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English Man and Manners in the Eighteenth Century: Drama, Stage, and Music*

By A.S. TURBERVILLE



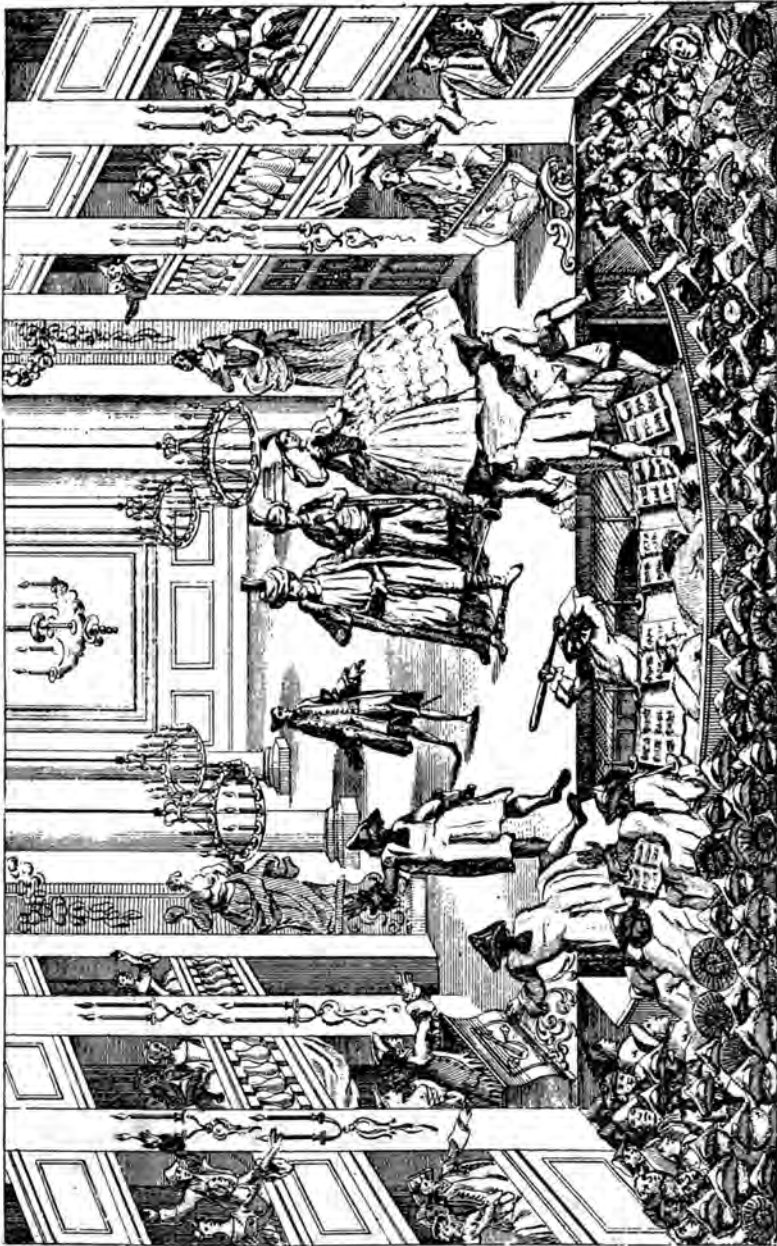
Profiles of Garrick and Hogarth

At the opening of the reign of Queen Anne the drama was still ‘Restoration drama’, that of Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. The plots of the plays were still as a rule indelicate and their language outspoken, so that ladies were wont, if they visited the theatre at all, to wear vizard masks – a practice which was forbidden by royal edict in 1704. There were other causes which made the theatre, even half a century later, a doubtful place of resort for gentlewomen. Although it improved as time went on, the behaviour of eighteenth-century playgoers was apt to be rough and unmannerly, and any disapprobation of a performance was shown emphatically and forcibly. Lord Mansfield once laid down the law of hissing. ‘Every man’, he declared, ‘that is at the playhouse has a right to express his approbation or disapproba-

* Clarendon Press, Oxford 1926, S. 401–437.

tion instantaneously, according as he likes either the acting or the piece; that is a right due to the theatre, an unalterable right.' But audiences in Mansfield's day were not content with merely hissing; their resentment might lead to dangerous violence. It was sure sign that a scene of uproar was intended or anticipated when the ladies in the house were hurriedly led out by their cavaliers. On one occasion when a certain popular French dancer failed to appear, a terrible riot ensued. The cry 'Fire the house' was raised by a noble marquess, the stage was stormed, swords were drawn, the scenery, the musical instruments, and the furniture of the theatre were all destroyed. Another serious disturbance took place when the time-honoured custom of admitting footmen and lackeys into the upper gallery free of charge was suspended by a certain manager. This privilege was not universally abolished till 1780.

Audiences became more decorous as the intimacy of the theatre decreased, as the auditorium grew longer, the distance between stage and spectators greater. In the days of Garrick the apron stage, thrust out into the auditorium, disappeared, and footlights were introduced, so that the mimic world behind them became remote as it had never been before. Until 1762 it had been customary to accommodate privileged patrons on the stage itself. For the theatre-goer of small means there was the upper gallery, the price of admission to which was usually one shilling, or the centre gallery, for which you paid two shillings. The more fashionable parts of the house were the pit and the lower boxes or gallery, for which five shillings was charged. But when the celebrated actor-manager, John Rich, moved from humbler surroundings into his fine new theatre in Covent Garden in 1733, he definitely recognized the stage as forming part of the ordinary sitting-accommodation of the house and charged half a guinea for its superior attractiveness. To the young gallant who was an *habitué* of the theatre, half its charm lay in being on or behind the stage, among the actors and actresses all the time, and the cynosure of envious eyes in pit and boxes. Sometimes so great was the crush on the stage that the players had difficulty in making their entrances



The eighteenth-century Theatre and Stage. The engraving commemorates a riot in Covent Garden Theatre, 1763

and exits through the throng. The practical inconvenience of this custom, and its great inappropriateness from a dramatic point of view, were so obvious that more than one attempt was made to suppress it. But financial considerations could not be ignored, and managers were reluctant to close a very remunerative part of the house, while there was the still more serious argument that valuable patronage might be lost if the most influential of their clients were dislodged from their favourite coign of vantage. It needed a man of Garrick's force of character and strong sense of dramatic fitness to make a resolute and effective stand against this bad practice.

