

SHAKESPEARE SURVEY
AN ANNUAL SURVEY OF
SHAKESPEARIAN STUDY AND PRODUCTION

35

EDITED BY
STANLEY WELLS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

LONDON NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE

MELBOURNE SYDNEY

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022, USA
296 Beaconsfield Parade, Middle Park, Melbourne 3206, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1982

First published 1982

Shakespeare Survey was first published in 1948. For the first
eighteen volumes it was edited by Allardyce Nicoll.
Kenneth Muir edited volumes 19–33

Printed in Great Britain
at the University Press, Cambridge

Library of Congress catalogue card number: 49-1639

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Shakespeare Survey

35

1. Shakespeare, William – Societies, periodicals, etc.

I. Wells, Stanley

822.3'3 PR2885

ISBN 0 521 24752 7

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BEFORE THE SHAKESPEARE REVOLUTION: DEVELOPMENTS IN THE STUDY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY SHAKESPEARIAN PRODUCTION

RUSSELL JACKSON

The emancipation of Shakespeare's plays from the bonds of the Victorian and Edwardian commercial theatre was achieved against great odds by an alliance between scholarly opinion and artistic imagination – the first, essential step in the process that J. L. Styan has described in *The Shakespeare Revolution* (Cambridge, 1977). The stage productions, journalism and learned papers of William Poel prepared the way for Harley Granville-Barker, whose productions of *The Winter's Tale*, *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* demonstrated that the qualities of Elizabethan staging – continuous action, non-representational settings, rapidity of speech – had a life beyond the rather antiquarian performances of the Elizabethan Stage Society. Granville-Barker brought British Shakespearian staging into the world of an international theatrical movement no longer committed to pictorial realism but open to the influence of a wide range of conventions, ancient and modern. The eclectic, stylized theatre of Reinhardt, the austere, architectural scenes of Appia and Craig, and the exoticism of Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* all exerted their influence. In Great Britain and America – climates unfavourable as yet to subsidized theatre – an 'other theatre' grew up, in reaction to the star system, the demands of box-office and the limitations of popular taste for spectacle and historical realism. These little theatres and repertory companies influenced in their turn the commercial managements.

During the three decades before the Great War there had been much debate concerning the

actor-managers' way with Shakespeare. Confronted with yet another sumptuous production, reviewers often moved from the merits and demerits of the particular case to the general question of the attitudes underlying scenic and histrionic methods employed. George Bernard Shaw was only the most brilliant of the many critics who felt that scenic spectacle was usurping the proper function not only of Shakespeare's plays but of popular genres – melodrama and Christmas pantomime – where it had a legitimate part in the entertainment. Some took for granted the necessity for pictorial realism in Shakespearian production, and addressed themselves to determining the degree of historical exactitude ('archaeology') required in scenery, costumes and properties.¹ Others, including Sidney Lee and Percy Fitzgerald, considered the possibility of a return to the simplicities of Elizabethan staging.² A. C. Bradley complained of the disadvantages of the prevailing approach and cited Poel's work as evidence that 'a performance in Shakespeare's day, though more of the play was performed, must have been something much more variegated and changeful, and much lighter in movement, than a revival now'.³ The

1 Cf. Michael R. Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre, 1850–1910* (1981), esp. chapter 2, 'Shakespeare'.

2 Sidney Lee, *Shakespeare and the Modern Stage* (1906); Percy Fitzgerald, *Shakespearian Representation, its Laws and Limits* (1908).

