1976

Costuming Practices at the Wallack Theatres, 1852-1881.

Charles Lee Dunham
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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COSTUMING PRACTICES AT THE WALLACK THEATRES, 1852-1881

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech

by

Charles Lee Dunham
B.A., Texas A&I University, 1958
M.A., Texas A&I University, 1960
December, 1976
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Frank A. Dunham and Virginia McLemore Dunham, who could care less about theatrical costuming, but who always encouraged excellence and provided much financial assistance during the research and writing of this study.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer gratefully acknowledges the assistance of many individuals in the writing of this work:

first, to the professors at Louisiana State University:

Gresdna A. Doty, the director of this study, who first introduced the writer to American theatre history and provided personal encouragement and incisive criticism during the development of this study.

Claude L. Shaver, who as Director of Theatre arranged for the writer to pursue his graduate study at LSU;

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Irene P. Huenefeld, costumier, whose creative talents inspired and whose dedication to authenticity first introduced the writer to the joys of costume research and design;

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third, to the photo-duplication divisions of the New York Public Library, Harvard University, and Louisiana State University;

finally, to Thomas Watson for initial research assistance and to John Brasseux for photo reproduction.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the costuming practices at the Wallack theatres in New York and thereby determine the prevailing trends in costuming on the American stage during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. From 1852 through 1881, Wallack's operated under one continuous management and attained the reputation of being the leading theatrical organization in the United States. Noted for the quality and authenticity of its costuming, Wallack's emphasized appropriate and elegant stage dress as an integral part of the over-all spectacle which drew large and fashionable audiences throughout the theatre's history.

The study relied upon the following evidence:
(1) photographs and engravings of performers in costume;
(2) critical comments in contemporary reviews of Wallack productions;
(3) testimony of contemporary performers, managers, and playwrights.

The study is composed of eight chapters, seventy-three plates, and two appendices. Chapter I provides a background for understanding the theatrical climate of mid-nineteenth century American theatre. Chapter II examines the managerial policies of J. W. and Lester Wallack. Chapter III examines the relationship of the acting company to costuming practices. Chapters IV, V, VI, and VII provide detailed analyses of
costuming practices for Shakespearean comedies, eighteenth-century comedies, romantic melodramas, and contemporary comedies.

The study reveals the following, summarized in Chapter VIII:

(1) both J. W. Wallack and Lester Wallack provided personal examples of interest in careful, detailed attention to appropriate costuming;

(2) they maintained a large and talented company of performers and technicians whose concern for costumes and artistic dedication matched their own;

(3) they provided the performers and technicians with generous salaries which encouraged excellence and kept the company together over long periods of time, thus stabilizing the high standards for costumes;

(4) they established an atmosphere of pleasant working conditions which were conducive to the pursuit of excellence in costuming and all other aspects of production;

(5) they made minimal use of the star-system, which encouraged each member of the company to be an equal participant differentiated only by natural talents and limitations so that costuming was a concern for all;

(6) they recognized their own limitations as well as those of other performers and cast actors in period roles only when they could effectively wear period costumes and recreate the styles and manners of a former time;

(7) they scheduled adequate rehearsal time to insure quality
of production, although dress rehearsals were uncommon;
(8) they allowed a generous budget which resulted in the
construction of costumes from elaborate materials;
(9) they kept the theatre fashionable with a repertory and
a style of production that attracted an educated and fashion­
able audience, which, in turn, encouraged educated and fash­
ionable costuming.

The study further determined that Wallack's
(1) promoted the development of more elaborate state costuming;
(2) encouraged appropriate and authentic period costuming;
(3) anticipated the development of realistic costuming,
thereby establishing the standards by which contemporary cos­
tuming practices may be judged.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

My father was cast for the part of Tressel in Cibber's version of "Richard III." Tressel is the youthful messenger who conveys to King Henry VI the news of the murder of his son after the battle of Tewkesbury. My father, a young, ambitious actor, came on with the feather hanging from his cap, all wet, his hair dishevelled, one boot torn nearly off, one spur broken, the other gone entirely, his gauntlet stained with blood, and his sword snapped in twain; at which old Wewitzer, who was the manager, and had been a manager before my father was born, was perfectly shocked. It was too late to do anything then, but the next morning Wewitzer sent for him to come to his office and addressed him thus: "Young man, how do you ever hope to get on in your profession by deliberately breaking all precedent? What will become of the profession if mere boys are allowed to take such liberties? Why, sir, you should have entered in a suit of decent black, with silk stockings on and with a white handkerchief in your hand." "What! after defeat and flight from battle?" interrupted my father. "That has nothing at all to do with it," was the reply; "the proprieties! Sir, the proprieties!"

Thus Lester Wallack describes one of J. W. Wallack's first encounters with the traditions which marked the costuming practices in early nineteenth-century theatre. The manager could not have known that the young lad in his early teens would one day become one of New York's most influential theatre managers and that the Wallacks--both father and son--would help lay the groundwork for the development of realism in costume design. It was, perhaps, just such experiences

1Lester Wallack, Memories of Fifty Years (New York: Charles Scribners's Sons, 1889), pp. 81-82.
that may have provided the basis for the Wallacks' later insistence on appropriate details in all phases of dramatic production. The Wallacks would eventually provide, according to the Spirit of the Times for February 1, 1868, "a beacon of light and shining example to the slovenly and inefficient establishments which costume an English peasant girl in the garb of a Spanish gypsy."

Born into a theatrical family in London on August 24, 1795, James William Wallack was "cradled in a theatre, nursed in a green room, and suckled at a sidescene." Following his debut at the Drury Lane at the age of twelve, young Wallack received his training under the patronage of Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Lord Byron and the guidance of Robert Elliston and Edmund Kean. He played Laertes to Elliston's Hamlet at the age of eighteen and supported Kean in such roles as Iago, Edgar, Macduff, and Richmond. He became an acknowledged favorite in such parts as Joseph Surface in The School for Scandal and Rolla in Pizarro, while critics considered him the logical successor to Charles Kemble in such Shakespearean roles as Benedick, Mercutio, and Petruchio. Following his marriage in 1817 to the daughter of a prominent actor, John


Johnstone, Wallack accepted an engagement at the Park Theatre in New York, where he received acclaim for his performances. Wallack immediately established himself in America as a star of the first magnitude, appearing in Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. After the birth of their son, John Johnstone (Lester) Wallack in New York on January 1, 1820, the Wallacks returned to London and the Drury Lane, concluding a highly successful two-year engagement at the Park Theatre.

After recovering from an accident during an American tour in November of 1821, Wallack became stage manager of the Drury Lane, where playbills credit him with "direction and superintendence" as early as the winter of 1823. During his three years as stage manager, Wallack appeared with Edmund Kean and Charles Macready. Although his reception in England was cordial, it was never as enthusiastic as that he received on his American tours; consequently, Wallack made repeated crossings of the Atlantic during a ten-year period between 1827 and 1837. On June 17, 1837, the New York Mirror announced that Wallack was sailing for Europe to "beat up recruits" to reopen under his management the National Theatre in New York.

Wallack began his first full-scale management in New York at the National on the corner of Church and Leonard


on August 28, 1837. He showed New York "the meaning of perfect stage management" by exhibiting "admirable taste and tact" in the production of plays at the National. The New York Mirror stated that the spectator never had his good taste shocked by anachronism and never had "to call upon his imagination to supply deficiencies of knowledge or blunders of judgment." Such "harmonious accord" was possible at the National, according to contemporary theatre historian Joseph Ireland, because Wallack initiated great improvements in the mounting of the plays. Ireland believed that the hand of the master was visible in every production and that "the taste, elegance, and propriety displayed about the whole establishment gave it a respectability never hitherto enjoyed in New York, except at the old Park Theatre." Unfortunately, the National burned after two years, and Wallack lost his entire wardrobe valued at $8,500. He once again returned to England, where he was active as a performer and manager at the Haymarket and at the Princess's Theatre. In 1851, following the death of his wife and his own serious illness, Wallack relocated permanently in New York where his son was performing at Burton's under the name of John Lester.

8New York Mirror, April 26, 1858.
9Ibid.
The younger Wallack was reluctant to trade on his famous father's name. He had played his first amateur role at the age of nineteen as Allan Field while on tour with his father in England, but for his first professional engagement in John Payne's comedy Charles II he performed as Mr. Lester, a name he would use until 1858. Lester learned his profession touring the provinces and performing such roles as Benedick to Helen Faucit's Beatrice and Mercutio to Charlotte Cushman's Romeo. Wallack credits Cushman with helping him to secure his first London engagement at the Haymarket in 1846. He made his American debut September 27, 1847, in the role of Sir Charles Coldstream in Dion Boucicault's farce Used Up, establishing himself as the leading light comedian in New York. Following a two-year engagement at the Bowery Theatre and again at Burton's Theatre, Lester joined his father in establishing the first of three theatres to bear the Wallack name. "Then and there," wrote Boucicault in The Sun for May 27, 1888, "was founded a dramatic dynasty which has proved for 35 years to be the backbone of the American stage."

With J. W. Wallack as manager and Lester Wallack as stage manager, Wallack's Lyceum formally opened its doors on September 8, 1852. Formerly known as Brougham's Lyceum and later renamed simply Wallack's, the theatre was located on the west side of Broadway and a few feet south of Broome street in New York.\textsuperscript{13} At the conclusion of the opening

\textsuperscript{12}Wallack, p. 39. \textsuperscript{13}Ibid., pp. 13-14.
night performances of *The Way to Get Married* and *The Boarding School*, the elder Wallack addressed the audience:

I am sure there are many here who remember the old National. You were pleased to approve of my management then, and I trust experience as a manager, in the little village of London, has since made me a little more worthy of your patronage. It is now thirteen years, since—and I am certain you all regret it,—we lost that beautiful building by fire. It is, therefore, thirteen years since I addressed you in the character of a manager, and it is five years since I acted before you. The National was a fine, gallant, first-rate old ship, full of kinds of accommodations; but we have no doubt that this nice little frigate, with the noble and industrious hands to support her, will sail in the full favor of your approbation.\(^\text{14}\)

Sail in full favor Wallack's did, as the *New York Herald* pointed out on February 24, 1853, that the theatre had in six months established itself "to occupy the front rank among metropolitan theatres." Alfred Bunn, a British manager who visited New York in 1852, thought of Wallack's as "a pleasant little theatre" which was in many respects "an exception to the general neglect of stage management." Bunn found the scenery "infinitely better," the direction tasteful, and the fidelity of costume "rigidly preserved."\(^\text{15}\)

Another Englishman, St. John Molyneux, wrote that he considered Wallack's to be the transatlantic home of "genteel comedy," and that English comedies, dramas, and burlesques, "treating of English scenes and homes, are more carefully


mounted and more perfectly put on the stage in a New York Theatre than in those houses where they were originally pro-
duced.\textsuperscript{16}

The Wallacks received additional approbation from Put-
nam's Magazine in 1854 for the attention paid to details and for the "utmost order and decorum" which excluded anything "offensive to the most delicate taste."\textsuperscript{17} The Spirit of the Times, on October 4, 1856, called Wallack's the only theatre in which the legitimate drama was properly represented. The Spirit noted on November 3, 1869, that "of all of the theatres in this country, Wallack's is the only one where the strictest attention is enforced to the minutest details."

The completeness and care given the wardrobe department and other phases of production undoubtedly reflected the personal attitudes of both Wallacks.\textsuperscript{18} The New York Herald stated in Wallack's obituary on December 27, 1864, that the success of the theatre was mainly due to the elder Wallack's personal supervision which marked each production with "his tact, his experience, his knowledge of the art, his taste, and his industry." The writer credited the elder Wallack with personally teaching the actors how to act, selecting the scenes, and superintending the dressing of the charac-


\textsuperscript{18} Swinney, p. 159.
ters: "no detail was neglected which could add to the pleasure of the public." In J. W. Wallack's anonymous biography, published a year later, the writer summarized the effect of Wallack's production standards:

to say that he always aimed at perfection and strove by every legitimate means within his grasp to secure it, and that the result of his endeavors was an elevation of theatrical intelligence and culture to a standard much higher than that achieved by any of his predecessors or contemporaries, is simple and universally recognized truth. Mr. Wallack's theatre has won the just reputation of being superior to any other in which the English language is spoken, and for this we have Mr. Wallack alone to be grateful.

J. W. Wallack's son, Lester Wallack, perpetuated the managerial genius of his father and maintained "the standard of dramatic excellence that has made the name of Wallack famous in England and America." According to the testimony of the New York Times on September 7, 1888, Lester Wallack for more than thirty years had not only been associated with "the most successful and most highly esteemed playhouse in this country," but "for more than twenty years his own intelligence and energy and artistic tastes controlled the affairs of that establishment." When the second Wallack's Theatre opened on September 25, 1861, at the northeast corner of Broadway and Thirteenth street, Lester Wallack had prac-

19 New York Herald, December 27, 1864.

20 A Sketch, p. 57.

tically assumed complete charge of managerial duties. Upon his father's death in 1864, he became the sole proprietor and actively managed the theatre until he made his final appearance on that stage April 11, 1881. Lester Wallack's personal attention to detail and supervision of all facets of production led the Spirit of the Times to conclude as early as April 26, 1862, that as a stage manager he had no superior in America. The writer stated that Lester's eye was everywhere, watching rehearsals, supervising the painting of the scenery, the selection of the wardrobe, and the construction of the machinery, thereby insuring the "absolute perfection with which plays are 'put upon the stage.'" The New York Daily Tribune also lauded Lester's stage management for exercising a "beneficial influence in elevating the material properties of the boards." As a manager Lester Wallack always maintained high ideals. According to the Tribune, "To him is largely due the perfection we have attained in stage dressing and mounting. . . . It was on his boards that the art of costuming was practically revolutionized. . . ."

22 Moses, Famous Actor Families, p. 221.
23 Wallack, pp. 21-23.
24 Spirit of the Times, April 26, 1862.
To realize the import of such plaudits, one must recall the basic principles which had governed costuming practices on the American stage during the previous one hundred years. America's first professional acting companies were composed primarily of British actors who brought with them the customs and traditions of costuming prevalent on the mid-eighteenth-century English stage. Reflecting neoclassical principles, actors considered time and place unimportant and usually dressed their characters in contemporary garments even for plays of former times. Actors also tended to idealize nature and sought to dress themselves in the most elegant and fashionable dress of the day. Even though the acting company maintained a "common stock" of costumes from which actors could select their dress, many performers provided their own costumes in an effort to dress as sumptuously as possible. As a result, intense rivalries often developed and costumes frequently reflected "the actor's purse" rather than the character's position; consequently, an actress portraying a lady of society might appear shabbily dressed alongside a servant played by an actress with greater financial means.


29Ibid., p. 281.
Stage traditions dictated some departures from contemporary dress, especially in the costuming of near-Eastern and classical characters. Actors wore the habit à la romaine for classical heroes and costumed near-Eastern characters in turbans, baggy trousers, and long fur-trimmed gowns. Actresses portraying near-Eastern roles, however, wore fashionable contemporary dress, indicating their nationality by the addition of feathered headdresses. Conventionalized costumes also existed for certain Shakespearean characters which were usually dressed in Elizabethan styles. Such characters as Hamlet, Falstaff, Macbeth, and Shylock each required specific traditional costumes from which actors rarely departed.

Despite some costuming traditions, no unifying force controlled the costuming. Since primary responsibility for a character's costume rested with the individual performer, discrepancies and incongruities often characterized eighteenth-century productions. By the end of the century, however, the decline of neoclassicism and the rise of romanticism resulted in some attempts to emulate nature, and performers began to dress their characters more appropriately with greater attention to detail and an increasing interest in historical accuracy.

Most theatre historians generally agree that while

30 Ibid., p. 280.
31 Richardson, p. 14.
initial efforts at historical accuracy in costuming can be attributed to David Garrick\textsuperscript{32} and Charles Macklin\textsuperscript{33} in the eighteenth century, it is with the nineteenth century that the actual change toward correctness in historical costuming began. Charles Kemble's production of *King John* in London in 1823, the first complete production to attempt historical accuracy,\textsuperscript{34} was designed by J. R. Planche and began an era when theatre managers, stage designers, and the audiences themselves became increasingly "period conscious."\textsuperscript{35}

In America, the costume designer began to rise in importance about 1817, and by 1846 some theatres hired designers who minutely reproduced historically accurate dress, armor, and swords for actors to wear in historically authentic settings.\textsuperscript{36} America's theatre managers followed the British lead and began to exercise some control over costume style, especially for period plays, and by the 1850's managers fully exploited "authentic" scenery and costume.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century,


\textsuperscript{33}Edward W. Mammen, *The Old Stock Company School of Acting* (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library, 1945), p. 31.

\textsuperscript{34}Holmes, p. 13.


however, performers continued the stage traditions of the previous century. Actresses persisted in wearing the dress of the day for most plays; for Oriental characters, however, Turkish trousers, long close-fitting blouse, sash, cloak, and turban with feathers became the standardized costume. Actors maintained the traditional Shakespearean costuming styles and conventionalized costumes for Oriental and Roman plays. The advent of the stage Irishman brought yet another traditional British costume to the American stage.

Some departures from English influence came with the development of native American characters. American writers created stage versions of the American Indian, the American Negro, the Yankee, the sailor, and the fireboy, all appearing on the stage in realistic native dress. As a result, the American theatre had for the first time its own costuming traditions which continued throughout most of the nineteenth century.

The first half of the nineteenth century was a period of invention and experimentation in costuming, but evidence indicates few attempts at a unified production. The Wallacks were directly involved with such experimentation, but numerous accounts attest that both J. W. and Lester Wallack recognized the need for the unification of all elements of a production, including costuming. Since a unified production was not the

37 Richardson, p. 60.
38 Ibid., p. 70.
standard practice, even in 1852, the Wallack theatres, the
Wallacks themselves, and their various companies warrant
closer examination. An investigation of the Wallack pro­
ductions should provide an insight into the further evolution
of costuming practices during the nineteenth century and
should aid in a more accurate appraisal of the development
of appropriateness in costuming on the American stage.

Wallack's Theatre provides an appropriate opportunity
for such an investigation because of its five distinct
features: (1) between 1852 and 1881 the theatre operated
under one continuous management which allows the examination
of the development of an unbroken line of costuming practices;
(2) the theatre attained the reputation of being the leading
theatrical organization in the United States; (3) the company
was noted for the quality and authenticity of its costumes;
(4) the Wallacks supplied the technical departments of the
theatre with a liberal budget and had their technicians do
the necessary research to insure accuracy of detail;39
finally, J. W. Wallack insisted that every detail of costuming
and scenery not only be accurate but also contribute to the
total stage picture.40

Such practices indicate that the Wallacks were progres­sive for their time and belie Wallack's statement following

39Cecil Derwent Jones, Jr., "The Policies and Practices
of Wallack's Theatre, 1852-1888," unpublished doctoral dis­
sertation, University of Illinois, 1958, p. 28.
40Ibid., p. 17.
the inaugural performance at his new Lyceum theatre: "I go with the times; but though I have not the vanity to go before them, I am too quick to be left behind." Careful examination of available evidence indicates that the Wallacks not only went with the times, but were prime movers in the transition toward more appropriate and authentic costuming practices.

\[41\] A Sketch, p. 45.
CHAPTER TWO

MANAGERIAL POLICIES AND COSTUMING PRACTICES

When James Robinson Planché, English scholar, artist, and designer, persuaded Charles Kemble in 1823 that it would be both reasonable and popular to dress Shakespeare's *King John* in costumes and armor approximating to early thirteenth-century fashions,¹ he gave impetus to a complete reformation of stage costuming. With Planché's research and designs and Kemble's management, the Covent Garden production became the first in which all the visual elements were especially designed for historical accuracy.² The production made theatrical history, not only for its authenticity, but because its popular acceptance emphasized to the managers that authentic or historically accurate dressing could be financially profitable.³

English actor-manager Charles Kean followed in Kemble's footsteps, carrying the trend even further by costuming his own productions lavishly with some semblance of historical accuracy, and often providing audiences with detailed sources and authorities for production designs.⁴ Ironically, it had


²Richardson, "Costuming on the American Stage," p. 29.

³Holmes, p. 13.

⁴Ibid., p. 14.
been J. W. Wallack who had literally dressed and "shoved" a nervous Charles Kean onto the stage for his first acting role,\textsuperscript{5} but it was Kean who introduced New York audiences to their first production entirely costumed according to the findings of historical research when he staged \textit{King John} and \textit{Richard III} in the fall of 1846.\textsuperscript{6}

These milestone productions represent steps toward historical accuracy in representation which other conscientious managers and actors began to adopt as part of their duty to the public and to the profession.\textsuperscript{7} Attempts at historical accuracy in America followed the English lead,\textsuperscript{8} and in the first half of the nineteenth century, numerous references attest to the fact that American audiences became increasingly aware of discrepancies in costuming and began to pressure actors and actresses to dress their parts with more authenticity.

Writing of her acting career in Ohio in the 1860's, Clara Morris reflects a contemporary performer's view:

\begin{quote}
It is a delightful study, that of costume--to learn how to drape the toga, how to hang the peplum; to understand the meaning of a bit of ribbon in the hair, whether as arranged in the three-banded fillet of the Grecian girl or as the snood of the Scottish lassie; to know enough of the cestus and the law governing its wearing, not to humiliate yourself in adopting it on improper occasions: to
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{5}Wallack, \textit{Memories}, pp. 91-92.
\textsuperscript{6}Richardson, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{7}Holmes, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{8}Richardson, p. 63.
have at least a bowing acquaintance with all footgear, from sandals down to Oxford tie; to be able to scatter your puffed, slashed, or hanging sleeves over the centuries, with their correct accompanying, small-close, large-round, or square-upstanding ruffs. Why the mere detail of girdles and hanging pouches from distant queens down to Faust's Gretchen, was a joy in itself.9

Anachronisms and incongruities persisted, however, in spite of interest in historical accuracy, primarily because performers provided most or all of their own costumes from their rather meager salaries. Actresses often made or altered their own costumes, while most theatres provided the basic period garments for the male performers.10 As late as 1870 even at Wallack's Theatre, the rules and regulations clearly stated that the individual actor was to provide himself with silk or cotton tights and stockings, wigs, feathers, swords, shoes, and boots necessary to complete a period costume. For contemporary plays, the performer was to provide the entire costume.11 Since responsibility for providing costumes and accessories lay primarily with the individual actor, subject to the ultimate approval of the stage manager, stock companies were often criticized for costumes deemed inappropriate or worn. It was often pointed out, however, that of all the stock companies Wallack's


10Richardson, pp. 74-75.

received the least criticism.\textsuperscript{12}

Even though the standards for costuming may have been higher at Wallack's, the theatre followed basically the same organization as that of other stock companies of the period. Managers maintained a permanent company of actors who could on demand produce any one of a large number of plays in a given repertory. The managers selected the actors according to their "lines of business," such as leading men, juveniles, old men, low comedians, or walking gentlemen, along with their female counterparts. Stock companies generally operated under the direction of an actor-manager, and therefore reflected the manager's tastes in types of plays produced and the styles in which they were presented. Managers usually engaged "stars" to augment the basic company for a season or less, while most stock company actors remained with the company for several seasons.

Because J. W. and Lester Wallack promoted high standards of theatrical production, it is not surprising that they insisted upon excellence in costuming. An examination of the Wallack management reveals eleven contributing factors which directly or indirectly may have affected the costuming practices at the Wallack theatres: (1) the extensive background and experience of the management; (2) a reliance on British methods and traditions; (3) the minimizing of the star-system; (4) a repertory limited to

comedy; (5) liberal financial outlays for production elements; (6) a drawing together of a permanent company of talented performers; (7) a generous salary schedule; (8) ideal working conditions; (9) adequate rehearsal time; (10) close supervision of rehearsals; and (11) a large and dedicated technical staff.

Managerial Experience

Since costume practices reflected to a great extent the individual preferences of the actor-manager, the background and training of J. W. and Lester Wallack resulted in the establishment of high standards for costuming. Father and son were "eminently qualified men to assume the operation of a company, both by experience and taste."13 James W. Wallack had more than thirty years of experience as an actor, stage manager, and manager before opening the first Wallack theatre in 1852, and Lester had more than twenty years of training before he assumed full control of the New York theatre after his father's death in 1864. The Wallacks were intimately associated with prominent theatrical managers and performers on both sides of the Atlantic, with their English experience and background bringing them into contact with the experimentation of such producers as Madam Vestris, J. R. Planché, and Charles Kean, who initiated reforms in production which fostered the development of more

authentic and appropriate costuming. One has but to look at the portraits include in Lester Wallack's autobiography "to realize how far-reaching was the acquaintance of the family, and how in them it was possible to see at work, methods born of the schools of Garrick, Elliston, and Kean."^{14}

British Traditions

Always described as being more British than American, the Wallacks followed and may even have surpassed the efforts of their English contemporaries in establishing appropriate costuming standards. An unidentified and undated clipping in the Player's Collection in New York comments, "It is Mr. Wallack's peculiar faith that Britain is the artery of the universe," but the critics "are not disposed to regard Mr. Wallack's anglophilia with anything like bitterness." The Wallacks would produce an English play "on slightest provocation," but neither Wallack was a revolutionary; in fact, available evidence indicates that they were both basically traditionalists, who relied on the tired and proven methods.^{15}

By establishing a permanent company of primarily British performers, the Wallacks were able to duplicate the British theatrical organization. Under that system actors selected costumes from a common wardrobe with the assistance of a wardrobe keeper whose duties included the construction and

^{14} Moses, Famous Actor Families, p. 198.
^{15} Swinney, p. 123.
maintainance of new costumes as well as the refurbishing of older costumes stored in the theatre's wardrobe. The Wallacks therefore relied on the taste and discretion of performers who had received their training in England under the British repertory system. In an interview reported in the New York Herald on August 26, 1879, Lester Wallack stated that he had always followed the British system under which his father opened Wallack's Lyceum, although he had modified some policies to conform to changing "public tastes." By following the British lead, the Wallacks demonstrated an interest in developing more appropriate and historically accurate costumes for period plays.

Star System

While relying on traditional British policies, the Wallacks were able to achieve even more effective costuming by not relying on the "starring system," whereby well-known actors would be engaged to bolster sagging attendance and receipts. When British stars began tours to America, they usually brought with them elegant and appropriate costumes for the particular characters they would portray. Their supporting casts, however, often wore inappropriate costumes which contrasted with those of the visiting star. Wallack's avoided such discrepancies by maintaining a permanent organization in which "all the company stand on equal footing save in natural talents" and "the little people are proud to see their names almost always in the
bill, and always just as prominent as the leading members."\textsuperscript{16} By not emphasizing the star system, the Wallack's were able to achieve a more uniform standard for costuming.

Only twelve stars appeared with the company during its thirty-six years of operation,\textsuperscript{17} and six of those performed during the theatrical seasons of 1856 and 1857 when the elder Wallack leased the theatre to William Stuart and Lester Wallack continued as stage manager. Twice the younger Wallack engaged stars for an entire season, including Charles Mathews the Younger during the 1871 season and E. A. Sothern for the 1872 season. The basic policy at Wallack's theatre remained, however, to bring together the "established favorites"\textsuperscript{18} to form "a large and highly talented and able company--one fully equal to all the requirements of its line of business."\textsuperscript{19}

Repertory

Because of its emphasis upon one "line of business" Wallack's became known as the House of Comedy. J. W. Wallack announced at the opening of the first Wallack theatre in New York in 1852: "My object is to make you laugh, not to make you weep." The elder Wallack planned to include "high comedy, the highest and best class of farce, vaudeville,

\textsuperscript{16}Spirit of the Times, February 16, 1867.
\textsuperscript{17}Jones, "Policies and Practices," p. 53.
\textsuperscript{18}A Sketch, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{19}Spirit of the Times, February 16, 1867.
etc.," along with "dramas of stirring interest" and new pieces, but no tragedy.\textsuperscript{20} British comedy became the staple item of the repertory, with such eighteenth-century classics as \textit{She Stoops to Conquer} and \textit{The Rivals} presented in twenty-four seasons and \textit{The School for Scandal} performed in eighteen seasons. Of the fifteen plays presented in ten or more seasons, fourteen were of the type designated as standard eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century comedies. Of the fifteen plays performed more than one hundred times, seven were standard comedies, and the remaining eight plays included four romantic melodramas, two spectacular melodramas, and two comedies by T. W. Robertson.\textsuperscript{21}

While Wallack's preference for comedy may have strengthened the comedic skills of the company, the variety of the repertory must have challenged the theatre's technical staff to its limits, for Wallack's produced a total of five hundred ten different plays during the thirty-six regular seasons of its existence. In the first ten years of the theatre's operation at the Broome and Broadway location, the Wallack's presented an average of seventy plays a season, with as many as one hundred eight in 1856, reflecting the prevailing practice of a nightly change of bill. This total of seven hundred two productions and revivals in ten years does not include over three hundred curtain-raisers and afterpieces. During the last three years at its first lo-

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{A Sketch}, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{21} Jones, p. 80.
cation, however, Wallack's averaged only thirty-two different plays a season, an indication of the advent of the long-run rather than the nightly change of bill. The theatre continued to average thirty-three plays a season during the first ten years at its new location at Broadway and Thirteenth, but averaged only twelve plays a season during its final ten years. Although the long-run reduced the number of plays to be mounted and costumed, the fact remains that one-fifth, or one hundred, of the productions were given fewer than five performances.22

An historian contemporary with the period, Laurence Hutton, states that the "established and approved plays" produced by Wallack's served as a tonic "administered in careful doses by Mr. Wallack" to elevate the standard of drama and remove "much that was sensational and irregular on the stage."23 In the 1870's, however, the old or standard comedies received fewer productions due to the lack of box office appeal. Lester Wallack explained in the New York Herald for August 26, 1879, that no matter how well the comedies were acted or how elaborately they were mounted, they did not pay for the production costs. Lester Wallack's reliance on the revivals of old comedies brought a comment in the Spirit of the Times on February 7, 1863, that he was "burrowing

22 Ibid., pp. 161-173.
23 Laurence Hutton, Plays and Players (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1875), pp. 103-104.
reasonably expect at any moment, to see them on the pave
in tight stockings, knee breeches, periwigs, and pig-tails."
The critic concluded, however, that Wallack's production of
the old comedies charmed the viewer and left him "as satis-
fied as though he had been to hear his favorite preacher on
his favorite topic." The appeal of the old comedies did
deteriorate, however, over the next two decades, causing a
critic reviewing She Stoops to Conquer in 1884 to conclude
that "the days of illusion are truly over when that elegant
picture of men and manners . . . fails to awaken enthusiasm
when acted by Wallack's excellent company."25

In a period when other theatres relied on extravaganzas
and spectacular scenic effects, Wallack's reliance on the
standard British comedies apparently contributed to the
establishment of higher standards for the costuming of
period plays. Even with the nightly change of bill, the
repertory allowed a continuity of costume styles from the
previous century. The variety of costumes in the theatre's
wardrobe undoubtedly reflected the variety of the repertory,
which in turn influenced the development of more appropriate
costumes.