By this date, 1762, the stage had advanced a great deal in general respectability. Even before the accession of Anne there had been a famous protest against the immorality of the drama. In 1698 there had appeared Jeremy Collier's famous invective, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, and this attack was followed by others less well known. In 1711 the two Houses of Convocation addressed to the Queen a strong condemnation of the contemporary drama. In 1719 a certain chaplain in a nobleman's house, denouncing 'the horrid blasphemies and impieties' of the English theatres, demonstrated that the plays of the day offended against no fewer than 1,400 texts in the Bible. In 1735 the question of the influence of the stage was brought forward in the House of Commons by Sir John Barnard, who complained of the mischief done by the London theatres, 'by corrupting youth, encouraging vice and debauchery, and greatly prejudicing trade'. In the middle of the century William Law, the mystic, wrote a treatise *On the Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage*, in which he maintained that 'the playhouse ... is as certainly the house of the devil as the church is the house of God'. Similar language is common in the later decades of the century, when latent Puritanism was reinforced by the new energy of the Methodist revival.

Diatribes against the drama do not necessarily influence it. They simply indicate that there is a hostile element in the population, which religiously keeps outside the theatre. It must be remembered that even among the leisured and cultured classes the theatre-going public in the eighteenth century was never a very large one. Apart altogether from

those to whose piety the theatre appeared an essentially depraved place, there were many who, while having no moral scruples, were not attracted by this particular kind of entertainment, who in a domestic age enjoyed only the domestic amusements of the tea-table, the card-table, and one may add the writing-table—for it is by no mere



Theatre Ticket designed by Hogarth

Fielding's 'The Mock Doctor', adapted from Molière's 'Le Médecin malgré Lui', was first produced in 1732 at Drury Lane

accident that so many eighteenth-century novels are written in epistolary form; there is no doubt that people in those days thoroughly enjoyed writing very long letters to one another.

But there is evidence that some of the attacks did have a direct influence upon the theatre. Collier's did serious damage to the regular

drama, and for a time attracted managerial attention away from it to the variety show. It also suggested to some authors the question whether the standpoint of the playwright need necessarily be, if not immoral, non-moral, whether the drama might not be moralized. Let the comedy continue to cater for its old public by harping on the same theme, that of illicit love and intrigue, but let the critics be propitiated by making virtue clearly triumphant in the end. Bath Addison and Steele, who in all their writings zealously avoided indelicacy of subject and coarseness of language, contributed to the dramatic literature of their day. Perhaps the greatest theatrical event of the reign of Queen Anne was the production in 1713 of Addison's *Cato*. Hopelessly turgid and undramatic it appears to us now, but it had a great success in its own day, partly because of the topical political allusions which each party contrived to read into it to its own satisfaction, but partly because of its apostrophes of virtue, of liberty, and of patriotism. Steele wrote a number of comedies 'on the side of the angels', which were regarded by contemporaries as somewhat tame in consequence, and yet have not impressed posterity as high examples of moral elevation. Hazlitt, for example, wrote: 'Nothing can be better meant, or more ineffective. It is almost a misnomer to call them comedies; they are rather homilies in dialogue, in which a number of pretty ladies and gentlemen discuss the fashionable topics of gaming, of duelling, of seduction, of scandal, &c., with a sickly sensibility, that shows as little hearty aversion to vice as sincere attachment to virtue. ... The sting is indeed taken out of what is bad, but what is good at the same time loses its manhood and nobility.' Another playwright who wrote in the same vein was Colley Cibber (1671–1757), whose comedies are now as dead as dead can be, but who still lives in his own *Apology* for himself, and who still is notorious as an adapter of Shakespeare because of the numerous outrages which he committed in the adapting process. Cibber claimed that he had always the interests of virtue at heart when he wrote his plays, and he was no doubt quite sincere in his moral aim, but this only proves that his moral standard was by no means exalted.

After the temporary set-back sustained by the drama as the result of Collier's diatribes there came another, also temporary, but also serious, in 1737, when the Licensing Act was instituted by Walpole. This measure was not a complete innovation. The King's Master of the Revels had for generations had authority over stage-players; by the fiat of the Lord Chamberlain *Polly*, the successor to *The Beggar's Opera*, had been suppressed. But the right of superintendence over the stage had been undefined and spasmodic. It now became systematized, and it exists to this day. For a long time past the object of the censorship has been understood to be the safeguarding of the stage from indecency and profaneness, but this was not the aim of Walpole's legislation. He was thinking, not of the protection of the public against immorality, but of the protection of politicians against abuse. The stage had proved one of the most effective vehicles for the ventilation of anti-ministerial criticism. Not all the wit of Pulteney and Bolingbroke in the *Craftsman* had been as useful a weapon against Walpole as *The Beggar's Opera*; and some of Fielding's comedies, such as *Pasquin*, had been exceedingly outspoken. It is worth noting that Barnard, who had uttered so strong a protest against the evil influence of London theatres, was strongly opposed to the idea of a stage censorship, and had objected to the Lord Chamberlain's action in prohibiting the production of *Polly*. But the great attack upon the licensing system came from Lord Chesterfield, when the Bill came before the House of Lords. The press and the stage were, he maintained, society's 'two out-sentries', and the powers now to be wielded by the Lord Chamberlain amounted to the placing of a tax upon wit.

The drama during the reigns of the first two Georges was at best third-rate, and except to the antiquarian it has little interest. So far as the ordinary reader is concerned, it has been decently buried, and there is no occasion for its resurrection. This period produced the most execrable travesties of Shakespeare – the worst perhaps being Lord Lansdowne's conversion of *The Merchant of Venice* into *The Jew of Venice*, in which Shylock became a low comedy figure. Tragedy of a sort continued to be written – so stilted and bombastic in

character that it is only memorable because it provoked the satire of Fielding and Sheridan, being exquisitely ridiculed in *The Tragedy of Tragedies or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*, and in *The Critic*. But one of the eighteenth-century tragedians has a permanent niche in the history of English literature—not because he is read today (he is not), but because he had considerable influence abroad as well as in England as the reviver of the type of domestic tragedy which flourished in Elizabethan and Jacobean days, of which *Arden of Feversham* and *The Yorkshire Tragedy* are examples. This was George Lillo, whose best-known work is *The London Merchant, or the History of George Barnwell*.¹ Lillo went not to palace or council-chamber for his themes, but to the shop and counting-house, and his dialogue, however heavy and unnatural it may appear to us, was intended to be homely and colloquial. Lillo, like Steele, had an ethical purpose, and *George Barnwell* was for many years regularly acted at holiday seasons for the moral benefit of London apprentices. Another practitioner of this form of art was Edward Moore, whose plays *The Foundling* and *The Gamester* had a great vogue in their day.

