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The librettist and theatre manager Alfred Bunn (1796–1860) published these memoirs of his career, giving a view 'both before and behind the curtain', in 1840. He professes not to be fond of autobiographies, is clearly irritated at the not always flattering walk-on role he is given in the memoirs of some of the greatest contemporary performers, and regards this three-volume work as a way of settling a number of scores. His account cannot therefore be said to be unprejudiced, but it is written with a verve which makes it very readable, and – allowing for bias and exaggeration – provides a fascinating account of the period when Bunn was running both the Theatre Royal at Drury Lane and the Opera House at Covent Garden, providing libretti for some of the best known British composers of the period, and quarrelling with almost everyone he worked with in the course of his career.

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# The Stage

*Both Before and Behind the Curtain, from  
Observations Taken on the Spot*

VOLUME 2

ALFRED BUNN



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THE STAGE:  
BOTH BEFORE  
AND  
BEHIND THE CURTAIN,  
FROM  
“OBSERVATIONS TAKEN ON THE SPOT.”

BY ALFRED BUNN,  
LATE LESSEE OF THE THEATRES ROYAL DRURY LANE AND  
COVENT GARDEN.

“I am (NOT) forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house.”  
HAMLET, ACT I. SC. V.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ERRATA IN VOL. II.

- Page 5, 8 line from bottom, *after the word patent add of the.*  
13, last line, *for unnatural read not unnatural.*  
26, 9 line from top, *for is read are.*  
43, 5 — top, *for are read is.*  
44, 2 — top, *for remains read remain.*  
89, 13 — top, *for his read her.*  
101, in note, 6 line from bottom, *for ou read ou.*  
102, in note, 4 line from bottom, *for de théâtre read du théâtre.*  
151, 14 line from bottom, *for In this read In such.*  
166, penultimate line, *for work read labour.*  
184, last line of Contents of Chapter VIII., *for desert read dessert.*  
190, 6 — bottom, *for aldermannic read aldermanic.*  
195, 9 — top, *after arms add him.*  
240, 8 line from top, *for yes read yet.*  
265, 8 — bottom, *for ever read even.*  
284, first line of note, *for you read the reader.*  
302, 8 line from top *for parvenue read parvenu.*  
302, 15 — top *for parcourus, read parcouru.*