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The Equestrian Drama of the Nineteenth Century.

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THE EQUESTRIAN DRAMA OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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 English

by

Clat Anthony Girard, Jr.
Ph. B., Loyola University, 1931
M. A., Louisiana State University, 1933

1939
I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Dr. John Earle Uhler who suggested the subject for this dissertation and who so conscientiously guided me toward the completion of this work.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is (1) to define the equestrian drama; (2) to show why, when, and how the equestrian drama came into existence; (3) to treat as fully as possible its gradual development, until it reached its peak in popularity in 1864; (4) to reveal - by actual dramas and by references from the periodical literature to dramas - just what part the horses played; (5) to classify the equestrian pieces and give their common characteristics; (6) to discuss the effect the equestrian drama had on the legitimate drama; and finally, (7) to explain its decline.

Method of Investigation. Collections of nineteenth century dramas have been examined carefully for equestrian plays. In addition, the periodical literature of the period has been consulted for reports of productions of equestrian dramas. From these principal sources and from histories of the drama, memoirs, diaries, and other works, material has been gathered for a history of the equestrian drama at the Surrey and principally at Astley's, where it was most popular. Productions at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and at the minor theatres, other than Astley's and the Surrey, are treated when they are of particular significance. Thus, a rather complete history of the equestrian drama at the London theatres is given.

Conclusions. Drama is not equestrian merely by reason of the presence of horses; the drama, the result of conscious effort - either original or adapted - must be principally designed for the exploitation of horsemanship, trick riding, and equine sagacity.

The equestrian drama was a natural outcome of social, dramatic, and
political conditions existing at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The remotest ancestry can be traced back to 1668 when Pepys records that horses first appeared on the stage in Shirley's Hyde Park. Much later, in 1769, a real horse was brought on the stage at Covent Garden in a performance of Henry V. These early introductions of horses, however, were merely attempts at realism. It was not until 1788 that Charles Dibdin, manager at the Royal Circus (The Surrey), conceived the idea of staging equestrian spectacles. Horsemanship, which had been popular in London at the riding schools since 1770 thus turned into spectacles and pantomime. Dibdin's idea was borrowed in 1787 by Philip Astley, owner of Astley's Royal Amphitheatre, which is more familiarly known as Astley's. From 1798 to 1807 John C. Crosse, manager at the Surrey, collected the apparatus - storms, sieges, battles, conflagrations - which are always associated with equestrian dramas, although he rarely introduced a horse. Then, in 1807 John Astley wrote and produced The Brave Cossack; or Parfidy — Punished — for the use of horses as the chief attraction. Thereafter, the equestrian spectacles were so popular with the public and so profitable to the managers at the equestrian theatres that in 1811 the managers at Covent Garden and Drury Lane deserted the legitimate drama and turned to equestrian drama in order to recoup themselves from losses over the legitimate drama. Even the other minor theatres turned to the equestrian drama. Many managers succeeded Philip Astley, but the most famous, and probably the greatest equestrian performer of the century, was Andrew D'Arcy; moreover, it was he who ventured to produce a play, not a dumb-spectacle - J. H. Asherst's The Battle of Waterloo, April 19, 1824. Astley's had its most famous period under his
management from 1830 to 1841. Horsemanship, therefore, which had turned into spectacle and pantomime, gradually became melodrama and farce. But the public was already getting tired of equestrian plays after the passage of the Theatre Regulation Act in 1845, which granted freedom to the minor theatres to produce legitimate dramas; and it was only due to the ingenuity of William Cooke, who became manager at Astley's in 1853, that there was new material to be offered to the public: adaptations from Shakespeare, novels, operas, and current events. After Cooke, R. T. Smith is the last manager to give the audiences something novel and sensational. Adah Isaac Heneen, who played in the revival of Mazeppe in 1864, achieved permanent success in the title role as the female Mazeppe, even if her other equestrian performances were not so successful.

Throughout the nineteenth century every possible situation was used so that horses could be brought on the stage. There were processions, cavalcades, tournaments, jousts, battles, horse races, chariot races, fox hunts, and individual performances of horses running up mountains, up cataracts, jumping over streams, fording meats, and swimming in rivers.

Although there are at least twenty-five contemporary terms in alphabetical order, ranging from Barletta to Spectacle, that apply to equestrian drama, all of the dramas can be grouped in three main divisions according to treatment and setting: the romantic, the supernatural, and the domestic. All these types share common characteristics other than scenes with horses: (1) music always, and almost always singing and dancing; (2) stock characters of melodrama - hero and heroine, confidant and confidante, and villain; and (3) rapid and violent action.
The popularity of the equestrian drama, with its emphasis on the/speculative, the sensational, and principally on action, caused a decline
in the legitimate drama. The obvious reason is that the major houses,
Covent Garden and Drury Lane, deserted the legitimate drama and turned to
the large-scale production of equestrian spectacles.

Undoubtedly, the burlesque equestrian dramas and the rise in popu-
/larity of the legitimate drama after 1845 contributed somewhat to the decline
of the equestrian play. These reasons, however, should not be overemphasized.
Finally, there is something ironical in the manner in which the equestrian
drama worked itself out to its ultimate decline; that is, the very spectacular
qualities that made it so popular were the qualities that finally pulled on
the taste of the theatre-going public. Then too, with virtually every pos-
sibility for the spectacular exhausted, the equestrian drama, already senile,
simply passed away.
Although this dissertation is not concerned with the horse in art or in literature other than the drama, it should be observed that the horse has had a special and interesting place in the history of man. "Pegasus, the Trojan Horse, Alexander and Bucephalus, Nero and Invitatus, Mohammed's Al Burak, Scharb and Rustum, Napoleon's white charger, General Lee's Traveller, Tsar Salim, the Brazilian Horse God — in legend and history we find the horse revered and celebrated by man . . . . As still-life and as life in vigorous action, the horse has been significant in art since the first anonymous hunter scratched outlines on the wall of a cave. It has been portrayed more than any animal in existence — not even excepting that most faithful of man's companions, the dog . . . . As Plutarch says, "the horse alone shares man's wars and glories." No battle scene, no triumphal procession, no funeral is complete without him. No tale of history or mythology but is interwoven with him, and never is a great man more majestically enthroned than when mounted on a horse. In our search we find him on canvas, in etchings and prints, in marble, bronze and wood, in tapestries, enamels and silks, on coins, vases, crystals and ivories. We will see him on triumphal arches and on tombs, in palaces, fortresses and even in churches, for there is scarcely a great picture of 'Cavalry' or of the 'Adoration' from which he is absent. Indeed, we are confronted with the horse in many manifestations, painted and sculptured in so many styles and throughout so many centuries that the subject might well become a life study."