The popularity of the legitimate drama in the first half of the eighteenth century was far eclipsed by that of the variety stage. The ballet, the masquerade, tight-rope dancing, made a much stronger appeal to the general populace of London. The king of all variety entertainers in the century was Rich, himself a very admirable mimic, but most successful as a producer. He ministered lavishly to the average man's love of the spectacular, provided elaborate scenery, real water, real animals, and he was once only dissuaded from bringing an elephant upon the stage because it was proved to him that the hole in the wall of the theatre which would have to be driven to admit the entrance of the beast would be so large as to imperil the stability of the building. Above all, Rich was the purveyor, or rather indeed the creator, of

¹ Lillo was preceded in this genre by the less well-known Aaron Hill. See A. Nicoll, *Early XVIIIth Century Drama*, p. 119.

At LEE and HARPER's Great Theatrical Booth,
ON the Bowling-Green, behind the *Queen's-Arm*
 Tavern, near the Marlhalfe-Gate, during the Time of
 Southwark Fair, will be perform'd, The True and Antient
 History of

W H I T T I N G T O N.

Shewing how he came to London to seek his Fortune, having been advis'd to it by a Cunning Woman; his Money being spent, he set down to console himself at a Merchant's Door, who took him into his Family to be a Scullion. The Merchant sending a Ship to the Kingdom of Morocco, call'd his Servants, according to Custom, to tend their Ventures; among which Whittington appear'd, and having nothing but a Cat he sent her. The Ship arriving at Morocco, which Kingdom being much infested with Rats and Mice, the Emperor return'd for the Cat, a great Quantity of Gold Dust and several precious Jewels. While the Ship was on her Voyage, poor Whittington was so cruelly treated by Madge, a Cook-maid, that he resolv'd to return into the Country; being got two Miles from London, and hearing the Bells ring fancy'd they spoke to him to return, and that he should be Lord-Mayor of London, which induc'd him to go again to the Merchant's, where he had not long been before the Arrival of his Treasure, half of which he bestow'd for the City's Use; whereon he was unanimously elected Lord-Mayor, in all the Pomp and Pageantry us'd in those Days.

The Part of Whittington, by Mr. Morgan.

With Variety of Singing and Dancing by the best Masters. Particularly, The Song of Mad Tom of Bedlam, by Mr. Plat, Thames and Augusta, by Mr. Plat and Mr. Papillon.

The Cloaths and Scenes are all entirely New

At LEE and HARPER's Great Theatrical Booth,
BEHIND the Marlhalfe-Gate, leading to the
 Bowling-Green, during the Time of Southwark-Fair, will
 be presented, A new Opera, never perform'd here before,
 call'd,
THE DEVIL TO PAY: Or, The Wives Metamorphos'd
 Intermix'd with above Thirty New Songs, made to old Ballad Tunes, and Country Dances.

The Part of Sir John Loverule, by Mr. Mullart.
 Ranger, by Mr Taylor; Doctor, Mr. Ayres; Butle, Mr. Rolco; Cook, Mr. Eaton. Lady Loverule, Mrs. Mullart; Noll Jobson, Miss Tollet; Lettice, Mrs. Coker; Luzy, Mrs. Hulst: And the Part of Jobson, the Cobler, by Mr. Hollett.
 And the better to entertain the Gentry, M^s Lee has engag'd a Company of Tumblers, lately arriv'd in London, who perform several surprizing Tricks; particularly, one throws himself off a Scaffold twelve Foot high; another throws himself over 12 Men's Heads; He likewise leaps over 16 Swords, as high as Men can hold them; and several other diverting Things too tedious to mention

With Variety of Singing and Dancing by the best Masters.

The Cloaths and Scenes are all entirely New.

We shall continue Playing from Ten in the Morning, 'till Nine at Night.

N. B. The right Book of the Droll is Sold in the Booths and is Printed and Sold by G. LEE, in *Bliss-Maid Alley, Southwark*; and all others (not Printed by him) are false.

Advertisements of pantomime and variety entertainments for Southwark Fair in 'The Grub-Street Journal' of Sept. 9, 1731
 G. Lee was a well-known holder of booths. 'The Devil to Pay' was an early ballad-opera, first produced at Drury Lane in 1731.
 A farce aimed at the Nonconformists, it was one of the most popular light pieces of its day

STAG HUNT and FOX CHASE.

ROYAL CIRCUS,

The Company at the CIRCUS beg leave to acquaint the Nobility, Gentry, and Public, that Young CROSSMAN will appear

THIS and every EVENING next Week, on HORSEBACK, and challenge all the Horsemen in Europe.

FRICASSEE DANCING, VAULTING, TIGHT-ROPE DANCING, PYRAMIDS, GROUND and LOFTY TUMBLING, &c. &c. &c.

The Performance will commence with a Grand Entry of Horses, mounted by the Troop.

Young CROSSMAN's unparalleled Peasant Hornpipe, and Flag-Dance, not to be equalled by any Horseman in this Kingdom.

LE GRAND SAUT DE TRAMPOLINE, by Mr PORTER, (Clown) who will jump over a Garter 15 Feet from the Ground, and fire off two Pistols.

THE MUSICAL CHILD, (Only Nine Years of Age) will go through his wonderful Performance.

Mr. SMITH will go through a Variety of Performances on a Single Horse.

THE HUMOURS OF THE SACK,

Or, The CLOWN deceived by a Woman;

FRICASSEE DANCE,

By Mr. CROSSMAN and Mr. PORTER.

Mr. INGHAM (from Dublin) will throw an innumerable Row of Flipflaps.

Mr. CROSSMAN will vault over the Horse backwards and forwards, with his Legs Tied, in a manner not to be equalled by any Performer in this Kingdom.

GROUND and LOFTY TUMBLING, by the whole Troop.

The AFRICAN will go through his astonishing Stage and Equestrian Performances.

LA FORCE DE HERCULES;

Or, The RUINS OF TROY.

Mr. PORTER will perform on a single Horse, in a ludicrous manner.

Young CROSSMAN will leap from a single Horse over Two Garters, 12 feet high, and alight again on the Saddle, and Play the Violin in various Attitudes.

The TAYLOR'S DISASTER.

Or, his Wonderful Journey to BRENTFORD,

By Mr. PORTER

To conclude with a REAL FOX and STAG CHASE, by twelve couple of Hounds, and two real FOXES, and a real STAG HUNT, as performed before their Majesties.

Breaking and Teaching as usual.

A Newspaper advertisement of the end of the century



A Female Wire Dancer at Sadler's Wells

English pantomime. Rich's entertainments commonly consisted of two parts. The *pièce de résistance* would be of a more or less serious nature, a play culled from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or some classical fable, in which would appear gods and goddesses, nymphs and naiads, scenery, dresses, and dances being of an elaborate type. Between the acts of this legendary drama there would be interwoven comic episodes from the eternal comedy of Harlequin and Columbine, the most amazing tricks being produced by the wand of Harlequin – huts being transformed into palaces, men into wheelbarrows, sausage-shops into Indian encampments. The transformation scene as an adjunct of pantomime is one of the gifts of John Rich to the English theatre.