3 A. C. Bradley, 'Shakespeare's Theatre and Audience', *Oxford Lectures in Poetry* (1909), pp. 361–93; p. 386. The lecture was delivered in 1902.

limitations of the treatment Shakespeare was receiving in the commercial theatre were obvious. Scenic spectacle—considered essential to financial success—was expensive in itself, effectively prohibiting the choice of all but a limited number of ‘safe’ plays. Such scenery was heavy and cumbersome to change, so intervals were long and the text had to be altered to permit each act to take place in one location. The egotism of star performers entailed further adjustments in the lines spoken and the stage business adopted. The best managements often produced vivid, coherent and visually splendid performances of great plays, but experiment and any radical insight into the inherent theatrical qualities of the plays were rarely possible. It is very much to the credit of certain managers that they contrived to introduce variety and novelty into the Shakespearean fare regularly served up to Londoners: Herbert Beerbohm Tree’s ‘Shakespeare Festivals’ and some of John Martin-Harvey’s productions were intelligent attempts to find a place within the system for some acknowledgement of the new ideas.⁴

When the new style of production came, offering greater fidelity to the texts, an over-all understanding of the drama, and a simpler visual impact, the efforts of the *ancien régime* seemed fussy and ineffective. Gordon Crosse, witnessing Granville-Barker’s *Winter’s Tale* in 1912, wrote ‘This ought to (but it won’t) put an end to the era of “arranged” texts and elaborate changes of scene’—he later noted that the parenthesis showed him ‘a too quick despaire’. Stark Young, after seeing John Barrymore’s 1922 New York *Hamlet* with Robert Edmond Jones’s settings, wrote that it was ‘out of class with Shakespeare production from other sources’, not because it attained some elusive perfection, but on account of its attention to ‘the discovery of the essential and dramatic elements that from the day it was written have underlain this play’. A production of the usual kind took the opposite direction: ‘It does not reveal the essential so much as it dresses the scene up at every conceivable angle, with trappings, research, scenery, business.’⁵ Modern-dress

stagings, among which those by Sir Barry Jackson’s Birmingham Repertory Theatre were the most prominent, attacked head-on the nineteenth-century preoccupation with correct historical detail and the avoidance of anachronism: ‘Shakespeare in Plus-Fours’ was an affront more direct than Poel’s to the values of Irving, Tree, and their disciples. Although there were some attempts to revive it—including Basil Dean’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Drury Lane in 1925—in the theatre the old style of Shakespearean production was undoubtedly dead. It survived in the cinema, which could satisfy more fully and economically the public taste for historical spectacle, but by now the very architecture that had accommodated it on the living stage was under attack. To Tyrone Guthrie the proscenium stage and its auditorium were an interesting but irrelevant episode in the history of spoken drama. Prejudice in favour of the proscenium arch was strong enough to ensure that the rebuilt Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford had one, but the theatrical avant-garde had by now moved to other configurations of action and spectators, corresponding more nearly to the platform stage of Shakespeare’s day.⁶

It is in this context—of the necessary rejection of old assumptions and techniques—that the current revival of interest in nineteenth-century Shakespearean production must be seen, for the work which marks the beginning of scholarly writing on the subject is itself a product of the period.

4 See George Rowell, ‘Tree’s Shakespeare Festivals (1905–1913)’, *Theatre Notebook*, 29 (1975), 74–81; Ralph Berry, ‘The Aesthetics of Beerbohm Tree’s Shakespeare Festivals’, *Nineteenth Century Theatre Research*, 9 (1981), 23–51. On Harvey, see Cary M. Mazer, *Shakespeare Refashioned: Elizabethan Plays on Edwardian Stages* (Ann Arbor, 1981), which offers a reappraisal of the relation between ‘new’ and ‘traditional’ stagecraft.

5 Gordon Crosse, *Shakespearean Playgoing, 1890–1952* (1953), p. 48; Stark Young, *Immortal Shadows: a Book of Dramatic Criticism* (New York, 1948; repr. New York, n.d.), p. 14.

Criticism (New York, 1948; repr. New York, n.d.), p. 14.
6 Tyrone Guthrie, *A Life in the Theatre* (1959), chapter 13, ‘The Picture-Frame’.