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1 "The Horse in Art: 2800 Years," The Art News, April 30, 1938, p. 15.
In the nineteenth century there was particular interest in equine art, and perhaps it is significant that both equine art and equestrian drama were popular at the same time. To mention a few of the names - in England: George Morland, John Ferneley, and Sir Edwin Henry Landseer; in France: Alfred De Breux, Francois Guillaume Le Paulle, Comte Henri de Montpesat, Philippe Ledieu, Adrien Marie, Rosa Bonheur, Degas, and Toulouse-Lautrec - is sufficient for us to see that some of the best artists of England and France devoted themselves principally to equine art. What influence the drama had on art, or the art had on drama, is not within the scope of this work. Undoubtedly some relationship exists, and it is my desire to do further research in this field.¹

Whether or not the equestrian drama was influenced by equine art, it is certain that the drama in the nineteenth century was much affected by social conditions, and by theatrical conditions which social development brought about. The legitimate or regular drama of the period reached the low-water mark; the illegitimate or irregular drama reigned supreme. Histories of the drama have not given enough emphasis to the irregular drama, nor have these histories treated adequately the specific types of illegitimate dramas. For the greater part of the century, plays had to be spectacular in order to have a wide appeal; the populace loved the sensational. Thus, there were plays with tigers, lions, elephants, monkeys, dogs, donkeys, and horses.

¹ The following books should be consulted:


Of the many kinds of plays dealing with animals, none was more popular than the equestrian drama. This drama as a type is not treated by Watson and Nicoll in their work in the drama of the nineteenth century; their works, as well as many others, merely mention the term equestrian drama without attempting to define it. M. Willson Disher is the only one who has attempted to treat the equestrian drama as a distinct type. His article "The Equestrian Drama" in The Nineteenth Century magazine, however, is not an adequate treatment of the subject. For the most part, his work consists simply in listing the plays without showing fully what part the horses actually played; moreover, he fails to give proper credit to the men, equestrian performers and managers, who were responsible for the rise and development of this unusual type of drama.

Equestrian drama embraced many types: spectacles, burlettas, melodramas, burlesques, farces, romantic dramas, extravaganzas, etc. It would be more nearly correct to say that these different types of plays were adapted to conform to the performance of horses; hence, with the emphasis placed on equine intelligence and on horsemanship, these types of plays became primarily equestrian dramas.

I propose, therefore, to offer a definition of the equestrian drama; to show when, how, and why the equestrian drama came into existence; to treat as fully as possible its gradual development, until it reached its peak in popularity in 1864; to show - by actual plays and by references from the periodical literature to plays - just what part the horse actually played; to classify the dramas and give their characteristics; to discuss the effect
the equestrian drama had on the legitimate drama; and finally, to explain its decline.

Because there is complete information in the Dictionary of National Biography about the lives of most of the equestrian managers, actors, and playwrights; and because there is full treatment of the histories of the equestrian theatres - Astley's and the Surrey - in Baker's The London Stage, vol. 2, I have used only such parts of biographies and histories that had some particular significance in connection with the equestrian play.

One or two things should be mentioned concerning the work I have undertaken. Nicoll in his hand-list of plays from 1600 to 1850 lists only two plays as equestrian dramas. The many collections of equestrian dramas - Ley's, Cumberland Minor, Dick's, and others - also fail to list many plays as equestrian dramas. Therefore, each play had to be carefully checked for its identity. And too, not all collections were available. I did not have access to the Lord Chamberlain's collection, the Larpent Collection of dramatic MSS., and the Harvard University Library collection of nineteenth century dramas. An adequate number of plays have been gathered in the work of this dissertation, however, and complete treatment has been made possible through these.

I have chosen to close this work with the revival in 1864 of the most popular equestrian drama, Hannaya. After 1864 there were performances of original plays, but for the most part there were revivals of earlier successes. I have limited my treatment of the equestrian drama to performances within the city of London, because those dramas that were successfully performed in London were repeated with equal success at the provincial theatres and

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amphitheatres. The same is true for the equestrian drama in America, where it was also popular. Amphitheatres were built in all the large cities of America—New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans—for the performances of equestrian dramas. In the near future, I plan to carry on my research to include a complete treatment of the equestrian drama in America.
CHAPTER I

Theatrical Monopoly in the Nineteenth Century

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, by virtue of the patent rights, Drury Lane and Covent Garden enjoyed the exclusive privilege of presenting what consequently was known as the "legitimate" drama, or, as it was sometimes called, the "regular" drama. All other theatres, except the Haymarket in the summer months, were by these restrictions obliged to represent only the "illegitimate," or "irregular," drama. Although the meaning of these terms was plain enough at the beginning of our period, by 1832 no one seemed clearly to understand them. In 1800 the "legitimate" drama meant, to all concerned, any form of spoken dialogue; whereas the "illegitimate" drama was entertainment in which nothing could be said without musical accompaniment. By 1832 perhaps the best definition that could be given was that suggested by Douglas Jerrold before the Select Committee appointed by Parliament in 1832 to report on the state of the drama. A play was "legitimate," he said, "when the interest of the piece is mental rather than physical."

The vagueness of the monopoly rights was greatly increased by the uncertainty of their legal status. These rights rested not only upon original patents but upon three other legal enactments of a confusing and contradictory nature. The patents granted by Charles II to Davenant and Killigrew in 1660 created an absolute monopoly, for the purpose of avoiding entertainments "that doe containe much matter of prophanation and scurrility."

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In favor of such as might "serve as instruction in humane life." In 1800, however, the status of the monopoly was by no means clear.¹

The government's interference with the drama, however, was generally based on three legal enactments separate from the patents. The first of these was the Licensing Act of 1737 (10 George II). It gave to the crown and the lord chamberlain unlimited powers of license and censorship within the confines of the city of Westminster, and as clearly limited their powers to that district. In practice, however, it was intended, and had been used, merely as a warrant to suppress minor theatres.² Then, when the many places of entertainment outside of Westminster were considered to be a menace, the second act of Parliament was passed in 1752. This law required that all places of amusement, whether in the city of Westminster or elsewhere, should be licensed, and it gave to local magistrates the authority to grant such licenses at their quarter sessions of the peace.³

This enactment gave rise to even more confusion than the Licensing Act. Many difficulties arose and the government finally informed the theatres that the magistrate's license was good only for performances of dancing, pantomime, and music, although the only bill making such a specific statement was defeated in Parliament the following year.⁴

Here, then, was a law permitting the spread of theatres all over the city at the discretion of the local magistrates. And as a result, during the first forty years of the nineteenth century there was no end of confusion

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¹ Dill., p. 21.
² Dill., p. 22.
³ Dill., p. 24.
⁴ Dill., p. 25.
caused by the difference of opinion between the chamberlain and the magis-
trates as to the exact meaning of the "illegitimate" drama. Perhaps to 
this conflict of authority more than to any other circumstance, the 
theatrical monopoly owed its downfall.¹

The last of the three laws (22 George III, c. 30) regulating the 
drama merely confirmed previous enactments and granted licensing privileges 
to magistrates all over the kingdom beyond a twenty-mile limit from London. 
This regulation does not concern us except as it greatly enlarged the 
sphere of the actor's profession, and gave employment to many companies 
thrown out of work at the London Theatres.²

After a conflict lasting until 1845, these laws were discussed and 
attacked and their worthlessness was revealed. In the meantime the dramatic 
profession was reduced to a condition just short of annihilation.³

In the give and take between the "majors" (the patent houses) and 
the "minors" (houses existing under the acts of parliament) lies much of 
the dramatic history of the nineteenth century.