While pantomime was the delight of the ordinary rag-tag and bob-tail, the cultured tended more and more to give their suffrage to the sentimental comedy of which Steele had set the type. An extreme fastidiousness came to be the characteristic of the fashionable audiences in the later decades of the century. Critics of the beau-monde shuddered at the horseplay, the bloodthirstiness, the sensationalism which had appealed forcibly to Elizabethan audiences, and demanded a nice decorum – not necessarily of subject and situation, but certainly of language and diction, a careful avoidance of extremes, of the highly coloured, the emotional, the obstreperous. Playgoers like Chesterfield and Horace Walpole did not want to be harrowed or thrilled or to be made to laugh outright. They wished to be kept mildly amused, pleasantly interested, by a stage reflection of the good manners of their own mannered circle. Their requirements were met by such dramatists as Richard Cumberland, who, however, introduced some variety in drawing the contrast between artificial civilization and the crudity of outlaw life, notably *The Brothers*; George Colman the elder, who, however, could sometimes laugh at the foolishness of the extreme sentimentalists; and Hugh Kelly, who produced unadulterated sentimentality of the most mawkish kind, evidently to the complete satisfaction of his patrons.

In 1768 Garrick produced Kelly's masterpiece, *False Delicacy*. No play of the century was a more triumphant success. While it was running at Drury Lane there was presented at Covent Garden Gold-


smith's play *The Good-Natur'd Man*. It is an interesting commentary on the taste of the time that the latter was a failure. Contemporaries condemned it precisely on account of its possessing the quality which to the modern mind appears to give it incontestable superiority over its rival – spontaneity. There is unforced humour in Goldsmith's scenes and characters. There lay the trouble—they were too funny, unbecomingly so. The most amusing scene in the play was hissed at the first performance and was subsequently omitted in deference to public feeling. But in his second play, *She Stoops to Conquer*, Goldsmith conquered. Even the most sophisticated proved unable to resist the assault of Tony Lumpkin.

Goldsmith invented no new dramatic form or method; but he introduced into the comedy of manners a new vivacity, a genuine humanity, such as had given to the first part of *The Vicar of Wakefield* its abiding freshness and charm, putting into his work for the stage something of the warmth and attractiveness of a personality which was essentially whimsical and lovable. This dunce at school, who passed through three universities without learning anything, this would-be medical practitioner, who remained hopelessly ignorant of medicine and incompetent to practise, this amateur flute-player, who started his career by a continental Odyssey with nothing but his little instrument between himself and starvation, this would-be historian of England who could not be bothered to consult any authorities—just because of his queerness and his humanity gave to the English drama, as he did to the English novel and to English poetry, something precious and imperishable.

Goldsmith was surpassed by Sheridan, who had greater dramatic skill, and was indeed the greatest dramatic genius of the century with the exception of Congreve. Sheridan's versatility was such that he had three distinct careers – the first that of a knight-errant, the second that of a playwright, the third that of a statesman and orator. Before he was of age he had become notorious by escorting to France a certain fair lady, Miss Linley, whose heart was set upon entering a nunnery in defiance of her parent's wishes, going through at any rate the form of

marriage with her at Calais, and fighting two duels as a consequence of this scatter-brained escapade. A year or so later, parental opposition having been withdrawn, he settled down to peaceful married life with his *inamorata*, and the following year blossomed forth as a great dramatist with the appearance of *The Rivals*. That delightful play was, like *The Good-Natur'd Man*, at first a failure, but, when revived in January 1777, it became an immense success, and it firmly established Sheridan's reputation. In 1777 there appeared *A Trip to Scarborough*, a very clever adaptation of Vanbrugh's *The Relapse*, in which Lord Foppington, rather less amusing than in the original, becomes more a figure of flesh and blood, and in which the whole action becomes dramatically stronger. In the same year came the masterpiece, *The School for Scandal*, and in 1779 that delectable burlesque *The Critic*. In 1780 Sheridan entered Parliament, and his career as a playwright closed. While he wrote other pieces—the farce *St. Patrick's Day*, the operetta *The Duenna*, the tragedy Pizarro—Sheridan's fame as a dramatist rests upon *The Rivals*, *The School for Scandal*, and *The Critic*. In these three plays there is revealed much of Congreve's brilliance together with a jollity and exuberance which have kept them permanently on the English stage, while Congreve's piercing wit is almost entirely relegated to the library.

Had it not been for the figures of Congreve at the one end of the century and Sheridan at the other, it would have been legitimate to argue that the eighteenth-century stage in England was much more remarkable for its actors than for its dramatists. In this period the personality of the player came to count, very often, for much more than the play, and people went to the theatre, not because they were attracted by the piece, but because Garrick or Mrs. Siddons was in the cast. The great actor of the Restoration drama was Betterton, who died at the age of seventy-five in 1710. In the next generation the stars were Colley Cibber, James Quin, and Charles Macklin. Cibber's debut as an actor was unfortunate. He had to take a message to the character whom the great Betterton was portraying. As he approached the doyen of the stage the novice was seized with such panic that he com-



The *THIRD DAY*.
 For the Benefit of the *REVIVER*.
 By HIS MAJESTY's Company of Comedians,
 AT THE
THEATRE ROYAL
 In *DRURY-LANE*,
 This present *Tuesday*, being the 7th of *March*, will be
 presented a New Moral *MASQUE*, call'd
C O M U S.
 Alter'd from *Milton's MASQUE at Ludlow Castle*,
 and now Adapted to the Stage.
 The Principal Characters by

<i>Mr. Quin,</i>		<i>Mr. Mills,</i>
<i>Mr. Milward,</i>		<i>Mr. Hill, and</i>
<i>Mr. Cibber,</i>		<i>Mrs. Cibber,</i>

 The *MUSICK* compos'd by *Mr. ARNE*.
 The Vocal Parts by
Mr. Beard, Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Arne, and Others.
 The Dances by
Monfieur Denoyer, Monfieur Muilment, Mrs. Walter,
Mrs. Thompson, and Others.
 Boxes 5 s. Pit 3 s. First Gallery 2 s. Upper Gallery 1 s.
N. B. To prevent any Interruption in the *Musick, Dancing, Machinery, or*
other Parts of the Performance, Side Boxes only will be form'd on the Stage.
 For the Accommodation of the Ladies, and (by Desire) Five Rows of the Pit
 will be Rail'd in at the Price of the Boxes, where Servants will be admitted
 to keep Places, and the Ladies are desir'd to send them by 3 o' Clock.
 To begin exactly at Six o'Clock. *Vivat Rex.*
 Books of the *Masque* will be Sold in the Theatre, at One Shilling each.