The fullest account of Shakespearian production between John Philip Kemble and Sir Henry Irving is that contained in the second volume of G. C. D. Odell's *Shakespeare – from Betterton to Irving* (2 vols., New York, 1920), a survey of three centuries which has not yet been superseded and is still in print. Odell wrote as a Victorian enthusiast for Shakespeare and the theatre, and possessed a Victorian capacity for monumental feats of collecting information – to which his *Annals of the New York Stage* testify in their fifteen volumes (New York, 1927–45). By the side of this, his work on Shakespeare is elegantly compact. Odell sees theatrical history as a glorious progress, with Kemble as the inaugurator of 'that system of special Shakespearian production that led the way for Macready, Phelps, Charles Kean and Henry Irving' (vol. 2, p. 7). The reader of *Shakespeare – from Betterton to Irving* soon understands that, so far as its author is concerned, these actor-managers were themselves reformers who brought Shakespeare's own words back to the stage and gave them 'something of the dignity, reverence and pomp to which they were entitled' (vol. 2, p. 49). After his review, in the first volume, of Restoration and eighteenth-century adaptations, Odell is happy to find stage versions which exclude non-Shakespearian matter. He is tolerant of the likelihood that a modern audience might be better entertained by Kemble's or Hull's *Comedy of Errors* than by the original; he feels that 'it would be a rash purist who would insist on the presentation on stage of all the material of the last two acts' of *Henry VIII*; he feels that Irving's *Lear* 'left out no highly important matter', despite its omission (among other passages) of the blinding of Gloucester (vol. 2, pp. 48, 290, 404). For certain plays he has an old-fashioned distaste:

All's Well that Ends Well has ever been a problem on the stage; the story is revolting, the heroine incapable of arousing sympathy, and the comic scenes either disgustingly low (to use an Eighteenth-century expression) or mere reminders of earlier (?) successes in the Falstaff plays. (vol. 2, p. 23)

He has no sympathy for the efforts of Poel, Granville-Barker or Craig. Webster's 1844 production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, which anticipated later experiments in its bare, curtained stage and Elizabethan dress, is to Odell merely a foretaste of 'the most pretentious and self-righteous scene-devisers of today'.⁷ In an Epilogue he quotes from his own uncomplimentary review of Granville-Barker's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (revived in 1915 in New York), and expresses the hope that 'this silly and vulgar way of presenting Shakespeare died with all other vain, frivolous, unsimple things burnt up by the great war-conflagration' (vol. 2, p. 468).

It is towards the end of his second volume, where he draws on his own experience and mounts a rearguard movement against new ideas, that Odell's limitations are most evident, but his praising Daly and damning Granville-Barker do not give the proper measure of his achievement. His account of the development of production methods is coherent, comprehensive, and not without liveliness. Although the descriptions and evaluations of performances are sometimes derived from partial or inadequate evidence, Odell strives to assign each its place in the context of theatrical tastes and techniques, and the theatre's life as an institution. Occasionally his division of the 'ages' of his history into separate sections on theatrical history, textual adaptation, and staging is in itself confusing. Most of the time, however, Odell manages to keep the thread of his discourse, and a thorough index makes it possible to use the book for reference. Within the confines of his two volumes (of 456 and 498 pages), and despite the immensity of his subject, Odell conveys a sense that the stage history of Shakespeare's plays is a matter to be discussed and enjoyed, not merely a list of names, dates, and significant events. The sympathy and enthusiasm

7 Cf. Jan McDonald, 'The Taming of the Shrew at the Haymarket Theatre, 1844 and 1847', in Kenneth Richards and Peter Thomson (eds.), *Nineteenth Century British Theatre* (1971).

with which he approaches the nineteenth century are engaging, but comparison with the compilations of other enthusiasts – such as the three volumes of William Winter's *Shakespeare on the Stage* (New York, 1911–16) – reminds one that Odell's ambition is an objective, accurate, and coherent account, not a celebration of his own favourites.