Financial Policies

Since the theatre's repertory in the first two decades

24 *Spirit of the Times*, February 7, 1863.
25 *New York Herald*, December 9, 1884.
included primarily plays which required period costumes, the practice of providing male performers with basic period garments necessitated considerable financial outlay. Critical reviews attest to the fact that neither Wallack stinted in providing funds for elaborate, elegant, and richly decorated costumes for period plays. Throughout the theatre's history, neither Wallack abandoned "the noble aim and duty of conducting a theatre upon high principles of art for the more limited but remunerative work of the actor." 26

The New York Daily Tribune in 1862 paid tribute to the Wallacks and other managers who, regardless of "considerable outlays of solid cash," continued to promote care in the details of stage accuracies, reminding its readers that "as much as several thousand dollars is spent on a play which may faint and die before the first week of its representation is over." 27 In this respect, the Wallacks' management placed their theatre "far ahead of any establishment in America for the general completeness and excellence of its dramatic representations." 28

Lester Wallack died bankrupt, however, and evidence indicates mixed opinions as to whether the expense of costuming and staging the old comedies directly affected his financial success as a manager. The New York Daily Tribune

27 New York Daily Tribune, February 17, 1862.
28 Spirit of the Times, February 16, 1867.
on June 22, 1863, called the content of the repertory "mere business shrewdness," adding that "a manager's surest road to fortune is to be found in organizing a good company and bringing out good plays." Another contemporary writer maintained, however, that in the production of period comedies Wallack was "looking backward, rather than forward, so he fails to go forward." In 1860 Wallack's averaged twenty-five hundred to three thousand dollars in weekly receipts, with expenses totaling about eighteen hundred dollars, resulting in profits of from seven hundred fifty to twelve hundred dollars weekly. Later tallies from 1863 to 1880 inclusive showed theatre receipts totaling $3,701,504.16 with profits of $1,116,900, or an average of $62,050 profit per season for Lester Wallack, over and above his salary.

The costuming and staging of Wallack's repertory apparently contributed to financial profits; however, the discrepancies between the theatre's apparent financial success and Wallack's bankruptcy may in part be explained by the fact that all receipts were deposited to the private account of Theodore Moss, Wallack's business manager. Moss began

29 Undesignated clipping, Wallack Folder, Player's Collection, Walter Hampden Memorial Library, New York.


31 John Carboy, "What Killed Mr. Wallack," undesignated clipping, Wallack Folder, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.

32 Ibid.
his apprenticeship at Wallack's first theatre as an assistant in the box office at a salary of six dollars a week, and had a personal fortune of three or four hundred thousand dollars when Wallack retired. Records indicate the theatre had a missing balance of $686,000. This previously un-evaluated information may indicate Wallack misplaced his trust in Moss, and that negative conclusions concerning the financial success of Wallack's choice of repertory may be invalid.

According to his son Arthur, Lester Wallack's "last years were saddened, for things weren't going too well with him. He was no businessman, and business matters vexed him." Whatever the reasons for Wallack's financial failure, contemporary opinions may be summarized in a statement quoted in 1906 as the writer viewed a portrait of Wallack: "Poor lovable man! Genius you were as actor and as stage manager--but as business manager--ah! The money-mad America must become two centuries older before it understands that a financier can't be made out of a poet."

Although he was, perhaps, financially the least fortu-
nate of all the great actor-managers of his time, Lester Wallack rarely placed financial consideration above his own artistic preferences. His concern for high standards of production matched that of his father, and both Wallacks provided the necessary funds to achieve those standards, thereby elevating the quality of elaborate costuming which characterized their theatre.

Acting Company

The fact that the Wallacks were able to maintain a company on a more permanent basis than those theatres utilizing the star system provides yet another reason for their ability to achieve a standard of excellence in costuming. Between 1852 and 1881, excluding the two years when J. W. Wallack leased the theatre to Stuart, the Wallacks hired two hundred seventy-six actors and actresses who had an average tenure of three years with the company. One hundred thirty-five performers acted with the company for more than one season, with an average tenure of five years, while forty-four actors--eleven women and thirty-three men--performed in an average of ten or more seasons at Wallack's. Women remained with the company for longer periods of time than did men. For those that performed in more than three seasons, the average tenure for women was over ten years compared to seven and a half years for men; for those who passed the five year mark, the average tenure for women was sixteen years compared to eight and a half seasons for
Permanency does not guarantee perfection, but Wallack certainly aimed toward perfection by accumulating a group of actors whom contemporary critics "universally conceded to be the best theatrical company in the country." The New York Daily Tribune on September 24, 1868, referred to that season's company as standing "foremost among the theatres in the United States, the prosperity and the honor of which are based upon earnest, consistent, and undeviating devotion to the art of acting." James H. Stoddart, an actor with the company in the 1854 and 1855 seasons and again from 1867 to 1872, wrote that when he first applied at Wallack's in 1854, J. W. Wallack said, "My company is large and expensive and my theatre small, comprising almost everyone of any note in the country." In Stoddart's opinion the old comedies were never played better, for most of the actors "had been associated year after year, and knew one another's style, and they played so well into one another's hands that the result was admirable."

Such mutual association among various members of the company over longer periods of time undoubtedly contributed to increased efficiency for the wardrobe staff and more

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37 Jones, pp. 155-160.
40 Ibid., p. 81.
appropriate costumes for the acting company. Longer tenures enabled the costuming staff to acquire a knowledge of the individual performer's preferences, and contributed to the construction of new costumes especially fitted to the performer. Longer tenures also provided the less experienced performers with an opportunity to learn from older actors not only how to dress a particular character but how to use that dress to the advantage of the character. Increased efficiency and knowledge could only elevate the standards of costuming at Wallack's.

Salaries

Since policy dictated that actors provide their own contemporary dress and all accessories for period costumes and actresses provide all costumes for both period and contemporary plays, performers would have been hard pressed to meet Wallack's high standards for fashionable contemporary dress had not the theatre provided a rather generous salary schedule. "As befitted its station," Wallack's salaries were higher than in comparable theatres, such as the Boston Museum. At other theatres in the 1850's leading actors generally received between thirty and fifty dollars per week, while other members of the company averaged between four and twenty dollars weekly. At Wallack's in 1857 fourteen members of the organization had weekly salaries over twenty dollars, with

\[\text{Mammen, Old Stock Company School of Acting, p. 25.}\]
leading actors, Lester Wallack and W. R. Blake, at one hundred dollars and eighty dollars respectively and leading actress, Mrs. Hoey, at fifty-five dollars per week. These salaries were before the abolition of the benefit system which increased the amounts proportionately.\textsuperscript{42} By 1862 twenty-one members of the company had salaries over twenty dollars per week, with Mrs. Hoey's salary at one hundred dollars and Lester Wallack's salary at one hundred twenty-five dollars.\textsuperscript{43} Records indicate salaries were always paid, even during seasons when other New York theatres found it necessary to suspend payments.\textsuperscript{44} Lester once even provided a fifty-dollar bonus for utility actor, Charles Rockwell, who had to assume a lead role in Wallack's own play, \textit{Rosedale}, when the assigned actor was suddenly taken ill.\textsuperscript{45} Rose Eytinge, who performed with the company in the seasons of 1867 and 1868, remembered that, "If a member of the company was ill, his salary was sent to him every week, together with pleasant words of hope and good wishes.\textsuperscript{46}

Performers apparently repaid Lester Wallack's liberality by investing a large portion of their salaries in appropriate contemporary fashions and accessories. Even in the fifties

\textsuperscript{42}Odell, \textit{Annals}, VII, 19.
\textsuperscript{43}Jones, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{44}\textit{New York Herald}, October 16, 1857.
\textsuperscript{45}Stoddart, pp. 156-157.
\textsuperscript{46}Rose Eytinge, \textit{The Memories of Rose Eytinge} (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1905, p. 89.)
reviewers recorded no criticisms of worn or inappropriate contemporary dress; other theatres, however, did not fare as well. By 1861 Lester Wallack had become the trendsetter for contemporary fashions for men; although he received the highest salary in the company, his personal standards required large deductions for personal expenses for "necessary costumes and properties for a wide range of characters, which season after season the constant change of plays demanded."47 As an actor, he realized the financial burdens of providing his own costumes; as a manager, he helped to alleviate those burdens by providing generous salaries which allowed his company to attain a higher level of costuming.

Working Conditions

A pleasant atmosphere certainly contributed to the overall excellence of the company, for as a manager Lester Wallack "was ever liberal, considerate, courteous, and encouraging to the members of his company."48 Another actor in Wallack's company, Julian Magnus, stated that Lester Wallack was a man who was in thorough sympathy with the actors' artistic aims, a man who could appreciate with what pains they achieved success, and a man "who could discern and feel grateful for the earnestness and endeavors which might not

47 Carboy, "What Killed Mr. Wallack."
result so fortunately." Arthur Wallack emphasized his father's gentleness with people, recalling an example of Lester's profound respect for women, amounting almost to reverence: "One of my earliest recollections is of his making me take off my hat to a maid servant whom we met on Broadway." Rose Eytinge wrote that Wallack would occasionally "let out" at rehearsals, but "the outburst was pretty sure to be followed by some little gracious act or word that effectually removed the sting." An actress at the Boston Museum, Kate Ryan, stated that when Wallack staged plays while on tour in Boston, he never lost his temper and "was always courteous and encouraging to every member of the company."

In an interview with Lester Wallack, John Lynch sought to verify an often repeated anecdote whereby Wallack on one occasion stopped a rehearsal and reprimanded one of his actors for spreading his coat-tails before sitting down. Wallack was supposed to have said, "Leave your coat-tails alone, sir. Do not try to save your clothes. You are supposed to be playing a gentleman, and a gentleman's wardrobe is always sufficient." Wallack replied furiously to Lynch, "That infernal yarn will pursue me to the grave." He vigor-

49 Ibid.
51 Eytinge, Memories, p. 89.
ously denied the occurrence, adding, "I should never have thought of embarrassing an actor in that way before others. I would have made it in private." As his son Arthur stated, Wallack's "idea of being a gentleman was to be gentle." By creating an atmosphere of pleasant working conditions, Lester Wallack encouraged a spirit of mutual cooperation which possibly contributed to the effectiveness of the costuming.

Rehearsal Policies

Adequate rehearsal time must have also contributed to the success of the costuming at Wallack's, although a comment in the *Spirit of the Times* in 1874 noted that at an hour's notice the company could present *The Rivals*. The usual allocation of rehearsal time ranged between one and two weeks, and during the 1860's Lester Wallack allowed six to nine rehearsals for new plays and two to four rehearsals for revivals. By the 1870's Wallack scheduled rehearsals for new plays approximately two weeks before opening and allowed five to eight rehearsals for old plays. Wallack's production of *Much Ado About Nothing* in January of 1869

55 *Spirit of the Times*, October 24, 1874.
56 Swinney, p. 109.
received twenty-one rehearsals, the greatest number ever given any play at Wallack's. Rehearsal time allotted at Wallack's exceeded the norm, for a new piece elsewhere was customarily given approximately six rehearsals and revivals one to four rehearsals.

Both Wallacks personally supervised rehearsals, paying minute attention to the smallest details, and each stressed the importance of rehearsing a play as it would be performed. E. A. Sothern wrote that under the elder Wallack's thorough stage management the actors "were like a set of school-boys under discipline. We had to give a reason for everything, and therefore to study hard." Sothern indicated additional preparation was necessary outside the scheduled rehearsals: "My stars! how I used to work in those days; often until three or four o'clock in the morning, and four or five hours a day when there was no rehearsal." Until the long-run policy became prevalent, the company generally rehearsed every morning between two and three hours.

The younger Wallack was also much admired as a stage manager. Kate Ryan wrote than in rehearsal Lester Wallack

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57 Jones, p. 42.
58 Mammen, pp. 49-50.
60 Ibid., p. 22.
61 Jones, p. 44.
would direct his own plays, "and while outlining the business for the players, he would act out every part in the play."

She concluded that "the young woman who could not play the part of Rosa Leigh in 'Rosedale' under his direction was indeed devoid of dramatic sense." Magnus called Lester's stage management "infinitely the best I have ever seen or played under." Magnus described how Wallack would act out all of the parts, including the women's, and echoed Kate Ryan's comments with the statement that "the actor who could not learn to play acceptably under his direction must have been entirely unfitted for the stage."

Both Wallacks relied on stage managers to handle rehearsals for revivals, checking only the final rehearsals. The stage managers included Lester Wallack, until he assumed the management upon his father's death, Henry B. Phillips until the late 1850's, John Moore and W. R. Floyd until the mid-sixties, and eight other members of the company from 1866 until the close of the theatre under Wallack's management in 1887.

Lester Wallack maintained, however, final control and supervision throughout, rarely missing a scheduled rehearsal. In a letter to John Moore, his stage manager in 1866, Wal-

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62 Ryan, pp. 197-198.
63 Magnus, pp. 124-125.
64 Jones, p. 45.
lack apologized for forgetting a rehearsal he had called, stating, "I cannot recollect, during my whole professional career, anything like such a total lapse of memory." He added in the letter, "There was opportunity, at least, for Isherwood to settle the setting of two or three scenes." Wallack regularly required the use of scenery and properties at rehearsals, but it is not clear whether or not he used complete dress rehearsals.

When Wallack did turn the stage directing over to production assistants, the quality of the productions remained high. W. R. Floyd, a member of the company for fourteen seasons, a stage manager in the sixties, and "stage director" from 1873 until his death in 1880, received critical acclaim for his extreme care of detail and perfect taste. Like Lester Wallack, he was a strict disciplinarian "with a firm purpose to do his duty to his employer and his art." In his obituary on December 4, 1880, the Dramatic Mirror noted, "It is no secret that to Mr. Floyd's good taste, persistent care and remarkable industry much of the perfection of stage management at Wallack's is

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67 Spirit of the Times, June 6, 1874.


69 New York Clipper, December 4, 1880.

70 New York Dramatic Mirror, December 4, 1880.
due. What he did was well done.\textsuperscript{71}

Careful attention to staging and scenic detail by the Wallacks and their stage managers undoubtedly fostered similar attention to detail in costuming. Even without a unifying final dress rehearsal, improved costuming would have resulted because the actors and costuming staff would have had adequate time to select a suitable costume, alter it if necessary, and provide appropriate accessories.

Technical staff

The Wallacks were extremely fortunate in their ability to surround themselves with qualified and dedicated personnel; this was especially true with members of their technical staff. Harry Isherwood remained as chief scenic artist for twenty-eight years, assisted during that time by a Mr. Timoney who had charge of properties. Both men drew constant praise from the press.\textsuperscript{72} Robert Stoepel's conducting of the orchestra from 1856 to 1863 elicited the comment that "Mr. Wallack shows true managerial tact in securing for his theatre the services of so eminent a musician."\textsuperscript{73} Stoepel's replacements, a Mr. Mollenhauer and later Thomas Baker, successfully maintained the reputation that Stoepel had established.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72}Jones, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{73}Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, May 24, 1862.
\textsuperscript{74}Jones, p. 28.
Wallack readily acknowledged the "zeal and efficiency" of his "unseen assistants." To insure the quality of the performance, the younger Wallack made sure that "all available talent was secured and honorably recompensed" and that a "liberal economy in outlay was combined with an unsparing use of that valuable but inexpensive article, taste" in the mounting of the plays. Here again the over-all excellence of the scenic artists, property master, and orchestra leaders established a level of production which probably promoted similar standards among the costuming staff.

Costume Supervision

The earliest mention of wardrobe personnel at the Wallack theatres occurs in a salary schedule prepared when the elder Wallack leased his first theatre to William Stuart for two seasons beginning in 1856. Stuart agreed to employ members of the company at the same salaries Wallack had paid them the preceding season. The schedule lists a Mr. Flanagan as being in charge of the wardrobe at a weekly salary of fifteen dollars, compared with twenty-five dollars for Harry Isherwood, the scenic artist, and eighteen dollars for Timoney, who was in charge of properties. The schedule also includes twelve dollar salaries per week for a Mr. Wallace, the scene

75 New York Daily Tribune, February 2, 1869.
painter, and a Mr. Benschoten, who was later designated as an assistant to the costumer.

Although the schedule lists Mr. Flanagan as being in charge of the wardrobe, the name must refer to George W. Flanrey, who, according to the New York Dramatic Mirror on February 14, 1899, was costumer at Wallack's first theatre. Wallack playbills in the 1860's credit costumes to Flanry, Flannery, and Flanrey, all of which presumably refer to the Flanrey whose obituary the Mirror records in 1899. The great majority of playbills and advertisements list the spelling as Flannery. The brief obituary states that Flannery was born in New York City in 1822, and after a brief career as a dancer, he remained at Wallack's as costumer until the death of Lester Wallack in 1888. Flannery was traveling with the Kelsey Shannon company as costumer when he died of pneumonia at Norfolk, Virginia, on February 4, 1899. His early association with Wallack's is documented in a program for Wallack's burlesque, Merchant of Venice Preserved, for August 15, 1857. The program states, "The characters will find themselves smart under a sound DRESSING from Mr. Flannery." The program for Hiawatha at the end of the 1857 season on July 13 also lists the costumer as "Mr. Flanner."  

Playbills dating from the 1858 season indicate that cos-

77 Odell, Annals, VII, 19.
78 Wallack Theatre Program, Harvard Theatre Collection.
turning duties were jointly held by Flannery and Abram Van Benschoten, whose name was listed in the aforementioned salary schedule. Theodore Moss, Wallack's treasurer for thirty-four years, stated that "Abe," as he was familiarly known, had been with the theatre since 1855, although it is not until 1858 that he is identified as a costumer. Van Benschoten was born in New York City in 1821, and, like Flannery, began his theatrical career as a dancer before joining the Wallack company. For twenty-five years, his most important duty was to serve as Lester Wallack's dresser for productions in New York as well as on tour. It is impossible to determine the degree of assistance received by Flannery and Benschoten, although some aides received credit in the programs for special revivals which required a great number of new costumes, such as for Lester Wallack's production of Much Ado About Nothing on February 1, 1869. Undoubtedly, members of the company performed duties other than those specified by their official titles, for Flannery and Benschoten filled the roles of Mr. Flat and Mr. Green in Lester's production of Money in 1878. They, in turn, probably called upon other members of the company for assistance when needed.

The costuming staff of the theatre must have included

79 New York Times, May 9, 1885.
80 Ibid.
81 New York Daily Tribune, February 18, 1878.
dressers other than Van Benschoten, for as actress Olive Logan wrote, all theatres of any importance had male dressers for the actors and female dressers for the actresses. The duties of the dresser included preparing the necessary costumes for the evening, refitting costumes for new roles, helping players to dress and undress during the performances, storing the costumes following the production, and packing suitcases and trunks for tours. J. H. Stoddart mentioned one particular dresser, "Old Edward," who assisted him during a run of Rosedale in 1871. Stoddart further cited the efficiency of these attendants as being one facet that "tended to make life at Wallack's a particularly pleasant one." As Wallack's dresser and Flannery's assistant, Van Benschoten must have contributed to the atmosphere of congeniality among the company; the New York Times concluded in his obituary that he "was greatly esteemed in the theatre for his mild and gentle disposition, as well as for his faithfulness to his employer." This supports Olive Logan's statement that the costumer or wardrobe keeper of the period was generally a very humble individual. The New York Herald for

84 Ibid., pp. 154-155, 158.
85 New York Times, May 9, 1885.
86 Logan, Mimic World, p. 79.
July 22, 1896, sheds further light on the relationship between the costuming staff and the acting company. On the occasion of the death of Mrs. John Hoey, the New York Herald recalled an incident following Mrs. Hoey's final performance at Wallack's on April 20, 1864, when "Abe Van Benschoten, costumer of Wallack's brought the carpet from the dressing room floor at the theatre to Mrs. Hoey's house and left it there, saying no other woman should ever walk upon it."

Because of the lack of extensive information concerning Flannery and Benschoten, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the work of the two costumers depends largely upon an examination of the existing photographs of costumes designed and constructed for Wallack productions. The fact that both men remained with the theatre throughout most of their professional lives suggests a certain degree of proficiency and acceptance by the Wallacks themselves and by the large and talented company with whose fortunes Flannery and Benschoten cast their lot.

The managerial policies of J. W. and Lester Wallack laid the groundwork for critical acclaim, contributing materially to the development of increased accuracy and detail in production elements during a period when actors, managers, and audiences were beginning to appreciate such truth in representation. They set personal examples of artistic ability and professional dedication. As one writer put it, "Lester Wallack studied harder than a seminary of theologians and worked more industriously than a colony of Italian street
They brought together a large and talented company of performers whose principles and artistic dedication matched their own. Writing in 1913, William Winter stated concerning the 1865 organization, "Such a company could not be formed today unless the best actors of a dozen of the best professional companies in America could be assembled, and kept in association for a year or two."

Since contemporary practices dictated that an actress provide all period and contemporary dresses and than an actor provide all period accessories and contemporary dress, the mutual association of the various members of the company over long periods of time probably contributed to the effectiveness of the costuming. Throughout the period, performers frequently sought each other's advice concerning costuming and learned the traditions of a role from more experienced performers. Lester Wallack's ability to establish an atmosphere of congeniality marked by kindness and consideration created such pleasant working conditions that the pursuit of excellence apparently became the standard for individual members of the company.

Since the Wallacks desired that they and their associates be known for artistic rather than monetary considerations,
they provided the performers with generous salaries which, in turn, allowed the members of the company to dress their characters more effectively. Comparatively high salaries and a liberal budget for the technical staff encouraged the scene designers and costumers to spare no resources to ensure accuracy of detail and quality of production. The tenure of the technical staff more than doubled that of the performers and provided a continuity and an expertise which allowed the staff to maintain high standards even when contemporary practices required a nightly change of bill.

When Lester Wallack was asked on his retirement to describe the ideal manager, he stated that from an actor's viewpoint, the ideal manager:

should possess the purity of Joseph Andrews combined with the patience of Job. He should be wise and honest and unselfish. He should cherish any number of ideals and at the same time he should be intensely practical . . . . He should have a thorough realization of the value of money, but no wish to make it for himself.91

Wallack added, however, that from a manager's viewpoint, his experience compelled him to state that "the proper make-up for a manager would be a man with much brain but no heart, no bowels of compassion, no charity for the shortcomings of those in his employ."92

Lester Wallack was, by his definition, an actor's mana-

90Ibid., p. 28.
91Lynch, "A Chat With Lester Wallack, Gentleman."
92Ibid.
ger. He fully realized the importance of the contribution of the individual actor to the over-all effectiveness of stage costuming. Even though the managerial policies of J. W. and Lester Wallack provided the foundation for the elevation of production standards in costuming, it is to the actors and their individual costuming one must turn for a greater understanding of how Wallack's came to be a "beacon of light" in the development of more appropriate, authentic, and unified costuming on the American stage.
CHAPTER THREE

THE ACTING COMPANY AND COSTUMING PRACTICES

An increased interest in elaborate and elegant cos­
tuming characterized the third quarter of the nineteenth
century, when the name of Wallack's was "par excellence the
respectable name of the profession."¹ Dion Boucicault, whose
plays London Assurance and The Shaughraun were among the most
successful ever produced at Wallack's, noted the prevailing
trend:

Miss Jinks, the leading lady, objects to the
blue dress in the third act and the white in the
last, the low comedian objects to the redness of
his wig, and the tragedian finds fault with his
weight, saying he is too light. They all think
of their make-up instead of their character.²

Similarly, in a review of an Olympic Theatre production of
Watts Phillips' play, Paul's Return, in 1864, the critic for
the New York Daily Tribune observed, "The value of intelli­
gent understanding of stage duties has been almost forgotten
in the rage for supremacy in silks, laces, gloves, jewels, and
other entrancing paraphernalia." The reviewer concluded, "It
has almost come to be acknowledged that it matters much less
what an actress has in her head, than what she can put on her

¹Undesignated clipping dated December 31, 1870, Dion
Boucicault Scrapbook, Theatre Collection, New York Public
Library.

²"Advice of a Veteran Actor," undesignated clipping
dated May 9, 1884, Dion Boucicault Scrapbook, Theatre Col­
lection, New York Public Library.
Another writer in 1873 suggested that the decorative art had replaced the dramatic art in determining the success of a contemporary society play, and that the "toilets of the actresses" took precedence over their histrionic talents. At the same time, in describing such elaborate costuming journalists contributed to the encouragement of more decorative stage dress by heralding openings of new productions with such statements as the following:

Miss Harlotte's gown in the comedy of "Croquet" is to cost $1,000; that Mrs. Modiste's laces are exquisite in the bewitching play of "Flirting," that Ida Legges will exhibit another new set of pearls in "Crinoline, or What a Bustle!" that in "Men and Millinery," the graceful Putty changes costumes eight times, each garb eclipsing the last.

Theatre managers, too, encouraged ostentation by playing on the public's enthusiasm for finery. As Augustin Daly's production of Divorce neared its one-hundredth performance in 1873, Daly ordered the actors to purchase all new costumes for that occasion. When his leading actress Clara Morris complained that she had just finished paying for the five dresses she had already used, Daly replied, "Yes, yes, I know all that; but I want to stir up fresh interest, therefore we must have something to draw the people, and they will come to see the new dresses."

5 Ibid.
6 Clara Morris, Life on the Stage, p. 154.
While actors, managers, critics, and theatre-goers alike seem inadvertently to have encouraged a trend toward elaborate costuming, the burden of satisfying their demands fell on the individual performers. Managers required individual actors to provide all contemporary costumes, but only accessories and ornaments for period costumes. For men, period costumes were provided, but for women, even in the 1880's, actresses often supplied their own historical costumes. Because of meager salaries, a walking lady might have but one simple muslin dress for all plays, and a leading lady might make do with one black satin, one white satin, and one scarlet robe. A Sir Benjamin Backbite, a Charles Surface, and a Joseph Surface might appear on the stage in identical costumes, and leading ladies vied with each other in extravagance of dress, even when they played shop girls. The New York Daily Tribune's drama critic suggested as early as 1864 that all theatrical dressing should be subject to the control of the stage management. At the same time, he believed that interference by the management could not be justified except in extreme cases, "as it is the practice of American theatres to compel actors to supply their own wardrobes."^8

When representing the "beribboned, powdered, and perfumed butterflies of long ago," however, Wallack productions

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7 Mammen, Old Stock Company School of Acting, p. 31.
8 Spirit of the Times, May 26, 1864.
9 New York Daily Tribune, October 2, 1865.
rarely received criticism regarding its costuming, for it was in the production of old comedies that Wallack's theatre "renders its highest service to the public, pays its best homage to real dramatic art, and best shows itself to be what it has long been, and is likely to remain, the foremost stage of America."\(^{10}\) As early as Wallack's second season in 1853, even in contemporary comedy, "the ladies and gentlemen were dressed like ladies and gentlemen, and the drawing room scenes looked like drawing rooms and were properly furnished."\(^{11}\)

The artist who was understandably most responsible for the success of Wallack productions was Lester Wallack, for as his father proudly acknowledged, it was the younger Wallack as stage manager who actually effected the accomplishments for which the theatre became known.\(^{12}\) Throughout the early years of the theatre's existence, J. W. Wallack's health was broken and he performed at the theatre briefly as a "star" during only five seasons, from 1852 to 1855 and again in 1858. According to *The Galaxy* for October, 1868, the elder Wallack's experience and taste lent direction and his unflagging spirit inspired confidence and strength; however, "the work was done by Mr. Lester Wallack."

As an actor, Lester Wallack's greatest characteristic

\(^{10}\) *Ibid.*, February 19, 1878.