There were many open defiances to the patent:

"... it is pleasant to recur to the infant incursions of 
the minors into the paths of the patentees. In 1784, old 
Astley took legal opinions as to presenting Billy Button; or, 
the Tailor riding to Brentford, in which there is usually 
some vulgar barter between Snip and the Ostler.

Tailor. Ostler, I can't get on the horse's back, he keeps 
maggling his tail so.
Ostler. Well, don't you know how to prevent that?
Tailor. Me, how should I?
Ostler. Why, you're a tailor -- stitch it down.

¹ Did., p. 25.
² Did., p. 26.
³ Did., p. 27.
A well-known puppet piece, called *The Broken Bridge; or The Insolent Carpenter*, was thought done, thought beyond the latitude of their licence.

The licence was what is yet granted to travelling bands, and called a 'trumpeter's licence.' Disbanded soldiers and Newly commissioned seamen at one time got such a protection as they set forth with their clarinets, flutes, or organs. Astley, who had served under General Elliott, obtained one with his discharge about 1795.

In this last production, a traveller stands on one side of a river, a carpenter on the other: the half-arch of a broken bridge is between them. The dialogue, which was musical, commenced thus:

Traveller. 'Hoi, halloa! Master Carpenter, how shall I get over?
   Fol de rol de ride.
Carpenter. (smoking his pipe) The ducks and the geese they do swim over.
   Fol de rol de ride.

These 'diverting dialogues,' as they were termed, delighted the grandsams of the present generation, and attracted crowds to the incommodeous buildings then erected by Astley. Some years afterwards, he obtained a patent for an amphitheatre in Dublin; and a letter is extant from a person in a high official situation in the Irish government, stating 'that, after mature deliberation, it was found that dialogues formed no part of equestrian performances, and therefore could not,' &c. In Paris, where Astley went annually, the Lieutenant-General de Police held him so closely to the terms of the permission granted him by Louis XVI., that he would not suffer even tumbler to appear on a little temporary stage; but Astley defeated him, by fastening a platform on the backs of sixteen horses, and letting his voltigeurs perform there! At Dublin, he crept on year after year, until, in 1792, he was presenting musical farces, which, once sanctioned there, he transported to his amphitheatre in London. What was permitted to him could not but be conceded to his rival at the Royal Circus, (now Surrey,) and his contemporary, Hughes, at Sadler's Wells. Hence arose, through non-intervention, the minor drama.'

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1 *New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 47 (May, 1836) p. 228 f.
The licence to Astley seems comprehensive enough, and was a contribution entwining the patents that was going on steadily. It ran:

"I do hereby give leave and licence unto Philip Astley, Esq., to have performed, for his benefit, at the Olympic and musical Pavilion in Newcastle Street, in the Strand, within the liberties of Westminster, the entertainments of music, dancing, burlettas, spectacles, pantomimes, and horsemanship, for one year from the 8th day of July, 1812, to the 8th day of July, 1813. Given under my hand and seal this 1st day of July, 1812, in the fifty-second year of His Majesty's reign.

(Chamberlain) Ingram Hertford. (L.S.)"\(^1\)

The licence was later limited to the period between Michaelmas and Easter.\(^2\)

Then Astley passed to the Surrey, where he performed "equestrian" dramas of an exciting kind.\(^3\)

Finally, finding all doors closed against a legal satisfaction, the ambitious minor lessees bent all their energies in another direction. One course remained open, that of an evasive interpretation of the term "burletta." This course offered but slight hope, but in the end it proved the way to victory.\(^4\)

The term "burletta" held the center of the stage in all the quarrels between the majors and minors. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the term had come to mean nothing but a play which could safely be given at a minor, or unpatented theatre.\(^5\)


\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Watson, op. cit., p. 31.

Many definitions of the term were given by lawyers and playwrights; nevertheless, confusion reigned in the minds of spectators, managers, and officials. In spite of this confusion, it is fairly easy to see how the extension of the term began and to what it led. In origin the burletta was not a minor or "illegitimate" type at all, but had begun in the patent theatres of the late eighteenth century. Minor theatres were rising, and at first these specialized in the "spectacle," with plentiful music and printed scrolls for the text, but soon men like Dibdin and Astley tried the experiment of presenting musical pieces with dialogue. These were simply the "legitimate" burlettas taken over by the minors because apart from the airs, the whole was in recitative and consequently, not spoken, but sung.\(^1\) We can see that the minors did not long delay action. Since their object was to present spoken drama, and since the law insisted that they give only "burlettas," very clearly then, the term "burletta" must be extended as to include the spoken drama. But how? Long usage had made its meaning clear. Dancing, pantomime, and music, without spoken dialogue, both in popular acceptation and in legal procedure, constituted a "burletta." What the orthodox "burletta" at this time was, we may learn from specimens preserved for us in the two volumes of *Circusiana* by John C. Gross.\(^2\)

Suffice it to say at present that they consist almost wholly of dumb show, song, and brief passages of dialogue evidently meant to be chanted as recitative to musical accompaniment.

Elliston, manager at the Surrey, before 1809 pursued a new method of attack; instead of having the dialogue in recitative, he simply had the

\(^{1}\) *Miscell., op. cit.*, p. 158.

characters speak the lines to the "tinkling of the piano and the jingle of the rhyme."\(^1\) Eicoll remarks that "no doubt the very first attempts in this style were adaptations of comedies and farces, but continued success led to boldness, and serious plays were seized upon."\(^2\) Watson writes that "Elliston's 'burlettas' were a doggerel rewriting of the original plays, accompanied by a tinkling piano, and presented with much more care in scenery and costume than was usual at this time on the 'illegitimate' stages."\(^3\)

He also states that "after 1803 . . . almost all 'burlettas' that were not strictly burlesques took the form of melodramas, especially those of an equestrian or spectacular nature."\(^4\)

Of the many types of burlettas - spectacle type, doggerel type, and the like - the spectacle type, such as *The Blood Red Knight*, an equestrian spectacle, was, as we shall see in the next chapter, very popular.