Since the publication of *Shakespeare – from Betterton to Irving* a number of developments have made the task of any would-be successor to Odell more arduous and, potentially, more rewarding. There is now a considerable body of scholarly writing on theatrical history to be assimilated and accounted for. The proliferation of new theatrical forms and the accomplishment of the aims of some of the 'scene devisers' make it impossible to accommodate the twentieth century to a progressive, evolutionary interpretation of events, however true that might be to the way in which one century – the nineteenth – viewed itself. The methods and goals of theatrical research have become more sophisticated. A field in which anecdote dominated, and in which the study of published memoirs, acting editions, cuttings from newspapers, and files of playbills sufficed has been transformed into an academic discipline. The researcher is obliged to locate, evaluate and classify information from a variety of unpublished sources – prompt-books, diaries, letters, financial accounts, and other primary materials. The creators and curators of the major theatre archives in Britain and the United States, together with a number of scholar-historians – Chambers, Nicoll, Bentley, Kindermann and others – laid the foundations of scholarly theatrical research. The study in universities of drama and theatre arts as disciplines distinct from literature has fostered an interest in the techniques of the theatre, to which a number of specialist journals have contributed. *Theatre Notebook*, *Theatre Research/Recherches Théâtrales*, *Maske und Kothurn*, *Theatre Survey* and other periodicals have maintained standards of documentation and accuracy in the subject. One journal, *Nineteenth Century Theatre Research*, is devoted to studies in

Victorian drama and theatre, of which it publishes an annual bibliography. In the historiography of Shakespearean production a number of distinguished publications have revealed the richness and variety of information available, and offered new perspectives on the plays to Shakespearean scholars.

III

The most influential and important of these is Arthur Colby Sprague's *Shakespeare and the Actors: The Stage Business in his Plays (1660–1905)*.⁸ Sprague's emphasis is on the accumulation of 'traditional' business and his evidence is drawn from a variety of sources, including prompt-books. The reader is consequently presented with a series of 'points', the crucial moves and emphases by which actors showed their awareness of tradition and their ability to improve on it. Sprague's documentation is meticulous and tactful, his style elegant and incisive. He conveys a vivid and pleasurable sense of a variety of theatrical experience no longer in fashion: that delight in the inspired moment acknowledged somewhat shame-facedly by audiences brought up to believe in *ensemble* and the rule of the director. Throughout *Shakespeare and the Actors* the reader is aware of the performance's context as well as its quiddity. Sprague is tolerant of invention only when it serves the audience's understanding as well as its enjoyment of the play in question. He gives a sense of the changing definitions given by successive generations to the notion of 'understanding' Shakespeare. An eye for theatrical effect and an imaginative perception of the plays are supported by high standards of scholarship. Sprague's footnotes, gathered at the back of his

8 *Shakespeare and the Actors* is supplemented by Sprague's *The Stage-Business in Shakespeare's Plays: a Post-Script* (Society for Theatre Research Pamphlet Series, no. 3, 1954) and *Shakespeare's Plays Today: Customs and Conventions of the Stage* (1970), written in collaboration with J. C. Trewin.

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book, have the rare distinction of being compulsively readable.

Because it explores an area passed over by Odell – the line-by-line interpretations of individual actors – Sprague's book, with its sophisticated use of evidence, is at once a companion and a superior to *Shakespeare – from Betterton to Irving*. Its use of prompt-books makes it of particular importance to historians of nineteenth-century Shakespeare, for it is from that century that most of the surviving pre-1920 prompt-books date. In *Shakespearian Players and Performances* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953) Sprague concentrates on a group of important characterizations by major actors, 'recreating' performances by collating information and opinion from a variety of sources. Alan S. Downer concludes his biography *The Eminent Tragedian: William Charles Macready* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966) with a description of that actor's *Macbeth*, drawing on prompt-book evidence. The exercise of 'reconstruction' has become a staple of postgraduate theses on Shakespearian stage history, and a number of articles (often extracted from dissertations) have been published in which acting and managerial technique are documented in this way.