\(^{11}\) *New York Herald*, September 26, 1853.

was his versatility. A writer for The Galaxy claimed that "for the art of entering into the peculiarities of a variety of characters he is without a rival." The younger Wallack portrayed such Shakespearean characters as Orlando in As You Like It, Bassanio and Gratiano in The Merchant of Venice, and Benedick and Don Pedro in Much Ado About Nothing. He played the title roles in Phillippe Dumanoir's Don Caesar de Bazan and Sheridan's The Stranger and originated the roles of Count de Ligny in J. R. Planché's comedy, The Captain of the Watch, Elliot Grey in his own play, Rosedale, Badger in Boucicault's The Poor of New York, and Hugh Chalcote in T. W. Robertson's Ours. It was in the "old comedies," however, that Lester Wallack was best known. In his category his repertory included among others the roles of Claude Melnotte in Bulwer's Lady of Lyons, Charles Courtly and Dazzle in London Assurance, Captain Absolute in The Rivals, Charles Surface and Sir Benjamin Backbite in The School for Scandal, Colonel Briton and Don Felix in The Wonder, and Young Marlow in She Stoops to Conquer.

Never noted as a tragic actor, Lester Wallack's success was as "fascinating, unnatural gallants" in the old comedies and heroes in romantic melodramas. Gentlemanliness appears

13 Ibid., p. 490.

14 See Lester Wallack's Memories of Fifty Years, pp. 215-216, for a complete list of Wallack's roles.

to have characterized each of Lester Wallack's roles, for "however dressed, or disguised, there is ever about him that undefinable, yet unmistakable air, that betokens the gentleman." Wallack insisted that his company dress their contemporary characters in the latest fashions worn by British ladies and gentlemen. In doing so, he made contemporary fashionable comedies "a picture from nature, naturally presented" and helped to elevate the standards of stage dress for contemporary comedy.

Throughout his career as the most brilliant American comedian of his day, Lester Wallack's personal costumes exhibited "rare taste, good sense, and a happy combination of prophetic gift and artistic execution." Endowed by nature with "manly grace" and "carefully trained in manners and in method" as a young man, Lester was "handsome, dashing, fashionable, and bright," presenting a "sprightly figure clothed in faultless garments, black and luxuriant hair, heavy side whiskers and moustache, and withal a general air of gallantry and elegance." Wallack drew constant praise as "a good dresser, exhibiting taste, neatness, and


17 Ibid.

18 Odell, Annals, IX, 103.

19 Undesignated clipping, dated January 3, 1882, Wallack Folder, Player's Collection, Walter Hampden Memorial Library.

20 New York Dramatic Mirror, December 10, 1881.
a fine eye for color," and in most instances critics added comments on his native intelligence. In reporting an interview with the younger Wallack, John Lynch described Wallack as "the last of the dandies," explaining:

The dandy is not to be confounded with his vapid contemporary, the fop, nor still less, with his vulgar successor, the dude. The dandy is often a man of many accomplishments. While he did give too much attention to his neck-cloth, his chains, and rings, to the curl of his hair or the color of his waistcoat, he was, more often than not, a man of liberal education.

Lynch concluded with a comment recorded earlier in the Spirit of the Times: "For many years he made himself 'the glass of fashion,' as nature had created him, 'the mold of form.'"

Lester Wallack's success lay primarily in the fact that he knew "how to carry a fine suit of clothes," according to Dion Boucicault. As early as 1862 the New York Daily Tribune noted how few actors there were "like Mr. Lester Wallack, who convey the idea that they understand the art of dress."

One critic called Wallack the "most brilliantly picturesque actor on the stage," crediting most of his power to his "resources of dress, in which he exhibits a marvelous talent . . . . His 'get-up' is usually superb. In that field he is master almost without rival." Another critic believed


22 Lynch, "A Chat With Lester Wallack, Gentleman."

23 New York Herald, September 17, 1888.

24 New York Daily Tribune, April 14, 1862.

that the public had so often seen Lester in "the young-ladies'-nice young man-sort of characters" that he ought always to play his role "with a white vest, primrose kids, sweet-scented whiskers, hair parted down the middle, carrying a rose-water-saturated cambric handkerchief." The World on September 7, 1888, best sums up the relationship between Lester Wallack and his penchant for appropriate dress:

It was his ability to fill the eye that fastened him in public attention. Not only was he an extraordinarily handsome man from the date of his first New York success to the day of his memorable benefit, but he was even more uniquely pictorial in action and in dress than Charles Fechter. It was apparently impossible to overdress him. Any other actor than he in the gaudy last act of "The Veteran" or in "The Captain of the Watch" would have invited a laugh from the latter-day sense of sobriety in color. But he seemed to bring all the privileges of the past up to the portal of the present and to authenticate them.

Always insisting on fashionable contemporary dress, Lester Wallack equally encouraged appropriate period dress for plays of former times. As an actor and a manager, he fully realized that the effectiveness of period costuming could be lessened if a performer did not wear the costume well and recreate the manner and style of the period represented. Consequently, on at least one occasion Wallack paid the salary of an actor who remained idle for several months while the company presented a series of revivals requiring period costumes. H. J. Montague, a leading light comedian

26 "Sketches of the Actors, Spirit of the Times.
27 Oedel, Annals, X, 172.
of considerable talent and popularity between 1874 and 1878, was charming in trouser and coat and "cigarette parts." Montague wore contemporary clothes with the ease of a thorough gentleman, but "put him in costume and he was gone, miserably conscious that he was awkward and out of place." 28

The New York Daily Tribune would have agreed with Wallack's decision not to use Montague, for its drama critic had maintained on October 4, 1871, that a good performance of a costume play, such as George Colman's late eighteenth-century comedy Heir-at-Law, could only be given by a dramatic company that "presents the legends of the stage and the practice of long ago. The modern style proves wholly inappropriate to this picture of a special phase of manners." The Tribune continued with the comment that the artists at Wallack's were "skilled in the habits of the old school." Wallack, therefore, proved aware of both the talents and the limitations of the members of his company. His own vanity, however, interfered at times with his judgment in regard to the costuming and make-up of the characters he himself portrayed.

Wallack became gray-haired at an early age and for years dyed his hair a "beastly, piratical, fiendish black." 29 When he had to wear a white wig for the title role in Charles

28 Wallack, Memories, pp. 173-174.

Mathews' *My Awful Dad*, he received so many compliments that thereafter he wore his natural hair. He sacrificed his "raven locks," but adamantly refused to shave his mustache or remove his side-whiskers, which he "dearly cherished." When Wallack played Charles Surface in *The School for Scandal* with a "powdered wig and whiskers as bushy as those of Lord Dundreary," the spectators obligingly forgot the "old-fashioned" whiskers when Wallack began to act. They excused him on the grounds that Edwin Forrest had worn his mustache all through his performances as the Indian hero of *Metamora*. The wearing of mustaches for such plays as *The School for Scandal* was a common practice among actors of the nineteenth century, although inappropriate in combination with eighteenth-century costumes.

Wallack even went so far as to have his staff create a special design to conceal his side whiskers for Dion Bouiccault's *The Fox Chase*, which required Assyrian national costumes. The result was a "barbarian head gear" with "ingenious Assyrian devices for the concealment of side whiskers." The *Spirit* critic observed that for a manager who "preaches

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31Undesignated clipping, Wallack Folder, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.
34New York Daily Tribune*, September 21, 1864.
sacrifices to his art," Wallack's attempt to cover the whiskers with tabs was "a weak evasion of artistic responsibilities."35

Ultimately, Wallack must have yielded to the increasing pressure for a more appropriate stage appearance, for on June 1, 1872, after an absence from the stage for almost a year, Wallack performed the role of Count de Ligny in J. R. Planché's Captain of the Watch with his whiskers "violently removed," but partially compensated by using a "magnificent ringlet wig, which covered at least half of the cheeks and extended gracefully to his shoulder."36 According to the reviewer, Wallack's performance was "visibly disturbed."

Wallack apparently followed the prevailing trend in early 1860's for actors to appear in the presence of ladies with their hats on, even in drawing-room scenes, because he was chastized by one reviewer of The Fox Chase for allowing "one of the vilest practices to which our actors are wedded."37 The reviewer hoped that with repetition of the play, such a fault would be corrected, for "no stage manager who values his reputation should suffer it to be continued." The Tribune had begun questioning the practice as early as February 16, 1863, asking especially why, "if through some powerful effort of the will, a hat be once removed, the remotest

35Spirit of the Times, October 1, 1864.
36Undesignated clipping from The World, Wallack Folder, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.
37Ibid.
suspicion of feminine approach is sufficient to send it flying back again with a promptness and a dexterity worthy of the holiest cause." The Tribune's comments must have had their effect, for on May 16, 1864, the newspaper reported that "a remarkable incident" had occurred at the Olympic Theatre, when Charles Wheatleigh, a "distinguished comedian, appeared upon the stage in the presence of a lady with his hat off." The writer added with irony, "He went so far as to carry his hat in his hand for several minutes without betraying a symptom of embarrassment or fatigue."

J. H. Stoddart reports, however, an incident that appears to contradict this criticism at Wallack's. Stoddart had begun to achieve a reputation for his wigs, the pride of the low comedian, and recalled that Wallack complimented him:

Mr. Stoddart, that is a beautiful wig of yours, and you have matched it in well, but as the scene is an exterior, and the other characters all had their hats on, it seems rather out of place for you to carry yours in your hand. Your next scene, I think, is an interior; the audience will then have ample opportunity of seeing what a beautiful wig it is.

Wallack was certainly aware of the proprieties, but it is impossible to determine if Wallack and his company followed the prevailing trend. Photographic records of the period show Wallack and other actors of his company with and without their hats.


39Stoddart, pp. 87-88.
For the most part Wallack received very little criticism regarding his personal costumes. One critical comment does appear regarding the 1862 production of Octave Feuillet's *The Romance of a Poor Young Man*, reviewed on May 19 in the *New York Daily Tribune*. Although the production was advertised with "correct and appropriate costumes by Messrs. Flannery and Benschoten," the reviewer stated of Lester Wallack in the double role of a Marquis and a steward, "We could better sympathize with the poverty of this gentleman on the stage, were he not such a model of the Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter Fashions." The reviewer suggested less splendor for "the poor youth," but there is no indication that Wallack followed his advice for later performances.

A second criticism appeared two years later in the *Spirit of the Times* on October 29, 1864. In a review of Wallack's production of an anonymous play, *The Compact*, the writer stated, "How these fellows, wandering about in the mountains, and up to their knees in mud and dust, manage to wear such fine clothes, is a mystery to me." The two criticisms written in the early sixties reflect an increasing interest in more realistic costume effects.

By the late sixties the practice of verisimilitude appears to have become more prevalent, as indicated in an incident recalled by J. H. Stoddart. After six seasons with the company from 1867 to 1872, Stoddart left on a brief unsuccessful starring tour and then joined A. M. Palmer's company at the Union Square Theatre. His first
role was Pierre Michel in Steele Mackaye's *Rose Michel*. The manager instructed him to order his dress and make his own selection, a common practice at all theatres of the period. Stoddart wrote:

I described to the costumer what I wanted, directing him to make a long gray coat which should reach down to my heels, explaining that my part was that of an old miser, and that I wanted my dress, as far as possible, to convey the character of the man. So I said: "Make it loose and heavy, so that I can slip out of it in a second." He confessed to know exactly what I wanted, and set to work to make the garment. When I received it, I was disgusted. It was a clean modern overcoat with a bright muslin lining, so I took it out to my farm and soiled its beauty with Jersey mud. Mrs. Stoddart then tackled it, lined it with some heavy old material, jagged it with shears, and then threw it into the cellar, and made a mat of it until it was required.40

Stoddart concluded, "There is no difficulty in obtaining a handsome coat, but it is difficult to get one that shall have the appearance of great wear and look old, moldy, and weather beaten . . . . Afterwards it was much extolled when I used it in the play."41 Because Stoddart stated he learned his trade under the elder Wallack in the early fifties,42 and since he had just completed five seasons at Wallack's when the incident occurred, it suggests perhaps that at Wallack's his coat would have been more appropriately made.

40 Ibid., pp. 167-168.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., pp. 86-87.
Wallack's certainly fostered efforts toward more realistic dress in all the costumes, although at times Lester Wallack and other members of the company may have let their enthusiasm for elegant clothing sway their better judgment. In elegant footwear especially, Wallack demonstrated a personal vanity. He possessed a handsome leg and frequently showed it off in stylish boots and slippers, causing the *Spirit* critic to comment on April 6, 1861, "We suppose it is all en règle that he should get into long boots--an especial weakness of this gentleman, by the bye." The catalogue of Wallack's personal wardrobe at the time of his death indicates that he possessed at least thirty pairs of boots, shoes, and slippers for use on the stage.\(^4^3\) The catalogue descriptions also include forty-four canes, fifteen assorted swords, daggers, and rapiers--the pride of a leading man--\(^4^4\) and twelve pairs of tights, described as "Pair Brown Worsted Tights; 3 pair Ashes of Roses Tights; 2 pair Gray Tights; pair Purple Tights; 2 pair Plaid Stockings; pair Brown Silk Tights; 2 pair Pink Silk Tights."\(^4^5\)

Twelve pairs of tights may seem excessive for one actor, but early in his career, Lester would often go to his dressing room to find "certain very necessary articles" of

\(^4^3\)Catalogue of the Theatrical Wardrobe of the Late J. Lester Wallack (New York: George A. Leavitt and Co., 1889), p. 3. See Appendix A.

\(^4^4\)Pitou, Masters of the Show, p. 21.

\(^4^5\)Catalogue of the Theatrical Wardrobe of the Late J. Lester Wallack, p. 4.
his wardrobe missing. On one occasion, an actor borrowed Wallack's tights since he couldn't find his own. Wallack stated, "Fortunately, I did not go on till the second act, and by that time, the whole theatre had been ransacked and I got somebody's nether garments, and he [actor Gustavus Brooke] carried through the performance with 'Lester's Tights.'"\(^6\) The fact that the wardrobe had no tights in stock is consistent with prevailing practices for actors to provide accessories for period costumes.

Borrowing of costumes seems to have been another common practice at Wallack's. When Lester Wallack played Lord Fipley in Boucicault's *Love and Money* in 1853, he wore a new long coat reaching to his heels. Following the run of the play, John Brougham borrowed the coat to play another character and then lent it to E. A. Sothern who was to play Dundreary in *Our American Cousin* at Laura Keene's theatre. After an immense run of sixty nights, Sothern returned the coat and had a new one made. Wallack recalled that when *Love and Money* was revived, the coat was brought out, and the company in the green room called out, "Here comes Dundreary." Wallack had to change his costume for fear of "plagiarizing," even though it was he who had given Sothern the idea of how to dress Dundreary and it was Brougham who had given Sothern Wallack's coat.\(^7\)


\(^7\)"Sketches of the Actors," *Spirit of the Times*, undated clipping, Wallack Scrapbook, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library. See also Hutton, p. 161.
While commentaries indicate Wallack directly supervised and approved the selection of the wardrobe, a more accurate appraisal probably would be that he effected changes in wearing apparel when and if he disapproved of the selection. The regulations previously cited concerning the responsibilities of the actors in the area of costume selection indicate Wallack would exercise only final control over the wardrobe. Olive Logan wrote in the early 1870's that most theatres included in their regulations a provision that every costume would be decided on by the manager. Any performer who made any alteration in dress without the consent of the manager, or refused to wear the costume selected, would be subject to a fine.\(^{48}\) Although Olive Logan's comment suggests that managers had begun to take more of an interest in appropriate dress by the 1870's, at Wallack's full dress rehearsals were infrequent, especially during the first two decades, and customarily the first time all details were put together was opening night.\(^{49}\) Since Olive Logan maintains that no actor wore the costume of the night at rehearsal,\(^{50}\) Wallack probably relied on the judgment of his technical staff and actors to dress the characters appropriately. Although Wallack recounts in his *Memories* several instances of his making minor adjustments in other


\(^{49}\) Jones, pp. 45-46.

\(^{50}\) Logan, *The Mimic World*, p. 72.
actors' costumes prior to a performance, he probably func-
tioned as an advisor, when asked before the performance, and
as a judicious critic and manager, following the performance.
Whatever the system of final approval of costume selection,
photographic evidence and critical reviews provide the only
basis now for evaluation.

Aside from Lester Wallack, probably no other member
of the company achieved more acclaim for personal efforts
to attain appropriate and elaborate costumes than did Mrs.
John Hoey. Her "splendid matrimonial partis" enabled her
to inaugurate an "extravagant system of stage toilet" in
America. Stoddart believes Mrs. Hoey revolutionized stage
costuming with her elaborate and expensive dresses, which
were "so handsome as to become almost the talk of the city," for other actresses quickly sought to emulate her extrava-
gance.

Born Josephine Shaw in Liverpool in 1824, Mrs. Hoey
came to the United States as a child. She married William
H. Russell and embarked on a theatrical career at the National
Theatre in New York as Mrs. Russell. She was a member of
William Burton's company at his Chambers street theatre for
a number of years, where she was a great favorite. Fol-
her divorce from Russell, she married John Hoey, president

52 Stoddart, p. 98.
of Adams Express Company, and retired temporarily from the stage in 1851.

The occasion of Mrs. Hoey's return to the stage resulted when the first leading lady at Wallack's, Laura Keene, resigned from the company by simply not appearing for her role as Lydia Languish in *The Rivals*. An English actress, Laura Keene had made her American debut at Wallack's on September 30, 1852, and performed there for the remainder of the first season and part of the second. According to Wallack, Laura Keene missed the performance to travel to Baltimore with a Mr. Lutz who planned to open a theatre in that city and had received financial backing, provided he could engage Laura Keene. The actress subsequently stated she had gone to visit a sick brother, but eventually she became manager of a theatre in Baltimore before taking over the Winter Garden theatre in New York, in direct competition with Wallack's. Leaving Wallack's "was a step she always deprecated as a foolish act of youthful independence," for she had been widely acclaimed for her roles as Beatrice and Rosalind at Wallack's; however, Mrs. Hoey assumed these and other roles when she returned to the stage. When Wallack expressed amazement at Mrs. Hoey's wishes, thinking her husband would object to her continuing her stage career, Mrs. Hoey replied, "He only makes the condition that if I

54 Ibid., pp. 151-153.
go on the stage again it is to be at Mr. Wallack's theatre, and nowhere else." Following her engagement, she "very soon came to the front and got her old place, and even a higher one," according to Wallack.\(^56\)

Since her husband could well afford the cost, Mrs. Hoey immediately introduced "a fashion of elaborate stage dressing," which later would be developed "to an extraordinary degree."\(^57\) For a period of nine years from 1854 until her retirement in 1863, Mrs. Hoey was acclaimed as the best-dressed actress on the American stage.\(^58\) As Julia in Kotzebue's The Hunchback she wore brooches, rings, earrings, necklaces, and stomachers of real gems, as called for in the lines of the play. Olive Logan commented that when Julia says, "Then I will show you lace a foot deep," Mrs. Hoey "had purchased it long ago."\(^59\) Clara Morris recalled Mrs. Hoey's costumes in her memoirs:

> When it was known that the mere linings of her gowns cost more than the outside of other dresses; that all her velvet was silk velvet; that all her lace to the last inch was real lace; that no wired nor spliced feathers curled about her splendid leg-horns, only magnificent single plumes, each worth weeks of salary, this handsome woman, superbly clad, created a sensation, but alas! at the same time, she unconsciously scattered seed behind her--for following young actresses to gather.\(^60\)

\(^56\) Ibid., p. 155.
\(^57\) New York Herald, July 22, 1896.
\(^58\) Odell, Annals, VII, 545.
\(^59\) Logan, Before the Footlights, p. 383.
\(^60\) Clara Morris, Stage Confidences (Boston: Lothrop Publishing Company, 1902), p. 150.
The trend toward extravagant dress did not disappear with Mrs. Hoey's retirement, even though other actresses could not boast of diamonds and laces of the quality of Mrs. Hoey's. "But for silks, velvets, satins, moires, and the countless paraphernalia of a fashionable woman's toilet," those who succeeded her dared not be far behind. When Madeline Henriques replaced Mrs. Hoey as leading lady at Wallack's, she stated that her salary was "not much more than sufficient to keep her in boots and gloves." Her father was a successful merchant, however, and she was able to "hold her position with éclat." Arthur Wallack recalled that J. W. Wallack considered Madeline Henriques "a young lady of exceptional beauty and great power." The elder Wallack so admired the young actress that he once cast her as Donna Violante in The Wonder, a part which Mrs. Hoey as leading lady considered hers. Mrs. Hoey shortly thereafter left Wallack's and retired from the theatre in April of 1863. Madeline Henriques advanced to the lead and held that position until she married Louis Jennings, an Englishman and editor of the New York Times. She evidently gave "arch and winning" performances and often wore white frocks, as did her predecessor, Laura Keene. The consensus of

61 Logan, Before the Footlights, p. 383.
63 Ibid.
64 New York Daily Tribune, October 21, 1862.
65 Winter, Vagrant Memories, p. 56.
opinion among critics seems to be that she "dressed magnificently." 66

It was not unusual for actresses at Wallack's to receive praise for their dress in the daily reviews, even when their acting was not up to par. The New York Daily Tribune stated in a review of Tom Taylor's Serf in 1865, "The feminine characters are not acted in a manner to attract especial notice--except as to the non-essential matter of elegance of costume." 67 Perhaps because of the strained relationship between Laura Keene and her former employers at Wallack's, Laura Keene said she would engage actresses not "because they indulged in extravagant displays of dry goods . . . but because they could act." 68 One contemporary observed that when the public wanted to see fine dresses they went to Wallack's, but when they wanted to see "dramatic art" they had to go to Laura Keene's. 69

The excitement created by Mrs. Hoey's "extravagant" dress may have overshadowed, for a time, her acting accomplishments and may have caused other actresses to over-dress their characters in an attempt to reach her standards. Mrs. Hoey rarely over-dressed a part, for she was "beautiful, graceful, intellectual, and accomplished, with a taste in

66 New York Herald, September 21, 1863.
68 Spirit of the Times, November 15, 1873.
69 J. H. Stoddart, as quoted by John Creahan in The Life of Laura Keene, p. 123.
costume unrivaled for elegance and propriety, and fortunately with means commensurate to its demands. In a production of The Romance of a Poor Young Man in 1862, Mrs. Hoey "dressed to admiration," but Fanny Morant dressed "too stunningly" for a governess. A reviewer of Leonard Grover's My Noble Son-in-Law in 1863 found Mrs. Hoey's dress "faultless and at no time beyond the limits of perfect taste" with one exception: "ladies of cultivation are not in the habit of displaying whole caskets of jewels upon their person at breakfast nor during the earlier hours of the day." Although she was primarily known for the richness of her dress, at the same time she usually displayed "exquisite taste in the selection of her stage apparel."

For nine seasons Mrs. Hoey was the leading lady at Wallack's, a position much envied by other actresses of the period, such as Mrs. G. H. (Anne Harley) Gilbert. She testified that Wallack's "was everything then. To get into his company was well-nigh impossible, and to be out of it was to be nowhere, to many people's thinking." Although


71 Spirit of the Times, May 19, 1862.

72 Ibid., April 18, 1863.


other actresses may have been envious, Mrs. Hoey apparently was much loved and respected throughout her career at Wal­lack's. When she retired, Lester Wallack presented her with two orchestra stalls for her use as long as he owned the theatre.\textsuperscript{75} She professed a mutual respect for Lester Wallack as an actor and as a manager, paying the highest price—five hundred dollars—in auction for a box at Wal­lack's testimonial benefit performance in 1888, almost a quarter of a century after her retirement.\textsuperscript{76}

Several other prominent actresses contributed to the over-all effectiveness of the costuming at Wallack's, maintaining the standards of elegance and good taste established by Mrs. Hoey. After Mrs. Hoey's retirement, Lester Wallack brought to America an English actress, Clara Jennings. Although she never rivaled her predecessor, she performed well for eight years\textsuperscript{77} and was always "notable for gracefulness and exquisite taste in costume."\textsuperscript{78} The company also gained noticeable strength during the seasons of 1867 and 1868 when Rose Eytinge shared the role of leading lady with Clara Jennings.

Rose Eytinge began her professional career in Syracuse,

\textsuperscript{75}Arthur Wallack, "The Wallacks Long Ago."

\textsuperscript{76}A. M. Palmer's Account of the Testimonial Benefit Performance to Mr. Lester Wallack, Given at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, May 21, 1888 (Theo S. DeVinnetley, 1893), p. 12.

\textsuperscript{77}Jones, p. 66.

\textsuperscript{78}Spirit of the Times, May 4, 1867.
New York, where because she had no wardrobe, she purchased clothes belonging to the deceased wife of the theatre manager, paying for them on the installment plan. Early in her career she made her own costumes and invested all her surplus capital in unbleached muslin. Her autobiography indicates an interest in authentic costuming when she describes a trip to the East where she purchased silk-fringed scarves, shawls, and ornaments for use on the stage:

From drawings and photographs which I was at great pains to procure, from copies of ornaments which had from time to time been discovered by the museums, I had made crowns and other headgear, jewelled belts, girdles, armlets, bracelets, ear rings, and various ornaments, all of which were faithful counterparts of the geegaws with which women of that far away period had bedecked themselves.

She recalled, however, that in a production of Tom Taylor's *A Fool's Revenge* at Booth's Theatre she let her "love of the beautiful and picturesque run riot." She designed a "strictly correct" mediaeval Italian costume of satin, rare silver embroidery and diaphanous draperies. She had studied the role of Fiordelisa from sides and was unaware of the character's poverty. When her co-star, Edwin Booth, saw her costume, he "fell back aghast," explaining that her dress should have been quiet and unobtrusive and of cheap material. She recalled that Booth let her wear the costume that night because she was so upset over her mistake.

At Wallack's Rose Eytinge exhibited a preference for long raceful robes and appeared in the "highest, most womanly, and intellectual" costumes.\(^\text{82}\) She was evidently not always accurate in her costuming, as evidenced by a criticism of her portrayal of Peg Woffington when she covered her "glorious blue-black hair" with a blonde wig, which the Tribune critic stated was ridiculous "in face of the well-known fact that the Irish beauty had black hair, and never disfigured it in her own proper person."\(^\text{83}\)

In the 1870's and 1880's Rose Coghlan continued the tradition of fashionable leading ladies. "Expert and capable in the broad fields of melodrama,"\(^\text{84}\) she apparently possessed "that rare ability of decorating herself so that her mere presence is a charm."\(^\text{85}\) One contemporary writer claimed that she had perfect taste in costume,\(^\text{86}\) and the Herald critic described one of her dresses as "a poem of millinery."\(^\text{87}\)

Leading ladies at Wallack's may have drawn the most praise from the press, but actresses in other lines contri-

\(^\text{82}\) Ireland, extra-illustrated, II, Pt. XVII, 281.

\(^\text{83}\) New York Daily Tribune, October 14, 1868.


\(^\text{85}\) New York Herald, September 22, 1878.

\(^\text{86}\) Undesignated clipping dated January 3, 1882, Wallack Folder, Player's Collection, Walter Hampden Memorial Library.

\(^\text{87}\) New York Herald, September 22, 1878.
buted significantly to the over-all success of the company with similar interests in appropriate and effective costuming. For thirteen years as the most prominent "second lady" or ingenue in the 1850's and 1860's, Mary Gannon demonstrated a preference for breeches parts, "owing to the opportunity of showing her plump little form to such advantage." Her costume for Tom Taylor's Ticket-of-Leave Man elicited the comment that "from the exuberant flounce to the Yo-Semitic waterfall," her costume "was sufficient to throw all spectators into rhapsodies of admiration." Ione Burke in the sixties and seventies and Jeffrey Lewis in the seventies also drew praise for their elaborate dress, even through at times they may have over-dressed their characters.

Actresses in the line of "old women" consistently dressed with "the most irreproachable taste" throughout Wallack's history. Mrs. W. R. Blake and Mrs. John Brougham in the early fifties, Mrs. George Vernon in the late fifties and sixties, and Mme. Elizabeth Ponisi in the seventies and eighties received no negative criticisms from reviewers, a remarkable accomplishment in view of the fact that critics frequently devoted whole columns to an analysis of stage dress. Mrs. Vernon and Mme. Ponisi were especially admirable

88 *Spirit of the Times*, November 13, 1858.
90 *Spirit of the Times*, October 1, 1853.
as the old women of "artificial comedy," for they maintained the traditions of the roles by dressing their characters according to the actual period when the comedies were first produced.

Since actresses provided their own costumes for both period and contemporary plays, their contribution to the effectiveness of the costuming at Wallack's cannot be overstated. Throughout Wallack's history, critics indicate that leading performers consistently dressed their characters in dresses which were elegant and elaborate and usually appropriate. Actors may have attained a more uniform degree of excellence in costuming, however, especially in period plays, since the theatre provided all period costumes for men. Their ability to wear well the dress of a former time and their ability to select and use appropriate accessories for period costumes bear directly on the over-all effect of costuming at Wallack's.

Besides Lester Wallack, perhaps the actor most indicative of the general excellence of the male performers was John Gibbs Gilbert, who was unrivaled in his special field, that of comic old men, a line of business he held with distinction for the twenty-six years he performed at Wallacks. Gilbert began his association with Wallack's in

91Towse, Sixty Years of the Theatre, p. 98.
1861 in the role of Sir Peter Teazle in *The School for Scandal*, and from that time, he insisted on accuracy in apparel and demanded "absolute concurrence with the manners of the time and of the society to be depicted."  

Gilbert knew his art thoroughly and was a staunch traditionalist. He respected the traditions of the stage and considered innovations to be obnoxious. Taking his profession seriously, he considered acting not a matter of opinion or of taste, but a matter of fact. This sense of actuality carried over into the costuming of his various characters, for he dearly loved the "old" plays: "I like society plays once in a while, although you see only a repetition of the life that is all about you; whereas in an old play, you find something to admire as you do in an old picture, a chance to study costume and manners." He deplored the trend of the day to costume society plays with "nine gentlemen on the stage dressed alike, from the waiter up to the hero," pointing out the absurdity of the situation with the question, "What illusion was there in this?"