From 1809 to 1812 the only question to be raised about a "burletta" concerned the amount of music that must accompany the speaking of the doggerel verses. There was apparently no definite change made in this respect, but probably the "tinkling piano" became less and less audible, and its chords less frequent as time went on. Sir William Brougham testified to the parliamentary committee, in 1834, that to his knowledge *Othello* had been performed as a "burletta," with an accompaniment that consisted of chords struck on a piano *every five minutes* and quite insubstantial at that.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Eicoll, op. cit., p. 139, quotes from the *Theatrical Inquisitor*, October, 1812.
\(^3\) Watson, op. cit., p. 23 f.
Furthermore, the restriction of "burlettas" to three acts served as another means of distinction. That this ruling became firmly established appears from many statements made by writers and statements found in periodicals.¹

The minors had just cause to complain. They could not perform "legitimate" dramas, but the majors helped themselves even more liberally to the kinds of drama that were properly the possession of the minors. For instance, the Theatres Royal produced equestrian spectacles on a grand scale and tried to out-do the minors, Astley's, and the Royal Circus. This contest of infringing on each other's rights continued throughout the century.

Strictly speaking, the monopoly was a farce; but the majors successfully defended their rights. Later, they realized that they themselves were suffering from the monopoly, and they soon became as loud as the minors in their cry for liberty and justice.² It was not until 1843, however, that the inevitable occurred. The Theatre Regulation Act, granting freedom of the theatres, was passed almost without a dissenting voice. It received the royal sanction on August 22 of that year.³

Watson discusses fully the effect of this act on the legitimate drama,⁴ but we can infer to what extent it affected the equestrian drama. It is true that the regular drama was in a static condition during the years 1800-1843, and it was not until after the passage of the act that new forces, long held in check, were loosed to help revive the legitimate drama.

¹ Ibid., p. 30 ff.
² Ibid., p. 49.
³ Ibid., p. 49. Also, see Appendix A for a memorandum on Theatres, dated March 12, 1844.
⁴ Ibid., p. 49 ff.
But we are concerned with the equestrian drama, and the question is: how did the act affect the equestrian drama? Its effect was not direct. When the new forces of realism at work under Bouicault and Robertson began to be felt, then the legitimate drama gradually came into its own. And with the revival of the legitimate drama there was a consequent decline in the illegitimate drama. But the time element is all important. The equestrian drama was popular until 1865, that is, shortly after the revival of Maxeppe in 1864. By that time, though, the horse spectacles had practically exhausted themselves; revivals in a more spectacular way of early successes had to be performed in order to appeal to the audiences.

Hence, the decline of the equestrian drama may be attributed to causes from within, rather than causes from without. It so happened that the rise of the new legitimate drama almost coincided with the decline of the equestrian drama. Not that the equestrian did not continue to be acted. It continued even to the last decades of the century, but the popularity was already on the wane. The audiences had been thrilled to the extreme when Neksea appeared as the female Maxeppe; they had already seen the wonderful processions, cavalades, battles, tournaments, the gorgeous settings and costuming. Furthermore, they had had entertainment and amusement that appealed to the senses; they were ready for intellectual entertainment, and the new legitimate drama satisfied that requirement.

Undoubtedly, the burlesque equestrian dramas and the rise in popularity of the legitimate drama after 1843 contributed somewhat to the decline of the equestrian play. These reasons, however, should not be overemphasized.
Finally, there is something ironical in the manner in which the equestrian drum worked itself out to its ultimate decline; that is, the very spectacular qualities that made it so popular were the qualities that finally pulled on the taste of the theater-going public. Then too, with virtually every possibility for the spectacular exhausted, the equestrian drum, already senile, simply passed away.
CHAPTER II

Rise and Development of the Equestrian Element

Horses have appeared on the stage since the time of the Restoration. In his diary, Pepys records, "After dinner to the King's playhouse, to see an old play of Shyly's, called 'Hide Parke,' the first day acted; where horses are brought upon the stage..."\(^1\) The date of this production is July 11, 1669. Montague Summers mentions this same quotation from Pepys, but he adds, "mention has been made of the realism of the Restoration Theatre, and even Equestrian Spectacle here had its remotest ancestry, as we learn from Pepys..."\(^2\) The next mention of the appearance of a horse on the stage is in Wyndham's *Annals of Covent Garden Theatre*: "Four days afterwards (September 18, 1669) Henry V was performed, and a real horse brought on the stage for the Champion in the coronation scene."\(^3\) As Summers says correctly, the remotest ancestry of the equestrian spectacle can be traced back to the Restoration.

Few people, however, realize that in the nineteenth century, equestrian spectacles were in great vogue on the stages throughout England, France, and America. Furthermore, they remained popular for many years, and only toward the end of the century was their appeal on the decline. A study of the rise and development of equestrian drama is indeed interesting.

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It must be clearly understood at the outset, however, that drama is not equestrian merely by reason of the presence of horses; the drama, the result of conscious effort - either original or adapted - must be principally designed for the exploitation of horsemanship, trick riding, and equine sagacity.

Two riding schools were popular in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Philip Astley's Amphitheatre of Arts, opened in 1770, became familiarly known as Astley's. In opposition to Astley, Charles Hughes opened his amphitheatre in 1771. Twelve years later, he and Charles Dibdin entered into partnership and erected a building costing 15,000 pounds, which they opened under the name of the Royal Circus. Each had not only a ring, but a stage, so that when the scenes within the ring had ended, the performance could continue with spectacles and musical pieces behind the footlights. Neither Astley nor Hughes was sufficiently enterprising, however, to develop a story concurrent with equestrian showmanship.

In 1788, Charles Dibdin writes:

"Horsemanship was at that time very much admired, and I conceived that if I could divest it of its blackguardism it might be made an object of public consequence; I proposed, therefore, that it should embrace all the dexterity and reputation of ancient chivalry; that tournaments, running at the ring, and other feats of equestrian celebrity, should be performed. I proposed to have a stage, on which might be represented spectacles, each to terminate with a joust or tilting match, or some other grand object, so managed as to form a novel and striking coup de théâtre, and that the business of the stage and ring might be united."¹

Furthermore, Baker says, "... the equestrian drama did not originate at Astley's, but was borrowed by that house from the Surrey (i.e., the Royal Circus)."¹ E. B. Watson makes the following pertinent remarks:

"The association of horsemanship with the drama was contagious... and it was so often blamed for the decline of the drama that it is not superfluous to repeat here what Baker quotes from Dibdin concerning the origin of this form of amusement."²

From the above statements, therefore, it is obvious that the idea for equestrian dramas originated with Charles Dibdin at the Surrey in 1762.