A BILL in the Gabrielle Enthoven collection, announcing the third performance of an operatic version of 'Comus' at Drury Lane on March 7, 1738, by 'His Majesty's Company of Comedians ... To begin exactly at Six o'Clock'

By permission of 'The Times'

pletely forgot his part. Betterton was furious at the contretemps brought about by a bungler, whose name he did not even know. ‘Forfeit him!’ he exclaimed. It was explained that that was impossible, as this beginner had no salary. Determined to penalize him in some way, Betterton then ordered, ‘Put him down ten shillings a week, and forfeit five!’ Cibber was not happily endowed by nature, being very short, corpulent, with a broad face, thin legs, and large feet, while his voice was shrill and apt to crack when raised in passion. Despite these disabilities it was Cibber’s ambition to excel as *jeune premier* and in tragic parts; he actually made his name by his excellence in characters for which his physical peculiarities were an advantage—in those of grave coxcombs, such as Lord Foppington – for it has to be remembered, that the beau of the early eighteenth century, unlike his successor of the macaroni period, had the solemn, majestic strut of the peacock, was not neat, lithe, and dapper.

Quin, like Colley, fancied himself in tragedy, but was really best in comedy, his great part being Falstaff. He was in private life a singularly disagreeable personage – a glutton and a heavy drinker, foul-mouthed, irascible, and infinitely self-important, and his one saving grace was a gift of lively repartee. On the stage he was the superlative of gorgeousness and the grand manner. Splendidly apparelled in brocades and embroideries, lace and ruffles, Quin, with very little variety of intonation but in a majestic bass, would mouth his heroic polysyllables with an air of superb self-complacency and complete detachment from the audience. Macklin, Quin’s great rival, also an unpleasant and bad-tempered individual, excelled in Shylock, and he is noteworthy as having given the death-blow to the low-comedy conception of the Jew, his own rendering being a great piece of tragic acting. Macklin’s methods appear to have been less stagy and ostentatious than Quin’s. At all events the latter used to complain that Macklin’s presence on the stage with him was disturbing, being antipathetic to the grand manner.

These were the gods of the theatre when the young David Garrick took the world by storm. Of a Huguenot family, Garrick started life as a wine-merchant, but trade did not prosper, and his innate love of

against the jealous animosity of the actors of the old school. His methods were as different as possible from Quin's. As that veteran put it, 'If the young fellow is right, I and the rest of the players have all been wrong'.

Poor Quin, who damns all churches but his own,
Complains that heresy corrupts the town,
That Whitefield Garrick has misled the age,
And taints the sound religion of the stage.



DAVID GARRICK

From a painting by Pompeo Battoni

But as the writer of these lines adds:

When doctrines meet with general approbation,
It is not heresy, but reformation.

The most dangerous of Garrick's enemies was Samuel Foote, who wrote a number of satirical farces, which had a great vogue at the time for the same reason that they have had no vogue at all since—that they were essentially topical. Foote was also a very able come-

dian, a wonderful and a very cruel mimic, a bit of an epicure, rather eccentric, and very much a snob.

But Garrick triumphed over all hostility, for he brought to the stage something novel and tonic. He did not merely declaim in the grand manner of Quin. His methods were natural, his style was quietly realist. Quin's stage costume was either a fantastic garb intended to be classical or ornate contemporary dress; Garrick chose clothes such as would indicate the character he was portraying but not distract atten-



Reynolds' s picture of Garrick being solicited by the Muses of Tragedy and Comedy

tion from the acting. Thus, in *Macbeth* he did not wear a kilt to show that the hero was a Scot or antique armour to show that the period of the play was the eleventh century, but he wore a scarlet and gold military uniform, whose anachronism would have seemed incongruous to our eyes, but which was perhaps truer to the mind of Shakespeare than the meticulous historical accuracy which the taste of a later day demanded. On his return from a prolonged continental tour

Garrick introduced into the English theatre for the first time the use of footlights – hitherto the stage, like the auditorium, had been lighted by chandeliers. These new lighting effects made the stage-scene more of a picture, while a concentration of light upon the actor's face gave far more importance to facial expression as an element in the actor's art. Garrick excelled in depicting subtle changes of thought or mood in this way, so that it was said that his face was a language in itself. He was able to individualize the parts he played as his contemporaries could not. It was said of his chief rival in popular favour, Barry, that in *King Lear* he was 'every inch a King', but of Garrick it was said that he was 'every inch King Lear'. Dr. Johnson spoke of his 'universality'. We should call it versatility. It was noted of Cibber, the great exponent of the coxcomb, that he was always a coxcomb, even in such parts as Iago and Wolsey; of Booth, who had taken the title *rôle* in Addison's *Cato*, that, whatever the part, he was always a philosopher. Garrick himself once said that no actor could be a great tragedian unless he was also a good comedian, and Reynolds's famous picture of Garrick torn between the tragic muse and the comic muse reminds us that he at all events was great both in tragedy and comedy. The service which Garrick rendered to the Shakespearean revival has often been misstated. He certainly did not initiate it; the great Shakespearean *rôles* figured in every star actor's repertoire before Garrick's day; nor did he sound the death-knell of Shakespearean travesty. His own adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* were deplorable. Garrick's service to Shakespeare was in his acting, in the fact that he made the great characters stand out, not as stock conventional figures, but as live human beings.

Goldsmith in the on the whole rather ill-natured lines devoted to Garrick in *Retaliation*, describes him as 'an abridgement of all that was pleasant in man', and 'As a wit, if not first, in the very first line'; and Johnson, who assumed quite a proprietary air towards Garrick – they were educated in the same school in Lichfield—spoke of him as 'the first man in the world for sprightly conversation'.



Mrs. Abington as Scrub in Farquhar's 'The Beaux' Stratagem'
Cartoon by James Sayers

Garrick was not only a great actor, but a member of the Johnson circle, and of other distinguished circles as well—in other words a great public figure. No other man ever did as much to raise the social standing of the actor's calling.

Of Garrick's contemporaries most are forgotten – save for Peg Woffington, famous for her beauty, for her skill in such different parts as those of noble ladies, homely gossips, and dashing minxes, for her immense, rather hoydenish good nature, and her constant infidelities. But Garrick's other leading ladies, such as Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Abington, are now no more than names deciphered on the facsimiles of ancient play-bills, and the same may be said of those sterling actors Mr. King and Mr. Dodd and 'Gentleman Smith', the original Charles Surface, debonair, perfect as the man about town, and Barry, who looked so fascinating as Romeo that all the young ladies in the audience fell in love with him and vowed he was much superior to Mr. Garrick.