Lester Wallack valued Gilbert's opinions highly and created for him the position of "acting director" in 1868, a position he held until the end of the theatre's history.

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94 Ibid.
95 *New York Herald*, December 5, 1878.
96 Winter, *A Sketch of the Life of John Gilbert*, p. 44.
Although it is impossible to determine the exact duties of the acting director, Gilbert may have coached or rehearsed scenes and may have assumed full responsibility for the company when Wallack was away.\(^7\) Whatever Gilbert's official status, he personified the goals and ideals established by J. W. Wallack, whom Gilbert called his "friend and dramatic master,"\(^8\) and by Lester Wallack, whom Gilbert loved as his "artistic son."\(^9\) Mutual admiration must have encouraged Gilbert's desire for careful reproduction of costumes and manners of past ages, a practice which certainly must have had its effect on other members of the company and which definitely contributed to the reputation of the theatre's presentations and revivals of costume plays.

Gilbert's predecessor, William Rufus Blake, achieved equal success in the fifties when portraying characters in the old comedies for "in looks, acts, dress, and text," he was "always perfect."\(^10\) Blake and Gilbert were the only two actors to perform in their particular line of business as "old men," allowing a continuity of appropriate period dress in that line throughout Wallack's history.

The standards of dress for leading men at Wallack's remained comparably high, although only one actor matched

\(^7\)Ibid.

\(^8\)Boston Herald, June 18, 1889.


\(^10\)Spirit of the Times, April 25, 1874.
Lester Wallack's achievements in stage dress for both contemporary and period plays. Osmond Tearle succeeded Lester Wallack as leading man in the late seventies and early eighties and charmed audiences with a varied wardrobe. Tearle "appareled himself in the height of fashion or garbed himself in tatters, stalked the stage in all the glory of silk and satin or clung to a raft in a pair of linen trousers and a bandanna handkerchief." Tearle's versatility contrasts with the limitations of H. J. Montague, Wallack's "matinee idol" of the mid-seventies, for Montague was "restricted to the level of contemporary comedy." due to his inability to act believably in period costume.

Period costumes for men received little criticism, even when worn by actors in supporting roles. W. R. Floyd, who performed at Wallack's for fourteen seasons, was but one of a group of comedians who wore "with grace the rapier and ruffles of the eighteenth century." As the principal low-comedian at Wallack's for eleven seasons during the fifties and sixties, George Holland maintained the tradition of performing with "not an item of dress nor a gesture nor an expression nor an attitude that is not considered and

101 Undesignated clipping, dated January 3, 1882, Wallack Folder, Player's Collection, Walter Hampden Memorial Library.


103 Winter, Brief Chronicles, p. 219.

104 Ibid.
sustained with conscientious care." Other actors often received compliments for their "perfect costume," or their "admirably characteristic" dress and demonstrated the company's devotion to the perfection of the details of a play produced and acted according to stock-company methods.

The costuming practices at Wallack's reflect to a great extent the individual preferences of the acting company. The apparent effectiveness of the costuming directly relates to the general excellence of the performers, for they ordered, selected, constructed, borrowed, or otherwise embellished their own stage dress. Much of the company's strength resulted, too, from their abilities as performers to represent another era in the old comedies in style and manner, as well as in costume.

Since full dress-rehearsals were infrequent at Wallack's, no unifying force controlled the collective costuming of the company. Some unity of design and style resulted, however, from three apparent practices: (1) under the stock-company system, younger performers learned traditional costuming practices from older, more experienced actors such as the Wallacks, John Gilbert, Mrs. Vernon, and Mme. Ponisi, who

105 O. B. Bunce, "Some of our Actors," p. 171.
107 Ibid., January 31, 1863.
had long and illustrious careers at Wallack's; (2) historical costumes for men possibly reflected a unity of design appropriate to the period since the theatre's costumer, George Flannery, provided the basic period garments for men; (3) for contemporary plays, Lester Wallack's insistence on the latest British fashions also encouraged some unity in style, particularly among the men.

Women's contemporary fashions, too, followed elegant and fashionable styles. Performers and critics contemporary with the period credit Mrs. John Hoey with the introduction of elaborate and expensive stage dress, although Wallack actresses developed the practice to such a high degree of ostentation that they may have over-dressed their characters for a particular role or situation. Contemporary writers indicate, however, that the actresses usually dressed with such good taste that their dressing alone represented a compliment to their audience.  

Unity of design would have been almost impossible among the women's costumes, since actresses provided all costumes for both period and contemporary plays. As a result, the effectiveness of historical costumes for women may have resulted from a knowledge of costuming gained from long years of professional association with each other and from their mutual cooperation and admiration which served as a binding factor in the organization of the company.  


110 Spirit of the Times, May 14, 1853.
Since contemporary reviews usually reflected opening-night performances, the first time actors appeared together in costume, the excellence reported by the critics is probably due to the individual taste and intelligence of the performers in the company, guided by the expertise of J. W. and Lester Wallack, and supported by the interest and encouragement of the more prominent actors to dress their characters appropriately.
Although J. W. Wallack and Lester Wallack were both schooled in Shakespearean drama, only three Shakespearean comedies received regular revivals at the Wallack theatres. The elder Wallack had achieved his first success at the Drury Lane in 1812 when he played Laertes to Robert Elliston's Hamlet, and Lester Wallack stated that one of the first important steps he had taken "upon the ladder of fame" was playing Benedick to Helen Faucit's Beatrice at Manchester, England. Father and son established their reputations by portraying various Shakespearean characters, but despite their successful experiences they produced only six of Shakespeare's works at their New York theatre. Two of these productions occurred during the 1856-1858 seasons when illness forced the elder Wallack to lease his theatre to William Stuart. The new lessee opened Hamlet on October 20, 1856, and gave the tragedy eight performances over two seasons. Stuart also presented Romeo and Juliet in June of 1857 for two performances. J. W. Wallack had produced a "notable revival" of Twelfth Night on March 24, 1856, as a benefit for Charles Walcot who played Aguecheek to John Brougham's Toby Belch and John Dyott's Malvolio. Lester Wallack portrayed Orsino, and Mrs. John Hoey represented
Olivia. The production received only two performances and was never revived again.

The three Shakespearean comedies which did figure prominently in the Wallack repertory included *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *As You Like It*. These productions occurred primarily when the elder Wallack was manager of the first Wallack theatre in the 1850's and provided him with an opportunity to enact the characters of Benedick, Jacques, and Shylock, three of his most popular characterizations. Although Lester staged revivals of *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1869 and *As You Like It* in 1880, Shakespearean comedy virtually disappeared from the repertory after J. W. Wallack's death.

**Much Ado About Nothing**

The first Shakespearean comedy to be produced at Wallack's first theatre was *Much Ado About Nothing* on October 18, 1852. The elder Wallack portrayed Benedick to Laura Keene's Beatrice with Lester enacting Don Pedro and W. R. Blake playing Dogberry. *Much Ado* received sixty-two performances over seven seasons. A review of its production in its first season strikes a discordant note regarding production elegance. The critic for the *New York Times* declared


3*New York Daily Tribune*, October 18, 1852.
that the scenery, wretched in the extreme, was old, worn out, and inappropriate, and that the dresses were appropriate for the scenery, but not for the play. Observing that the play was "well-attended, nearly crowded," the writer believed, "Mr. Wallack must be making money, he spends so little and receives so much." These critical comments are the only ones concerning costuming of any Shakespearean presentation in the fifties, although four illustrations from Much Ado have survived.

These include a print from an engraving with an inscription which identifies the content as representing the close of the first scene following Beatrice's tirade, to which Benedick replies, "I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a tinner!--but go your ways, in Heaven's name; I have done." (Plate I) Although lacking the detailed accuracy of a photograph, the hand-drawn engraving shows a group scene with J. W. Wallack as Benedick and Laura Keene as Beatrice, dating the production in the first two seasons, for Laura Keene left Wallack's in the middle of the second season. Plate II shows an individual portrait of J. W. Wallack again as Benedick, printed from a photograph by Brady in Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper on May 31, 1856, and again on January 14, 1865, following Wal-


5 John Creahan, Laura Keene's biographer, identifies the engraving as being reprinted from Barnum's Illustrated News in 1853.
lack's death, but representing the same production, as indicated by a comparison of the costumes worn by J. W. Wallack in both illustrations. Plate III provides a photograph of Laura Keene as Beatrice, probably from the same production, as indicated by a comparison of hair-styles, sleeves, and veils shown in Plates I and III. Finally, Plate IV portrays the elder Wallack as Benedick, but in an entirely different costume, probably from an earlier performance.

The appropriateness of the costumes in the first three plates appears to contradict the critic's negative remarks in the New York Times at the end of the first season and prompts the speculation that the elder Wallack may have recostumed the play for the opening of the second season when Laura Keene was still with the company.

The cut of Wallack's costume in Plates I and II suggests the early sixteenth-century style of the continent rather than Elizabethan. Disregarding the line describing Benedick as a "German from the waist downward, all slops," Wallack wore a thigh-length jerkin with the main body of the garment gathered into a deep yoke. The jerkin was generally worn loose with the front folded back into deep lapels, creating the square silhouette of the early sixteenth century. Wallack wears the belted jerkin, split down the front, over a doublet with a square embroidery-edged neckline; a gathered chemise is evident around the neck, a popular style prior to the development of the ruff. The plumed hat, soft knee-boots with slashed tops, dagger, and cape are all of the
early sixteenth century. The engraving indicates the possibility that all the men's costumes were cut from the same basic pattern and style, with the exception of some variety in footwear.

In contrast to the sixteenth-century apparel of the men, Laura Keene's costume as Beatrice resembles a fashionable dress of the early 1850's, with its boned and fitted bodice. She apparently made some attempt to adjust to the sixteenth-century style by attaching appropriately decorated sleeves to a contemporary gown. The hair-style appears to be that of the mid-nineteenth century, although the pearls intertwined in her hair provide a Renaissance flavor. The veil was worn by Renaissance noblewomen in the style shown in the picture. The pouch or gipciere near the left arm is also appropriate, but the tassel attached to it is inappropriate to the Renaissance, although popular in the mid-1850's. An over-skirt covers the under-skirt, and both appear to be supported by a hoop, indicated by the horizontal line in the drape of the skirt while the actress is seated. While not authentic or historically accurate, the effect of the costume is pleasing and compares favorably with the style of the costume worn in Plate I by the female character third from the left.

In Plate IV Wallack wears a doublet with a cape draped in the style of the Italian Renaissance. Without the layered look of the costumes in the other prints, Wallack's choice does not seem as complete, possibly due to his selection of
low slippers and a greater expanse of fleshings or tights under the shorter doublet. Aside from a nineteenth-century hair style, the tassel on the cape and buckled slippers more suitable for the eighteenth century, the costume might otherwise be appropriate for the character and for the Renaissance.

Wallack presented Much Ado About Nothing periodically from 1852 through the season of 1859, presumably using the same costumes stored in the theatre's wardrobe. Women's costumes would have changed, however, as each actress provided her own. Mrs. Conway portrayed Beatrice for two seasons, followed by Mrs. Hoey for two seasons; reviews, however, mention only that the costuming was appropriate.

Ten years after the production in 1859, the Spirit of the Times announced on November 28, 1868, "We are promised a Shakespearean comedy at an expense of 25,000 dollars," an advance notice of Lester Wallack's acclaimed revival of Much Ado on February 1, 1869. Pronouncing that Much Ado would be presented with "unusual elegance of costuming and magnificence of scenery," a newspaper writer also observed that he had never seen a play at Wallack's that "was not brought out at an extraordinary expense and with unusual splendor." A critic for Leslie's corroborated the advance notice by lauding the production for "a completeness and pomp which would seem to leave nothing to be desired" and noting that "in scenery and dressing, the piece was as

6 Spirit of the Times, December 5, 1868.
nearly perfect as anything which we have ever had offered us upon the American stage."\(^7\) William Winter called Wallack's production "a stage triumph--magnetic, vital, surcharged with color, and glittering with light,"\(^8\) and Magnus believed that it had not, "in point of sumptuousness, good taste, or correctness of detail been surpassed by any subsequent setting of Shakespeare's comedy."\(^9\) Winter agreed that Wallack had "lavished every care and needful expense upon the production of this Shakespearean gem."\(^10\) The *New York Times* complimented Wallack for spending "months of patient study to elaborate points which usually are utterly neglected."\(^11\) Possibly Wallack used such "rich and expensive scenes and costumes" to counteract the imminent opening of Edwin Booth's new theatre with Booth's spectacular production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

*Much Ado About Nothing* ran for thirty-six performances,\(^13\) and reviews indicate that much of its success was due to the costuming, which added to the "wealth of scenic accessories" a "luxury of costume never surpassed on our stage."\(^14\) In

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\(^7\) *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, February 20, 1869.
\(^8\) *New York Daily Tribune*, February 2, 1869.
\(^10\) *New York Daily Tribune*, February 2, 1869.
\(^12\) Odell, *Annals*, VIII, 416.
\(^13\) Ibid., 417.
\(^14\) *New York Daily Tribune*, February 2, 1869.
an address following the opening night performance, Lester Wallack paid tribute to the scene-painter, mechanics, and costumers, acknowledge their zeal and efficiency. Notices for the production announced "costumes, in strict keeping with the period by Messrs. Flannery, Benschoten, and Hamilton," with the "Armor, Lace Trimmings, Dress Ornaments from Messrs. Shannon and Miller, 32 Maiden Lane," and the "Arms and Equipment imported from Paris, by Messrs. Horstman and Co." Advertisements placed the period of the play "about the middle of the sixteenth century," and William Winter wrote that "Spanish and Italian tastes were consulted on these matters," resulting in "a delicate mingling of gorgeous colors--the Spaniards, of course, being the darker and sterner."

Lester Wallack played Benedick to the Beatrice of Rose Eytinge, while John Gilbert portrayed Dogberry. Three separate photographs of Wallack as Benedick provide ample evidence of his luxurious costumes. Plate V depicts Lester Wallack in a full-length view, Plate VI shows Wallack in a second costume reclining on a bench, and Plate VII illustrates the details of the costume in Plate VI.

Wallack's costume is appropriate for the sixteenth century and for the character of Benedick. In Plate V he

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15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., February 1, 1869.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., February 2, 1869.
wears a variation of paned Spanish slops, with slight padding and bombast, although not reaching the knee as most portraits from the sixteenth century indicate. The paning appears to be sewn into the pumpkin-shaped breeches rather than loosely attached at the waistband and breeches cuffs as was the fashion of the sixteenth century. No codpiece is visible. Wallack evidently wears a sixteenth-century vest over the doublet, for there appears to be a V-opening down the front, with contrasting lapels. The peplum appears to be three to four inches below the waist. Scalloped gauntlet gloves complement Wallack's scalloped Spanish-style boots. The puffed sleeves in paned material at the shoulder and elbow match the trunks. If the costume in Plate V is the same as that described in the catalogue of Lester Wallack's theatrical wardrobe, which lists a "first dress from Much Ado," the colors were "black with orange velvet" for the jacket and trunks.19

The costume in Plate VI is similar to the one in Plate V, but several differences exist. Gone are the slops, scalloped boots and gloves, and the front opening in the doublet. In addition, the peplum is slightly longer, with an opening slashed to the waist. Wallack evidently wears Venetians, short breeches of the sixteenth century usually tied below the knees, although not much is visible under the thigh-high Spanish boots. The puffing on the sleeves exactly matches

19 For the contents of the complete catalogue, see Appendix A.
that of the first costume in style and trim, except that the puffs are now a solid color. The effect is that of a character grown more sedate in dress, appropriate for the action in Much Ado. Plate VII also reveals that Wallack wears a more sedate hat with smaller plume and buckle to complement the two belt buckles. His gloves, no longer scalloped, provide even more contrast with the costume in Plate V.

It is unfortunate that no photographs of Rose Eytinge in the role of Beatrice are available. The catalogue of Lester Wallack's wardrobe lists, however, a "Dove Colored Silk Domino, trimmed with scarlet, worn by 'Beatrice' in 'Much Ado About Nothing.'" The domino was originally a hooded woolen cloak worn by the clergy in winter in the sixteenth century; however, ladies adopted the domino with a half mask in the eighteenth century to wear to carnivals and masked balls. The robe was usually voluminous and made of silk. The use of a domino from the eighteenth century for a play costumed in mid-sixteenth century indicates an anachronism probably unnoticed by audiences and critics alike.

The catalogue also lists a "Bridal Dress, White Satin and Gold; two cloaks, Violet and Ruby, worn in 'Much Ado About Nothing.'" Although the term "dress" refers to costumes of both men and women, the listing probably refers to the bridial dress worn by Hero. If this is the case, Wallack

probably provided some or all of the costumes worn by female characters, for those costumes would not be in his possession if provided by the actresses themselves. Although uncommon, such a practice was not unknown, for occasionally managers supplemented salaries by providing some costumes.21 Two years after the Much Ado production, Augustin Daly provided Clara Morris with three of five dresses, with the three afterwards belonging to him.22 Instances of managers providing ladies' costumes occurred usually when extra-fancy costumes were required or when special productions were planned, such as Wallack's Much Ado About Nothing.

One extant photograph of John Gilbert as Dogberry indicates his interest in dressing his part with more authenticity than was prevalent in mid-nineteenth century; that is, his costume corresponds to the clothes worn in a particular period as depicted in portraits of that period. Although the engraving in Plate VII was made in New York in 1853, and Gilbert never performed at Wallack's until the 1860's, the costume is indicative of Gilbert's style of dress for Shakespearean characters. The collar and knee breeches mark the costume as early seventeenth century in a style reminiscent of Puritan austerity. No anachronisms compromise the costume from being appropriate to the early seventeenth

21 Richardson, p. 75.
23 Richardson, p. 76.
century, however Gilbert's costume would have been inappropriate for Wallack productions which usually followed costume styles of the sixteenth century.

As You Like It

Another notable Shakespearean production appeared for the first time in June of 1853. In announcing the production of As You Like It as a benefit for Laura Keene, advertisements promised new costumes. Although produced at the end of Wallack's first season, the manager presented it "with as much care and at as lavish an expense as would have been warranted had the season but commenced with its production." Opening three weeks after the negative comments in the New York Times concerning the scenery and dressing of Wallack's Much Ado About Nothing, the production undoubtedly received extra care from the elder Wallack. Before closing on June 13, 1853, As You Like It received seven consecutive performances and earned praise for the "splendid scenery and costumes." The Spirit of the Times observed that "it was in every respect meritorious, more than respectable, whilst the accessories of costume and scenery evince the care with which it has been produced."

The production featured J. W. Wallack as Jaques, Lester

25 Ibid., June 7, 1853.
26 Ibid., June 13, 1853.
27 Spirit of the Times, June 11, 1853.
Wallack as Orlando, and Laura Keene as Rosalind. Although Laura Keene so enjoyed the role of Rosalind that she chose the character for the opening of her own theatre at 622 Broadway on November 18, 1856, the only extant photographic evidence from the fifties is an engraving of the elder Wallack as Jaques, a role he played on both sides of the Atlantic.

Wallack's selection of a costume for Jaques (Plate IX) indicates a consistency of style in that the choice is similar to his costume for Benedick (Plate IV) but not as elaborate or finished as the costume for Benedick in 1858. (Plate II) As might be appropriate for the melancholy Jaques, the costume lacks elaborate trim on the doublet, the neck opening edged with plain darker trim than the body of the garment. The gathered neck-line of the chemise is characteristic of the late fifteenth century in Italy, as are the plumed hat and soft calf-length boots.

In subsequent productions Mrs. Hoey portrayed Rosalind to the elder Wallack's Jaques. Her concern for appropriateness in dress for the character of Rosalind was remembered in her obituary, which observed that she was the only woman "who wore the boy's dress to the end of the play, discarding the elaborate wedding dress" because "Where would Orlando get such a gown in the woods of Arden?"

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When *As You Like It* was produced again on September 30, 1880, the costume for Rosalind reflects Lester Wallack's interest as a manager in encouraging appropriate dress. The production created interest by the announcement that it would be modeled after a highly successful London production and that Rose Coghlan would dress Rosalind after "Miss Litton's London models." Miss Litton, the London actress who portrayed Rosalind, had mounted a campaign to encourage appropriate Shakespearean costuming. She discarded the "memorial habit of Rosalind--the nice ladylike trappings in which she has haunted so many Arden Forests" and settled on "leather jerkins and leather leggings, and a little cap, and a generally wrought and reasonable get-up." Armed with photographs of the dresses worn by the London actress, Rose Coghlan pronounced that although she would dress the part as Miss Litton did, any similarity in interpretation and rendition of the role would be coincidence. According to Wallack's leading actress, the leather doublet and leggings seemed much more appropriate for Rosalind, because "it is quite ridiculous to make her wander about the wood in silken hose and satin French-heeled boots."

The critic for the *New York Dramatic Mirror* recorded

31 *Spirit of the Times*, October 9, 1880.
32 *New York Dramatic Mirror*, October 9, 1880.
33 Ibid., September 25, 1880.
two weeks later that the costumes worn by Rose Coghlan and Stella Boniface as Celia were "not very handsome." The reviewer described Rosalind's first-act costume as a "dress of blue brocaded silk over a petticoat of mouse-colored plush, the brocade looped with silver chains, the sleeves of the brocade coming to the elbow, and plush ones, tightly fitting, reaching the wrist." The description coincides with that of a dress which might have been worn in the early Italian Renaissance. Stella Boniface received criticism from the reviewer because she wore bright pink "with the everlasting waterfall of curls straggling down her back," looking like a "Boston belle in party dress does look, has looked, and always will look to the end of time."35

The reviewer continued criticism of the feminine costumes by chastizing Marion Booth as Phebe and Effie Germon as Audrey for making the mistake of not wearing sleeves to their dresses, an omission inappropriate for the Renaissance. The writer also urged Marion Booth to visit a wig-maker and to secure a stick of black cosmetic to play Phebe correctly.36 Rosalind alludes to Phebe's "inky borws" in the third act of *As You Like It*, indicating that Phebe is brunette. The critic for the *Spirit of the Times* commented that Marion Booth was "pretty, but bare-armed and brown-haired" as Phebe and that Stella Boniface as Celia was also "badly

34 *Ibid.*, October 9, 1880.
dressed."³⁷

In contrast, William Winter thought the dressing was "sumptuous and harmonious throughout, although far less prosaic than has been usual." He believed the production was "the most entirely satisfactory interpretation of the comedy that has been seen in this capital for many years," and found the revival both "scholar-like and human."³⁸ It is curious that Winter did not comment on the inappropriate elements of the costumes, for in his analysis of As You Like It, he wrote that the proper dresses for Rosalind, Celia, and the ladies of the court of Duke Frederick would comprise "gowns of silk velvet and cloth of gold, rich embroideries in Venice gold . . . deep trimmings of fur or velvet to collars, cuffs, and skirts." He further described the dresses of the period as low at the throat, short-waisted, "full over the hips, with full sleeves, caught in at the wrist and long over-sleeves."³⁹ Winter's description, appropriate to the Italian Renaissance, coincides with that of Rosalind's first dress, but contrasts dramatically with the descriptions of "bare-armed" ladies.

The only available photograph from the production is Rosalind's second costume in her disguise as Ganymede, which drew unanimous praise from the critics. Plate X indicates the style which "was much admired for its propriety and its

³⁷Spirit of the Times, October 9, 1880.
³⁸New York Daily Tribune, October 1, 1880.
³⁹Winter, Shakespeare on the Stage, II, 332-333.
becomingness." The *Spirit of the Times* testified that Rosalind's "costume of leather doublet and gaiters is new, picturesque, and becoming," while Winter wrote that "for the first time on the American stage, in this generation, the part was dressed aright—in a woodland garb of slate color and leather with a crimson velvet cap; and it made a bewitching figure."

The costume is certainly masculine in appearance as well as material; Rose Coghlan's hair-style, also masculine, represents one of the few occasions when an actress adopted a period hair style other than contemporary, as Stella Boniface used with her "waterfall of everlasting curls" for the role of Celia. Rosalind's leggings, however, appear anachronistic since they button up the sides, while lacings close the front of the doublet and tie the slashed sleeves over the puffing of the chemise. Buttoned leggings can be found in the early eighteenth century, but not in sixteenth-century portraits where leggings, lashings, and bindings were prevalent.

The writer for the *Spirit of the Times* recorded the only comment concerning the men's costumes, stating simply that Harry Pitt as Orlando looked like "an old picture in

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40 *New York Dramatic Mirror*, October 9, 1880.
41 *Spirit of the Times*, October 9, 1880.
42 *New York Daily Tribune*, October 1, 1880.
43 Richardson, p. 111.
his quaint costume."\(^{44}\) Pitt reminded the writer of Montague, for like Montague, Pitt was most at home in modern comedy and had difficulty performing believably in period costume.\(^{45}\) The men's costumes were evidently prepared under George Flannery's direction, as the Wallack program announced "New and appropriate costumes by Mr. G. Flanry \(\underline{sic}\) and assistants."

Flannery or John Gilbert, who was in charge of stage direction, probably had the opportunity to make costuming adjustments, for the company held at least two dress rehearsals. A "full dress rehearsal," which the *Spirit of the Times* termed a "phenomenon at Wallack's," followed a dress rehearsal with scenery.\(^{46}\) The explanation for the use of sleeveless dresses among the ladies' costumes, other than those of Rose Coghlan, probably lies in the standard practice of actresses selecting their own costumes. Since the women's costumes showed sufficient discrepancies to warrant identical comments in at least two newspapers, perhaps the men's costumes were acceptable in style as well as appropriateness for the Italian Renaissance.

Two of the supporting actresses who received criticism in the press, Stella Boniface and Effie Germon, had performed their same roles in support of the English actress,

\(^{44}\) *Spirit of the Times*, October 9, 1880.
\(^{45}\) Ibid., October 2, 1880.
\(^{46}\) Ibid.
Ada Cavendish, when she played a starring engagement on the Wallack stage the preceding season following the close of Wallack's regular season. The supporting company also included John Gilbert as Adam, Harry Beckett as Touchstone, and six other Wallack regulars, assisted by actors from other theatres. No reviews commented on the effectiveness of the costuming for the Cavendish production; however, the program for the engagement, dated May 31, 1879, announced new costumes by G. Flannery and Mrs. Bergh.

Since Flannery received program credit for both productions, it may be that some costumes were re-used in the Wallack revival during the regular season. Flannery apparently had little control over women's costumes; however, Ada Cavendish's costume for Ganymede is illustrated in Plate XI, primarily for the purpose of comparison with Rose Coghlan's leather costume. The London actress wears "the memorial habit of Rosalind--the nice ladylike trappings," which Rose Coghlan discarded. Although the design of the costume is appropriate to the Renaissance, Ada Cavendish's curls and greater expanse of feminine leg detract from what is intended to be a masculine disguise.

**The Merchant of Venice**

The elder Wallack re-created his widely acclaimed Shylock for the first time at his own theatre on May 10, 1879. Odell, *Annals*, X, 566.
1853, and *The Merchant of Venice* received fifty additional performances over five seasons, all in the 1850's. The production that drew the most notice, however, occurred on December 9, 1858, marking Wallack's return to the stage after a two-year retirement forced on him by illness. The production is of special interest because critics compared Wallack's production with Shakespearean productions staged by Charles Kean, who was known for his efforts toward historical accuracy in costumes and scenic accessories. Presented "in a style of classic elegance and scenic splendor seldom beheld on this side of the Atlantic, and only seen on the other when Charles Kean directs," the "pristine accuracy" was notable. One writer believed Wallack adopted the costumes of the year 1600 when the play was written, in contrast to Kean who had chosen those of an epoch thirty years earlier.

The elder Wallack must not have announced the precise period in which he costumed the play, for the *New York Daily Tribune* noted that no date was "fixed for the action." The *Spirit of the Times* fixed the date as 1606, and one historian indicated the time as that of Henry VIII. The

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48 *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 18, 1858.
49 *Spirit of the Times*, December 11, 1858.
51 *New York Daily Tribune*, December 11, 1858.
52 *Spirit of the Times*, December 11, 1858.
53 Jones, p. 108.
New York Times critic observed, however, that, "It would be difficult to find authority for either choice, but it is interesting to know that the costumes do belong to some period, and are not the vain imaginings of a spangle-beset fabricator of theatrical wardrobes."\(^{54}\)

Praise was unanimous. "Every accessory—dress, decoration, and scene—carried fairly back to the days of the famous city of the sea," and "the figures of the play were beautifully brought out, and not one thing to mar the scenic illusion."\(^{55}\) The tone of all the reviews agreed with a statement in the New York Herald: "The critic's task is the more grateful when the beauties are so many and the blemishes so trivial, as in Mr. Wallack's revival of 'The Merchant of Venice.'"\(^{56}\) The New York Times declared the production the "art sensation of the season,"\(^{57}\) and Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper termed it "a decided artistic triumph."\(^{58}\) The critic for the Spirit of the Times believed that Wallack's production had "such talent in the actors, and taste in the scenery and dresses, that the golden age of the drama has returned again."\(^{59}\)

\(^{54}\) New York Times, December 10, 1858.
\(^{55}\) New York Daily Tribune, December 11, 1858.
\(^{56}\) New York Herald, December 10, 1858.
\(^{57}\) New York Times, December 13, 1858.
\(^{58}\) Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, December 18, 1858.
\(^{59}\) Spirit of the Times, December 18, 1858.
Although the program listed Flannery as costumer, assisted by Benschoten and others, with costumes taken from the best attainable authority, credit for their success went to the individual performers, including Lester Wallack as Bassanio and Mrs. Hoey as Portia. Following the opening of the play, the critic for Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper described Mrs. Hoey as a rich and elegant dresser: "Her modern dresses are distinguished for their subdued and refined taste, and of consequence their perfect harmony, while her costumes are of infinite splendor and always correct as to pattern and date." The New York Daily Tribune's critic agreed: "Her acting was, as usual, enhanced by the elegance of her appearance, and the richness and variety of her dress spoke wonders for the flourishing commercial conditions of those times." The New York Daily Tribune also praised Lester Wallack as stage manager for "much of the honors of the night. He looked to the life the noble

60 Odell, Annals, VII, 122.

61 The reviewer makes one of the earliest distinctions between dresses and costumes, for in the fifties and sixties critics used the term "dress" to describe the clothes of both men and women for contemporary and period styles. Writers used the terms "get-up" and "make-up" to describe the stage dress throughout the fifties, sixties, and seventies, but the use of the term "costume" to denote period dress did not become a regular part of the critics' vocabulary until the sixties. The use of the term here suggests that Mrs. Hoey did not adapt a contemporary style but possibly wore a dress appropriate to the Italian Renaissance.

