

**LILLO'S DRAMATIC
WORKS, WITH MEMOIRS
OF THE AUTHOR, VOL. II**

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Lillo's Dramatic works, with memoirs of the author, Vol. II by George Lillo & Thomas Davies

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GEORGE LILLO & THOMAS DAVIES

**LILLO'S DRAMATIC
WORKS, WITH MEMOIRS
OF THE AUTHOR, VOL. II**

LILLO'S
DRAMATIC WORKS

WITH MEMOIRS OF THE AUTHOR

BY THOMAS DAVIES

SECOND EDITION IMPROVED

VOLUME THE SECOND

CONTAINING

FATAL CURIOSITY, A TRAGEDY

MARINA, A PLAY

ELMERICK OR JUSTICE TRIUMPHANT, A TRAGEDY

BRITANNIA AND BATAVIA, A MASQUE

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM, A TRAGEDY

LONDON

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FATAL CURIOSITY

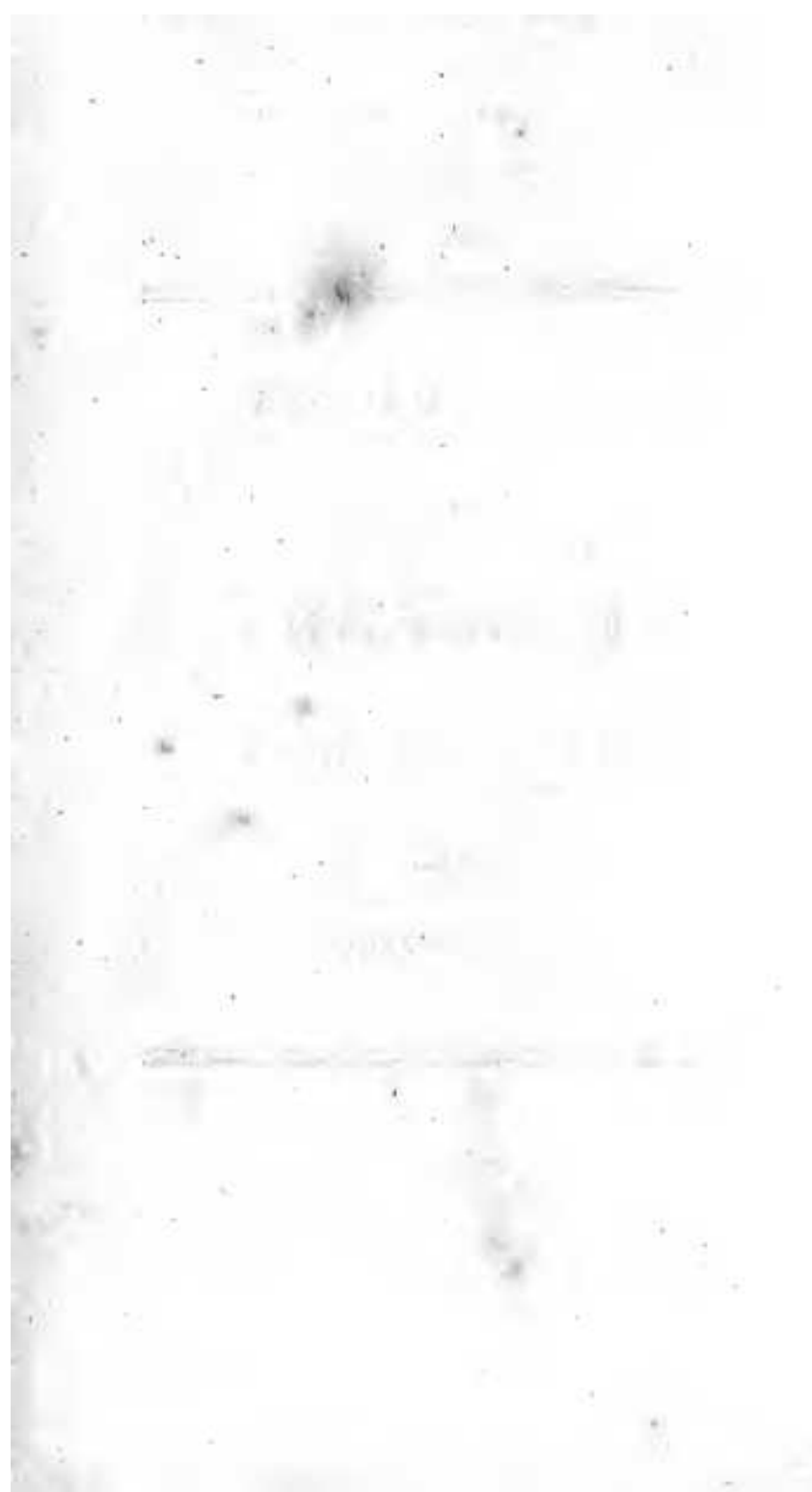
A TRUE

TRAGEDY

ACTED AT THE NEW THEATRE

IN THE

HAY-MARKET.



