

**"H.B." AND  
LAURENCE IRVING**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649115815

"H.B." and Laurence Irving by Austin Brereton

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

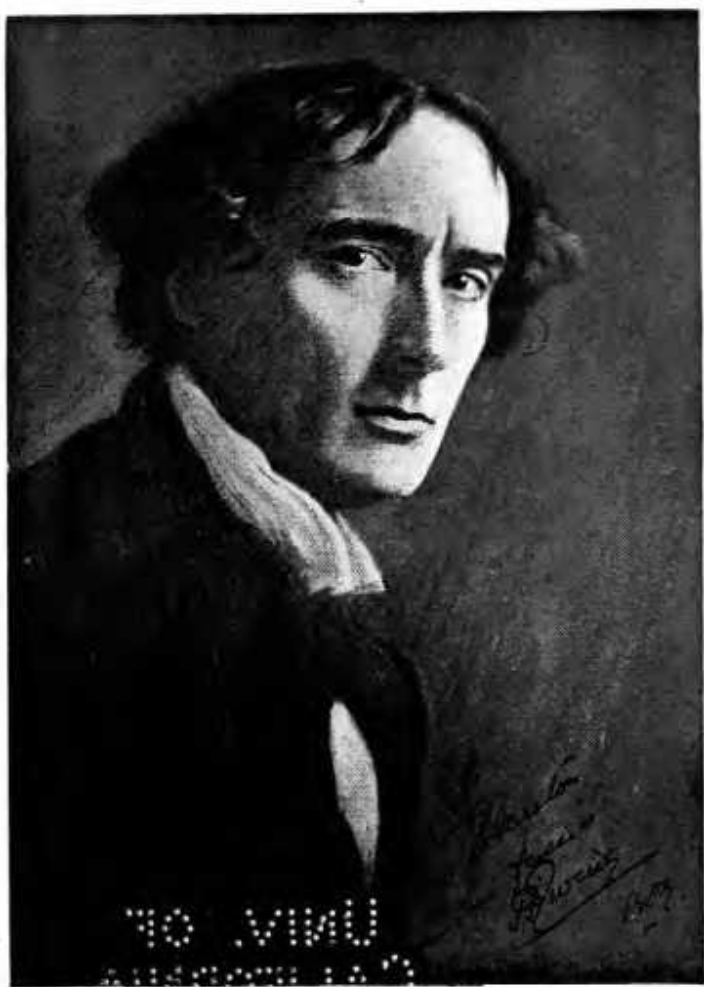
This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**AUSTIN BRERETON**

**"H.B." AND  
LAURENCE IRVING**





"H. B."

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

# “H.B.” and Laurence Irving

*By*  
Austin Brereton



With Eight Illustrations

London  
Grant Richards Ltd.  
mdcccxxii

193 101795  
AMERICAN

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE RIVERSIDE PRESS LIMITED  
EDINBURGH

# Contents

## PART I.—"H.B."

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. CHILDHOOD . . . . .	15
II. OXFORD . . . . .	26
III. THE STAGE OR THE BAR . . . . .	40
IV. "YOUNG HAMLET" . . . . .	53
V. MARRIAGE AND LONDON . . . . .	62
VI. CRICHTON AND JEFFREYS . . . . .	68
VII. IN AMERICA . . . . .	81
VIII. HIS OWN MANAGER . . . . .	92
IX. MATHIAS IN LONDON . . . . .	101
X. HAMLET . . . . .	120
XI. AUSTRALIA AND HOME . . . . .	139
XII. AUTHOR AND CRIMINOLOGIST . . . . .	149

## PART II.—LAURENCE

XIII. MARLBOROUGH TO RUSSIA . . . . .	165
XIV. ACTOR AND AUTHOR . . . . .	172
XV. SUCCESS IN SHAKESPEARE . . . . .	177
XVI. BRIEUX AND DOSTOIEVSKY . . . . .	183
XVII. HAMLET AND SKULE . . . . .	189
XVIII. TYPHOON AND CANADA . . . . .	199
XIX. A TRAGIC END . . . . .	216
APPENDIX . . . . .	227
INDEX . . . . .	235



## Illustrations

" H.B." . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
" HARRY " . . . . .	PAGE 48
THE BROTHERS . . . . .	96
HARRY AS HAMLET . . . . .	128
" H.B." AND LAURENCE . . . . .	144
With the Bust of their Father	
LAURENCE IRVING . . . . .	163
LAURENCE AS CHARLES SURFACE . . . . .	176
LAURENCE AS RICHARD LOVELACE . . . . .	192

The portrait of " Harry " is from a photograph by Elliott and Fry, that of The Brothers by Window and Grove, of Laurence Irving by J. Beagles and Co., of Laurence as Charles Surface by W. and D. Downey, of Laurence as Richard Lovelace by Norman May and Co., Cheltenham.

## Introduction

ON the afternoon of a summer day, nearly thirty-nine years ago, a lonely man sat in his study awaiting the arrival of his two sons. He was at the zenith of his career. He had surmounted vast difficulties, he had conquered where thousands of other men would have been discouraged and failed. The old world was at his feet. He was on the eve of winning triumph after triumph in the new. But his thoughts just then had a tinge of sadness in them. His great victory in the world, his pride of place—for he was at the head of his calling—had been purchased at a price that cannot be estimated. Despite his achievements, although the adulation which he constantly received would have turned the brain of one of lesser calibre, he was then, as ever, a lonely man. Even his very rooms, his abode for over a quarter of a century, situated as they were in the heart of the most fashionable street in the world, were dull, though artistic. The sun hardly ever touched them, and what daylight there was had to find its way in through windows either heavily curtained or of stained glass. Suitable though they were to the occupant, they would now be considered extremely uncomfortable and somewhat depressing. Their unstudied richness, their artistic profusion,

## 8 Introduction

typical of those Bohemian days, were wanting in something which struck the visitor strangely—that is, the visitor who came in the morning or afternoon. At night, when the curtains were drawn, the gas and candles lit, the host was at his best—in his element, so to speak. The feeling that then permeated him and communicated itself to his guests was eminently one of cheerfulness, of brilliancy, of satisfaction. In the daytime, the dominant manner of the inhabitant of these Bond Street rooms kept off, to some extent, the feeling that would creep in upon the friendly and sensitive visitor. It was the absence of a woman's hand. The rooms were distinctly a man's rooms. There was no sign or token that a loving woman ever crossed the portal. There was no feminine touch about them.

On that afternoon in 1883, Henry Irving was in the hey-day of his career. He had just terminated a season of marvellous success at the Lyceum Theatre. *Much Ado About Nothing* had enjoyed a run of eight months, over two hundred performances, and farewell weeks at the Lyceum, devoted to répertoire, in preparation for the first tour of America, had drawn admiring crowds to Wellington Street. The actor had entertained the Prince of Wales (afterwards Edward VII.) to supper on the stage of the Lyceum. The Lord Chief Justice of England had presided at a banquet which was attended by over five hundred of the distinguished men of the day. Yet was Henry