62 Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, December 25, 1858.
63 New York Daily Tribune, December 11, 1858.
Bassanio. His attire was splendid . . . .”

The production recorded a longer run in New York than ever before enjoyed by a Shakespearean production, sixty-three consecutive performances; however, only one photograph of the production is available. Plate XII depicts the first meeting between Shylock and Antonio and includes J. W. Wallack as Shylock, John Dyott as Antonio, and Lester Wallack as Bassanio.

The elder Wallack selected a costume comparable to the traditional style worn throughout the nineteenth century by most interpreters of Shylock. The writer for the New York Daily Tribune suggests Wallack's traditional approach when he states that as the elder Wallack "entered in the Venetian Jew's garb, to which his old intellectual dandyism had imparted a rude grace and beauty . . . the house rose at him." Wallack dressed Shylock as a Venetian merchant with a "gown reaching to the heels, with sleeves tight in the lower arm and loose above," as indicated in Italian portraits from the late sixteenth century. The fringed sash girding the waist is also appropriate to that period. Wallack includes the cap required by law to distinguish a

64 Ibid.
65 Winter, Shakespeare on the Stage, I, 161.
66 Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, December 25, 1858.
a Jew; traditionally the "orange-tawny bonnet" could also be a scarlet hat lined with black taffeta or a red cap. The elder Wallack apparently wears the Jewish gaberdine which was the traditional costume for Shylock throughout the nineteenth century. The gaberdine was not a legal requirement, for the Venetian law stated only that a Jew must wear a distinguishing mark in the form of a badge or a headdress.

For years, actors traditionally wore a red wig as the required mark, but William Winter states that when Edmund Kean put on the gaberdine of Shylock, he used "for the first time in the stage history of that character a black wig--instead of a red one,--thereby inciting the surprise and the contemptuously expressed pity of the manager." Winter believed, however, that the elder Wallack was the first actor "to dress Shylock's head with literally grey hair," and this he did at the request of his son, Lester Wallack.

Since the text of The Merchant of Venice describes Shylock and Antonio as merchants, an appropriate costume for

70 Richardson, p. 187.
72 Winter, Shakespeare on the Stage, III, 149.
73 Ibid., I, 141.
Antonio could be similar to that worn by the elder Wallack; however, Flannery apparently chose to costume Antonio in a style similar to that of Bassanio, who is a lord. John Dyott as Antonio and Lester Wallack as Bassanio wear costumes that appear to have been cut from the same basic pattern. Both wear knee-length doublets with shorter jerkins and sleeveless outer cloaks, appropriate for young gentlemen. The trims, slashings, and lacings differentiate the two men while maintaining a unity of style. The guimpe, or chemise, is visible above the squared neckline, characteristic of the Italian Renaissance. No anachronisms are apparent in any of the three costumes.

The elder Wallack's costume, which remained in Lester Wallack's possession until sold at auction following Lester's death, was probably similar in style to the one worn when he played opposite Laura Keene in the role of Portia in the early fifties. Plate XIII illustrates Laura Keene's costume for Portia and demonstrates a much more authentic style of dress than she wore as Beatrice in Plate III, for the crinoline support garments are not evident in the photograph. She wears a gown with an open overskirt and loose hanging sleeves, as worn by some Paduan ladies, although the flavor of the costume is more reminiscent of the Gothic period. Italian women also wore a gold chain following the triangular lines of the waist, hanging down in front; from this was usually suspended a large jewel or cross. All of these characteristics are evident in the photograph. The absence
of a hoop allows for the proper drape, and the sleeves complement the flowing line of the costume. The photograph appears to indicate that Laura Keene exposed bare wrists and forearms; during the sixteenth century, women usually covered their arms with the sleeves of the chemise gathered tightly at the wrists. This appears to be the only adjustment; the hair style, parted in the middle and falling loosely down the back, is one style appropriate for the period, even though plaited and/or crimped hair was more prevalent. Veils were commonly worn, but not required.

Plate XIV shows a painting of Laura Keene in her disguise as Belthazar, a doctor of laws. According to Venetian portraits from the sixteenth century, a doctor of laws would have worn a richly patterned ungirdled robe with an upright collar and long open sleeves reaching almost to the ground over a tight sleeved doublet. Laura Keene's costume has appropriate sleeves, but the robe is much too plain and too short for a gown of the doctor of laws of sixteenth-century Venice. The headdress is not appropriate to the time in that it would have been a high cap with a narrow brim and a flat top. Although the costume is not the official dress of the doctor of laws, it is not an adaptation of a contemporary dress and indicates an attempt at authenticity by Laura Keene.

\(^{74}\) Godwin, p. 94.

\(^{75}\) Ibid., p. 95.
From the reviews and available photographs of the various productions of the three Shakespearean comedies produced by Wallack's, several assumptions can be drawn regarding costuming practices at Wallack's. Both J. W. and Lester Wallack sought to costume their own Shakespearean characters as authentically as possible, although the costumes of the fifties have a more finished appearance than those possibly worn by the elder Wallack earlier in his career. Lester Wallack's Benedick costume in the late sixties demonstrates a closer adherence to the requirements of the script, which calls for a specific change in costume style appropriate to Benedick's change of character during the action of the play.

Advertisements indicate that for special revivals Flannery and Benschoten consulted sources from a specific period to achieve a certain degree of unity of style. More unanimity of style appears to have existed among the male members of the company because the theatre provided period costumes for all male actors. The men's costumes appear to have been cut from one pattern for all basic garments falling within a particular age or class group, as indicated in both scene engravings from the early and late fifties and in the use of the same basic cut for Lester Wallack's two Benedick costumes in the late sixties. Flannery and Benschoten may have effected the research necessary for the construction of the men's costumes and supervised the selection of materials. Undoubtedly they worked closely with
with the actors regarding individual variations and accessories, for by the late fifties men's costumes appear to show more detailed construction and individuality than indicated in the early fifties, as seen in the elder Wallack's costume for Benedick (Plate IV) and again in his costume for Jaques. (Plate IX)

Women's costumes were less unified in style and less consistent with illustrations of the sixteenth century because the selection of the material, color, and style was the responsibility of the individual actress. By the late sixties, however, the management may have provide some costumes or accessories for actresses. Photographs indicate that Wallack's actresses at times wore adaptations of contemporary gowns, rather than more appropriate reproductions of sixteenth-century dress; in each case, however, where photographic evidence is available, an attempt to create the flavor of another era is obvious.

Although programs and advertisements list Flannery as the costumer, credit or blame fell on the individual performers for an individual costume and on the management for the over-all effect of the costuming. While the Wallacks basically followed stage traditions, they altered the standards of dress and of drama in each of the three decades by setting personal examples of excellence and by providing the funds to allow the actors to achieve the reputation of being the best-dressed company in America.
Scene From

Much Ado About Nothing
J. W. Wallack

Benedick

Much Ado About Nothing
PLATE III

Laura Keene
Beatrice
Much Ado About Nothing
PLATE IV

J. W. Wallack
Benedick

Much Ado About Nothing
PLATE V

Lester Wallack
Benedick
Much Ado About Nothing
Lester Wallack
Benedick
*Much Ado About Nothing*
PLATE VII

Lester Wallack
Benedick
Much Ado About Nothing
PLATE VIII

John Gilbert
Dogberry
Much Ado About Nothing
J. W. Wallack
Jaques
As You Like It
Rose Coghlan
Rosalind (Ganymede)
As You Like It
Ada Cavendish
Rosalind (Ganymede)
As You Like It
PLATE XII

Scene From
The Merchant of Venice
PLATE XIII

Laura Keene
Portia
The Merchant of Venice
Laura Keene
Portia (Belthazar)
The Merchant of Venice
CHAPTER FIVE

COSTUMING PRACTICES FOR REVIVALS
OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COMEDIES

Eighteenth-century English comedies found a home at Wallack's during the first three decades of its existence and formed a major part of Wallack's repertory in almost every season. Works such as Sheridan's The School for Scandal and The Rivals, Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, Mrs. Centilivre's The Wonder, and George Colman's The Clandestine Marriage were written with "lines of business" in mind and thus were highly suitable for the stock company organization. Revivals of eighteenth-century comedies at Wallack's became social as well as theatrical events, attracting large and fashionable audiences. Representing the "same class of habitues that frequent the opera," members of high society particularly enjoyed thecomedies of manners from the previous century because of the "equivocal language, the sexual wit, and the license of corrupt

1 Hutton, Plays and Players, p. 104.
2 Jones, p. 82.
3 Ibid., p. 83.
4 Spirit of the Times, October 10, 1863.
5 New York Herald, September 10, 1861.
6 Jones, p. 103.
tongues." In fact, first night ladies would "swallow anything on earth" if it had the warrant of old comedy.\(^7\)

Throughout the nineteenth century, theatrical tradition dictated that eighteenth-century comedies be produced in the style in which they were originally presented. Since performers seldom departed from traditional interpretations,\(^8\) reviews rarely commented in great detail on the staging or the costuming. The reviews consistently testified, however, to the "traditions" and "taste and discrimination" in the mounting of plays from the previous century.\(^9\) This general evaluation becomes more striking when one takes into account that audiences were so familiar with the details of the old comedies that any artist who appeared in any of them had "to undergo a most severe ordeal of criticism"\(^10\) relative to their acting and to their costuming. The actors, almost without exception, appeared

in the finest dresses of the day, the gentlemen in knee breeches and silk coats, with wigs and shoulder-knots and ruffles and gloves and swords--the ladies in all the bravery of powder and patches and laces and embroidered petticoats and tucked gowns, and even the servants strutting in finery fit for a modern Oriental ambassador.\(^11\)

Reviews of Wallack's revivals of eighteenth-century

\(^7\)Spirit of the Times, September 28, 1878.
\(^8\)Winter, Old Shrines and Ivy, p. 237.
\(^9\)New York Daily Tribune, January 6, 1862.
\(^10\)Spirit of the Times, September 25, 1869.
\(^11\)Ibid., November 24, 1866.
comedies in all three decades of its existence reflect the consistent use of elegant and appropriate costumes. In the 1850's Wallack advertised "the great comedies of the first masters" as "produced in a form and perfection for which this establishment has obtained a reputation unrivaled and peculiarly its own." The Spirit of the Times confirmed Wallack's announcement on December 4, 1858, by commending the theatre to "the essential notice of all who can enjoy capital acting, attended with the accessories of dress, scenery, &c, all of which are so useful for the proper presentation of a good play."

A series of revivals at Wallack's in the sixties elicited the opinion that regarding the "conventional elegancies of the stage," the "style and careful elaboration with which these 'revivals' are got up" could only be equalled by the Paris theatres, "where infinite pains are lavished on the correct mounting of pieces." In the seventies Wallack's depended largely on its "traditions" regarding comic revivals. The writer for the New York Times commented on February 22, 1876:

Malegre the influence of modern drama, the traditions which must be adhered to in the interpretation of plays of this order are still preserved at Wallack's, and amid the elegant surroundings and accessories by which dramatic entertainments of the day are distinguished, move personages who, by manner as well as by speech and garb, seem to have come upon us fresh from the eighteenth century.

13 New York Herald, February 17, 1862.
Even in the eighties when the status of Wallack's had declined, the old comedies brought comments that only Wallack's company could produce such revivals "finished, well-rounded, and complete in the minutest detail." Throughout all three decades, the consensus of opinion was that Wallack's preserved the "fine symbolism" and the "rich traditions" of the old comedies.

Three eighteenth-century classics topped the list of Wallack's productions in popularity. Wallack's produced two of these, Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer and Sheridan's The Rivals, in twenty-four separate seasons, with the former receiving one hundred seventy-seven performances and the latter one hundred forty-nine. Sheridan's The School for Scandal played in eighteen seasons for the greatest number of performances given any eighteenth-century comedy, two hundred and three. All three plays were traditionally costumed in the styles prevalent during the transition between the early and late Georgian periods, 1750 to 1800.

Whenever attendance slackened at Wallack's, Lester would bring out a "squad of reinforcements headed by Sheridan, Goldsmith, and those other battered old veterans who have taken an active part in all the Wallackian wars," for the old comedies were to Wallack's "what the old Guard was

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15 New York Dramatic Mirror, January 3, 1880.
to an almost vanquished commander at bloody Waterloo." In fact, in an emergency and at an hour's notice The Rivals could be presented, and it often was, to replace a current production which had to be withdrawn due to the indisposition of leading actors. So often did Wallack produce the old comedies in the sixties, the critic for the Spirit of the Times bombarded Wallack's for weeks with pleas for change, best illustrated by the following comment on April 25, 1863:

Haven't we had about enough of "Old Comedies" for this season, and does Mr. Wallack intend to go on for the next fifty years playing to good houses the everlasting, never changing "Old Comedies," relieved only by the spasmodic effusion of some influential critic? The capabilities of Mr. Wallack and Mr. Wallack's most excellent company are greater than those of any other company in the country, but it is a notorious fact that for year in and year out they are schooled and trained and exhibited in, and only in, the standard plays of olden time.

Reviews of the old comedies indicate that costuming standards remained consistently high throughout Wallack's existence. Critics pointed out that such an even degree of excellence could be maintained over the decades, even when death and other circumstances created gaps in the company, because of Lester Wallack's practice of securing "all the talent at his command."  

She Stoops to Conquer

17 New York Dramatic Mirror, March 19, 1881.
18 Spirit of the Times, October 24, 1874.
Lester Wallack portrayed Young Marlow in each performance of Goldsmith's comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, from the first production on December 17, 1852, until the last performance at his second theatre in 1879. Three portraits of Lester Wallack as Young Marlow are available, representing two different styles of costuming. Wallack's costume in Plate XV is presumably from an earlier production than the costume illustrated in Plates XVI and XVII, which show Wallack in two postures, seated and standing.

If the print from the engraving in Plate XV is accurate as to what Wallack actually wore, his costume dates from 1780 when men began to discard shoes and silk stockings for close-fitting riding breeches and boots. The tassels on the boots are typical of the late eighteenth century. Wallack wears the short waistcoat of the 1780's, but wears a frock coat more suited to the 1770's, for cuffs had disappeared by the eighties. The large cuffs, pocket flaps, and straight front opening of the coat are all indicative of the seventies. The neck stock, with its throat-encircling band, and the ruffled sleeves are also characteristic. Wallack does not wear the powdered wig, which was optional toward the turn of the century.

In Plates XVI and XVII Wallack wears a combination design encompassing a retonne, which was a lighter weight version of the redingote or greatcoat with two flat collars, and a "wrap rascal," usually designed with a large double collar, voluminous body section, and huge sleeves. The
wrap rascal had no buttons, but was closed with bands which were buckled across the front, as illustrated in Wallack's costume. It is difficult to determine if Wallack wears a tricorne or bicorne hat; either would be correct, although the bicorne replaced the tricorne in the eighties, along with several other styles. This costume probably dates from a production in the 1870's because of critical reference to Wallack's use of Wellington boots. Lester Wallack's often documented passion for boots elicited a comment from the critic for the *Spirit of the Times* on November 1, 1873, that "Don John's boots were a study," even though he was costumed faultlessly. The writer pointed out that Field Marshal Wellington never wore such boots, even though he gave his name to the popular early nineteenth-century boot style. The obvious anachronism apparently caused the critic to remind Wallack that "no horseman could sit in the saddle encumbered by such encasement."

Further evidence that dates the costume in the 1870's comes from a reference the same writer makes to Wallack's spurs, which are not present in the engraving print from the earlier production. (Plate XV) The writer commented that Wallack's spurs were mounted "so as to convey the idea that 'Young Marlow' was about to 'gaff' himself in the rear." He concluded, however, that Wallack's costume deserved high praise, for it was "costly, and rich, and in good taste."

*Spirit of the Times*, November 1, 1873.
Wallack must have used his costume well, for the New York Times critic for the production in 1873 recorded that Wallack's by-play with his riding-whip and his hat, both visible in the portraits, represented "business" that was "exquisitely finished." 21

Both versions of Wallack's costume support critical opinion in the 1870's that revivals were "in all respects equal to previous representations of the piece," 22 and that Wallack's productions of She Stoops to Conquer "left nothing to be desired." 23 Goldsmith's comedy was the most successful of the revivals during the 1861-1862 season 24 when Wallack's advertised the production with "costumes and accessories selected with every regard to correctness and beauty." 25 The New York Times stated that the comedy had never been given to better advantage and that the brilliancy of the costumes coincided with the appropriateness of the scenery, the talents of the artists, and the "contagious enthusiasm of the audience," providing "separate sources of enjoyment." 26 The New York Herald critic acknowledged that he had rarely seen the play better rendered. 27

21 New York Times, November 1, 1873.
22 Ibid., February 24, 1871.
23 Spirit of the Times, February 26, 1876.
27 New York Herald, January 6, 1862.
The only other available illustration of the costuming of a male character in *She Stoops to Conquer* is that of E. M. Holland as Diggory (Plate XVIII). The photograph is probably from the same 1873 production which Wallack's costume illustrates, for the younger Holland did not perform the role until that year. Holland's costume is appropriate to the late eighteenth century with its folded cravat, profusion of buttons and buckle-trimmed shoes. The tongues of the shoes are exaggerated, however, for the over-sized tongue disappeared after the 1730's. The younger Holland apparently inherited from his father, a "low comedian," the traditional exaggeration of various costuming elements for comic effect.\(^{28}\) Holland was only twenty-five years of age in 1873, and he probably used a loose-fitting costume to aid in creating the illusion of age. His knowledge of facial make-up is apparent, although better illustrated in a mutilated photograph of the same costume in the Harvard Theatre Collection.

Although John Gilbert and Mrs. Vernon consistently performed their roles and Mr. and Mrs. Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer* with "perfect pictures of antiquated fashions,"\(^{29}\) the only other available photograph is that of Mrs. Vernon's successor, Mme. Elizabeth Ponisi. (Plates XIX and XX) These portraits are not clearly identified, however,

\(^{28}\) See Plates XLVIII and XLIX.

\(^{29}\) *New York Daily Tribune*, January 12, 1869.
as to date or character. The Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library identifies the two different photographs of the same costume as being from *She Stoops to Conquer*, with one dated 1865. The Harvard Theatre Collection, however, contains a photograph of Mme. Ponisi in the same wig and costume and identifies it as the character of Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals*. (Plate XXI) The latter is contained in the extra-illustrated edition of Ireland's *Records of the New York Stage from 1750 to 1860*, prepared in the nineteenth century for Augustin Daly. Since the periods of the two plays are identical and the ages and social status of the characters are similar, Mme. Ponisi may have worn the same costume in both shows. Since she did not join Wallack's troupe until the early seventies, she may have used the costume in the sixties as well as the seventies, or she may not have used this particular costume at Wallack's at all. The Harvard photograph (Plate XXI) is accompanied by an identifying line from *The Rivals*, Act 3, Scene 3: "Sir, you overpower me with your good breeding." It is most probable that the costume was for *The Rivals*, as the decorative trim on Mme. Ponisi's wig suggests that the traditional cap for Mrs. Hardcastle is missing. Referring to the traditional stage dress for Mrs. Hardcastle, a contemporary actress at Daly's, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, recalled that when she first was assigned to the role she had never seen the play and had no idea how

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30 Ireland, extra-illustrated, II, Part 14, 22.
to dress the character. A fellow actress gave her the pattern for the necessary cap.\textsuperscript{31} The cap is not mentioned, however in Samuel French's printed version of \textit{She Stoops to Conquer} labeled as a promptbook, property of Lester Wallack, and dated 1874. The costume list in the script describes Mrs. Hardcastle's first dress as a brocade sack and petticoat.\textsuperscript{32}

Whatever the correct identification, the costume as revealed in the photograph is appropriate to suggest that the actress attempted to use the dress appropriate to the period when both plays were written. From the photographs it is difficult to tell if Mme. Ponisi wore a full polonaise; however, the open skirt in front dates the design prior to the 1790's when closed skirts were the fashion. The longer sleeves to below the elbow were fashionable in the 1770's, and the contrasting quilted petticoat was also popular. The "modestie" piece of lace and ribbon visible above the fan evidently conceals a low decolletage. The skirts are voluminous to conform to a style appropriate to a lady of fashion who was required to "stoop" to "conquer" the back fastenings of fashionable dresses of the eighteenth century. The enormous coiffure, trimmed with flowers, leaves, and jewels, is appropriate for the character and the period.

\textsuperscript{31}Martin, \textit{Stage Reminiscences of Mrs. Gilbert}, pp. 42-44.

The fan completes the effect of an authentic eighteenth-century costume.

**The Rivals**

Mme. Ponisi and John Gilbert, who played together for sixteen seasons, were both staunch traditionalists, and their impersonations in *The Rivals* drew constant praise from critics in the seventies and eighties. One New York critic stated that Gilbert as Sir Anthony Absolute never took liberties "with established ideals" and another writer compared his interpretation to the national currency which "never fluctuates nor changes." He added that Gilbert's Old Absolute was faultless and unrivalled, ably complemented by Mme. Ponisi's Mrs. Malaprop, which was a "joy forever." Both were truly "artists who knew their business." Traditional interpretations, however, rarely brought specific reviews or prompted photographic records. Critics usually stated that the comedy "was accurately and properly set" and "beautifully dressed." According to William Winter, the costuming of *The Rivals* at Wallack's showed "an intelligence and propriety of good taste" seldom followed else-
In a photograph of Gilbert as Sir Anthony Absolute (Plate XXII) in Act III, Scene 1, of *The Rivals*, Gilbert appears to wear a surtout, a topcoat of the eighteenth century with a flat collar worn for travel or country-wear. A large overcoat or balandran, a heavy full cape, drapes the chair and completes the traveling outfit. The wig, tricorne, button-trimmed cuffs, and buckle-trimmed shoes are all of the 1770's, adding detail to an authentic replica of a late eighteenth-century country-squire's dress.

Other than the photograph of Mme. Ponisi as Mrs. Malaprop (Plate XXI) the *New York Dramatic Mirror* provides a second source to support appropriate dress styles in *The Rivals*, and this comes from a negative comment. The critic for the *Dramatic Mirror* stated that Stella Boniface dressed "most unbecomingly" as Julia in the production of 1881, looking "absolutely ugly in a top heavy coiffure and hideous Gainsborough hat." The writer's comment reflects a possible disdain for costuming which conflicted with contemporary fashions of the 1880's. The hairstyle and the Gainsborough hat of black velvet or taffeta with mauve ostrich plumes and taffeta ribbons represent a popular appropriate style for the eighteenth century in which *The Rivals* would be costumed. The critic for the *Dramatic Mirror* seemed to


prefer more natural and less exaggerated hair styles, even for plays of the eighteenth century. In the 1881 production Rose Coghlan wore a traditional blonde wig for the character of Lydia Languish, but the reviewer for the Dramatic Mirror noted that she was not "handsome in a flaxen wig."\(^{40}\) Tradition evidently caused some consternation for brunettes attempting to look natural in a light wig.\(^{41}\) The writer declared, however, that Rose Coghlan's dresses for The Rivals were "marvels of loveliness" and "perfect studies." The writer especially admired one dress of gray brocade and pink satin, the front trimmed with point lace and pearls, combined with a large white hat trimmed with white feathers.\(^{42}\)

**The School for Scandal**

As with She Stoops to Conquer and The Rivals, Sheridan's The School for Scandal reflects "in a mirror of artistic exaggeration, the hollow, feverish, ceremonious, bespangled, glittering, heart-breaking fashionable world,"\(^{43}\) and as with the first two plays, the costuming of Sheridan's masterpiece drew praise throughout Wallack's history. The elder Wallack first produced The School for Scandal on October 4, 1852, when "the toilettes were almost perfect, and in good keeping with the age and fashion of the period in which this sterling

\(^{40}\) Ibid.

\(^{41}\) Spirit of the Times, February 29, 1868.

\(^{42}\) New York Dramatic Mirror, April 9, 1881.

\(^{43}\) Winter, Old Shrines and Ivy, pp. 225-226.
comedy was written.\textsuperscript{44} A production in 1858 "was put upon the stage with all the discrimination, even to detail, which has ever characterized this theatre."\textsuperscript{45} In 1862 a reviewer reflected that the comedy as costumed and performed at Wallack's was a "rare treat, comprising much of agreeable historical instruction with the most pleasurable intellectual representation."\textsuperscript{46} In 1870 The School for Scandal was again "placed upon the stage with praiseworthy taste and care,"\textsuperscript{47} and in 1878 the play was "handsomely mounted."\textsuperscript{48}

The School for Scandal could have been costumed authentically under J. W. Wallack's management, for he was thoroughly familiar with the styles of the period in which the play was written. Sheridan himself viewed Wallack's performance as Captain Absolute in The Rivals in 1818 at the Drury Lane, along with the Prince of Wales and Lord Byron, who once boxed with the elder Wallack.\textsuperscript{49} Lester Wallack and other members of the company probably took advantage of the elder Wallack's recommendations based on his experiences closer to the actual period when the play was first produced. For the production in 1869 Lester Wallack advertised costumes

\textsuperscript{44} New York Times, October 5, 1852.
\textsuperscript{45} New York Daily Tribune, December 4, 1858.
\textsuperscript{46} New York Herald, September 23, 1862.
\textsuperscript{47} Spirit of the Times, November 26, 1870.
\textsuperscript{48} New York Times, September 22, 1878.
\textsuperscript{49} "John Lester Wallack," The Galaxy (October, 1868), pp. 32-33.
"after the celebrated pictures in the Garrick Club,"50 one of which is included in Plate XXIII. An engraving of the original production in 1777 (Plate XXIV) suggests that the costumes of Lester Wallack, John Gilbert, and Mme. Ponisi previously discussed represent a certain degree of authenticity and an attempt to reproduce the styles of clothing worn for eighteenth-century productions. Both illustrations depict the famous "Screen Scene" from The School for Scandal.

Gilbert's costume as Sir Peter Teazle in the "Screen Scene" (Plate XXV) suggests that costumes may have been used interchangeably for eighteenth-century comedies, for his costume for Sir Peter appears to be similar to the costume for Sir Anthony. (Plate XXII) The print from the engraving of the latter identifies Sir Anthony's character, as do other poses in the Harvard Theatre Collection, while Harvard's identification of the character of Sir Peter is supported by the presence of the screen required for The School for Scandal. The only difference in the photographs is in the choice of wig style. Gilbert adopted the elegant side curls used for Sir Anthony in a later costume for Sir Peter. (Plate XXVI) The fact that Gilbert wore the same costume in two different plays lends credibility to the supposition that Mme. Ponisi may have also worn the same costume for She Stoops to Conquer and The Rivals.

The photograph in Plate XXVI is the first evidence of

50Spirit of the Times, September 25, 1869.
Gilbert's using a light-colored costume, for all other available photographs show him in dark somber colors, although the styles of the late eighteenth century allow for all shades of pastels. The costume shows less exaggerated sleeve cuffs with matching trim in the style of the end of the eighteenth century. This costume, too, is totally appropriate, except that Gilbert has a monocle which did not appear in England until the 1820's. The monocle appears again in Plate XXVII, where Gilbert wears a costume from a production in the eighties and probably worn for the 1882 opening of Wallack's third theatre. This costume appears to lack the detailed button and braid trimming of the one seen in Plate XXVI. The turn-back cuffs have been omitted in the style of the late 1700's. Deep lace trimming at the cuffs and in the handkerchief, as well as what appears to be lace trimming on the tricorne, give a less masculine appearance than either of the two earlier costumes. The monocle is the only anachronism, however, in any examples of eighteenth-century costumes worn by Gilbert.

The effectiveness of the costuming for eighteenth-century plays appears to relate directly to the ability of the actors to reproduce the manners as well as the dress of that time. The critic for the New York Herald wrote of Gilbert's Sir Peter in 1862, "The very age and body of the time are not less carefully studied in his deportment and conversation than in the admirable costumes of all the charac-
ters, from first to last." 51 Twenty years later a writer commented that Gilbert had the "manner, bearing, and seeming of one of those eighteenth-century portraits so stiffly suggestive of periwigs and velvet, ruffs, buckles, and brocades." 52 The reviewer for The School for Scandal on the opening of Wallack's third theatre at Broadway and Thirtieth in 1882 found the historical beauty and accuracy of the production noteworthy "at a time so far removed in fashion from the days of the Georges, and so unpicturesque alike on and off the stage." 53 The writer noted that few actors in the 1880's were competent to wear such courtly dress and manners; Gilbert, of course, was a notable exception.