For bridging the gap between stage and ring, W. Wilson Disher in his article "The Equestrian Drama" gives credit to Dalpini, a clown and designer of spectacles, who became manager of the Royal Circus in 1793:

"His (Dalpini's) resourceful brain first conceived the idea of joining stage to ring by bridging the orchestra which had hitherto been a dividing gulf. By this means he caused a procession to march round in a circle: cars bearing groups representing Europe, Asia, Africa, and America were drawn by horses, leopards, tigers, and other beasts. He also represented a stag hunt with horsemen and horsewomen and a 'real' stage."³

These early ingenuities, however, came to nothing. Now, unless Dibdin's own statement, quoted by Baker and Watson, is to be doubted, it is obvious that Disher is wrong. Dibdin, and not Dalpini, prepared the way for the equestrian drama. And it was not until 1787 that Astley borrowed Dibdin's idea of setting off his riding with a burletta.⁴

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¹ Dib., p. 220.
² Watson, op. cit., p. 69.
⁴ Watson, op. cit., p. 71, footnote 1.
John C. Gross became manager of the Royal Circus in 1798. In an introduction to his two-volume collection of ballets, spectacles, melodrama, etc., *Circaea*, Gross says:

"The late elegant Theatre ... was built by subscription in the year 1788, (It was opened I understand in 1781, but without a licence), opened the year following under the joint direction of Messrs. Hughes and Dibdin, with Equestrian Performances, Ballets of Action, Dances, Burlettas, and Pantomime, and crowned with great encouragement."¹

Furthermore, Baker states that in 1797 burlettas and pantomime were added to the program at Astley's, which consisted of feats of horsemanship, tumbling, and performances of dogs. Twice destroyed by fire – in 1794 and 1803 – "the new house opened on Easter Monday, 1804, with, for the first time an equestrian spectacle, though he (Philip Astley) was not the originator of this kind of dramatic exhibition, for which the house was thereafter to be famous."²

Decastre says that W. Davis rebuilt the theatre after the fire of 1803 and that "it was during their coalescence – in 1804 Messrs. Handy, Parker, Grussman and Smith and Davis were admitted to take a half share of the concern with Astley, junior – that the 'horse' spectacles were first produced on their stage."³

The difficulty in those days was to construct a drama that needed no dialogue, for it must be remembered that words were not to be spoken.

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on the stages of any theatre other than the Theatres Royal, Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Gross met this difficulty. When gestures were inadequate to express a turn of plot, one character would hand to another a scroll bearing a statement.

An examination of Circusiana is proof that Gross invented the model for horse spectacles, even though he rarely introduced a horse. From 1798 to 1806 Gross brought out a series of spectacles founded on popular romances or on the adventures of such heroes as Sir Francis Drake.\(^1\) In The Magic Flute, one of his first pieces, the "Horse Turk" reared and seized a streaming banner, which it tore down from the rampart walls, during the course of a grand tournament.\(^2\) Then The Cloud King; or Magic Rose was performed for the first time on Monday, June 20, 1806, at the Royal Circus. Since it is a dumb-spectacle that might be suited to the equestrian element, it would be best to analyze it rather fully. On the title page the author says that it is a melo-dramatic tale of enchantment principally founded on the grand and superb ballet of Zemire and Azor, blended with the poetical tale of the Cloud King written by W. S. Lewis.

The tale has all the characteristics of the typical equestrian spectacle: music, dancing, recitative, foreign and exotic settings, scrolls to show a turn in the plot, and horses. In the majority of early spectacles, therefore, the stage directions take the place of the dialogue, which was kept at a minimum. From the description of the scenery we may see how

\(^1\) Fisher, op. cit., p. 631.
\(^2\) Ibid.
unnecessary further dialogue was and how Croes adapted the stage for the
use of the horse as an integral part of the drama. To quote from the play:

"Scene V. A dark Wood, through which, from the situation
of the trees, appear a variety of intricate
avenues, backed by a maze labyrinth—a most
tremendous storm, intermingled with arêtes of distress,
vivid flashes of lightning, and tremendous peals of
thunder, &c. &c.

In the intervals of the storm Scander is seen on his
Horse, which attacked by an angry Lion, as it crosses the
stage, emits fire from his nostrils, followed by Cymballo
on foot in the greatest agitation—a dreadful crash is
heard, and Cymballo re-enters, indicating he has lost
his master, and that he must inevitably have been dashed
to atoms—a distant moan is heard—Cymballo starts—
efforts up a short prayer and rushes off—the moan is
repeated, and he returns with the Merchant breathless,
and wounded by his fall; on being brought forward he faints
in Cymballo’s arms, who gives him a cordial—he revives
—they are attacked by an immense Serpent, which they at
length destroy; and, the atmosphere appearing lighter,
thanking Heaven for their deliverance, the Travellers, by
the light of the Moon, prepare to renew their journey,
but are suddenly prevented by a torrent of rain—in
rain, they endeavour to shelter themselves, the trees
they select for that purpose being struck by thunder-bolts,
and torn awander—at length a chaos suddenly appears,
discovering a distant illuminated portal, leading to a
splendid Palace, richly adorned with festal lamps—the
Tempest still continuing, the Merchant resolves to take
shelter there—Cymballo, trembling, solicits him to
refrain; but, drawing his sword, he compels him to pre-
cede him, and they approach the Portico.

E. E. The Attendants of the Cloud King are occasionally
visible during this scene, with Talismanic power
giving birth to the storm, and impelling the
attacks of the Lion, Serpent, &c. 1

1 Croes, J. G., "The Cloud King; or Magic Rose," in Circusiana,
vol. 1, London, 1809, Scene 1. (Since the play consists of twelve short
scenes, references will be made only to the scene.)
The quotation given above is the only reference to the equestrian element in the entire play; it is sufficient, however, to show just what the equestrian element is. Miscell makes a very pertinent statement with regard to such lengthy stage directions: "Naturally, as the writers of melodrama had to turn out scores of these pieces to make a living, and as stage directions are easier to write than dialogue, this action-element was not only retained but increased. The resultant effects on dramatic composition may well be realized."\(^1\) Whenever a dramatist comes to a really difficult situation he switches off his dialogue and turns to the italics and capitals of stage direction. This is not only true for the great majority of melodramas, but also for every equestrian drama. As we examine the various plays throughout this chapter, we shall notice this.

Moreover, with regard to the scrolls, two excerpts will suffice to show how they were used:

"A messenger, pale and breathless, rushes on, displaying the following scroll:

A DISASTER. STORM HAS SHATTERED YOUR SHIPS AND DESTROYED YOUR FORTUNE.\(^2\)

and again,

"The scroll contains the following:

A RICH AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED LOST, IS SAFE ARRIVED.\(^3\)

Lending songs, recitatives, and dances provide an essential element in these dumb-spectacles. Beautiful settings supply the necessary element of the spectacular, as for instance

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1 Miscell, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 102.
2 Scene 1.
3 Scene 3.
"Aerial Palace of the Cloud King, erected on luminous skirted clouds — a splendid throne in the center."\(^1\)

or

"The splendid eastern Garden, and Palace of Prince Azor, in which is introduced a superb representation of the

ICHIRAGAI

or

Feast of Tulips.

A Grand Procession,

and

Dance Takes Place;\(^2\)

Throughout the twelve scenes which comprise this dumb-spectacle the realistic and the romantic are integrally united. The supernatural elements, the talismanic power of the Cloud King, the foreign and aerial setting, foreign characters - such as Zorayda, Elmira, the sisters of Selim - are definitely romantic elements; the introduction of the horse, however, is an attempt at realism.

