in Arionelli who acts the part admirably & sings the 2 songs, & especially the recit. & air "Water parted" -- most divinely in his strong & beautiful falsetto, which is much

better than his natural voice. It was really delightful, & highly comic. I never saw it before & was most highly amused -- indeed Taylor, Jones, & Grove were inimitable.

Next came Tom Thumb, which went off with its usual effect: tho' I thought Mathews very flat in Arthur which is indeed very unfit for him -- & is only properly done by Munden, whose very faults, in this part, are merits.

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[26. June. 1809]

After dinner I went alone to the Lyceum, which opens to night for the Summer Season with the English opera. The theatre belongs to Mr. Arnold -- & it is he who has fitted it up & conducts the business entirely at his own risk.

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It is a bold undertaking, and I doubt if it will succeed. The theatre is astonishingly improved -- most beautifully painted above the stage & in front of the boxes -- it really looked beautiful -- & the Lamps are quite new -- & on a new & most elegant construction -- being supplied with oil from 3 brazen urns, from which it passes along a brass tube, on which the lamps are fixed & guarded from the audience by a little screen behind each. It has a most brilliant & pretty effect. A great number of new scenes have been painted -- indeed the scenery is now as pretty as it was before frightful. The house was cram full, but I got an excellent place in the front row of the pit by the orchestra, which is enlarged & contains above 25 performers of the best. Mr. Smart leads the band. The whole establishment is on a very elegant & expensive scale. There were a great many people of rank & fashion, Princess of Wales, &c.

It all went off with unbounded applause -- from the excellence of the acting & the beauty of the

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Music -- which is by M. P. King & really very fine -- quite Italian & very elegant -- & with some original passages in it: but the thing itself is very dull & poor. There is nothing in the dialogue at all: it is as Mr. Hunt said a mass of inanity. I was lucky enough to sit next Mr. Hunt of the Examiner, who is a very clever & entertaining man. We had a great deal of entertaining talk about theatres, acting, & music.

The piece was called Up all night, or the Smugglers' Cave. Downton in the Admiral was the support of it. His acting was indeed very great. Philips from Dublin made his first appearance in London as Young Heartwell -- he is a very good spirited actor, tho' a little pert & conceited & not a young man -- his voice has been, I think, better -- tho' it is still a very fine loud tenor & very flexible, but his falsetto is weak & bad -- however his natural voice is so extensive he does not often use it. He had a great deal of taste & spirit, & is a feeble copy of Braham -- tho' certainly not the best I ever saw -- & a much superior actor. Mr. Horn made his first appearance as Mr. Meddle--

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on any stage. He is a very modest genteel young man -- & a capital musician -- tho' his voice does not possess great powers, he sings with so much taste that he cannot fail to please -- he was highly applauded: & seems a sensible man & may make a very good actor. A Mr. Smith, with a fine bass voice, played Peter, a guff servant -- he is tolerable tho'

rather in the Sadler's Wells style. Mr. Miller from Bath played Henry Blunt -- he had nothing to do & is a very heavy young man -- & sings in his throat terribly -- but does the lower parts of quartetts &c., as does Mr. Doyle, who played Sir Charles Heartwell -- he had nothing to do. Mrs. Mountain in Juliana looked & sung most beautifully -- & Mrs. Bishop in Flora was pleasing & elegant & sung sweetly -- she wants a little more life, & to sing out & open her mouth more, but has great taste. A Mrs. Orger, a pretty little woman, played Madge, & altogether it was very well

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acted. The music is beautiful, and the piece bad. All the best songs were encored -- & besides these were some beautiful trios, duets, & quartetts -- & a septetto at the end of the 1st act, most delightful -- & the finales to the 2^d & last act were beautiful. It was most favorably received & announced for to-morrow with peals of applause -- of course the theatre was full of Mr. Arnold's friends. There was nothing wanting to make the matter perfect except a good plot & dialogue.

After the piece we had God Save the King & Rule Britannia in full chorus in compliment to the Princess of Wales & on occasion of opening the theatre. After this Mr. Hunt went away, & I went up to the boxes, the avenues to which & the pit are much enlarged -- & behind the 2^d tier is an immense circular lobby, the walls of which are covered with a Panorama of Petersburg -- & the roof formed like a tent -- & with seats all round it.

Between this and the boxes is a smaller loby^b for refreshments. On the whole, it is really a most elegant and capital place of amusement & deserves to be patronized. I went into the boxes & saw Love in a Tub, in which was introduced several new dances by Mr. Dubois Jun^r who has chosen to alter his name to Bourdin: & Miss Lupino, Master Noble, Miss Twamley, both the Miss Bristows, & a whole corps of D'Egville's pupils. It makes a very pretty little ballet -- & was much applauded.

... I think that the Lord Chamberlain's granting a licence to this theatre is certainly an infringement of Mr. Colman's patent for the Haymarket: -- it is however a great acquisition to the town.

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[27. June. 1809]

... After dinner I walked to the Circus. The dance was over & Beggar's Opera turned into a Burletta was just begun. The house was full as ever it could hold. Got a good seat second row in side boxes, but it was quite packed -- and at the half price was a mere overflow. The attraction is the Beggar's Opera turned into rhyme & recitative with Elliston as Capt. Macheath.