Lester Wallack was no less impressive in his portrayal of Charles Surface. Although Wallack enacted the role for most of his career, his name was absent from the programs of the 1870's, and he did not perform for the opening in 1882. Magnus stated that he gave up the part because he was too old and too heavy. 54 A review of Lester's performance as Young Marlow in She Stoops to Conquer supports this contention by stating in 1873 that although "robed gorgeously as of old," "Don John is fat--palpably, unmistakably fat." 55

51 New York Herald, September 23, 1862.
52 Spirit of the Times, January 25, 1882.
53 Ibid.
54 Magnus, Famous American Actors of Today, p. 121.
55 Spirit of the Times, November 1, 1873.
Wallack's weight gain may account for the lack of photographs of him in various eighteenth-century roles in the seventies when such portraits became popular for established roles as well as for new characters.

Odell includes, however, an 1880 photograph of Osmond Tearle as Charles Surface in his *Annals of the New York Stage*. Tearle was reputedly "one of the handsomest and best dressed Charles ever seen in New York," and the costume seen in Plate XXVIII demonstrates Tearle's choice of pastels and an appropriate style with modified cuffs similar to Gilbert's. (Plate XXVI) Plate XXIX shows Tearle in a different costume for the same role for the opening of Wallack's new theatre in 1882. Tearle wears a much more ornate vest with complementary trim on the front edges of the coat and on the sleeve cuffs. In this second costume (Plate XXIX) he discards the large cuffs in a style similar to that of Gilbert's in Plate XXVI.

The photographs of Gilbert and Tearle in the later productions contrast dramatically with the more somber costumes from the sixties and early seventies. The basic patterns of the later costumes indicate that probably the costumer Flannery designed the costumes from styles more prevalent toward the end of the eighteenth century. Tearle's coat opening curves toward the rear, while Gilbert's coat is cut on straight lines, providing a differentiation appropriate to

to the characters' age differences while maintaining a consistency of style. The use of less exaggerated cuffs in both costumes for the 1880 production and the use of decorative trim rather than turn back cuffs in both costumes for the 1882 production indicate a consistency of design in the two productions. The use of pastels also serves to unify the two productions. The two designs reveal the use of a variety of patterns which was not the case in the Shakespearean designs from the 1850's when apparently one basic pattern served for all the men's costumes. The photographs also serve to point out a definite trend toward more colorful and ornate costumes for the men in the seventies and eighties.

For women, richly decorated costumes were the accepted fashion throughout the history of Wallack's theatre. Rose Coghlan played Lady Teazle to Gilbert's Sir Peter in an elaborate production staged on September 21, 1878, and advertised with new scenery, costumes, and appointments. Winter identified the period of dress in the production as the end of the eighteenth century and wrote in the Tribune that "the costumes--no less sumptuous than accurate--... must have severely taxed the whole millinery and upholstery resources of this establishment." Plate XXX illustrates one of the costumes probably worn for this production by Rose Coghlan. The lack of a bouffant powdered wig provides the

57 New York Daily Tribune, September 21, 1878.
58 Ibid., September 23, 1878.
only incongruity in the costume; however, the more current hair style probably saved Rose Coghlan from the type of criticism received by Stella Boniface in The Rivals in 1881, when she wore the exaggerated style referred to earlier.

Rose Coghlan's dress probably had an eighteenth-century Watteau-style back to allow the train to sweep the floor, for in the second half of the eighteenth century, the excess material was usually picked up and pinned or tied in a polonaise. The Gainsborough hat is appropriate for the period, as are the mittens fastened between the fore-finger and thumb, leaving the fingers bare. Such mittens were also popular in the mid-nineteenth century and available to actresses, although they had gone out of style by 1860. The ruching around the bodice and down the skirt front is appropriate to the late eighteenth century, as is the neck-ribbon. Winter observed, however, that Rose Coghlan's resemblance to Lady Teazle ceased "with her old-fashioned dress."\(^{59}\)

Winter believed that Wallack allowed too much "garniture" in the production, even though the majority of the spectators would be grateful to Wallack for dressing the comedy "in gorgeous apparel." Winter complained that "too much gilt-frame throws into dull shadow the picture which it encloses, and which in fact it ought to heighten." He concluded, however, "If the gilt obscures the gingerbread, that is no accident, and the loaf must exhibit more ginger.\(^{59}\)
To most observers, we fancy, its spice will be quite sufficient."\textsuperscript{60}

The costumes of the production in 1881 were even more gilded, if Gilbert's and Tearle's costumes are from that production which opened on January 22. One critic thought Rose Coghlan "looked charming in Lady Teazle's wig and figured Watteau gown."\textsuperscript{61} The same writer later described her three dresses:

- a pink and white brocade over a wine-colored satin petticoat, hat to match, adorned with pink and wine colored plumes. Her evening dress was a white satin brocaded in gold roses, the corsage pompadour, and the whole adorned with Irish point. In the screen scene, Miss Coghlan's green brocade is also equally lovely, with a front of Nile green satin, trimmed with point lace, and point lace shawl lined with cardinal satin.\textsuperscript{62}

Irish point appears to be the trim in the costume depicted in Plate XXXI, and the sleeves are embroidered or brocaded with what appears to be a flower design. The roses in the powdered wig would seem to identify this particular costume with the evening dress described by the reviewer for the \textit{Dramatic Mirror}. The statement that the corsage was pompadour style referred to a dainty bodice of lace, one of the various features of the period of the Marquise de Pompadour, 1721-1764.\textsuperscript{63} The style of the dress matches the tone and style of the costumes worn by Gilbert and Tearle, but

\textsuperscript{60}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61}New York \textit{Dramatic Mirror}, January 29, 1881.
\textsuperscript{62}Ibid., April 9, 1881.
\textsuperscript{63}Wilcox, \textit{A Dictionary of Costume}, p. 274.
presents an interesting problem. The draping of the dress would have been more appropriate for a contemporary evening gown of the late 1870's. This is especially evident in Plate XXXII where a side view of the same costume shows what appears to be a form of the bustle, which in the late 1870's slipped down the back of the skirt. No portraits of gowns in the eighteenth century show this style of draping. At the same time, other features of the dress are not in the contemporary style of the late 1870's. The accessories, the pointed bodice, the square neckline, and the skirt opened in front are all costuming elements indicative of the eighteenth century.

Rose Coghlan must have combined authenticity with contemporary fashion, for with the exception of the back drapery, the gown would be appropriate to the character depicted in a dress fashionable in the late eighteenth century. Winter referred to the production's "Watteau atmosphere," but the term "Watteau" referred to a dress as well as a large variety of decorations and accessories featured in the paintings by Jean-Antoine Watteau in the French Regency, 1715-1723. The various costuming elements featured in his paintings remained popular through the 1770's. A comparison of the two photographs of Rose Coghlan's costumes from productions in 1878 and 1881 suggests a change in style of costuming by

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64 New York Daily Tribune, January 22, 1881.
65 Wilcox, A Dictionary of Costume, p. 393.
the eighties, one that discarded the quaintness of authen-
ticity for a more currently fashionable adaptation of the
eighteenth-century style.

The only other relevant comments concerning costuming
of The School for Scandal in the sixties and seventies came
in descriptions of the character of Moses, the money-lender.
J. P. Williamson played Moses in 1869, and the reviewer
thought that his costume was indefinite in that "sometimes
it suggested an Irish Jew, sometimes a German Jew, and some-
times no Jew at all," suggesting that the critic preferred
a traditional eighteenth-century Jewish garb, just as Shakes-
peare's Jew was dressed in a traditional Jewish garb of the
sixteenth century. Harry Beckett used a false nose for Moses
in 1878 and wore a costume that was "comic, but not old-
fashioned," according to the Tribune for September 23, 1878.

The Clandestine Marriage

Yet another variety of style used in dressing comedies
from the eighteenth century can be seen in a photograph from
Wallack's production of George Colman's The Clandestine
Marriage in 1862. Although The Clandestine Marriage was
first produced at the Drury Lane in 1766, the Wallack pro-
duction in 1862 may have been the first time Wallack's at-
ttempted to use costume styles closer to 1800 than to the
date of the original production. Plate XXXIII depicts the

66 New York Daily Tribune, September 17, 1869.
dressing scene in Act 5, Scene 2, with Gilbert as Lord Ogleby, John Sefton as Canton, and W. R. Floyd as the impudent valet, Brush, when Lord Ogleby is seen wearing his "robe de chambre" and nightcap. The cut-away line of the coat fronts is indicative of late eighteenth-century dress, a style used again for revivals of *The School for Scandal* in 1878 and 1881. The costumes, including the house coat and cap, are appropriate to the eighteenth century in every detail.

Floyd's costume as Brush provides the only example of the costuming style for servants; however, the writer for the *Spirit of the Times* in 1869 described the liveries of servants as usually costumed at Wallack's as "overwhelming."

The writer indicates that it may have been possible at times to detect imperfections in certain subordinate costumes; but when it comes to putting an English servant in livery upon the stage, this establishment is supreme. Not a gold band is missing, not a rosette misplaced, not a button absent from its post.67

Floyd's valet costume as Brush is certainly complete and appropriate; Brush's part, however, is not a minor one in this instance, for Lester Wallack played the role on November 31, 1859, for Charles Walcot's benefit.68 The critic's remarks in 1869 suggest, however, that even minor servant's roles would be costumed appropriately and handsomely.

The reviewer's statement concerning "imperfections in

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67 *Spirit of the Times*, March 20, 1869.
certain subordinate costumes" is telling, for two weeks after
The Clandestine Marriage played in 1862, a critic noted the
shoddy furniture in A Bachelor of Arts and then commented:

We have a right to demand excellence in every­
thing. Trifles, indeed, such as patent leather
boots in the old comedies, and green velvet
waistcoats as full dress, may be overlooked . . .
but not a second hand drawing room. 69

Whether the writer referred to the recent production of The
Clandestine Marriage is not known and certainly not indicated
by the photograph.

The Wonder

Although late eighteenth-century comedies were the most
popular of Wallack's revivals and the theatre's wardrobe
necessarily stocked several varieties of styles of eighteenth-
century dress, Wallack's also produced plays from the first
half of the eighteenth century which required seventeenth-
century costumes. During the first decade of J. W. Wallack's
management, the elder Wallack enacted the role of Don Felix
in The Wonder by Mrs. Susannah Centlivre. Written in 1714,
the action of the sentimental comedy is set in the seventeenth
century. It received fifty performances at Wallack's over
fourteen seasons, with Lester Wallack portraying Don Felix
through nine seasons in the sixties and again in an "admirable
revival" 70 in 1876.

69 Spirit of the Times, December 15, 1862.
70 Ibid., March 18, 1876.
The only critical reviews of costuming available are from the revival of 1876; however, an engraving made from a painting of Lester Wallack in the role in the sixties (Plate XXIV) indicates he probably used an appropriate style of dress from the first half of the seventeenth century. The engraving does not show the entire costume, but the falling lace collar, soft-brimmed plumed hat, curly wig, and the shoulder wings provide sufficient data to identify the style as early seventeenth-century baroque. Padded sleeves from the sixteenth century gave way to loosely paneled outer sleeves in the early decades of the seventeenth century; the engraving indicates appropriate paning, but sewn into the sleeves as with Wallack's costume for Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*. The sleeves finished in a cuff and edged with lace were common in the early decades of the seventeenth century, and the collared cape is appropriately fastened with soft tasseled cord. The buckled sash across the chest provides a military flavor, as do what appear to be hanging sleeves which were still in use in England in the early seventeenth century.

Wallack used the hanging sleeves again in his costume for the revival in 1876, the only year in which Wallack presented *The Wonder* in the seventies. Plate XXV shows a style of costuming less detailed than that worn in the sixties, moving away from the baroque toward the less ornate styles which were characteristic of the middle of the seventeenth century. Plate XXV depicts Wallack's second costume in the
production; according to the catalogue of Lester's wardrobe\textsuperscript{71} his first dress combined a brown silk velvet jacket with matching trunks, in which Winter thought Wallack looked piratical and heavier than usual.\textsuperscript{72} It seems unanimous among the critics that Wallack had lost his figure for romantic roles by the late 1870's.

Wallack's second costume (Plate XXXV) consisted of black velvet and white satin with matching trunks and cloak. The canions are not Spanish in style, nor are they totally appropriate to the seventeenth century because the padding has been removed from the breeches which should extend to the knee or lower. The doublet, cut all in one without a separate peplum, is appropriate to the dress of the day, as is the buttoned front. The horizontal paning, the scalloped and bowed boots, and the lace-trimmed gloves and neck-line are characteristic of elements of dress in the seventeenth century. For this production Wallack dyed his naturally gray hair black. (It was not until the following season that he performed in a gray wig in \textit{My Awful Dad} and received so many compliments that thereafter he wore his hair gray.) Wallack's hat is appropriate, although of a different style than that commonly worn in Spain in the 1660's. The addition of a neatly-trimmed beard finishes an effective costume, although because of the breeches it is not totally accurate

\textsuperscript{71}See Appendix A.

\textsuperscript{72}\textit{New York Daily Tribune}, March 14, 1876.
when compared with portraits of costumes from the mid-seventeenth century.

Throughout The Wonder's production history, advertisements referred to "magnificent national costumes" or to "elegant costumes," but no reference to new costumes was recorded until 1869. Costumes for productions in the early sixties must have come from stock in the theatre's wardrobe department. Advertisements announced entirely new costumes by Flannery and Benschoten, however, for the production in 1876. Such new costumes did not necessarily guarantee more authentic dressing where women were concerned, for in reviewing the production in 1876, Winter criticized Geraldine Maye's hair-style and acting with the comment that ringlets were "rife where actresses used once to move." Even in the 1870's actresses wore contemporary hair styles for period plays, as ringlets were reserved for men in the seventeenth century and women's styles were off the neck and worn close to the head.

Wallack's theatre never claimed perfection in the costuming of the old comedies, but photographs and reviews indicate that that was the establishment's aim. The critic for the New York Dramatic Mirror wrote in 1880 that the theatre's efforts resulted in "a good deal of exaggerated sentiment" about "its traditions, its purity, its nobility, and the like," yet admitted that "there is considerable truth

73 Ibid.
hidden away beneath all this that frankly must be acknowledged:"

Lester Wallack has built a name and a fame for his theatre that is highly honorable and deserving of respect from the lovers of old drama, and although to enter its doors is to enter the portals of the past, as it were, he has not only kept alive but cultivated a taste for an elevated style of performance, which in these days of trivial theatricals is an achievement worthy of all praise.74

Since the performers had the primary responsibility for the costuming of their characters, the success the company achieved in the costuming of seventeenth and eighteenth century plays is due to a large extent to the capabilities of the individual artists who received the credit when their costumes delighted. Reviews indicate that criticism of costumes occurred more often when the acting faltered, thereby suggesting that actors who understood their roles and the play were more likely to be dressed appropriately, especially during the first two decades. Gilbert received constant praise for representing the character he assumed, instead of "assuming a well-fitting dress, made to order, in which to impersonate his own character."75 Adherence to lines of business probably contributed to successful costuming, for the individual performer specialized in a particular line which required a specific style of costuming, especially in eighteenth-century comedies. The costuming reflected,

74 *New York Dramatic Mirror*, October 9, 1880.
75 *Spirit of the Times*, November 5, 1870.
however, the individuality of the performer, as indicated by one writer's comment on Lester Wallack in 1869:

Wallack balances, carrying his personality into everything he puts on, by putting on nothing which does not fit him, and so nice is he in thus habiting himself that each role seems cut to order rather than selected from a ready-made stock.76

The writer's metaphor is most appropriate for "the prince of point-lace comedy,"77 and the writer concluded with the comment, "I do not remember to have ever seen a badly set play at his theatre; the costumes are correct, the properties proper."78 As Winter wrote in his review of The Wonder, Lester Wallack had the professional skill to wear "the manner, not less than the attire, of the cavalier of another nation and an earlier time."79

Under Wallack's stock-company organization, actors must have acquired a costuming knowledge from such venerable performers as J. W. Wallack, Gilbert, Blake, Floyd, Holland, Mrs. Vernon, and Mme. Ponisi, who continued valid traditions established long before their tenures at Wallack's, or if they did not provide the knowledge, at least they provided the inspiration. The critic for Leslie's stated in 1860 that an unusual esprit de corps existed at Wallack's and be-

76 Ibid., December 18, 1869.
77 Undesignated clipping, Wallack Scrapbook, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.
78 Spirit of the Times, December 18, 1869.
cause of that, the theatre was able to "present pictures finished to the most minute detail."

Rich materials of satin, velvet, and brocade in bright colors characterized the costuming of the old comedies at Wallack's, increasing to the point of ostentation in the late seventies. Unity in style and design was possible among the male members of the company who selected their costumes from an extensive wardrobe, which included several styles for the same basic period and several varieties of the same style to accommodate costume changes within a particular play. George Flannery presumably designed and supervised the construction of the basic garments with the assistance of Abe Benschoten and other subordinates at the theatre. According to photographs and advertisements, designs were apparently adapted from actual paintings of clothing worn during the particular period which the plays required.

Color coordination drew no critical comments in the fifties and sixties, possibly because male performers wore dark and somber hues which would not have clashed with the vari-colored costumes of the actresses. Extensive use of white by ingenues as well as leading ladies also would have aided. Color style appears to become more important toward the last of the 1870's when the use of pastels was more prevalent than in the earlier decades.

A unified production, at least among the leading male

80 Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, May 12, 1860.
and female performers, was probable in the seventies and likely in the eighties as to the basic designs of the costumes. Reviews indicate that the quality of dress for the minor characters equaled that of the major performers. Supporting actors drew some criticism, however, for minor discrepancies in dress, and supporting actresses often drew criticism for contemporary hair-styles in the plays of previous centuries. Female performers, who presumably provided their own costumes until possibly the late seventies, evidently took pains to dress fashionably for Wallack's fashionable audiences, even to the point of sacrificing authenticity for a more complimentary style. Wallack, too, allowed such adaptations to his costumes for seventeenth and eighteenth century roles. Photographs indicate, however, that the flavor of the particular period was always present, for designs were not exact replicas but adaptations based on authentic primary sources as well as theatrical traditions. The praise and support Wallack's drew from appreciative audiences and even more appreciative critics were apparently well deserved.
PLATE XV

Lester Wallack
Young Marlow
She Stoops to Conquer
Lester Wallack
Young Marlow
She Stoops to Conquer
PLATE XVII

Lester Wallack
Young Marlow
She Stoops to Conquer
E. M. Holland
Diggory
*She Stoops to Conquer*
Mme. Elizabeth Ponisi
Mrs. Hardcastle
She Stoops to Conquer
Mme. Elizabeth Ponisi
Mrs. Hardcastle
She Stoops to Conquer
Mme. Elizabeth Ponisi
Mrs. Malaprop
The Rivals
PLATE XXII

John Gilbert
Sir Anthony Absolute
The Rivals
"Screen Scene"
The School for Scandal
Garrick Club
John Gilbert
Sir Peter Teazle
The School for Scandal
PLATE XXVI

John Gilbert
Sir Peter Teazle
The School for Scandal
PLATE XXVII

John Gilbert
Sir Peter Teazle
The School for Scandal
Osmond Tearle
Charles Surface
The School for Scandal
Osmond Tearle
Charles Surface
The School for Scandal
Plate XXX

Rose Coghlan
Lady Teazle
The School for Scandal
PLATE XXXI

Rose Coghlan
Lady Teazle
The School for Scandal
PLATE XXXII

Rose Coghlan
Lady Teazle
The School for Scandal
Scene From
The Clandestine Marriage
PLATE XXXV

Lester Wallack
Don Felix
The Wonder
CHAPTER SIX

COSTUMING PRACTICES
FOR ROMANTIC MELODRAMAS

When J. W. Wallack addressed his audience on the opening night of the first Wallack theatre in 1852, he announced plans to include "dramas of stirring interest" along with the standard comedies, farces, and novelties.¹ At that time he referred to the romantic melodramas in which both he and Lester Wallack had achieved great popularity.² Melodramas such as *The Rent Day*, *Don Caesar de Bazan*, and *The Stranger* regularly proved to be financial successes because they followed a popular format. Romantic heroes and virtuous heroines would vie with a villain who would eventually be foiled after exciting action and several musical interludes.³ Among the top ten plays in number of performances at Wallack's, four were romantic melodramas. Three of these were original adaptations by Lester Wallack and the fourth was Dion Boucicault's *The Shaughraun*. Lester Wallack's *The Veteran* in the late fifties, *Rosedale* in the sixties, and Boucicault's spectacular Irish comedy in the seventies were popular successes which

¹ *A Sketch of the Life of J. W. Wallack*, p. 45.
² Jones, p. 91.
inspired a number of photographic records and indicated that the costuming was an important part of the over-all spectacle.

The Veteran

When Lester Wallack wrote The Veteran and first produced it on January 17, 1859, he sought "to create a sensation piece, introduce beatiful tableaux, brilliant costumes, good music, and a host of other good things," and he "succeeded admirably."¹ The plot served as a medium for the "display of gorgeous costumes, beautiful scenery, and animated tableaux," and Wallack "trusted to a great degree to the scene painter and the costumer for success."⁵ A critic claimed he had never seen a better mounted play and called the scenery superb and the contemporary dresses, both military and national, "costly, appropriate, and picturesque."⁶ Achieving a run of forty-nine consecutive performances when it first opened,⁷ The Veteran received a total of sixty-six representations in its first season.⁸

In the first two acts of The Veteran the action takes place in France and then shifts to Algeria. Colonel Delmar,

¹Spirit of the Times, January 22, 1859.
⁵Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, January 29, 1859.
⁷Swinney, p. 85.
⁸Ireland, Records, II, 688.
portrayed by J. W. Wallack in his last original character, plays matchmaker between his niece and his son, Leon, portrayed by Lester Wallack, but Blanche thinks she prefers Lt. Eugene D'Orville. The Colonel almost traps himself into a marriage with Mrs. McShake, a distant relative from England, but he and the lieutenant are called to war in Algeria. Conveniently, the ladies are shipwrecked, kidnapped, and also taken to Algeria, causing Leon, the non-soldier, to join the ranks to rescue the ladies from the evil Sultan of Myra. A disguised Scotchman in the Sultan's court, Ofi-an-agan, turns out to be Mrs. McShake's long lost husband, to the Colonel's great relief, and all couples are appropriately united after a spectacular rescue by Leon in disguise as one of the Sultan's guards.

The advertisement for the play reveals the elaborateness of the production and the extensive technical staff required:

EXTENSIVE PICTURESQUE TABLEAUX
ALL NEW SCENERY GORGEOUS AND CHARACTERISTIC
Painted from Authentic Sources
THE COSTUMES OF THE DIFFERENT NATIONS,
Varied and Magnificent
ALL NEW

The overture and incidental military marches and grand symphonies composed expressly for this play, by
Mr. J. P. COOK

The Scenery..............by Messrs. Isherwood and Wallace
Costumes..................by Messrs. Flanry and Benschoten
Machinery..............by Mr. S. H. Vanhatten and assistants
Furniture, Banners, Colors, Arms &c........by Mr. Timoney
THE CHARACTERISTIC DANCES
Arranged by Miss E. HENRARDE

The costumes are taken from the drawings of French uniforms, published by authority, and from Victor Adam's celebrated "Sketches in Algeria."9

9New York Daily Tribune, January 17, 1859.
Following a list of characters, Wallack provided detailed descriptions of various scenes, identifying each as to the specific scenic artist responsible. A print from an engraving of the tableau at the end of the fourth act (Plate XXVI) suggests the elaborate scenery and costumes praised by the critics.

The scene depicted takes place when Amineh, an Arabian girl working for the return of Arabian lands, attempts to stab the Sultan of Myra just before the walls collapse and Leon makes his dramatic rescue. The script identifies the characters from left to right as Oglou, the Chief of the Guard; the Sultan of Myra, seated; Amineh, with dagger; Ofl-an-agan, with staff; Col. Delmar, with back to audience; Eugene, Mrs. McShake, and the Colonel's niece, Blanche. The tableau includes Algerian and French soldiers, Arabians, and Turks "amid glittering Oriental accoutrements."^10

Although the details are not clear, the two French soldiers, Col. Delmar and Lt. Eugene D'Orville, appear to be wearing French Infantry uniforms. The drapery of the Colonel's jacket, the cross belting, and epaulettes are all typical of the 1854 uniform. The proper colors would be red and blue. Ofl-an-agan refers to their uniform boots in Act III, Scene 3, when he tries to explain to the Sultan that they cannot remove their shoes in his presence because they are not wearing shoes, but boots. The Bedouin-desert-mounted police force, at left, wear the appropriate caftan, or kibr, of

white cotton and the correct headdress, or kaffiyeh, a long piece of cloth draped over the body and worn by Arabs, Moors, and Mohammedans for centuries. Ofl-an-agan wears the dolama, or Oriental Turkish outer cloak with long full sleeves; his turban is on the floor where he tossed it after renouncing his allegiance to the Sultan and joining the Colonel's troupe. Underneath the dolama, Ofl-an-agan wears the loose baggy trousers called chalwar and a tunic girded with a sash. Ofl-an-agan is a Highlander, but he is in the service of the Sultan of Mrya and dresses in the style of the Sultan's court.

The women's costumes show the contemporary crinoline hoop worn under the Arabian-style costumes. The hoop is actually not too anachronistic for Mrs. McShake and Blanche, for they are forced to wear Arabian costumes when their proper clothes were lost in the shipwreck which brought about their capture. Mrs. McShake comments in Act IV, Scene 2, that Blanche's dress is very pretty for an opera-dancer, but then asks, "But do you call that skirt a proper length for a young French lady of good birth?" Contemporary engravings show opera-dancers in the style worn by Blanche. When Blanche replies that Mrs. McShake has also adopted the Arabian costume, Mrs. McShake retorts, "In its material, miss, but not in its shortness. If one wasn't long enough, couldn't you have sewn on to it, as I did?" The added length is evident in the engraving and produces the "peculiar costume" called for in the script. These two women conceivably could justify
their wearing the remnants of their French hoops under their adapted costumes; however, Mrs. McShake states that the last remnant of her country's costume is her bonnet, which she has carefully preserved.

Mrs. Hoey as Amineh is disguised as a boy on her first entrance, but the feminine costume seen in the engraving (Plate XXVI) indicates the prevailing trend in the fifties of actresses wearing contemporary crinoline hoops under the costumes of another nation. As an Arabian, Amineh would have worn a chemise, chalwar, and caftan. The women's costumes may be of appropriate materials, colors, and trim, but they do not conform to the silhouette of Arabian costumes in the 1850's. Nevertheless, Mrs. Hoey dressed "with that faultless elegance for which this lady is remarkable."

Hand-painted photographs of Dyott, Bangs, and Brougham in the Harvard Theatre Collection provide evidence of bright and varied colors in the production. Bangs as the Sultan of Myra (Plate XXXVII) wears a maroon and silver knee-length brocaded caftan topped by a white cape with a large blue diagonal stripe, edged with contrasting rust and gold stripes. The caftan is belted by a matching sash with gold fringe, which also edges the skirts of the caftan. The kaffiyeh and turban are jeweled. Dyott as Emir (Plate XXXVIII) wears

13 Ireland, extra-illustrated, II, Part 19, 4.
a white full-sleeved dolama edged with gold fringe over a blue chemise embroidered in gold. The sash is orange and green, and the hanging sleeves are blue. A white cape sets off this colorful costume.\textsuperscript{14} Both costumes coincide in style and detail to national costumes of the period. A third photograph in the Harvard collection shows John Brougham as Ofl-an-agan in lime green with a sash of kelly green and white satin. The cape is kelly green and has a wide jeweled border, befitting the Grand Vizier to the Sultan.\textsuperscript{15}

Three illustrations of Lester Wallack's costume for Leon Delmar in the disguise of Zohrab represent the same costume but highlight different aspects of the ornate design. Plate XXIX represents the original pen and ink drawing of the costume photographed in Plate XL, and Plate XLI shows a close-up of the same costume minus the headdress. Records indicate that this costume dates from an 1872 revival; however, the costume fits the style of the 1859 production and may be the same design. A hand-painted version of the costume in Plate XL indicates black and white as the predominant colors. The jacket is black velvet, elaborately embroidered and closed by numerous buttons and button loops. Wallack wears black stockings and gold boots with black geometrical designs. The green, maroon, and gold sash sets off a rust-colored shirt and kaffiyeh; the turban is white with a gold crown and feathers, a rather pleasing combination of color.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
in a finished design. The white cape again frames the costume. The pattern for the tunic and jacket is identical to costumes found in modern source books for Algeria; the trimming is also identical. Wallack's wearing of a short fringed skirt without the chalwar, or trousers, and his use of boots mark departures from authentic dress. Leon is in a disguise, however, and the boots and hose allow for a more dashing appearance suitable to the character and help set him apart from other similar costumes.