Considering the importance and number of nineteenth-century Shakespeare prompt-books, it is disappointing that so few have been made available in facsimile. Downer edited a facsimile of an annotated copy of *Richard III*, in which Edmund Kean's performance of the title role had been described; Charles H. Shattuck's editions of Macready's *As You Like It* and *King John* prompt-books included notes on the background and reception, and reproduced stage designs for them; Shattuck has also edited an eleven-volume collection of John Philip Kemble prompt-books.⁹ Shattuck's account of *The Hamlet of Edwin Booth* (Urbana, 1969) has at its core a detailed reconstruction of the 1870 performance at Booth's Theatre, New York, in which the historian marshals eleven principal prompt-books or manuscript sources, as well as reviews and other secondary material. It is the fullest

description yet attempted of a single interpretation and its development.

The use of prompt-books as evidence has been aided and stimulated by *The Shakespeare Promptbooks: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Urbana, 1965), in which Shattuck lists and describes performance-related, annotated texts in public collections. William P. Halstead's *Shakespeare as Spoken, a Collection of 5000 Acting Editions and Promptbooks of Shakespeare* (12 vols., Ann Arbor and London, 1977–80) is, as its title implies, a more ambitious undertaking. A plain text (the 1867 Globe edition) of each play is faced on the right-hand page by annotations indicating the cuts and transpositions of the various adapters. In addition to the books in public collections listed by Shattuck, Halstead embraces items in 'private' archives and printed acting editions. Consequently his descriptions of the material and its locations make his volumes a useful supplement to Shattuck's list. Because Halstead does not take stage directions into account (this is Shakespeare 'as spoken'), the user still needs to consult the originals. Moreover, his system does not easily accommodate complex transpositions and the introduction of new material into performance texts. *Shakespeare as Spoken* is a helpful indication of those lines and scenes that have suffered most surgery, and reveals clearly the existence of a tradition of cuts and alterations and the influence of Garrick and Kemble on later stage versions. The re-creation, with red pencil and plain text, of its constituent acting versions would be an arduous task of limited profitability.¹⁰

⁹ Alan S. Downer (ed.), *Oxberry's 1822 edition of 'King Richard III' . . .* (Society for Theatre Research, 1959); Charles H. Shattuck (ed.), *Mr Macready Produces 'As You Like It': a Prompt-Book Study* (Urbana, Beta Phi Mu Chapbooks, nos. 5–6, 1962), *William Charles Macready's 'King John,' a Facsimile Promptbook* (Urbana, 1962) and *John Philip Kemble Promptbooks*, 11 vols. (Charlottesville, 1974).

¹⁰ Shattuck's catalogue has been supplemented by the compiler himself in 'The Shakespeare Promptbooks: First Supplement', *Theatre Notebook*, 24 (1969), 5–17. See also L. Terry Oggel, 'The Edwin Booth Promptbook

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The attention now paid to prompt-books, and the availability of Shattuck's and Halstead's catalogues, might encourage the publication of more examples on microfilm or fiche, if not in book form. The *Kemble Promptbooks* were announced as the first of a series, under Shattuck's general editorship, but no further sets have as yet appeared. It may be that microfilm and microfiche, with accompanying books by editors, would be the appropriate method of publication for such an enterprise. Although a number were included in the second Cornmarket series of Shakespearian adaptations, it would be useful to have a fuller programme of reprints of the 'proprietary' acting editions from the nineteenth century (Oxberry's, Lacy's, French's, etc.).¹¹