Although he continued in management for some time afterwards, Garrick virtually retired from the stage in 1766; the next great star of the eighteenth-century theatre, Mrs. Siddons, did not establish her position till 1782. Sarah Kemble, one of the numerous children of an itinerant player, was born in the Shoulder of Mutton Inn at Brecon in 1755. Her father did not want her to adopt his profession, and she took service as a lady's maid, but soon she was reciting Shakespeare and Milton in the servants' hall, and a little later before the quality in the drawing-room. In 1773 she married William Siddons, a rather down-at-the-heel actor of an obsequious and even cringing disposition. The husband and wife acted in very inferior theatrical companies in the west of England. In these early days the immortal Sarah was of fragile appearance, very timid and nervous; yet she moved an audience of intending scoffers to tears at the little spa of Cheltenham, then just on the threshold of its fame as a watering-place, by her performance in Otway's *Venice Preserved*. Garrick heard of her and sent an emissary to report upon her. A second report came from a clergyman, who saw her at Worcester, and informed Garrick that



Costume on the stage at the end of the century. Miss Farren and Mr. King as 'Lady Emily Gaxville' and 'Sir Clement Flint'

From an engraving by J. Jones after J. Downman. Lent by the courtesy of the Editor of 'The Connoisseur'

she had an excellent figure and would do particularly well in ‘breeches parts’. It was arranged that Mrs. Siddons should come up to London for trial. The servile husband was very anxious to be included in the bargain, but it does not appear that he got his way. In any case this first essay in the metropolis was not a success, and when Sheridan succeeded to the management of Drury Lane he did not re-engage Mrs. Siddons, on the ground that Garrick had not regarded her as a



MRS. SIDDONS

By John Donaldson, in the Collection of the late J. Pierpont Morgan, Esq.

first-rate actress. She returned to the provinces and, touring up and down the country, gained a great deal more experience and a great deal more confidence. From 1778 and 1782 she was in Bath, and her successes there were a prelude to a second venture in London. On the 10th October 1782 she appeared at Drury Lane in Southerne’s *The Fatal Marriage*, and achieved a success as sensational as Garrick’s had been. For some time she continued to act almost exclusively the

parts of tender and gentle heroines, but her performance in February 1785 as Lady Macbeth revealed her as a great tragic actress. Prior to this the great Lady Macbeth of the century had been Mrs. Pritchard, an immense favourite with the theatre-going public. Mrs. Pritchard had always used a candle in the sleep-walking scene; Mrs. Siddons did not propose *to* do this. So susceptible were eighteenth-century audiences that the Drury Lane management were apprehensive of



Mr. Puff and Tilburina

*Published Feb. 24th, 1786, by S.W. Fores, at the Caricature Warehouse,
No. 3 Piccadilly*

trouble as the result of this departure from tradition, but so intense was Mrs. Siddons's acting that no one even noticed the omission of the candle. Lady Macbeth remained her greatest part; but she also excelled as Katharine in *Henry VIII*. Nowadays we think of her as a great tragedienne, because we know her best by her picture as the Tragic Muse. A beautiful woman as well as a great actress, she was the delight of portrait-painters.

Particularly in the first half of the eighteenth century the drama had a serious rival in opera. There were two distinct types of opera. There was, first, what is known as ‘ballad-opera’, in which the music was usually English, derived either from folk-song melodies or from popular tunes of the day. Such operas were essentially simple and popular, but they were musically sometimes of a higher and sincerer type than their more pretentious rivals. By far the best-known work of this nature was *The Beggar’s Opera* (produced in 1728), whose popularity in its own generation was as phenomenal as that which it achieved when it was revived in the twentieth century. The cast and the promoters of the entertainment were doubtful whether it would succeed, and were nervous at the first performance, but well before the end of the first act they were reassured by hearing the Duke of Argyll in one of the boxes exclaim, ‘It will do – it must do – I see it in the eyes of them’. The original success of the play was due largely to the story and to the political allusions, often at the expense of Walpole, which gave such umbrage in the royal circle that two of its chief patrons, the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, were forbidden the Court. But *The Beggar’s Opera* also held its audiences because it was musically attractive, because its songs were catchy and charming.

Incidentally *The Beggar’s Opera* was an excellent burlesque of the absurdities of the sentimental drama and of the second type of eighteenth-century opera – the Italian, which Dr. Johnson defined as ‘an exotic and irrational entertainment’. That may have been the point of view of the people who rejoiced in Gay’s masterpiece, but there was a large section of the musical public in eighteenth-century England, as there has been of other times, who appreciated any kind of music other than its own. At the opening of the century there was a strong persuasion that the only good music in the world was Italian music. In truth the Italian operas which were in vogue at that date were of a very low order of artistic merit, being totally undramatic and consisting of endless arias written specially to suit the individual requirements of the Italian *virtuosi* who sang in them. In many cases

their sole *raison d'être* was that they should afford an opportunity for vocal gymnastics: it was vocal gymnastics that the audiences went to hear. Sometimes, in the earliest years of the century, only the leading *rôles* were taken by Italians singing in their own language, all the minor parts being sung by natives in English. But similar linguistic confusion has been known on the boards of Covent Garden in the twentieth century.



Concert-ticket designed by Hogarth

From Ireland's 'Graphic Illustrations of Hogarth', 1799

While Italian opera was popular in a certain set in the first decade of the eighteenth century, it did not gain widespread support at first, because the general prejudice against Papists and foreigners had to be overcome. More widely diffused popularity followed upon the appearance of Handel in England in 1710. Handel had made a reputation as a composer in his native country before he was twenty-one, but

since then he had studied in Italy and become saturated with the Italian influence, so that it was an Italian, and not a German style, that he brought with him to England. It is as an English musician that he is now, quite rightly, counted: for he was only in his twenty-sixth year when he arrived, and he spent the remainder of his long life, with one short interval, in England, becoming naturalized in 1726. He became even in his own lifetime a great national institution. His opera *Rinaldo*, produced in 1711, was a signal success; its successor was the same; and after he had written a *Te Deum* in celebration of the Treaty of Utrecht he was granted a life-pension by Queen Anne. At the Georgian Court subsequently he basked in royal favour, while he was a protégé of the Duke of Chandos and of other nobles.