Twelve years passed before Wallack revived The Veteran on February 12, 1872, with entirely new costumes again by Flannery and Benschoten. Wallack changed the French characters to English and Scotch, providing an opportunity for still more variety of types of national costumes. As one critic stated, the "scenes shifting from the Highlands to the desert of Arabia, give to the painter and costumer opportunities which are not neglected." The same costumes were used again two years later in another revival, which drew the following response from a critic:

> With a spirit of self-abnegation, laudable in proportion to the sacrifice entailed, the sybaritic manager, as Leon Delmar, bared with blushing face his shapely limbs to the public eye, and appeared in the historical "fillibeg," to the great chagrin of Mr. Bell, the artistic

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18 *Spirit of the Times*, February 10, 1872.

taileur, who fondly expected an order for a pair of spring trousers.20

The critic's reference to Wallack's "artistic taileur," Mr. Bell, indicates that neither Flannery nor Benschoten constructed the costume. Possibly Flannery did the research and designs and supervised the wardrobe, but Bell and others may have effected the actual construction. As Wallack's personal dresser, Benschoten probably assisted Flannery but had as his main duties maintaining Wallack's costumes and assisting him to dress. The reference to Bell provides the only evidence that Wallack employed an artistic taileur.

The "fillibeg" referred to by the writer is the lower part of the kilt, laid in pleats and worn as a skirt in the Scottish Highland dress. Wallack's Scottish costume is illustrated in Plate XLII, which shows an authentic costume complete with black pumps and silver buckles, a simple white shirt, a kilt in dress tartan, knee-length stockings, and a sporran, or large pouch of animal skins worn in front of the kilt. It was this costume that the Spirit writer referred to when he stated he overheard a lady voting Wallack "a handsome L. E. G."21

The same critic noted that "Statuesque ladies, beaming with loveliness and clad in the picturesque garb of the Indies, were heaped upon the altar of public opinion for sacri-

20Spirit of the Times, April 11, 1874.
21Ibid.
Wallack evidently went for the sensational in adding "nymphs of the ballet in tarleton and tights." Where they fit into the plot is unknown, but the writer added that the play was "put upon the stage with uncommon taste, skill, and liberality" and that the costumes were "brilliant and in harmony with the general style of the representation." A comment in the New York Herald described the final tableau as a "chef d'oeuvre of startling incident and skillful blending of color and costume."

John Brougham and Lester Wallack were the only two actors to repeat their roles as Ofl-an-agan and Leon Delmar in the 1872 production. Clara Jennings "looked very pretty," as Amineh, but in 1874 Jeffreys Lewis held the role and according to the Spirit of the Times "looked the character perfectly" opposite Effie Germon as Blanche, "who was piquant and lovely in her blonde hair and rich Eastern costume."

Jeffreys Lewis' costume as Amineh (Plate XLII) shows an elaborately trimmed and appropriately draped garment without the crinoline evident in the ladies' costumes in the 1859 production. Except for the crinoline, photographs of the

22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., February 17, 1872.
26 Spirit of the Times, April 11, 1874.
costumes in all three productions show them to be authentic in style, design, and colors, as advertised by Wallack's.

Rosedale

As successful as The Veteran was, Lester Wallack's biggest financial success was his romantic melodrama Rosedale, or The Rifleball, which received the greatest number of performances of any play produced at Wallack's. Following its opening on September 30, 1863, it ran for sixty-seven consecutive performances and one hundred twenty-seven in its first season,\(^{27}\) grossing $88,850.\(^{28}\) the largest money-maker to that time. Thereafter, Rosedale played in five additional seasons for a record total of two hundred forty-three performances.

Each time Wallack's produced a revival of Rosedale, advertisements announced all new costumes by Flannery and Benschoten, marking it the only play that received new costumes for each of its revivals. Since the time of the play was contemporary and the casts necessarily changed over the two decades of productions, new costumes would have been appropriate. Since members of the company provided their own contemporary costumes, Flannery and Benschoten's duties would have involved primarily maintenance, with the exception of supervising the design and construction of a large

\(^{27}\) Swinney, p. 124.

\(^{28}\) Odell, Annals, VII, 546.
number of military uniforms. The costumes, selected with "the strictest regard to correctness of detail," represented the Rifle Volunteers, Artillery Volunteers, and Lancer Uniforms, authenticated by imported paintings of the uniforms worn by the British Fourteenth Light-Dragoons.

Leslie's critic found the play to be a "curious compound of individual incidents, very loosely worked together, but in themselves highly dramatic and telling," while the Tribune writer stated that it was "such a marvel of constructive ingenuity that no human being has as yet been able to unravel its plot." Rosedale gave Lester Wallack a chance to sing several "capital" songs and "ministered to the tastes of every class of playgoer" by taking its chief ingredients from sensational novels of the day. The plot involves the underhanded efforts of Miles McKenna, an ex-convict played by John Gilbert, to secure the fortunes of the widowed Lady May, played by Mrs. Hoey. As with most melodramas, couples are separated and then reunited, but only after Elliot Grey, played by Lester Wallack, rescues a kidnapped child from a band of Gypsies. Disguises, mistaken identities, unknown family ties, and the British class sys-

31 Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, October 17, 1863.
33 Ibid.
tem provide opportunities for interesting and contrasting styles of dress. The complicated action required fifteen rehearsals in 1863, six rehearsals in 1864, and subsequently as few as four rehearsals until 1876, when its last major revival came after sixteen rehearsals.34

Rosedale provided the Wallack actresses with the opportunity to wear the latest fashions, and in Rosedale Mrs. Hoey displayed some of her most "dazzling costumes." Actors paled, however, by comparison:

Man, degenerate man, was, so to speak, nowhere. Portions of him appeared at times above the billowing sea of flounces, but his eternal black coat was an offence to the eyes of the chameleon-clad fair ones, and he was either swamped again or banished into sartorial darkness and gloom in the lobby or in the passageways.35

John Gilbert's disdain for the tradition of actors dressing contemporary plays in "eternal" black coats lifted him from pictorial anonymity. Instead, he could have been a walking advertisement "for clothiers who fit out beautiful old gentlemen to go courting susceptible widows." Reviewers refused to comment on the contemporary fashions as the writers lacked the "technical lore" with which "to dilate upon the faultless toilettes of the ladies of the company." One writer stated, "We will not even approach the subject, lest haply, we might insert our foot in it."36

34Jones, p. 43.
35Spirit of the Times, October 10, 1863.
36Ibid.
After a hundred twenty-five performances in its first season, a revival of *Rosedale* the following winter announced new scenery and costumes,\(^3^7\) which drew as large audiences as on its original production.\(^3^8\) The *Spirit* critic noted that Lester Wallack's nightly author's fees provided him handsomely with "gloves, hair-dye, and cosmetics."\(^3^9\)

In an 1868 revival, the women continued to draw more praise for their dresses than did the men in their "plain black clothes," which "faded out of sight." Lester Wallack and the other military men, however, escaped sartorial obscurity, for Lester was "transcendently arrayed in a blinding superfluity of gilt straps and things." Rockwell as Colonel May also made an "exceedingly handsome guardsman," but looked like a "gentlemanly ghost" with his "powdered head, mustache, and glittering white teeth."\(^4^0\)

The only examples of the military costumes used in the sixties are two photographs of Lester Wallack, the first in Plate XLIV from the production in 1863 and the second in Plate XLV representing Lester's costume for subsequent productions in the sixties. The costumes are exact replicas of the British Lancer's uniform but not the same costume. Careful examination of the two plates shows slight discrep-

\(^3^7\) *New York Herald*, November 1, 1864.
\(^3^8\) *Spirit of the Times*, November 19, 1864.
\(^3^9\) Ibid., November 5, 1864.
\(^4^0\) Ibid., March 14, 1868.
ancies in the epaulettes and fringe, indicating a new construction based on the same pattern and military accoutrements. The trousers in Plate XLV are of a slimmer cut, reflecting the contemporary tailoring trend of the later date. Careful authenticated reproduction of military costumes was a regular policy at Wallack's, as indicated by these two plates from different seasons.

The only feminine costume from Rosedale is a photograph of Mrs. Vernon as Tabitha Stork, the housekeeper for Matthew Leigh. (Plate XLVI) Such photographs in character are rare, for in the sixties usually only leading character parts or characters in eccentric costumes would call for photographs. The role of the cantankerous Tabitha Stork is crucial, however, to the unwinding of a complicated plot, and Mrs. Vernon "was excellent, as usual."41 Her costume is appropriate to her character and to her station in the early sixties.

An engraving from a souvenir program contains facial pictures of Mrs. Hoey and Lester Wallack and a scene from the Gypsy camp. The engraving (Plate LXVII) is too vague to reveal any specifics about the costume designs, but the women's costumes show a sameness of style and drapery among the characters in the scene. The men's costumes illustrate a variety of dress styles appropriate for a band of Gypsies and reflecting the fact that individual actors dressed their

41Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, October 17, 1863.
own characters. The Gypsies are apparently dressed in peasant costumes representing no specific locality. It is impossible to tell if Lester Wallack is present in the print, but he is disguised as a Romany vagabond at this point in the action.  

Fortunately, both costumes worn by George Holland as Bunberry Kobb are available. Kobb, Tabitha Stork's suitor, is shown in Plate LXVIII in what Colonel May describes in Act I as an "antedeluvian style of get up." Kobb replies to the Colonel's criticism, "Stuff! Nonsense! As if a man wanted a better or more becoming costume than that of his father or grandfather before him." He then tells the Colonel, "By Jove, sir, the good old country aristocrat is dying out, oozing away, and when he's gone, the country's gone--mind that!" Wallack created the role of Kobb specifically for Holland's low-comedic line of business, and the "old-fashioned" style of costuming is appropriate for the situation described. In Act V Kobb states, "I have seen the error of my ways in the matter of dress, and I think my future get-up in that department will show I have not been to London for nothing." When he re-appears in Act V, he wears a "modern" black suit with well-made dancing pumps, as shown in Plate LXIX.


^3 Lester Wallack, Rosedale, in Davy Crockett and Other Plays, ed. by Isaac Goldberg and Hubert Heffner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), pp. 5-6.

^4 Ibid., pp. 51, 59.
Although appropriate for an English gentleman, the effect of the costume is comic due to the bagginess of the costume, and Holland performs stock comic business with his gloves and with his book of dance instructions for the grand ball.

**Rosedale** requires two minor bits of business which would provide problems for the dressers. When Kobb goes into Tabitha Stork's pantry in Act III, dressed in the style seen in Plate LXVIII, he topfles the shelves and re-enters with molasses stains on his shirt front, his face covered with jam, and his hat torn by a nail. Also, in Act V Rosa Leigh throws herself into Elliot Grey's arms and whitens him with flour she has been working with in the kitchen. Both actions provide bits of realistic detail, but would necessitate nightly cleaning, the job of the individual dressers.

When Lester Wallack revived **Rosedale** in the seventies, the military costumes were all new and included "Officer's Uniforms of the British Infantry of the Line, the Volunteer Artillery, Rifle Volunteers, and Twelfth Lancers," all from patterns imported from England. The wardrobe was still under the superintence of Messrs. Flannery and Benschoten. The *Spirit* critic stated that Lester, in his own dress uniform, looked "more like a general on the retiring list than a lieutenant," although he acted with spirit and grace.47

47 *Spirit of the Times*, May 19, 1877.
Wallack's costume in Plate L dates from two 1871 productions on May 29 and again on November 13. Lester wears the same costume, newly constructed, for a revival in 1877. The costume (Plate LI) illustrates the ornate trim on his tunic under the elaborately embroidered military jacket. His gain of weight is apparent in the latter plate. Even in the early seventies, the New York Times referred to "the padded chest and legs of Elliot Grey." The critic for the Times commented, "We do not censure the artificiality because we recollect the time when he was what now he tries to be." The costume is authentic, nevertheless, and the reviewer for the Spirit, using an appropriate metaphor, stated that the play Rosedale, "having been cut to fit Wallack, there isn't a wrinkle in it."

The Shaughraun

By the mid-eighteen-seventies, the standard repertory no longer brought sufficient financial returns to maintain the high standards of production Wallack had always followed. With few romantic melodramas available, Wallack turned to a type of melodrama emphasizing spectacular scenic effects, yet maintaining the basic romantic appeal of those successes of the past. Dion Boucicault's The Shaughraun provided the tonic necessary to brace up "the needy treasury" of the

49 Spirit of the Times, May 19, 1877.
50 Jones, p. 91.
house. The play opened on November 14, 1874, ran for one hundred forty-three consecutive performances and brought $220,076.50 into the box office. Although staged in contemporary Irish costumes, the production is of particular interest because photographic records are available of twelve of the original eighteen performers in character, and several of these are shown in multiple costumes. These include posed individual and group pictures by Sarony, as well as two action photographic engravings from two different productions.

To go "a shaughraun" is to go wandering, or tramping, and the title refers to the hero of the play, Conn, an Irish vagabond played by the author, Boucicault, in all three Wallack productions. Often recognized as the best of Boucicault's Irish plays, The Shaughraun includes two heroines, a peasant girl and a lady of higher social standing, and

51 The World, March 5, 1916.
52 Jones, p. 127.
53 The original cast with photographic plate references in parentheses was as follows: Captain Molineux, H. J. Montague (LIV); Robert Ffolliott, J. B. Polk (none); Father Dolan, John Gilbert (LVIX); Corry Kinchela, Edward Arnott (LXI): Harvey Duff, Harry Beckett (LX, LXI, LXII); Conn, Dion Boucicault (LII, LLI, LXII); Sgt. Jones, W. J. Leonard (none); Mangan, J. F. Josephs (none); Reilly, E. M. Holland (LXI): Sullivan, C. E. Edwin (LXI): Doyle, J. Peck (LXI); Donovan, G. Atkins (none); Arte O'Neal, Jeffreys Lewis (LVI, LXI): Claire Ffolliott, Ada Dyas (LIII, LIV, LV); Moya, Ione Burke (LVII, LXI); Mrs. O'Kelley, Mme. Ponisi (LVIII); Bridget Madigan, Mrs. J. Sefton (none); Nancy Malone, E. Blaisdell (none).
54 The World, March 5, 1916.
55 Odell, Annals, IX, 522.
treacherous villains scheming for the property and lives of the heroes. Kinchela, a villainous squire, controls the estates of Robert Ffolliott, who is a political prisoner in Australia. The villain tries to force Robert's intended, Arte O'Neal, to marry him, but she and Robert's sister Claire, though penniless, are determined to hold on to the estate from which the squire has been embezzling funds. Robert escapes and returns home a fugitive, although Kinchela knows he has been pardoned. Captain Molineux, an English officer in love with Claire, is forced by British honor and Kinchela to capture Claire's brother and place him in prison. Conn manipulates Robert's escape in a spectacular scene, dons Robert's coat and hat, and leads the peasants in a chase. After being shot, Conn miraculously returns to life during a comic wake scene; subsequently, the villains are brought to justice, the couples united, and Conn rewarded with Moya, Father Dolan's niece.

Boucicault personally directed the play, "holding the book at rehearsals and dogmatically dictating every bit of stage business." He described how he waited until the last minute to select his own costume:

I get the actors and actresses to study their characters, and generally leave myself to the last. But the last morning before the play was produced I saw my dresser hobbling about, but afraid to come to the stage. At last he said, "Have you thought of your costume?" I said I had

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56 Attributed to Jeffreys Lewis, undesignated clipping, Dion Boucicault Scrapbook, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.
not done any such thing. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and I had to play about seven o'clock in the evening. I went upstairs and said, "Have you got a red coat?" "Yes, we have got a uniform red hunting coat." "Oh, that is of no use!" "We have got one that was used in She Stoops to Conquer." That was brought, and it had broad lapels and looked to belong to about one hundred and fifty years ago. "Oh!" said the man, "there is an old coat that was worn by Mr. Beckett as Goldfinch." When he came to that, it reached all down to my feet, and was too long in the sleeves. So I cut them off with a big pair of shears, and by the shears, and the scissors I got some sort of fit. Then I got an old hunting cap, a pair of breeches, and sent for some old boots that cost me about 2s 6d, and did not fit me, and that is how I came on the stage. The editor of one of the newspapers said, "Where on earth did you get that extraordinary costume from?"

Boucicault's recollection seems to emphasize that in contemporary plays actors were to select their own costumes; however, it also indicates that they could expect assistance from their dressers regularly employed at the theatre. The reference to a dresser "hobbling about" possibly refers to Van Benschoten, for ten years later he was totally incapacitated and died the following year in 1885. Wallack was not performing elsewhere and Benschoten was probably Boucicault's dresser. The fact that Boucicault had to buy second-hand boots is consistent with the policies of the theatre for actors to provide personal accessories of dress.

Boucicault's memory is suspect, however, because at least three sources indicate he did not use a red coat, even though he recalls specifically asking for red. The critic

57 Richardson, p. 95, from The Art of Acting by Dion Boucicault (New York, 1926), p. 34.
for the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* wrote on September 11, 1875, that in Boucicault's interpretation of Conn, he "displayed his intention of being more realistic and less romantic in his presentation of Irish character," observing that Boucicault had done away entirely with the old conventional red waist-length coat and sugar-loaf hat, the traditional dress of the stage Irishman. The actual statement of the *New York Times* critic was, "Where did Mr. Boucicault pick up that wonderful coat?" Furthermore, Robert Ffolliott in *The Shaughraun* tells Captain Molineux in Act I that Conn might attack him because of Molineux's red coat. Ffolliott says Conn's mother was frightened by a mad bull, "and the minute Conn sees a bit of scarlet, such for example as your coat there, the bull breaks out in him, and he might toss you over a cliff." A large tinted picture of Conn's costume in the Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library shows a lime-green jacket with purple pants, thereby suggesting that Conn's coat was not the traditional red. Boucicault's recollection of his preparation of the coat for the play is apparently correct, however, as indicated in Plate LII.

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58 *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, September 11, 1875.

59 *New York Times*, November 15, 1874.


61 *Actors and Actresses*, V, No. 5, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.
Unlike Wallack, Boucicault apparently placed little importance on costuming. He believed audiences didn't want six or seven new dresses worn in each new play by the leading actress, nor did they demand a great display of "tinsel scenery." He thought audiences would be content if the leading actress had only one dress, and that a calico one, "if the part had the variety instead of her back."^2

Ada Dyas as Claire wore only three costumes for the play which covers two days of action. Plate LIII shows Claire in a plain gray dress at the milk churn in scene one when she first meets Captain Mollineux. Plate LIV depicts her costume during Act II where she lights a cigar for the Captain, and Plate LV shows her in a riding habit she wears while luring the Captain's attention away from the prison so Robert can escape in Act II. She apparently returns to one of the first two costumes for Act III. The dresses were "lovely incarnations in Miss Dyas," according to the New York Daily Tribune. ^3 The three photographs represent a rare collection of a complete line of costumes worn by an actress for one particular play. The dresses are simple and plainly trimmed, yet indicate a knowledge of style which a lady brought down by misfortune might maintain even when elaborate materials and accessories were no longer available to her.

Ada Dyas' costumes provide a marked contrast to the dress

^2New York Herald, December 21, 1884.

^3New York Daily Tribune, April 26, 1875.
selected by Jeffreys Lewis as Arte O'Neal. (Plate LVI) The richly decorated contemporary gown seems inappropriate for her similarly penniless situation. Critics were quick to criticize Jeffreys Lewis for her choice. One reviewer complained that her dresses were "out of keeping with the locality and surroundings of the play," although no fault could be found with her acting.64 Another reviewer agreed that she had "too much show of richness,\(^\text{65}\) and still another found her "elaborate toilets" decidedly inappropriate.66 The New York Herald critic stated that her dresses were "out of keeping with the state of honorable poverty in which she is supposed to be living."67 The Spirit writer came to her defense, however, with the observation that she was betrayed into a pardonable elegance in her attire, because it was "not improbable that a lady of her station possessed silks and laces when she hadn't a crust."68 He especially admired the "picturesqueness" of her two dresses for their uniqueness and novelty of design. The critic for The World must have agreed, for he found the costuming of both the ladies and

64 New York Times, November 15, 1874.
67 New York Herald, November 15, 1874.
68 Spirit of the Times, November 21, 1874.
and gentlemen "appropriate and tasteful" with not a "hint of exaggerated toilet." The writer then remarked, "The reverse of this, it may be remembered, is the rule whenever the average Irish drama holds the boards." 69

Boucicault's more realistic approach to the staging must have had its effect on most of the other members of the cast. Ione Burke's costume as Moya, Conn's sweetheart, is in keeping with her low station, as indicated in Plate LVII. The dress is comparable in its style and simplicity to Ada Dyas' first costume in Plate LIII. Mme. Ponisi's costume as Mrs. O'Kelly, Conn's mother, is a veritable riot of contrasting patterns and colors, shown in Plate LVIII. A picture of her in another costume illustrates the same style with the same bonnet, but with different contrasting patterns. 70

As Father Dolan (Plate LIX) John Gilbert wears a frock coat trimmed with large covered buttons, very similar in style to the coats he wore in the old comedies. The plain, dark old-fashioned costume is appropriate for the poor minister. As Captain Molineux in Plate LIV with Ada Dyas, Montague wears an English officer's uniform, and, according to the Spirit, he "had a part which was as becoming to his talent as his uniform was to his person." 71 Finally, Harry Beckett dressed Harvey Duff in tattered peasant garb (Plate LX) to

70 See Odell, Annals, IX, 524.
71 Spirit of the Times, November 21, 1874.
disguise his police affiliation, completing a group of costumes appropriate to character and station in life. The New York Times critic agreed and stated, "In a word, every detail of the stage-attire of the drama is in keeping with its manifold requirements." 

A print from an engraving from scene eight in Act II (Plate IXI) allows further speculation on the costuming of other characters. Moya and Arte have come to meet Robert at the ruins of St. Bridget's Abbey. They are discovered by a group of peasants bearing carbines. The men sight what appears to be the figure of Robert Ffolliott trying to escape and fire twice. The figure drops and the hat and beard fall off revealing Conn, the Shaughraun. The script directions identify the characters from left to right as Moya, being held by Duff; Kinchela, waving his hat; C. E. Edwin as Sullivan, firing the rifle; E. M. Holland as Reilly, holding Jeffreys Lewis as Arte; and J. Peck as Doyle, another peasant. Conn, in disguise, tops the picture. Moya wears a longer dress for the night air and has wrapped herself in a cloak; Kinchela wears a typical outfit befitting a squire, and Arte O'Neal wears a second overly-elaborate gown. The three peasant men are dressed in identical styles of short jackets, knee pants, stockings and hats, all indicative of their positions as members of the Irish constabulary.

Plate LXII represents the same scene, but probably from a production which opened on February 2, 1880. Arnott played
Kinchela in both the 1874 and 1876 productions, and the figure at the left is not Arnott but probably Gerald Eyre in the 1880 production. If this is so, Stella Boniface, over-dressed for Moya, is at left, and Rose Wood as Arte O'Neal has fainted at right. Beckett, in tattered coat, retains the character of Duff. The members of the constabulary wear what appear to be military uniform jackets but retain the sugar-loaf hats evident in both pictures and typical of the stage Irishman. The constabulary evidently wore the modified traditional Irish costumes in their minor roles.

Although Lester Wallack did not play in The Shaughraun, the Spirit critic stated that he "used all his great experience to aid in giving the greatest possible picturesqueness and force to Mr. Boucicault's conceptions." The writer for The World thought that the elaborate scenes served to prove the great resources of Mr. Wallack's establishment "and to evidence, in connection with his company and costumes, how conscientiously and intelligently he continues to labor for the delight of his patrons and the advancement of his profession and art." 74

The critical reaction to the costuming of The Shaughraun in the seventies reflects a trend toward more realistic costuming and away from traditions which marked the American theatre throughout Wallack's history. All three melodramas

73 Spirit of the Times, November 15, 1874.

utilized contemporary styles of dress, but each extracted critical interest and appreciation for appropriate and realistic staging and costuming. Elaborate as well as simple styles brought critical acclaim when deemed appropriate for a particular production, and any discrepancies were quickly noted, especially in the sixties and seventies. Photographic records prove that Wallack's sought to follow contemporary trends in dress, constantly re-dressing the plays to conform to changing styles. In the fifties and early sixties, Wallack's even provided a standard by which contemporary fashions often were judged.

Records indicate, however, that traditions were often hard to overcome. In the fifties actresses still wore contemporary undergarments which altered the silhouettes of otherwise authentic national costumes. This trend apparently gave way in the late sixties and early seventies. Actors still preferred the traditional somber clothes in the sixties and often paled by comparison with the elaborate costumes of the actresses. Actors trained in the "low-comedy line" used exaggerated styles of dress to enhance their characters, even when other actors selected appropriate and realistic styles. Critics apparently tended to excuse such actions because of a sentimental regard for a particular actor whose acting style was rapidly disappearing. Minor characters often maintained inappropriate costuming styles, even when leading actors made efforts to eliminate such practices.

Photographic records also indicate that neither Wallack
nor his costumers maintained complete control over the cos-
tuming of any single production, and critics appropriately
blamed the individual actors for discrepancies. No unifying
force controlled a production except when the theatre pro-
vided national or military costumes. In this area, Wallack's
consistently produced accurate replicas of costumes based
on authentic sources, although the individual actor could
suggest certain variations he felt would enhance his appear-
ance or character.

Original melodramas afforded Wallack an opportunity to
utilize a trained and efficient staff to its fullest potential
to create original, extravagant, and appropriate costumes.
He provided liberal funds for such productions, and in each
instance he was liberally rewarded, critically and financially.
When viewed in the light of contemporary trends, Wallack's
deserved the position of esteem it enjoyed, for its artistic
standards were high and the results laudable.
PLATE XXXVII

F. C. Bangs
The Sultan of Myra
The Veteran
John Dyott
Emir
The Veteran
Lester Wallack
Leon Delmar (Zohrab)
The Veteran
Lester Wallack
Leon Delmar (Zohrab)
The Veteran
Lester Wallack
Leon Delmar (Zohrab)
The Veteran
PLATE XLII

Lester Wallack
Leon Delmar
The Veteran
PLATE XLIII

Jeffreys Lewis
Amineh
The Veteran
PLATE XLIV

Lester Wallack
Elliot Grey
Rosedale
PLATE XLVI

Mrs. Vernon
Tabitha Stork
Rosedale
Souvenir Program
Rosedale
PLATE XLIX

George Holland
Bunberry Kobb
Rosedale
PLATE L

Lester Wallack
Elliot Grey
Rosedale
Dion Boucicault
Conn
The Shaughraun
PLATE LIII

Ada Dyas
Claire
The Shaughraun
Ada Dyas, H. J. Montague
Claire, Capt. Mollineux
The Shaughraun
Ada Dyas
Claire
The Shaughraun
Jeffreys Lewis
Arte O'Neal
The Shaughraun
PLATE LVII

Ione Burke
Moya
The Shaughraun
Mme. Elizabeth Ponisi
Mrs. O'Kelly
The Shaughraun
John Gilbert
Father Dolan
The Shaughraun
PLATE LX

Harry Beckett
Harvey Duff
The Shaughraun
Scene From

The Shaughraun
CHAPTER SEVEN

COSTUMING PRACTICES
FOR CONTEMPORARY COMEDIES

Contemporary comedies were a regular, though limited, feature of Wallack's production schedule from 1852 to 1881, adding variety to its standard repertory of English comedies from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the first half of the theatre's history, novelties, or productions new to New York audiences, formed only ten per cent or less of the repertory in eleven of eighteen seasons and reached twenty-five per cent in only one season; in the seventies, however, novelties formed about one-third of the total repertory.¹ The standards of excellence Wallack's demonstrated in its revivals were also apparent in its productions of contemporary plays written primarily by British playwrights. These plays seldom became part of the company's repertory; of the one hundred eighty plays which were new to New York when performed at Wallack's, only twenty-two were repeated in more than one season.²

The plays of T. W. Robertson proved to be the exception, for when first introduced in 1866 his so-called "cup-and-saucer" dramas became "as much as the cachet of the Wallack

¹Jones, pp. 81-82.
²Ibid., p. 82.
as had formerly been Sheridan and other classic comedies.\textsuperscript{3}
Many historians date the actual beginning of realistic staging
from the entrance of Robertson's works,\textsuperscript{4} for his plays con­tained elaborate directions for realistic domestic interiors
and costumes.\textsuperscript{5} His characters and plots held the interest of
the audience, but the "stage business and situations were
far more important and influential in the success of his pro­ductions.\textsuperscript{6}

The most popular of Robertson's comedies at Wallack's
was \textit{Ours}, which ranks sixth in the number of performances re­ceived. When the play opened on December 19, 1866, the re­sponse was so enthusiastic that the writer for the \textit{Spirit
of the Times} predicted that it would "not only be Ours, but
days, and perhaps weeks before the bill will be changed."\textsuperscript{7}
The play ran for forty consecutive nights\textsuperscript{8} and received one
hundred sixty-eight performances over seven seasons. The
production offered "faithful attention to detail"\textsuperscript{9} and scenes

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{3}Odell, \textit{Annals}, VIII, 130-131.
\item \textsuperscript{4}Swinney, p. 143.
\item \textsuperscript{5}Phyllis Hartnoll, ed., \textit{The Oxford Companion to the
\item \textsuperscript{6}Quoted in Swinney, p. 142, from J. S. G. Hagen, \textit{Records
of the New York Stage from 1860-1870}, extended and illustra­ted (New York, 1870), X, 99.
\item \textsuperscript{7}\textit{Spirit of the Times}, December 22, 1866.
\item \textsuperscript{8}Jones, p. 126.
\item \textsuperscript{9}\textit{Spirit of the Times}, February 1, 1868.
\end{itemize}
which were "cozy and well furnished except in the last set, where the fierce winds of the Crimea howl around the hut, and exhibit the cheerless aspect of the war."^10 "Placed upon the stage with a completeness rare even for Wallack's,"^11 the play blended elements of heroic emotion and tender pathos in a "true reflection upon the way of the world."^12

Advertisements stated that the costumes and uniforms were "from the best authorities and strictly in keeping with the time and place of the dramatic action,"^13 the mid-1850's during the Crimean War. In 1866 one critic found the dresses "correct and effective;"^14 however, the only available photographic evidence is from an 1879 production (Plate LXIII) indicating that Wallack's used contemporary fashions. All three characters, including Lester Wallack and Rose Coghlan at right, dress in the most fashionable clothes of the late 1870's. Although the Crimean War occurred some twenty years earlier, the use of contemporary dress from the seventies apparently went unnoticed. When depicting English ladies and gentlemen of the upper classes, Wallack's consistently costumed mid-nineteenth-century plays in the dress of the year of production. Costumes for Dion Bouicault's London

11. Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, January 5, 1867.
13. Ibid., December 19, 1866.
Assurance, for instance, represented the current London fashions\textsuperscript{15} throughout its eighteen seasons of production, even though Boucicault wrote the play in 1841 and advertisements promised "scrupulously correct costumes."\textsuperscript{16} The features of an English gentleman's full dress were as well known as the latest women's fashions\textsuperscript{17} and apparently audiences and critics would have been shocked at any attempt to date costumes for contemporary comedies. The term "correct dress" evidently referred to current fashions befitting English ladies and gentlemen and other characters according to their social roles, for it was in a review of Ours in 1868 that one writer referred to Wallack's as "a beacon of light and a shining example to the slovenly and inefficient establishments which costume an English peasant girl in the garb of a Spanish gypsy."\textsuperscript{18}

The costumes used in Ours and advertised as authentic evidently referred especially to military dress worn during the scenes depicting events in the Crimean War, a conflict in which Lester Wallack was briefly involved.\textsuperscript{19} In 1873 a reviewer called Don John, Lester Wallack, a "born Captain of Hussars--a man of fashion."\textsuperscript{20} His fur-trimmed uniform as

\textsuperscript{15}Richardson, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{16}New York Daily Tribune, January 6, 1862.
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., September 22, 1862.
\textsuperscript{18}Spirit of the Times, February 1, 1868.
\textsuperscript{19}New York Dramatic Mirror, March 19, 1881.
\textsuperscript{20}Spirit of the Times, November 15, 1873.
Hugh Chalcote (Plate LXIV) depicts an authenticity of military costume, and Plate LXV reveals a consistency of design in the uniform for John Gilbert as Sir Alexander Shendryn, a colonel in the army. Realistically fur-trimmed costumes apparently did not assure that they would be used realistically in a winter scene, however. One reviewer noted that Charles Coghlan as Angus was not enough of a "classical freebooter or a medical moss-trooper to stand with coat off in a stage storm and make love to a pretty girl."  