"While Cross cannot be called the begetter of equestrian drama, he undoubtedly collected the apparatus of storms, battles, sieges, and conflagrations which were always associated with this species of entertainment. Unless he had demonstrated how to arrange plots which would string these portents together with dramatic suspense, the authors of horse spectacles would not have so quickly won the public's money and

\(^{1}\) Scene 4.

\(^{2}\) Scene 12.
applause."¹ In the story, Anor, a Persian Prince, who has been transformed into a monster by the Cloud King, finally wins Salima when she pities him, thereby changing him into the Prince.

From 1800 to 1806, twenty-one plays by Cress are listed by Nicoll.² All of these, however, are not equestrian spectacles. These, of course, were repeatedly played; and Cress is but one of the writers who supplied the public with such novel entertainment.

Disher writes that meanwhile Astley's efforts were becoming well-known. On June 8, 1800, in the pantomime of Quixote and Sancho; or Harlequin Warrior, "two squadrons of horse, mounted by warriors clad in gold and silver armour," performed various evolutions of ancient warfare.³ John Astley, the son, was very active in the production of spectacles. On July 27, 1803, John Astley brought to the amphitheatre a French company in Knights of the Sun; or, Love and Danger. Their visit raised the standard of the spectacles.

The Fair Slave; or, the Moors and the Africans was produced on May 19, 1806. In this spectacle there is a procession of Africans and their captive Moors on camels and real horses. Both of these spectacles are of unknown authorship.⁴ These early ventures, although containing the germ, were not primarily equestrian dramas.

In 1807, John Astley invented, wrote and produced, a story that called for the use of horses as the chief attraction and equipped his stage with a
new invention for dividing the stage into platforms, which could be raised or sunk to varying levels, and crossed by a 'devil’s bridge' for surpassing Gross’s practicable scenery. The spectacle was entitled The Brave Cossack; or, Perfidy Punished. 1 "Galiette, formerly a member of Gross’s company, played the same part — a certain Count Satoffo, whom Prince Palotinski (Mr. Hengler) had entrusted with his son. Enter Satoffo, returning from the chase; in Belusa (Mrs. Parker) he meets his doom. To test her love he tells her that the prince’s son is dead. But when she meets perfidious Cartoff she hears that the boy is well. Annoyed by the brave Cossack’s lie, she persuades Cartoff, under the promise of her hand, to kill the boy in earnest and blame Satoffo. This he attempts, but a hermit (Laurent, the clown) comes to the rescue. At this point two more characters complicate matters, in order to introduce a battle and a siege. After Mr. Hengler has triumphed, Satoffo is tried, the hermit produces the son, and Mrs. Parker departs swearing vengeance on all parties. This leads to ‘tremendous warfare,’ which is welcomed by the brave Cossack as a chance to vindicate his honor.” 2

That, no matter how dull it may now appear, was the delight of the day. Among the spectators was Lady Bessborough, who wrote to Lord Granville:

"Think of my going to Astley’s last night. There is a battle on the stage with real horses galloping full speed, and fighting to a beautiful white light like day dawn, that is quite beautiful, and like one of Bourignon’s pictures animated." 3

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1 Ibid., p. 656. Nicoll does not record this play.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
The next adventure was much more prosperous. *The Blood Red Knight*¹ by J. H. Amherst, in the season of 1810, had a run of 175 nights and brought the proprietors a profit of 18,000 pounds. The plot was simpler, turning on nothing more than the attempts of the Blood Red Knight to seduce Isabella, wife of his brother, Alphonso the Crusader. Alphonso returns, is defeated once or twice, and calls in the soldiery, when, to quote the bills' promise:

"The Castle is taken by storm, the surrounding River is covered with boats filled with Warriors, while the Battlements are strongly contested by the Horse and Foot Guards. Men and Horses are portrayed slain and dying in various directions, while other soldiers and horses are emerged (sic) in the River, forming an effect totally new and unprecedented in this or any Country whatever, and terminating in the Total DEFEAT OF THE BLOOD RED KNIGHT."²

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¹ In the *Memoirs of J. D'Onaste*, p. 100, this play is referred to as having been written by Mr. George Male. The copy of the play examined is from the Harvard College Library. On the title page is the following:

First performed in New York, on Monday evening, August 4th, 1822, under the direction of Mr. Blythe of Astley's Amphitheatre, London, and published from the original manuscript by his kind permission.

The name of the author does not appear on the title page; however, the name Chapman is written in ink on the title page and the name Barrymore, V. is written in pencil just above the dramatic personæ on the following page. Missell does not list the play under Chapman or Barrymore; he lists the play as follows:

Amherst, J. H.

*Spectacle*  *The Blood-red Knight; or, the Fatal Bridge* (*R. A. M. 25/4/1810*)

That is, the play was performed at the Royal Amphitheatre (Astley's) on Monday, April 25, 1810.

² Quoted from *Disher*, *op. cit.*., p. 634.
A closer examination of the play itself will yield the following equestrian elements:

"A March is heard, the Blood-Red Knight's party, both horse and foot, are seen crossing the mountains; all the Peasants come on from the back of the stage, and are anxiously viewing the Cavalcade. A party of infantry enter and range on the stage, as a troop of horse do immediately on the opposite. The male and female peasants come down the stage during the symphony of the Chorus -- the Blood-Red Knight dashes across the mountains on horseback, full speed, and arrives on the stage while they sing the following chorus:

**CHORUS.**

Behold the brave Sir Rowland
Come conquering from the fight,
His sires of old were firm and bold,
And he's call'd the Blood-Red Knight.

Let the brazen trumpet sound
His triumph in the fight,
In songs of praise your voices raise
To the fame of the Blood-Red Knight."\(^1\)

and again,

**LAST SCENE.**

"A Bridge approaching the Castle, Dyke, Battlements, &c. Alphonso, Frederick, Edgar and their party enter, horse and foot, and give directions for the different parties to attack the Castle generally, for which purpose they quit the stage. Horse and foot are seen in action on the Bridge -- the Castle being forced, the action becomes general on the stage, ramparts, water and Bridge. Some of the guards are immerged in the water, surrounded by friends and foes -- the Castle is at length seen on fire in several places, while the dead and dying, both men and horses, are seen confusedly mixt together. The Blood-Red Knight has a furious combat with Alphonso, who

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\(^1\) Act I, Scene 1, p. 3 r.
is disarmed by him, and at the moment the Red Knight is about to cleave him down with his sword, Isabella enters and seeing Alphonso’s danger she shoots Sir Rowland, who falls and expires. A most interesting picture is formed by Isabella, Alphonso, and the Child, and the curtain falls amid the shouts of the victorious troops of Alphonso.