IV

In addition to the great number of surviving prompt-books, the historian of nineteenth-century Shakespeare is fortunate in having access to a multitude of contemporary reviews, thanks to the flourishing of newspaper and periodical journalism that accompanied the rapid growth of the major cities, the repeal of stamp duty, and the improvement of technology. Although an estimate of the prejudices and audience of reviewers is essential, there has been little study of the Victorian theatrical press. Only a small proportion of the journalism itself has been reprinted, in its own time or since. Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1817) is still available in modern editions, but the theatrical notices it draws on are not easily obtained except in Howe's edition of the complete works (21 vols., 1930-4) or the selection made in 1895 by William Archer and Robert Lowe in the series *Dramatic Essays*.¹² A collection of Leigh Hunt's *Dramatic Criticism* appeared in 1950. Henry Morley's *Journal of a London Playgoer, from 1851 to 1866* has been reprinted with an introduction by Michael Booth; Shaw's Shakespeare reviews are included in *Shaw on Shakespeare*, edited by Edwin Wilson. Three collections of Max Beerbohm's

criticism have been published with introductions by Sir Rupert Hart-Davis.¹³ Some of the collections assembled by Victorian journalists themselves have been reprinted without scholarly attention. George Rowell's *Victorian Dramatic Criticism* (1971) and Gāmini Salgādo's *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare: First Hand Accounts of Performances, 1590-1890* (1975) include some notable reviews of Shakespearian performances.

A number of articles have appeared on the careers and opinions of nineteenth-century reviewers, including pieces on Hunt, Shaw, Archer, and Beerbohm.¹⁴ Joseph Donohue's

Collection at the Players': a Descriptive Catalog', *Theatre Survey*, 14 (1973), 72-111, and Peter J. Ventimiglia, 'Shakespeare's Comedies on the New York Stage: a Promptbook Analysis', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 71 (1977), 415-41.

- 11 The second Cornmarket series of Printed Adaptations and Stage Versions of Shakespeare's Plays began to appear in 1970, under the general editorship of H. Neville Davies. A collection of *Nineteenth Century Shakespeare Burlesques* has been prepared by Stanley Wells (5 vols., 1977-8), who has also written on 'Shakespeare in Planché's Extravaganzas', in *Shakespeare Survey 16* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 103-17.
- 12 Subsequently reprinted by Hill and Wang, New York, as a 'Mermaid Dramabook' (New York, n.d.).
- 13 Lawrence and Caroline Washburn Houtchens (eds.), *Leigh Hunt's Dramatic Criticism, 1808-31* (New York, 1950); Michael R. Booth (ed.), Henry Morley, *Journal of a London Playgoer, from 1851 to 1866* (Leicester, 1976); Edwin Wilson (ed.), *Shaw on Shakespeare* (1968); Sir Rupert Hart-Davis (ed.), Max Beerbohm, *Around Theatres* (1953), *More Theatres* (1969), *Last Theatres* (1970).
- 14 On Hunt: Stanley Wells, 'Shakespeare in Leigh Hunt's Theatre Criticism', *Essays and Studies*, 33 (1980), 119-38. On Shaw: William A. Armstrong, 'Bernard Shaw and Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15 (1964), 27-31; J. Percy Smith, 'Superman Vs. Man: Bernard Shaw on Shakespeare', *Stratford Papers on Shakespeare, 1963* (Toronto, 1963), pp. 118-49. On Archer: Hans Schmid, 'Die Werktreue Aufführung: zur Shakespeare-Kritik William Archers', *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch* (West) (1967), pp. 83-95, and the same author's monograph *The Dramatic Criticism of William Archer* (Berlin, 1964). On Beerbohm: Stanley Wells, 'Shakespeare in Max Beerbohm's Theatre Criticism', *Shakespeare Survey 29* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 133-44. See also Joan Coldwell, 'The Playgoer as Critic: Charles Lamb on Shakespeare's Characters', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 26 (1975), 184-95.