But the sun did not shine constantly. For a short period after his accession George I was hostile – Handel had been *Kapellmeister* at the Court of Hanover, and he had deserted for the larger world of London. But George I did not long remain unforgiving. More serious was the rivalry of another composer of Italian opera, who also settled down in England and gained an important following – Giovanni Buononcini – so that all musical London was divided between the two. A popular catch ran –

Some say compared to Buononcini
That Mynher Handel's but a ninny;
Others aver that he to Handel,
Is scarcely fit to hold a candle.
Strange all this difference should be,
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

The verdict of posterity is at strange variance with the conclusion arrived at in this rhyme! Handel's early popularity suffered something of an eclipse after the arrival of his competitor. In 1729 he went into joint management with a competent Swiss impresario named Heidegger, and his fortunes revived, but an unfortunate quarrel with an Italian singer some years later led to the estrangement of many of



A Concert at Montagu House, 1736

From a drawing by Marcellus Laroon in the British Museum

his best patrons, and a rival opera was established in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1733. Thither went the Prince of Wales and many of the aristocracy, and Lord Hervey tells us how George II and his Queen used to sit shivering in the empty Haymarket Theatre, where one of Handel's operas was being performed, while all the rest of the world followed the Prince. In 1737, as the result of his ill-fortune, Handel went bankrupt.

Ere this Handel had turned his attention to a new type of composition. Until he was well on in middle life he was known almost exclusively as a writer of operas. He wrote thirty-six of these. They are now almost entirely forgotten, though expert opinion holds that, embedded in a vast deal that is dull and conventional, there are a number of fine airs, as good as any in his better-known works. But in the history of opera Handel cannot take a high place, for he brought nothing new to its development. He was quite content with existing banalities, and made scarcely any attempt at characterization or the dramatically appropriate. His lasting greatness is



G. F. HANDEL

based almost entirely upon his oratorios. To Handel and his contemporaries the word did not mean at all what it means nowadays. It meant to them simply any kind of choral music performed in the concert room, and was just as much an ordinary entertainment as the opera was. It was not necessarily sacred music, either by subject or in feeling. There was indeed very little that was religious in Handel's music or his temperament, and he simply took to the writing of oratorios because he found that people were getting tired of his operas, and that the oratorios paid better. He was a very practically minded man,

SUSANNA
an
ORATORIO
Set to Musick by
M^R HANDEL

London. Printed for I. Walsh, in Catharine Street, in the Strand:
of whom may be had,
The Works of M^r Handel, Geminiani, Corelli, and all the most
Eminent Authors of Musick.

*Engraved title-page (reduced) of 'Susanna', one of
Handel's later works*

who believed in giving the public what it wants. Besides, the production of oratorios was much less expensive!

Handel had written the oratorio *Esther* before 1720; it was the discovery that a revival of it in 1732 pleased the public that determined him to devote himself for the future primarily to this form of composition. But it was some time before he achieved a really great success with it. Both *Israel in Egypt* produced in 1738, and *Saul*, produced in 1740, were coldly received, and there is a well-known story of Lord Chesterfield leaving an auditorium practically empty save for the ever-faithful royal patrons at one of these performances because he thought it indecorous to intrude on his sovereign's privacy. Lack of support in London induced Handel to give the first performance of his one religiously conceived oratorio, *The Messiah*, in Dublin, where it achieved an immense success. When his masterpiece was performed in London there was little enthusiasm, and although Handel wrote *Samson* and a number of other similar works in the meantime, he was again a bankrupt in 1745. His first genuine success with an oratorio in London came next year, when *Judas Maccabaeus* was first sung. This marked the turn of the tide, and, although his numerous other works were not all received with equal favour his general popularity remained unabated. His reputation was secure, and the remainder of his days were untroubled, save by the terrible affliction of blindness, till his death in 1759.

Despite the fact that his extraordinarily copious output contains a very high proportion of inferior work, quite unworthy of his renown, Handel's name is the most famous in the whole history of music in England. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the immense authority which he exercised during his lifetime, and the still greater influence which he exerted after his death, was a great misfortune from the point of view of the development of national English music. Very many of his contemporaries and successors were content to be merely imitators of Handel, and he remained the predominant, all-pervading power over music in these islands until the vogue of Mendelssohn brought yet another foreign influence into our midst. After

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Likewise Mr. Handel's Opera's, and many other Books of Musick, are there Engraved, Printed and Sold.

N. B. The Wholesale and Retail Warehouse for Dispensing Dr. Bateman's Pectoral Drops, by Letters Patent under the Great Seal of Great Britain, is still continued to be kept there.

Note also, That for those Persons who employ the said THOMAS COBB's Rolling-Press, he repairs their Copper-Plates, when necessary, gratis.

*A printer's advertisement in 'The Grub-street journal' of March 9, 1731
'Mr. Handel's Opera's... are there Engraved, Printed and Sold'*

all, Handel was a German by birth and an Italian by musical choice and training, and he never attempted to put anything of England into his works. It is indeed to be regretted that the greatest of English composers, Purcell, had not raised up a school of composers in his succession before he died in 1695. The Handel influence distracted attention from national sources of inspiration, and this country, the home of the madrigal, which had in Elizabethan and Jacobean days led the world in song, came to be regarded on the Continent before the closing of the eighteenth century as a distinctly unmusical country.

Eighteenth-century England herself was quite self-complacent, if we are to judge from the writings of that fashionable teacher of music, best known to posterity because he had the distinction of being father to Madame d'Arblay, viz. Dr. Charles Burney who wrote several dissertations on the state of contemporary music in the principal countries of Europe and a great History of Music, which is of permanent interest as an indication of the taste and judgement of a cultured English musician of the period.

By far the best known of the native-born composers of the eighteenth century – as he was also the most popular in his own day – was Dr. Thomas Arne (1710–78). He has a very long series of compositions to his credit: a setting of Addison's *Rosamund*; a burlesque entitled *The Opera of Operas*, based on Fielding's *The Tragedy of Tragedies*; a setting of *Comus*; a comedietta, very popular at the time, called *Love in a Village*; various operas in the Italian manner; and a number of oratorios just as secularly minded as the operas. But while all these are forgotten, its patriotic sentiment has preserved *Rule, Britannia!* and the great charm of their fluent melody keeps in perennial life his settings of Shakespeare's lyrics, *Where the bee sucks, Blow, blow, thou winter wind*; and other lovely songs, such as *When daisies pied*.

The other notable composers of the century wrote mainly church music. Such were William Croft (1678–1727), who was organist at Westminster Abbey, the author of some of the finest of our hymn tunes; Maurice Greene (1695–1755), a great anthem writer; William

Boyce (1710–79), another distinguished anthem writer; Thomas Attwood (1765–1838); and the greatest of all, Samuel Wesley (1766–1837), the son of Charles Wesley, who in his admiration for Bach escaped from the prevailing Handelian infection, but whose works belong mainly to the nineteenth century.