Finis”1

This spectacle proved to be one of the most popular produced during the nineteenth century; it was played year after year with unequalled success. Let us examine one of the typical reports:

"We saw the Blood Red Knight a few evenings since, and were highly gratified with the ingenuity and effect of that celebrated spectacle. . . . the last scene is a matchless specimen of scenic magnificence; the fortress is assailed by a body of horse and foot, and similarly defeated. The assailants ford the moat, gallop over the breaking bridge, from which a party of their opponents are precipitated into the water, and having fired the castle, an impressive tableau is formed by conquered men and dying horses, which, in spite of our admiration, we are unable to describe . . . ."2

Baker, in the work already cited, says that the young Astley in 1817 relinquished his government in favor of Davis, who had been in partnership with him some years, and the theatre was rechristened Davis’s Amphitheatre; furthermore, under Davis the equestrian spectacles were produced on a more extensive scale. One, The Blood Red Knight, brought in 18,000 pounds to the treasury. I am inclined to agree with Baker that the profit was made in 1810 and not in 1817. It is my opinion that the monetary

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1 Act II, Scene 8, p. 23 f.
2 The Theatrical Inquisitor, September, 1817, p. 237.
success of these equestrian dumb-shows was the main reason why the patent
theatre filled material from the miners and tried to outdo them in
equestrian spectacles.

In 1811 the managers of Covent Garden revived Colman's Blue Beard with unequalled splendor as an equestrian drama. The following remarks are to be found in the 1825 Oxenbury edition of the play:

"Strongly, however, are we inclined to tolerate Melo-dramas, and convinced as we are that they might be rendered in the highest degree interesting and instructive, we have no intention to assert that 'Blue Beard,' considered with a view to its literary character only, is either the one or the other. The poetry, we admit, is not of a very high order; the puns are vile, the sentiments stale, and the language in general bombastic. Yet, the author, who had little in view beyond manufacturing a convenient vehicle for the display of gorgeous scenery and showy processions, has affected his intention with a cleverness, which many who may think mealy of the performance, would find some difficulty in equaling; and, what probably was to him but the pastime of an evening, has on numerous succeeding evenings imparted gratification to thousands . . . . . . "Blue Beard" did not owe its success to the charms of the dialogue, but to the magnificent scenery, the brilliant decorations, the music, the singing, the dancing, and the thousand other fascinations which the dialogue served to introduce . . . . We ought not to close this article without advertsing to the splendid revival of the piece, at Covent Garden, in 1811, with some alternations in the catastrophe. On this occasion, living horses were for the first time exhibited on the stage of an English Patent Theatre; and, in lieu of the pasteboard steeds and elephants, which had previously been seen, Selim led a well-appointed troop of cavalry to the attack of Abonelique's castle. The novelty was so much relished, that it gave rise to the composition of several other pieces calculated for the introduction of equestrian exhibitions."

The plot is the simple triangle involving Abonelique, a wealthy

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1 Duren, Annals of the English Stage, 2 vols. N. Y., W. J. Widdleton, 1865, vol. 2, p. 386, remarks: "The season was rendered memorable and profitable by the run of 'Blue Beard' and 'Timour the Tartar,' with horses. Before these Shakespeare, and all other of the tuneful brethren gave way."
conjuror, his forthcoming marriage to Fatima, and the rescue of Fatima by
Salim, her lover, from the castle, just as Abemalique is about to kill
her because she has been too curious: she opens the door to the secret
apartment in the Blue Chamber and finds out about his past evil deeds.

In the Cymbal edition of the play, horses are not referred to in
the stage directions; an eye-witness report of the play, however, would be
much better for our purpose, since we can discover how the horses per-
formed and what was the reaction of the people to those performing horses:

"The production indeed is unworthy of criticism, and would
not have been noticed in this paper but for a singular
novelty that has lately been added to the representation.
That actors should make beasts of themselves is no new
thing; but the tragic mask of our stage, Mr. Kemble,
must turn beasts into actors; and accordingly, after having
had dog actors at Drury-lane, and jack-ass actors (emblematic
wagons) at Sadler's Wells, we are now presented with
horse actors at 'classical' Covent-Garden. These pre-
npossessing palfreys appear to be about twenty in number,
and come prancing on the stage into rank and file with as
much orderliness as their brethren at the Horse Guards,
-facing directly to the spectators, and treating them with
a few preparatory cavortings, indicative of ardour; so
that when the riders drew their swords, the appearance is
not a little formidable, and seems to threaten a charge
into the pit. After this, and a few picturesque gallopings
over a bridge, they do not appear till the last scene; when
all their powers are put forth, and Blue Beard and his myrmidons
utterly eclipsed. Firstly, the aforesaid gallopings
are repeated over mound and bridge, till every steed has
reappeared often enough to represent ten or a dozen others;
then one or two of them get interestingly entangled in a
crowd; then a drawbridge, breaking down, is scaled by three
or four at full gallop, which calls down the thunder of the
galleries; — then a duel ensues between a couple of the
horsemen, of whose desperate blows the reader may have a
lively idea, if he has ever seen the impassioned images
that top the hour on St. Dunstan's. The excessive politeness,
indeed, manifested by these duellists, and the delicate
attention they pay to each other's convenience, reminds one
of the celebrated battle of Fontenoy, where the officers of
the French and English guards coming together, pulled off their hats to each other, and mutually insisted upon giving up the honour of the first fire. The only difference is that the consistency of the thing, the *qualis ab imcepto*, was not so well kept up in the latter instance. Lastly, comes the grand display, the dying scene; and here it is difficult to say which is more worthy of admiration, the sensibility or science of those accomplished quadrupeds. When I saw then, there seemed to be but three who performed this part of the ceremony, and it may safely be asserted, that never did horses die with so much resignation. If I knew their names (let me suppose they are Twitcher, Twirley, and Whitensos), I should say that Twitcher and Twirley, who were parties in the duel, had most emulation, and Whitensos must conciliate. The two former seemed to be aware that they were in battle; and latter manifested an indifference to his situation, almost amounting to disdain. Twitcher and his antagonist were, if I may so speak, about the pitch of Brunton and Claremont, easy but majestic, and amably severe; but the presence of mind displayed by Whitensos was equal, at least, to that of Liston. Lord Grizzle himself, in his dying moments, could not surpass his philosophic preparation and finished devise. While the other two were occupied with their own rencontre, he entered the stage with as much indifference as if nothing had happened, though it was more evident that he had received his mortal wound, for after a little meditation he began to die, bending his knees one after the other, like a camel stooping to be loaded, and then turning upon his side and becoming motionless, just as a human actor does upon his back. The other horses, by this time, are disposed also in their respective attitudes; the dismounted warriors are seen fighting across their bodies; — drums, trumpets, smoke, and confusion complete the effect; and the close of the scene lets loose a thousand exclamation in praise of the new performers.

