

**THOMAS  
BETTERTON**

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Thomas Betterton by Robert W. Lowe

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**ROBERT W. LOWE**

**THOMAS  
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THOMAS BETTERTON

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## P R E F A C E.

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ALTHOUGH the documentary material for the history of the Restoration stage has been pretty thoroughly ransacked by previous inquirers, my researches into the life and times of Betterton have brought to light a considerable number of new facts, and have enabled me to confirm or to contradict several old hypotheses. In no case have I relied upon the mere assertion of previous historians, but have always checked their statements by a reference to the original evidence on which they proceeded. I have at all times been careful to distinguish between ascertained fact and mere conjecture ; so that the reader may accept as undoubted any unqualified assertion contained in the following pages. The course of events during the few months immediately succeeding the reopening of the theatres is here, I believe, set forth with greater accuracy than in any previous work ; for I have been so fortunate as to disentangle a knot which had baffled Genest and other historians. They had understood Pepys's allusions to "the Cockpit" as referring to the theatre of that name



in Drury Lane; whereas they really referred to the Royal Playhouse at the Cockpit in St. James's Park. This fact, with one or two other minor discoveries, brings comparative clearness into a period which has hitherto seemed very obscure and confusing.

The chapter dealing with the Restoration Playhouse, its structure and arrangements, and the manners and customs which prevailed before and behind the scenes, will, I hope, interest both the general reader and the specialist. No such systematic attempt has hitherto been made, so far as I am aware, to paint an accurate picture of the surroundings amid which Betterton acted—to describe the material conditions of the stage for which Wycherley and Congreve wrote.

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