

**FAMOUS PLAYS:
THEIR HISTORIES
AND THEIR AUTHORS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649763245

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY

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BY

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY,

AUTHOR OF "COURT LIFE BELOW STAIRS," "ROYALTY RESTORED," ETC.

NEW EDITION.

LONDON :

WARD & DOWNEY,

12, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

1888

TO
HENRY IRVING, Esq.

DEAR MR. IRVING,

Since Garrick died, no player has studied more persistently or laboured more strenuously to elevate the stage than you. Your intelligence, inventiveness, and genius, as student, manager, and actor, have kept the highest form of histrionic art vigorous and fruitful among us. Through your ingenious powers and liberal enterprise the dramatist of all time has in the present age been familiarised to his countrymen; the greatest English poet of our day has been accepted as a playwright. Your scholarly conceptions and powerful representations have inspired new schools of acting, and have justly rendered you the recipient of weighed admiration, wrested from an unemotional age, and wrung from an unimaginative nation. Your stage has become the sanctuary of art, your theatre the home of culture.

That this volume is not more worthy your acceptance, is to me a cause of regret; that it bears your name, a source of satisfaction.

Believe me,

Faithfully yours always,

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY.

PREFACE.

FOR knowledge of the playhouses which obtained under the Restoration, all students of dramatic history are dependent on *Roscius Anglicanus*, a small, imperfect volume written by John Downes, book-keeper and prompter to the Duke's Company from 1662 to 1706. Concerning the patents granted by Charles II. to Killigrew and Davenant, for the establishment of their respective theatres, Downes confines himself to two sentences. A great part of his book of fifty-two pages is occupied by a list of plays and their respective casts, performed by both companies under these managers. Of the Drury Lane or King's company of comedians, his account is most brief, his knowledge of them being received from Charles Booth, "some time book-keeper there." If Downes deviates, "he begs pardon of the

reader and subscribes himself his very humble servant," a proceeding which, if courteous, is unsatisfactory.

Genest's information regarding this period of stage history is mainly derived from Downes, and is therefore meagre and incomplete. Malone's *History of the English Stage* is valuable from copies of deeds it contains concerning the patents, but is diffuse, and makes little mention of minor details. All information possibly obtainable and wholly reliable I have gathered from Downes, Malone, the valuable documents printed by the Shakespeare Society, as likewise from volumes mentioned in the first part of the appended list of books consulted. In all, the paper prefixing this volume will be found to contain the first concise and exact account of the Restoration playhouses yet printed.

A narration of circumstances under which the plays selected were written and produced, is given without attempt at criticising their merits. When contemporary notices of these productions appeared, extracts from them are given; at some length in the case of Lord Lytton's dramas, as

doubtless it will be interesting to compare press opinions greeting their first appearances with criticisms afterwards elicited. Some details concerning the authors of these plays are added, from belief that personality ever entertains, and in hope verbal outlines will help readers to complete mental pictures of the personages and their works mentioned in these pages.

J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY.

A LIST OF THE BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS
CONSULTED IN WRITING THIS VOLUME.

A COLLECTION of Materials towards an History of the English Stage; Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix*; Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses*; William Cooke's *Elements of Dramatic Criticism*; Shakespeare Society Papers; Malone's *Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage*; Langburne's *Account of English Dramatic Poets*; *Momus Triumphans*; Danc's *Dramatic Miscellanies*; Downes' *Roscus Anglicanus*; Betterton's *History of the English Stage*; Halliwell's *Dictionary of Old Plays*; Charles Dibden's *Complete History of the English Stage*; *Life and Works of Congreve*; *Letters Written by Congreve*; *Memorials of English Affairs*; *Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*; *Gilden's Life of Betterton*; *An Account of Betterton*; *Buckle's Miscellaneous and Posthumous Works*; *Denis's Letters upon Several Occasions*; *Collier's Defence*; *Spence's Anecdotes*; *Some Account of the Life and Writings of Joseph Addison*; *Johnson's Life of Addison*; *Addisoniana*; *A Letter from Italy to Lord Halifax*; *Cato, a Tragedy*; *The Narrative of Dr. Richard Norris Concerning the Frenzy of Mr. John Dennis*; *Dennis's Remarks of Cato*; *Mrs. Inchbald's Remarks on Cato*; *Letters of Mr. Addison and Mr. Pope*; *Memoir of Joseph Addison, with a Particular Account of His Writings*; *Anderson's Life of*

Gay ; The Beggar's Opera ; Johnson's Life of Gay ; Dean Swift's Literary Correspondence ; Pope's Letters ; Horace Walpole's Letters ; Boswell's Life of Johnson ; Dr. Percy's Life of Goldsmith ; Peake's Memoirs of the Colman Family ; Northcote's Life of Reynolds, and Conversations ; Sir James Prior's Life of Goldsmith ; Cradock's Memoirs of Goldsmith ; Arthur Murphy's Life of Garrick ; Davies' Life of Garrick ; Sheridan's Life and Times ; Sheridaniana ; Watkins' Memoirs of the Private Life of Sheridan ; Moore's Life of Sheridan ; Le Fanu's Memoir of Sheridan ; Authentic Memoirs of Sheridan ; Reynolds' Life and Times ; Wood's Personal Recollections of the Stage ; Wemyss' Theatrical Biography ; Hodder's Memoirs of My Time ; Bernard's Retrospection of the Stage ; Life of James Sheridan Knowles ; Planche's Recollections and Reflections ; Hawkins' Life of Kean ; Phippen's Memoirs of Kean ; Fanny Kemble's Records ; Hazlitt's Personal Recollections ; Short View of the English Stage, and Spirit of the Age ; Macready's Reminiscences ; Lord Lytton's Life and Letters ; Scharf's Recollections of Scenic Effects ; Lord Lytton's Dramas ; Harriet Martineau's Autobiography ; William Jerdan's Personal Reminiscences and Men I have Known ; Leigh Hunt's Recollections of Writers ; Charles Knight's Passages of a Working Life ; Forster's Life of Dickens.