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Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age (Princeton, 1970) discusses the aesthetic assumptions behind the critical reaction to some important performances. M. Glen Wilson has written an illuminating article on the press's treatment of Charles Kean and its influence on his posthumous reputation.¹⁵ The most substantial account of a critic in relation to Shakespearian performance is Daniel J. Watermeier's *Between Actor and Critic: Selected Letters of Edwin Booth and William Winter* (Princeton, 1971), which affords valuable insight into the work and opinions of both parties – America's most eminent Shakespearian actor and one of its most influential theatrical correspondents. Among critics of whom it would be useful to have a fuller account are John Oxenford, Joseph Knight, G. A. Sala and Dutton Cook; and Clement Scott, whose energetic pluralism and reactionary views made him a *bête noire* of Ibsenites and progressives in the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁶ Victorian theatrical journalism covers the whole spectrum of popular publishing in its most dynamic period. *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* (3 vols., 1966–79) and articles in *Victorian Studies* and *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter* have made it easier for the student to use weekly, daily, and monthly papers and magazines. There has been a growth of interest in the work and careers of Victorian journalists, and the authors of many anonymous articles have been identified.

Letters and diaries offer another source of information on life before and behind the curtain, allowing light to be thrown on the private controversies and prejudices sometimes aired in the press, as well as providing fresh commentary on performances. Excerpts from diaries by Joseph Rice and Henry Crabb Robinson have been published by the Society for Theatre Research.¹⁷ George Rowell's *Queen Victoria goes to the Theatre* (1978) includes an eminent playgoer's comments on the theatre of her reign. Kate Terry Gielgud's *Autobiography* (1953) quotes from reviews of performances between the 1890s and the early years of the new century, written as letters to an invalid friend. A selection of these private

reviews, including a number on Shakespearian productions, is contained in *A Victorian Playgoer* (1980) edited by Muriel St Clare Byrne, with forewords by three Gielguds: John, Val, and Eleanor. The letters are lively and reveal an intelligent taste for the old regime. It is interesting to find Tree's massive terraced garden for *Twelfth Night* described as 'delightfully Arcadian and unconventional and simple', or a female Oberon (Julia Neilson) accepted without question and praised for being 'splendid . . . in physique, bearing and voice'. Gordon Crosse's *Shakespearean Playgoing 1896–1951* (1953) begins with a sympathetic account of the same period, but goes on to give a favourable account of the revolution. Like the earlier, privately-printed *Fifty Years of Shakespearean Playgoing* (1940), this derives from a series of pocket diaries, now in Birmingham Shakespeare Library, in which this insatiable theatregoer entered careful notes on the Shakespeare productions he saw. The resulting book is a vivid record of the transition from actor-managers' to directors' Shakespeare, and the rise of the non-commercial companies.

Of the letters and diaries written by performers, Macready's are the fullest and most revealing, although they have yet to be published in full in a scholarly edition. The well-presented and skilfully chosen selection by J. C. Trewin is a useful stop-gap, and contains some otherwise

¹⁵ 'Charles Kean and the Victorian Press', *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 8 (1975), 95–108. Wilson's article challenges the 'accepted' view of Kean's technique, as found in surveys such as Bertram Joseph's *The Tragic Actor* (1959) or Alan S. Downer's 'Players and Painted Stage', *PMLA*, 61 (1946), 522–76.

¹⁶ Cf. Robert Hapgood, 'His Heart upon his Sleeve: Clement Scott as a Reviewer of Shakespeare Productions', *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch* (West) (1967), pp. 70–82. Five American critics – Clapp, Wilkins, Winter, Fiske and Wheeler – are discussed in Tice L. Miller, *Bohemians and Critics: American Theatre Criticism of the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, NJ, 1981).