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It is very well got up, & well acted. Elliston has so much spirit & animation & is so natural & excellent an actor, that he gets thro' it admirably, tho' certainly his voice is not equal to the songs -- but his acting carries off his vocal imperfections. Polly was well done by a Lady -- she seems about 30, but is a neat figure -- genteel, & a charming singer indeed -- tho' she wants animation in acting, & seems unused to the stage. Her "Cease your funning" was exquisite. She has a charming voice, great taste & execution, & might soon

become a very excellent stage singer. Lucy was acted with great spirit by a vulgar Mrs. Hatton. Peachum, Johannah -- Lockit, Williams -- Filch, Slader -- the rest by the rest. Altogether it went off admirably. Mr. Taylor, Mr. Giroux & 2 Miss Giroux danced a capital quartetto hornpipe in fetters. After this came the comic pantomime of Harlequin Cockney.

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I had seen it before, but stayed to see it again, as it is really the most laughable thing that can be -- and the scene of Bartholemew fair -- the tricks, leaps, & concluding scene are admirable: & the dancing by Taylor, & the Miss Giroux, is very pretty. Miss Ridsdale, the dwarf whom I saw at Harrogate, made her appearance at Bartholemew fair. She looks as odd as ever: & has a most grotesque appearance in walking the stage; but the grand attraction now added to the Pantomime is Bradbury as the Clown -- who is exactly Grimaldi -- & performs most wonderful feats of agility & oddity -- & has a great deal of humor indeed. On the whole was highly amused -- & am glad the speculation of the Circus answers so well for Elliston.

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[28. June. 1809]

...I went to the Sans pareil theatre -- a rainy evening -- it was very well filled at 1/2 price -- at first it was thin. The two Savoyards was just at its conclusion -- Mrs. Ridgeway who did the chief part is a beautiful woman & sings tolerably.

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... Female Courage was the next piece -- which consists only of a band of robbers carrying off a girl from her father & her

The next was a Grand Melodrama called the Wild Man, a Water Pageant. Prince, Mr. Hartland -- Muley, Mr. Ridgeway -- Anselmo, who sung tolerably, Mr. Broadhurst -- Son of the Prince, a charming active clever child, Miss Jefferson -- Don Quixote by a Mr. Conway, a burlesque character & a very different Mr. Conway from my friend -- Sancho Panza, Mr. Rees,

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an impudent fellow who was once at Newcastle, & sings & struts with no humor, little voice, & much brass. The Wild Man by Grimaldi -- admirably interesting -- his protecting the child, his resolution to keep him, the Prince trying music & playing on the flute to see if it will affect him, the Wild Man astonished & delighted, & feeling every change of the strain -- at last giving entirely up to the guidance of the Prince & child. I never saw such inimitable acting as Grimaldi's -- & it shews the versatility of his powers, for I was affected even to tears by his forcibly depicted emotions. It was indeed beautiful. Mrs. C. Dibdin plays the assistant female, who saves the life of the Princess by disguising herself as a ruffian & undertaking to merder her for Muley, who wishes in the absence of his Prince to murder the Princess & send away the young child, to

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be murdered in the desart part of the Island. He is however saved by the Wild Man -- it is a most interesting piece. Princess, Miss Jellett -- & Beima, Mrs. C. Dibdin -- she is a very inanimate poor actress as the firststrate -- tho' she had a charming part. There is some decent music by Reeve.

Mr. C. Dibdin Jun^r writes all the pieces, & is, I understand, Proprietor. The scenery is most beautiful indeed -- especially the Volcano & Sunrise, Wild Man's cave Interior & exterior -- Palace of the Prince, interior & exterior -- Landscape & cottage -- a forest -- Moorish sepulchre, interior & exterior -- Landscape -- Grand Palace scene -- & last the Palace Gardens, most beautifully illuminated & the whole stage forming a Lake of Real Water -- with procession of boats, &c.--

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a Most gay scene -- which ends with the battle, in the water, of Muley & the Wild Man -- & saving the young Prince, whom the former throws in -- so that there are at least 8 or 10 swimming about in it besides the boats &c. It is a most beautiful & wonderful scene indeed, & is done by admitting the New river water into a cistern under the stage -- and forming jet d'eaux at the illuminated side-scenes. The drop scene, before the water is displayed, is exactly behind the lamps (which are very handsome, the same as at the English Opera) & represents Neptune &c. -- so that the Lake of water comes quite to the lamps -- the whole floor of the stage being taken up. It has indeed a most magnificent effect: & altogether I was most highly amused with the variety of the evening, & the excellence of the

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performers & fine scenery. The house was very full -- but we got capital places in the turn of the boxes, so as to see all the scenery & not to be too far off stage. The company was good -- & the theatre is beautiful -- it is a very fine wide stage, & the boxes do not recede -- it is therefore a

complete amphitheatre & is indeed very beautifully formed & still finer fitted up. There is only one capital tier of boxes & large gallery above in front. The pit goes below the boxes as at the Lyceum: but the shape of the theatre is peculiarly adapted for seeing & hearing, & is particularly handsome.

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[3. July. 1809]

Pain in side this morning -- after breakfast Mr. Eliot called & sat an hour. Wrote &c. Read part of Miss Edgeworth, Tales of fashionable life, which are clever, spirited, & original as usual -- and very amusing. Pain in side quite well at 1. Packed up. At shops &c. ...

Here ends my nine weeks' residence in London, which has been most pleasant & gay -- indeed the pleasantest I ever spent here: as I have

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seen & known more people whom I liked & had better health. I have certainly a great deal of enjoyment, but I fear no lasting benefit to myself is to result from it: -- the ground I wished to occupy, being, I have too much reason to fear, preoccupied.

Something however I hope may cast up for me in my profession.

I am sorry to leave London, having enjoyed so much pleasure in it & having got used to its mode of life.