The production must have been noteworthy, nevertheless, for Olive Logan recorded that an English officer who had seen Ours in London told her that it "was played on the stage at Wallack's Theatre so much better than in London as almost to be unrecognizable." The officer, who had actually served in the Crimean War, stated that he didn't base his evaluation on the superiority of the scenic artists, but on "the extreme care bestowed upon other details by the management," possibly a reference to the effective costuming. When Lester Wallack played a starring engagement in Ours at the Grand Opera House in New York in 1881, however, the reviewer for the New York Dramatic Mirror remarked that the dressing of the other characters in the play would not bear criticism because the uniforms had a frowsy appearance and looked "as if they had been hastily snatched at random from

the first trunk at hand in the property room." The completeness of production at Wallack's own theatre obviously could not follow him during his many starring engagements in the seventies and eighties when he sought to bolster sagging box office receipts with personal appearances at other theatres.

Reviewers recorded no such criticism of military costumes in any production staged at Wallack's; in fact, critics rarely criticized contemporary fashions at Wallack's, except when they conflicted with a character's station in life. Even then, the beauty and elegance of a lady's dress might have blinded a critic's eye and dulled the sharpness of his remarks. Following Mrs. Hoey's extravagant innovations in contemporary dress, it was often said by ladies who frequented the theatre, "I won't have that silk cut till I go to Wallack's." Mrs. Hoey fell victim to excesses at times, for a contemporary critic once remarked that as an impoverished heroine, instead of selling her hand to save her father, Mrs. Hoey "should have paid his debts with her diamonds and set him up in business again by disposing of her laces." Very few production photographs of Mrs. Hoey are available, perhaps because of her status in society; however, the elaborate elegance of her dresses can be seen in a photograph

24 Ibid., September 11, 1880.
25 Ibid., September 25, 1880.
taken from Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, December 25, 1858. (Plate LXVI)

Mrs. Hoey's successor, Madeline Henriques, also "excited the arithmetical calculations of all the ladies present who are conversant with the present prices of silks and satins." Interest in elaborate stage fashions became so excessive that by the late seventies the Spirit of the Times and the New York Dramatic Mirror had to add special departments to comment on the dresses worn in contemporary plays. By 1880 the dresses of a play were as thoroughly advertised and as critically evaluated as the acting. The writer for the Dramatic Mirror stated in 1880:

Stock actresses can no longer afford to find all their own modern costumes, as they did in the good old days, and the manager would be swamped if he agreed to dress all his actresses, so generally a compromise is effected by which the actress agrees to find two dresses, and the manager all after two.

Whether this was the case at Wallack's is unknown, but Lester Wallack's liberality in financial matters is well-documented, and he probably would have been the first to support any suggestion which would improve the quality of dress in contemporary plays.

Contemporary dress at Wallack's usually reflected the latest fashions for both men and women. A print from an engraving of one of the earliest contemporary comedies at Wal-

26 Spirit of the Times, October 1, 1864.
27 New York Dramatic Mirror, September 25, 1880.
28 Ibid.
Wallack's depicts a scene from The Little Treasure (Plate LXVII) and indicates the fashions of the mid-1850's. Wallack's first produced the play on November 21, 1855, with Mary Gannon as the "little treasure" in "a simple but pretty and effective piece with no plot, complications, or tortuous story." The engraving includes Mrs. Vernon, the mother-in-law, at left, Mary Gannon at center, and Lester Wallack to her left.

The style of the costuming in the early sixties can be seen in a photograph which depicts a scene from Henriette, produced by Wallack's in 1860 and 1861. (Plate LXVIII) E. P. Wilkins, the Herald's theatrical critic, wrote the play which received thirty performances over two seasons. The photograph indicates the similarity in style of men's clothing in the 1860's and the predominance of solid dark colors of men's evening dress which left ostentation to the ladies.

Critics quickly noted any deviation from appropriate current dress for men. One writer objected to Joseph Polk's white vest and white trousers which he wore during the wedding ceremonial in a production of Pauline in 1868. The writer argued, "If Mr. Polk replies that he had just arrived from a journey, and had not time to fittingly garb himself, then we must suggest that it is not even a good traveling costume." A similar comment in the Spirit of the Times on November 30, 1867, stated that in Maud's Peril by Watts

29New York Daily Tribune, November 22, 1855.
30Spirit of the Times, February 15, 1868.
Phillips, "Peril arises, as far as we could discover, from a young gentleman in a black coat and light pants," an inappropriate dress for evening wear in the 1860's.

Reviewers apparently more readily criticized discrepancies in men's costumes when they did not fit a particular situation or station in life. In 1872 a writer commented on Stoddart's costume as Mark Meddle in London Assurance, stating that he wished Stoddart "would dress a little more like an attorney, even a country attorney, and a little less like a stableman." The critic then apologized for his notice of any deficiency "when all is so excellent, so well-proportioned, so evenly developed, so near to the ideal 'level best.'" 3

Reflecting current fashions, men's costumes were slow to change, but by 1877 an artist's sketch of My Awful Dad (Plate LXIX) depicts Lester Wallack in his gray wig and a light-colored suit, which was the fashion for at-home wear in the seventies. Wallack's reputation as a trend-setter in contemporary style apparently would have kept him immune from criticism, even if the critics disliked a current fashion. Montague, however, did not fare as well in 1877. Although the critic admired the actor in Steele McKaye's Won At Last as "every inch a gentleman . . . wearing his clothes with a grace much to be envied," the writer criticized Montague's wearing light blue cashmere pants and vest: "It

31Ibid., April 27, 1872.
may be the fashion, but it is a hideous one, if it is."\(^{32}\)

By 1878 a print from an engraving of Wallack's production of *Diplomacy* (Plate LXX) reveals three distinct and varied men's trouser materials, one light, one dark, and one pattered, although the men's coats are cut along similar contemporary lines. Rose Coghlan's fashionable, yet simple, gown for the same production (Plate LXXI) would fare well in the company of the three gentlemen and within the rather ornate surroundings of the setting.

Since most of the contemporary plays at Wallack's were British in origin, Wallack often received criticism for failing to produce enough contemporary comedies by American authors.\(^{33}\) Wallack consistently argued that American plays were worthless, and John Gilbert supported his contention.\(^{34}\)

The major exceptions to Wallack's reliance upon imported British comedies came with productions of plays by members of Wallack's own company, including six of his own. Of the twenty-eight plays by native American authors that Wallack did produce between 1853 and 1866, twenty-one were by actors in his own company. The chief contributor, John Brougham, wrote fourteen plays especially for Wallack's.\(^{35}\)

Perhaps Brougham's most famous play was the burlesque

\(^{32}\text{Ibid.}, \text{December 15, 1877.}\)

\(^{33}\text{Swinney, p. 79.}\)

\(^{34}\text{Jones, p. 97.}\)

\(^{35}\text{Ibid., p. 95.}\)
Po-ca-hon-tas, or The Gentle Savage, "An Original Erratic Operatic Semi-Civilized and Demi-Savage Extravaganza." Wallack's first produced Po-ca-hon-tas on Christmas eve, 1855, and it ran uninterruptedly as an afterpiece until January 25, 1856. Hutton stated that the play was among the best, "if not the very best, burlesque in any living language." Brougham's play represented one of the few contemporary comedies to be staged in costumes of an earlier time and marked one of the earliest recorded notices of George Flannery as sole costumer at Wallack's. The program notes carried the notice that the costumes were "cut from the original plates, and thoroughly digested by Mr. T. Flannery, and several auxiliary thimble-riggers." 

The sketch in Plate LXXII depicts John Brougham as H. J. Pow-Ha-Tan I, a crotchety monarch, and Georgina Hodson as H. R. H. Princess Po-ca-hon-tas, the beautiful and dutiful daughter of King Pow-Ha-Tan. Brougham's costume is similar in style to that worn in 1829 by Edwin Forrest, whose costume as Metamora became the accepted stage dress for the American Indian. Brougham wears close-fitting trousers, a long

37 Odell, Annals, VI, 443.
38 Hutton, p. 164.
39 Brougham, p. 1.
40 Ibid., p. 2.
41 Richardson, p. 52.
blouse of fringed material trimmed with ornamental beads, beaded moccasins, and the traditional feathered headdress over a straight-haired wig. Georgina Hodson received an ovation for her costume, described by the Leslie's critic as "the most magnificent dress" the critic could possibly conceive. The crinoline support garments are absent, and the fringed costume is trimmed with beads. Apparently, Brougham adopted authentic Indian dress to enhance the "seriousness" of the burlesque, for he was the first author of burlesques to achieve comic success through earnest and "solemn seriousness." The costuming in Brougham's burlesque is an exception to the rule, however, for most of the contemporary comedies were costumed in contemporary styles.

Pictorial evidence of the costuming for contemporary comedies indicates basically the same pattern followed in Wallack's costuming of melodramas. The primary concern of the individual performers was to dress their characters fashionably in the best English traditions. High fashion was the by-word of Wallack's productions, so much so that actresses at times over-dressed their parts and wore contemporary styles even when historical events in the play should have necessitated the dress of an earlier time.

Actors also followed contemporary styles and dressed in conservative garments of dark colors through the sixties.

42 Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, January 5, 1856.
43 Hutton, p. 164.
but by the seventies the fashions of the day allowed variations in color and material. Authentic military and national costumes provided opportunities for men to wear more colorful clothing in the earlier periods.

The introduction of plays by T. W. Robertson in the late sixties marked a beginning of more realistic details in the mise en scene and required performers to dress their characters according to their station in life; discrepancies in the appropriate dress styles were quickly noted by reviewers. There could be no unity of style, except among military or national costumes provided by the theatre, for individual actors dressed their own characters to their own tastes. Success in costuming contemporary plays, therefore, was due primarily to the discretion of the individual performers who ranked among the best comedic actors of the time.
Scene From

Ours
Lester Wallack
Hugh Chalcote
Ours
PLATE LXVI

Mrs. John Hoey
Scene From

The Little Treasure
Scene From

My Awful Dad
Scene From

Diplomacy
PLATE LXXI

Rose Coghlan

Diplomacy
PLATE LXXII

John Brougham, Georgina Hodson
Pow-Ha-Tan, Po-ca-hon-tas
Po-ca-hon-tas
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

For almost a quarter of a century Wallack's Theatre achieved the reputation of being the finest theatrical organization in the United States. Effective costuming was an important element of the over-all spectacle and drew large and fashionable audiences throughout Wallack's history. Critics have attested to the quality of the costuming, and photographic records indicate a high degree of accuracy in the critics' consistently complimentary reviews. Such critical acclaim prompts the speculation that Wallack's was a trend-setter, possibly establishing the standards by which contemporary costume practices may be judged.

Operating in a period dominated by the star-system and later by the combination-system, Wallack's adhered strictly to stock company methods. The high quality of production standards achieved by Wallack's provides a prime example of the excellence which could be attained under the stock company system.

The Wallack management undoubtedly provided the impetus for contemporary successes attained in costuming. Nine contributing factors are apparent: (1) both J. W. Wallack and Lester Wallack provided personal examples of interest in careful, detailed attention to appropriate costuming; (2) they maintained a large and talented company of performers
and technicians whose concern for costumes and artistic dedication matched their own; (3) they provided the performers and technicians with generous salaries which encouraged excellence and kept the company together over long periods of time, thus stabilizing the high standards for costumes; (4) they established an atmosphere of pleasant working conditions which were conducive to the pursuit of excellence in costuming and all other aspects of production; (5) they made minimal use of the star-system, which encouraged each member of the company to be an equal participant differentiated only by natural talents and limitations so that costuming was a concern for all; (6) they recognized their own limitations as well as those of other performers such as H. J. Montague and cast actors in period roles only when they could effectively wear period costumes and re-create the styles and manners of a former time; (7) they scheduled adequate rehearsal time to insure quality of production, although dress rehearsals were uncommon; (8) they allowed a generous budget which resulted in the construction of costumes from expensive cut-velvets, satins, moires, and laces, elaborately trimmed in gold and silver; and finally, (9) they kept the theatre fashionable with a repertory and a style of production that attracted an educated and fashionable audience, which, in turn, encouraged educated and fashionable costuming. The Wallack managerial policies allowed the theatre to become known as The House of Fashion as well as The House of Comedy.

In the 1850's the theatre provided period costumes for
all men, and actors selected their dress from a large wardrobe of costumes encompassing styles of the past three centuries. Shakespearean productions featured elaborate and appropriate sixteenth-century adaptations based on authenticated sources to promote historical accuracy. Productions of eighteenth-century comedies featured period costumes designed from styles prevalent at the time the play was first produced. By the mid-1850's, George Flannery, a former dancer, was designing effective and appropriate national costumes based on paintings of Indian, Arabian, and Turkish dress.

Flannery appears to have used one basic garment pattern for period costumes representing a particular age or class group, but incorporated a wider variety of styles for national costumes. Photographs and engravings reflect an increase in the use of more elaborate decorative trim on a more layered costume by the late 1850's.

Actors provided all costume accessories as well as their own contemporary dress, which usually followed the latest British fashions. In their plain dark contemporary dress, actors often paled in comparison with Wallack's leading ladies.

Mrs. John Hoey introduced to New York the practice of extravagant costuming for both period and contemporary plays in the 1850's. Her dresses alone were sufficient to attract the fashionable elite. Since New York theatres required actresses to provide all their dresses for both period and contemporary plays, other actresses found it difficult to
maintain a comparable level of elegance. Women frequently adapted contemporary gowns for period plays, adding appropriate accessories and draperies to create the flavor of another era without sacrificing current fashion. Some actresses used contemporary crinoline hoops beneath otherwise appropriate period and national dress. Photographs reflect, however, an increasing interest in historical authenticity and some attempts at authentic reproduction. Audience reaction and critical reviews encouraged the simultaneous development of extravagant dress styles and fashionable authenticity.

With performers providing some or all of their own costumes, no unity of design was possible in the 1850's, except among men's costumes especially designed as appropriate period, national, or military dress. The Wallack company became such a closely knit group, however, that performers probably consulted each other concerning their stage dress. Adherence to the traditions of a role and the often-sought advice of the more experienced performers in the company may have aided in some unity. Actors also may have sought the assistance of their individual dressers. Wallack's dresser, Abram Van Benschoten, became Flannery's assistant in 1858 and undoubtedly contributed to the effectiveness of the costuming.

Provided with a liberal budget, encouraged by the Wallack management, and aided by dedicated and talented performers, Flannery and Benschoten continued to authenticate their
designs and provide appropriate costumes for the men throughout the 1860's. Military uniforms cut from imported patterns highlighted Wallack productions at his new theatre which opened in 1862. The colorful uniforms provided relief from the still somber contemporary dress for men. Flannery began to introduce light pastel costumes for eighteenth-century comedies and designed adaptations of appropriate period dress with bold color contrasts for plays set in the seventeenth century.

In the 1860's actors began to dress their contemporary characters according to their station in life, reflecting the advent of more realistic costuming. Eccentric comedians continued the practice of exaggerating costume elements for humorous effect, and realistic details and exaggerated styles existed simultaneously at times within the same play. With the introduction of "cup-and-saucer" comedies by T. W. Robertson in the late sixties, appropriate costuming became essential to effective production, and critics quickly noted any discrepancies.

Such discrepancies found men under-dressing their parts, while actresses often over-dressed their characters. The trend toward elaborate costuming, which Mrs. Hoey began in the fifties, flourished in the sixties. Even upon Mrs. Hoey's retirement in 1863, other leading ladies felt compelled to emulate her extravagance in dress. The increased financial strain of providing their own dresses may have caused Wallack's to provide some feminine costumes by the late 1860's.
Even with financial assistance, the responsibility for their choice of material, color, and design remained their own. Nevertheless, contemporary dress and period costumes were consistently elegant, elaborate, appropriate, and tasteful, reflecting the taste and intelligence of Wallack's actresses.

Wallack's became the focal point for New York society and set the standards for stage dress as well as for current fashion. Ladies often visited the theatre just to view the dresses, thereby encouraging a greater degree of extravagance in each production. Actresses frequently sacrificed authenticity to current fashions, wearing contemporary hair styles and adapting contemporary dress patterns for period plays. Actresses relied on wigs, feathers, gloves, hats, fans, and other accessories to create the illusion of a former time.

Costuming practices in the 1870's and early 1880's reflected a continuation of the same basic patterns of the 1860's. Men's period costumes continued to show a high degree of authenticity, while women's costumes followed contemporary fashions. Members of the company demonstrated an increasing interest in, and promotion of, more authentic period and national dress. Photographic records indicate, too, a greater care among all performers to dress their characters according to their station in life.

Flannery's period designs for men demonstrate more of a variety of styles within a particular period than previously
used. For plays which remained in the repertory for many seasons, Flannery and his staff consistently re-designed military costumes to conform to current styles. Men's contemporary stage dress followed the prevailing fashions, which allowed in the 1870's a greater variety of color and pattern in the fashionable dress of the day.

For thirty-two years George Flannery supervised the wardrobe, costume construction, and costume maintenance, serving as advisor, researcher, and designer. Yan Benschotan served as his assistant for twenty-seven years. The importance of the individual actors and actresses to the success of the costuming cannot be overstated, however, for the primary responsibility for an actor's costume lay with the actor. Critics appropriately praised or blamed the individual performers for the success or failure of a costume's effectiveness. The title of costumer apparently carried little weight as a unifying force, except when the costumer constructed all of a group of costumes; even then, the actor added accessories and made alterations he deemed appropriate to his character.

Through its technical staff, acting company, and progressive management policies, Wallack's Theatre apparently played an important role in the elevation of production standards in American theatre. Although Wallack's never claimed perfection in its costuming, they prided themselves on the degree of perfection they were able to achieve. The records show that Wallack's promoted the development of more
elaborate stage costuming, encouraged appropriate and authentic period costuming, and anticipated the development of realistic costuming. To chronicle the Wallack productions is to chronicle the development of costuming practices through a period of transition which eventually would lead the American theatre into the realistic era.
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APPENDIX A

CATALOGUE
of the
THEATRICAL WARDROBE
of the late
J. LESTER WALLACK,
of this city,
to be sold by auction
at the
Leavitt Art Rooms
787 & 789 Broadway
Corner of 10th Street
on
Friday Morning, Jan. 25th,
at 10.30 O'Clock
Geo. A. Leavitt & Co., Auctioneers
New York, 1889
CATALOGUE

Terms of Sale Cash

Deposit Required from all Buyers

1 Bridal Dress, White Satin and Gold; two Cloaks, Violet and Ruby, worn in "Much Ado About Nothing."

1 First Dress in "Much Ado About Nothing," Black and Orange Velvet, Jacket and Trunks.


5 "Captain of the Watch" Dress, Brown Cut Velvet and Moire Jacket Trunks with Sword Belt.

6 Garnet and Blue Silk Velvet Square Cut Striped Coat and Breeches worn in "Child of State."

7 Black Velvet Square Cut Coat, trimmed with Blue and Steel Buttons, worn in "To Marry or Not to Marry," one Blue Silk Vest, trimmed with Black Velvet and one trimmed with Silver.

8 Garnet Satin Brocade Morning Gown, trimmed with Fur, worn in "To Marry or Not to Marry."

9 "Rosedale" Costumes, two Blue Frock Coats, trimmed with Frogs, one Blue Frock Coat trimmed with White and Gold, two Scarlet vests trimmed with Black and Gold.

10 Blue Jacket embroidered with Gold Trimmings and Pair of Pants to Match, worn in the Play of "Impulse," Scarlet Cloth Hunting Coat, Pair of White Corduroy Breeches and Double Breasted Black Frock Coat.

11 Green Silk Velvet Jacket, trimmed with Gold, worn by Mr. James W. Wallack, Sr., in "Rob Roy."

12 Black Velvet Jacket, Trunks and Cloak, worn in "Ruy Blas" by Mr. Fechter.

13 Morning Gown and two Pair of Pants, Ashes of Roses lined with Blue, worn in "How She Loves Him."

14 Black Silk Velvet Drapery lined with Blue, worn by the late James W. Wallack, Sr., in "Hamlet."

15 Black Frock Coat, Blue Velvet Coat and Vest worn in "Diplomacy."

16 "Shylock" Dress, worn by the late James W. Wallack.

17 Blue Military Frock Coat, worn in "The King of the Mountains."
18 Blue Flannel Body Coat, Blue Flannel Blouse, Dark Flannel Jacket, worn in the Play of "Pauline." 3 pieces
19 Plum Colored Silk Velvet Full Trunks trimmed with Gold, and a Belt to Match, worn in "The Compact." 2 pieces.
20 Blue Cloth Cloak striped with red and blue; Black Frock Coat, double breasted, worn in "John Garth." 2 pieces.
21 Dark Blue English Tunic trimmed with silver; Dark Blue English Tunic trimmed with gold. 2 pieces.
22 2 Scarlet Vests; 2 pair Blue Trouserers with red stripes; 2 Blue Jackets, 1 trimmed with gold and 1 with silver. 6 pieces.
23 Gray Arm Hole Cloak trimmed with Black; Black Arm Hole Cloak trimmed with black satin; Black Square Cut Coat, trimmed with jet, and Breeches to match; Drab Cloth Square Cut Coat and Breeches to match. 6 pieces.
24 White Flannel Jacket worn in "A Scrap of Paper." 2 pieces.
25 2 Drab Military Coats, 1 trimmed, 1 trimmed with drab and 1 with Silver. 2 pieces.
26 Scarlet and Buck Military Jacket trimmed with gold; Black Velvet Jacket embroidered with gold; Blue Flannel Jacket with Frogs; Sash; White Cloak with scarlet tassels; White Skirt with gold Bullion Helmet, worn in the play of "The Veteran." 7 pieces.
27 Brown Velvet Jacket and Trunks and Breeches worn in "School." 3 pieces.
28 Brown Cloth Jacket and Breeches 2 pieces.
29 Dove Colored Silk Domino, trimmed with scarlet, worn by "Beatrice" in "Much Ado About Nothing." 2 pieces.
29a Black Silk Cloak trimmed with scarlet satin.
30 Black Silk Dominoes, gentleman's. 2 pieces.
31 Silk Dominoes. 4 pieces.
32 Old Dress for "Don Caesar de Bazan." 1 piece
33 Old Red Coat and Trousers for "Ours." 1 piece
34 Box containing 2 pair long old Boots; pair old Russets; 2 pair of Drab Boots; pair of Buff Boots scalloped in black; 2 pair Buff Boots, red heels; pair of Bronze Boots; 6 pair of Black Boots; 2 pair Boot Tops, buff; 2 pair Pair Tops; Black Boot Tops trimmed with white lace; pair Spangled Boots; 2 pair Black Military Tops; Black and Gold Leggings; pair Oxford Ties; pair of Shoes, black velvet; 3 pair White Kid Shoes; 2 Gorgets; 2 Black Military Belts; pair Black Velvet Slippers; 2 Scarlet and Gold Waist Belts; Sabre-sash; pair of Sandals; 10 pair of Spurs; Silver Egalet, scarlet and silver; Blue and Silver Sword Knot.
3 White Leather Cross Belts and Cartridge Boxes. 3 pieces.
35 1 Black Leather Cross Waist Belt, trimmed with silver. 1 piece.
1 Do. do. do. do. trimmed with gold.
36 Pair Brown Worsted Tights; 3 pair Ashes of Roses Tights; 2 pair Gray Tights; pair Purple Tights; 2 pair Plaid Stockings; pair Brown Silk Tights; 2 pair Pink Silk Tights. 12 pair.
37 Box of Hats. About 6.
38 Swords, used in the play of "Much Ado About Nothing." 2 pieces.
39 Sword, used by the late James W. Wallack in "Rienzi."
40 Rapier, used in "Faint Heart."
41 Swords, used in "As You Like It." 2 pieces.
42 Sword, used in "Diplomacy."
43 Sword, used in "Much Ado About Nothing."
44 Court Swords. 3 pieces.
45 Scimitar.
46 Sword, used by the late James W. Wallack in "Richard III."
47 Whip.
48 Duelling Pistols. Pair.
49 Dagger.
50 Turkish Dagger.
51 Chinese Dagger.
52 Blackthorn Cane.
53 Hard Rubber Cane, loaded top.
54 Hickory Cane, Carved Bird top.
55 Another, Silver top.
56 Blackthorn Cane.
57 Maple Wood Cane.
58 Malacca Riding Cane, bone top.
59 Malacca Cane, silver top.
60 Cherry Wood Cane.
61 Hard Rubber Cane.
62 Bamboo Cane, silver top.
63 Malacca Cane, silver and gold top, monogram G. J. C.
64 Bamboo Cane, carved top.
65 Birch Cane, silver.
66 Grapevine Cane, gold top, inscribed G. H. Barrett.
67 Malacca Cane, silver top.
68 Malacca Riding Cane, ivory head.
69 Pimento Cane.
70 Applewood Cane, curved top.
71 Bamboo Cane.
72 Another.
73 Hickory Cane.
74 Black Walnut Cane.
75 Hickory Cane.
76 Malacca Canes. 2 pieces.
77 Applewood Cane.
78 Ebonized Grapevine Cane
79 Cherry Wood Cane.
80 Applewood Cane.
81 Dog Wood Cane.
82 Hickory Cane, silver plate, inscribed "Capt. Gedney to J. W. Wallack."
83 Applewood Cane.
84 Bamboo Cane.
85 Black Walnut Cane.
86 Birch Canes. 2 pieces.
87 Assorted Canes. 6 pieces.
APPENDIX B

Plate LXXIII depicts the large group of technical personnel who were members of Wallack's company in 1888. Taken on the occasion of Lester Wallack's funeral, the photograph possibly includes Wallack's costumer, George Flannery, and other costuming assistants at that time. Abram Van Benschoten, Flannery's assistant for twenty-seven years, died three years earlier in 1885.
Stage Hands, House Staff
Wallack's Theatre
Lester Wallack's Funeral
September 10, 1888
VITA

Born in Sulphur Springs, Texas, on August 31, 1938, Charles Lee Dunham attended elementary schools in Texas' Rio Grande Valley before his family moved to Laredo, Texas. Receiving his high school diploma at the age of fifteen from Holding Institute, he enrolled in Laredo Junior College in 1954 and received the Associate in Arts degree in 1956. After transferring to Texas A&I University in Kingsville, Texas, he was graduated magna cum laude with a BA degree in speech, English, and secondary education in 1958. While teaching speech and English in South Texas high schools, he studied toward an MA degree in English during the summers and was graduated from Texas A&I in 1960. After nine years as a public school teacher, the last five at Lyford High School, he entered Louisiana State University in 1967 with a technical assistantship in costuming. After completing his residency, he accepted a position in 1970 as theatre director and costumer at Henderson State University in Arkadelphia Arkansas. He resigned an associate professorship in 1976 to return to LSU to complete his doctoral study.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Charles Lee Dunham

Major Field: Speech

Title of Thesis: "Costuming Practices at the Wallack Theatres, 1852-1881"

Examiners:

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: September 29, 1976