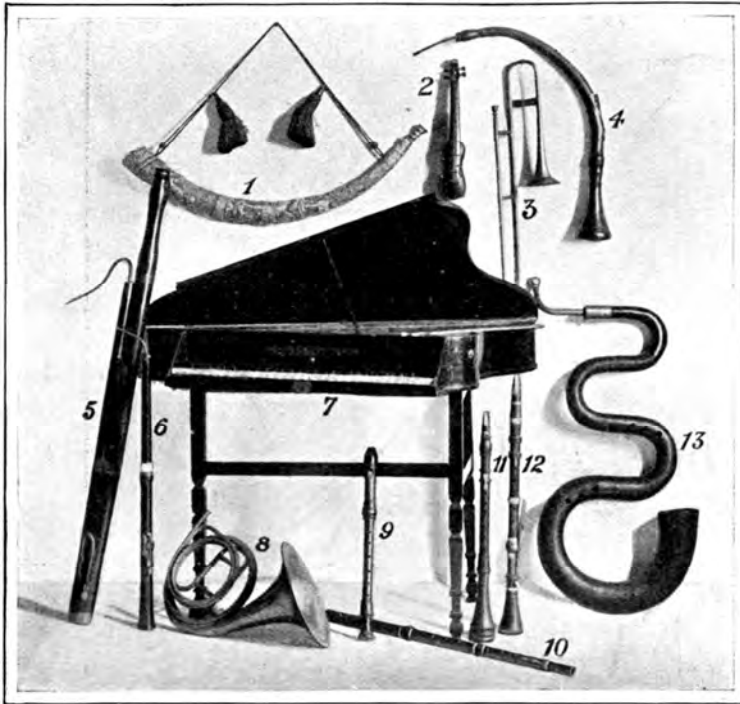


CHARLES BURNEY

From the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, by permission of the Curators of the Examination Schools, Oxford

A number of the organist-composers wrote glees as well as anthems, and the development of glee singing, a form of music as characteristically English as the earlier madrigal, is a distinctive feature of the eighteenth century. Although a Madrigal Society was

founded in 1741, the madrigal had as a popular form of part-singing died out well before the end of the previous century. The glee – not necessarily a gleeful piece of music – although a lower form of art,



Musical Instruments of the Eighteenth Century

(1) .Horn of carved ivory (2) kit or pocket violin (3) trombone or sackbut (4) cor anglais
(5) bassoon (6) hautboy (7) spinet (8) horn (9) English flute or recorder (10) German
flute (11 and 12) clarionets (13) serpent, the predecessor of the ophicleide

By permission of the Rev. F. W. Galpin, M.A.

was more obviously melodious than the madrigal. Samuel Webbe (1740–1816) was the most distinguished of the glee composers. Others were the brothers Stephen and William Paxton, Stevens, Callcott, and Horsley.

BOOKS SUGGESTED FOR FURTHER READING

- Allardyce Nicoll, *History of Early XVIIIth Century Drama, 1700-1750*.
 A. W. Ward, *History of English Dramatic Literature to the Death of Queen Anne*.
 Dr. Doran, *Annals of the English Stage*.
 P. Fitzgerald, *History of the English Stage*.
 Colley Cibber, *Apology*.
 A. Dobson, *Goldsmith*.
 W. Sichel,
 Lloyd C. Sanders, } *Life of R. B. Sheridan*.
 A. Murphy,
 T. Davies, } *Life of Garrick*.
 J. Knight,
 P. Fitzgerald, }
 C. T. Abdy Williams, *Handel*.
 E. Walker, *History of Music in England*.



DAVID GARRICK

THe Territories from whence came most Ships to *London* last Year next to *Germany*, were the *English Plantations* in the *West Indies*, and from thence came 138. What, not two Thirds of the Number of what came from the little Country of the *United Provinces*. Surely their Prudence and Industry are much to be commended and Immitated; and whether 'tis our Idleness, Fearfulness, Losses, or other Employments of our Men and Ships, by reason of the War, I won't determine, but one would think that from *Hudson's Bay*, *New-England*, *New-York*, *New Jersey*, *Pennsylvania*, *Maryland*, *Virginia* and *Carolina*; on the *Main*, *Bermudas*, *Barbados*, *Nevis*, *Jamaica*, and our other Islands in the Ocean should employ; more especially, considering that *Mr. Roberts* in his Map of Commerce, lays that 201 Ships have been loaded at *Barbados* in one Year, 1660. and these were upwards of 13505 Tuns, which were about 80 Tuns apiece one with another. And this Island is but 28 *English Miles* long, and half as broad, which being measured, is 126000 Acres. Were the rest of the Plantations husbandried agreeable to this, our Trade might be vast indeed, but a great many of them yield more bulky Commodities, and so might surely (if we would) employ many more Ships; altho' I am not unensible of many Ships coming from the *West-Indies* to divers others of our Ports than *LONDON*, but how many, I know not, altho' the general Customs of *London*, are as eleven to fifteen of the whole Kingdom. I am sensible also that divers Ships with *Tabacco*, &c. do unlade in some of our Out Ports, and pay the Duty, then relade, and go for *Holland*.

The same *Mr. Roberts* says, there are about 40 Sail a Year laded from *Virginia*, and 10 from *Maryland* of three or four hundred Tuns each; and I presume by these he means not the *West Indians* Trading, one with another; and doubtless the Trade has been far greater since then *Mr. Roberts* speaks of.

In order to improve this *West-Indian* Trade, I believe it would be well worth while to have it some body's Business to make a good Natural History as well as can be, and to study how every thing there may be improved, and what useful known matters grow in other Countries, that in Probability might grow there, and also to settle the *Guinea-Trade* for *Blacks*, which are the usefulest Merchandize can be carried thither, except *White-Men*: For according to their Plenty is the Product: But if the keeping our *African-Company* in Suspence, they shall exclude others, or not be of use to us, will belong to another Argument.

On *November 24. 1681*, in Number 3 of my first *Quarto Volume*, I published my Thoughts to prove that the Plantations did not depopulate, but rather encrease or improve our People; and I have also proved it so that none will gain-say me, that the more People we send to our Plantations, the more we must have at home, so long as ever it can be imagined that People will love their Interest, but thither I refer my Reader; and on *Friday* next expect more from.

Yours

John Houghton, F. R. S.

From the *Golden Bace* in *Grace-Church Street*
and *Corner of Little East-Street, London.*

*Imperial ideas. A leading article reproduced from Houghton's
'Collection' of Dec. 20, 1695*