¹⁷ A. C. Sprague and Bertram Shuttleworth (eds.), Charles Rice, *The London Theatres in the Eighteen-Thirties* (1950); Eluned Brown (ed.), *The London Theatre, 1811–1866: Selections from the Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson* (1966).

unpublished material, but the older, more pretentious editions by Pollock and Toynbee are incomplete and unreliable: the scholar needs to consult all three.¹⁸ J. M. D. Hardwick's *Emigrants in Motley* (1954) prints letters by Charles and Ellen Kean, on tour in America and Australia. The correspondence between Shaw and Ellen Terry, published in 1931, includes their exchange on *Cymbeline*, together with comments on other Shakespeare plays and on Irving's management.¹⁹ Libraries and archives contain innumerable letters documenting the running of theatres and the lives of performers, but few are as worthy of publication as Booth's or Ellen Terry's. It may be that, with a few brilliant exceptions, such documents are better absorbed into biographies than served raw and between footnotes to the public. Some documents, such as John Philip Kemble's memoranda (in the British Library) and James Winston's diaries (edited by Gilbert Cross and Alfred Nelson for the Society for Theatre Research in 1975) are useful for the indirect light their financial and administrative details shed on Shakespearian performances by the parties involved.

Theatrical biography stands uneasily between the publisher's desire to attract a wider public and the academic's insistence on high standards of documentation and the rules of evidence. Although most nineteenth-century biographies of actors and actresses are for one reason or another inadequate, the opportunity to supply fresh information from newly-discovered sources does not always result in a book that is well-written or has any new insight for the Shakespeare scholar. Nor can it be said that many theatrical subjects have given rise to works possessing the intellectual scope and vigour of Painter's Proust or Ellman's Joyce. With a few notable exceptions actors of the old order did not move among the intellectual avant-garde.

Inevitably, certain individuals have proved more stimulating than others, and have consequently been better served. Edmund Kean has been the subject of two notable biographies – by H. N. Hillebrand and Raymond Fitzsimons –

as well as a number of more popular accounts. Hillebrand's *Edmund Kean* (New York, 1933) is sound and civilized, showing discrimination in the face of a mass of scandalous anecdote. Fitzsimons's *Edmund Kean, Fire from Heaven* (1976) is brisker, and benefits from the findings of more recent research. George Frederick Cooke, like Edmund Kean, led the kind of life that tempts biographers to sensationalize: a recent book by Arnold Hare, *George Frederick Cooke, the Actor and the Man* (Society for Theatre Research, 1980) puts together a coherent and judicious narrative of his career. Another scholarly biography of Cooke, Don B. Wilmeth's *George Frederick Cooke, Machiavel of the Stage* (Westport, Conn., 1980) provides a similarly vivid account of the world of a Georgian actor. Neither Kean nor Cooke can be said to have contributed directly to the development of the techniques of Shakespearian production. Their attitudes to the performance of the plays are implicit in their acting and the reactions of their contemporaries.²⁰ With the Kemble family the case is altered, for John Philip Kemble and his sister professed specific artistic tastes as well as exemplifying their application to acting and *mise-en-scène*. Kemble had definite views regarding a manager's duty to Shakespeare and both he and his brother Charles played important parts in the inauguration of that system of 'special production' applauded by Odell.

John Philip Kemble, the Actor in his Theatre, by Herschel Baker (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), and

18 J. C. Trewin (ed.), *The Journal of William Charles Macready* (1967); Sir Frederick Pollock (ed.), *Macready's Reminiscences and Selections from his Diaries and Letters*, 2 vols. (1875); William Toynbee (ed.), *The Diaries of William Charles Macready, 1833–1851*, 2 vols. (1912). See also Charles H. Shattuck (ed.), *Bulwer and Macready: a Chronicle of the Early Victorian Theatre* (Urbana, 1958).

19 Christopher St John (ed.), *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw, a Correspondence* (1931). Shaw's letters have also appeared in Dan H. Laurence's edition of his *Collected Letters*, 2 vols. (1965–72) and, in part, in Edwin Wilson's *Shaw on Shakespeare*.

20 Cf. Carol Jones Carlisle, 'Edmund Kean on the Art of Acting', *Theatre Notebook*, 22 (1968), 119–20.