CRITICISMS
ON
" FATAL CURIOSITY."

" OTHELLO commences with a prospect of Conjugal Felicity; Lear with that of Repose, by retiring from Royalty. Different revolutions (arising from Jealousy, Ingratitude, and other culpable affections) change both of these pleasing prospects into the deepest distress, with which each Tragedy concludes. Nor is it a small heightening to these revolutions, when they are attended, as in the *Cedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, with a discovery of the parties who suffer and those who cause their sufferings, being connected; for example, to be Husband and Wife, Brother and Sister, Parents and a Child, &c. &c. If a man in real life happens to kill another, it certainly heightens the misfortune, even tho' an event of mere chance, should he discover that person to be his Father or his Son. 'Tis easy to perceive, if these events are tragic, that Pity and Terror are the true tragic Passions; that they with propriety bear that name, and are necessarily diffused thro' every Fable truly Tragic.

" Now, whether our ingenious countryman Lillo, in that capital Play of his, *Fatal Curiosity*, learnt this doctrine from others, or was guided by pure genius,

void of Critical Literature; 'tis certain that in this Tragedy (whatever was the cause) we find the model of a Perfect Fable, under' all the Characters here described.

“ A long-lost Son, returning home unexpectedly,
“ finds his Parents alive, but perishing with indigence.
“ The young man, whom from his long absence his
“ Parents never expected, reveals himself first to an
“ amiable friend, his long-loved Charlot, and with her
“ concert the manner how to discover himself to his
“ Parents. 'Tis agreed he should go to their house,
“ and there remain unknown, till Charlot should ar-
“ rive, and make the happy disclosure. He goes
“ thither accordingly, and having by a Letter of Char-
“ lot's been admitted, converses, tho' unknown, both
“ with Father and Mother, and beholds their misery
“ with filial Affection,—complains at length he was
“ fatigued, and begs he may be admitted for a while
“ to repose. Retiring he delivers a Casket to his
“ Mother, and tells her 'tis a deposit she must guard
“ till he awakes. Curiosity tempts her to open the
“ Casket, where she is dazzled with the splendor of
“ innumerable Jewels. Objects so alluring suggest
“ bad Ideas, and Poverty soon gives to those Ideas a
“ sanction. Black as they are, she communicates
“ them to her husband, who, at first reluctant, is at
“ length persuaded, and for the sake of the Jewels
“ stabs the stranger, while he sleeps. The fatal murder
“ is perpetrating, or at least but barely perpetrated,

“ when Charlot arrives, full of Joy to inform them,
 “ that the stranger within their walls was their long-
 “ lost Son.”

“ What a Discovery! What a Revolution! How irresistibly are the tragic Passions of Terror and Pity excited. 'Tis no small praise to this affecting Fable, that it so much resembles that of the play just mentioned, the *Œdipus Tyrannus*. In both Tragedies, that which apparently leads to Joy, conducts in its completion to Misery; both concur in the horror of their discoveries; and each in those great outlines of a truly Tragic Revolution, where (according to the nervous sentiment of Lillo himself) we see

—The two extremes of life,
 The highest Happiness, and deepest Woe,
 With all the sharp and bitter aggravations
 Of such a vast transition—

“ A further concurrence may be added, namely that each Piece begins and proceeds in a train of Events which with perfect probability lead to its conclusion, without the help of Machines, Deities, Prodigies, Spectres, or any thing else, incomprehensible or incredible. It is true that in one Play mention is made of an Oracle; in the other, of a Dream; but neither of them affects the Catastrophe; which in both arises from Incidents perfectly natural. In both pieces there exists Totality, that is to say a Beginning, a Middle and an End.”—[*Harris's Philological Enquiries, part 2d. chapter 7th.*]