Joking apart, it is no doubt interesting to see of what so noble an animal as the horse is capable; and it is still more agreeable to be relieved from those miserable imitations of him, which some beating time on the Stage with human feet, and with their hind knees the wrong way. If it were possible to present the public with such exhibitions and at the same time to cherish a proper taste for the Drama, they might even be hailed as a genuine improvement in representation; for if men, and not puppets, act men, there seems to be no dramatic reason why horses should not act horses. But there are always two very strong objections, staring this kind of novelty in the face, — one respecting the public taste, and the other the poor beasts themselves. The success of such exhibitions is not only allowed to be a mark of corrupted taste with
regard to better things, but it materially helps to produce that corruption. They are two powerful a stimulus to the sense of the common order of spectators, and take away from their eyes and ears all relish for more delicate entertainments. The managers and the public thus corrupt each other; but it is the former who begin the infection by building these enormous theatres, in which a great part of the spectators must have noise and show before they can hear or see what is going forwards. In time these spectators learn to like nothing else; and then the managers must administer to their depraved appetite, or they cannot get rich. Are these the persons to cry out against the creation of a new and smaller theatre?

But the animals themselves are to be considered, with regard to their comfort. A sprightly horse has a profusion of graceful and active movements; and it is his nature perhaps to be fond of a certain kind of exertion. He delights, when in health and vigour, in securing the fields; and soals, we are told, an amorous ardour in the race; but then the fields and the race-ground are proper places for him; the turf invites him to activity, and the open air breathes health and pleasure into his veins. On the other hand, it will take a great deal to persuade a rational spectator at the theatre, that the closeness of a stage, the running round and round, and above all, the misery of absolute death, do not give the animal considerable pain, and have not cost a hundred times as much in the training. It is a common observation respecting these horses at Covent-Garden, that in galloping about the stage, they exhibit a manifest constraint and timidity; and when they pretend to come in at full speed, have a jumping and feeble motion resembling that of rabbits. We all know by what merciless practices, bears and camels are taught to dance; and any body who has been at a country fair, and seen the wretched maid in which dogs and birds are worried through their feats, will be slow to believe that the docility, necessary for such purposes, is obtained by good usage. — The Arabs, it is true, and other nations, whose uncivilized stage brings the animal and his master into familiarity from their birth, can teach their horses to perform a thousand surprising feats with no other means than habit and kind treatment; but this is a very different case; — the sphere of action is different, and the animal is put upon no other action than it is natural and pleasant to him to perform. The Managers of Covent-Garden should know, that what is said by many, and thought by most people, of the training of these horses, is not favourable to the humanity of their masters; and till there is some explicit statement on the subject, it will be as difficult to think otherwise, as it is impossible to applaud their introduction at all. —

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If there was criticism, there was also much fun-making. The manag-
ners of some of the other theatres wished to ride the train to prosperity
because of the popularity of the horse spectacles and, not being in a
position to rival the spectacles produced at the Theatres Royal and the
equestrian houses, turned to burlesque.

Here is a piece brought forward at the Lyceum. Quadrupeds, or The
Manager's Last Kick, produced on July 18, 1811, is a revival of the bur-
lesque tragedy of the Tailors, introduced by a scene between the manager
and his creditors, to whom he announces his intention of bringing quadru-
peps on his stage by way of foreign hope, in order to be enabled to bear
up against the increasing losses occasioned him by similar exhibitions on
the part of a rival theatre. "This piece, which was written, I believe,
not by Poole, as the prelude tells us, but by an anonymous correspondent
of his, is a burlesque account of a dispute between the master tailors and
their journeymen, which terminates in a general battle; and this battle
is made a good vehicle for the introduction of mules, zebras, and asses,
on which the respective champions are mounted. Taken altogether, the
original is not a happy production: the language will run with real serious-
ness for lines together, humorous only by preference to the food and dress
of the actors; and when the humour does come, it is abrupt and at long
intervals: in short, it is not the sort that is humorous, but the patches;
and this is very different from true and entire burlesque; . . . . The

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1 Doran, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 354, writes about the season of 1811-1812,
"The greatest success (of the Drury Lane Company at the Lyceum) was with
a piece called Quadrupeds, altered from the 'Tailors; or, a Tragedy for
Worm Weather,' and intended to ridicule the equestrian performances at
Covent Garden."
songs introduced are better written than might be expected, and well adapted
to jovial or vulgar tunes; but the crown of all is unquestionably the
battle scene, which affords a good and palpable ridicule of the Kemble
horses, and with its kickings, clatterings, and ragged warriors, pummel-
ing each other in all directions, looks like Hogarth’s picture of the
battle of Hudibras, brought to life.”

In contribution to the general ridicule against the Kemble horses,
the extravaganza Quadrupeds of Grainthorpe, or the Revolt of Weimar by
George Selman, the Younger, was produced at the Haymarket on Monday, July
18, 1811. “That no explanation may be wanting to the learned, or mysteri-
ous attraction to the vulgar, it is described as a Tragico-Comico-Anglo-
Germanico-Hippico-Capo-Dramatico Romance. The last scene, which in fact is
the only one that has any thing to do with quadrupeds, presents us with
the customary battle; and the steeds consist of cloaked wicker-work adapted
before and behind to the bodies of the performers, by which means every man
is enabled to be his own horse, and also to caper and twist about with a
rapidity that would certainly be the death of an ordinary palfrey. The
only living quadruped is a solitary jackass, bestridden by Sundan, so that
the scene is in every respect inferior to that at the little theatre; for
the Haymarket burlesque makes a grand mistake in imitating the fine clothes
and plumed helmets of the Covent-garden combatants, and in bringing real
Knights and real Captains to the contest: — the object is not to copy in

1 Theatrical Examiner, No. 97, Sunday, July 21, 1811, p. 470.
little, but to engrave in little, and this is properly done by the ranged
warriors and the sticks and staves of the Lyceum."¹

The next equestrian play at Covent Garden was Timour the Tarter,²
April 29, 1611. This play was undoubtedly included in the list of plays
burlesqued since it was produced before the accounts given above. W. G.
Lewis, the author, says in the advertisement that "this trifle was written
. . . . (as) a spectacle in which Horses might be introduced." An interest-
ing advertisement is given in Lacy's Acting Edition of this play:

Scene I. Interior of a Fortress.
Arrival of the Splendid Escort.
with Military Band, Plumed Couriers, and Band of Amazons.

Scene II. — Interior of Timour's Castle.
Scene 3. The Lists, with Procession to the Grand Tournament.
Timour's Splendid Car, drawn by Six Horses.
Combat on Horse and Foot by the Rival Chieftains for the Captive
Selima, and Grand Tartarian Ballet.

Act 2.

Scene 1. Splendid Chamber in Castle.
Scene 2. — Gallery of the Castle.
Scene 3. — Fortress by Moonlight.
Grand Attack by Horse and Foot.
Castle in Flames and Overthrow of Timour.

This grand spectacle must have been successful for it was played at
Astley's on September 14, 1629, and at Drury Lane on May 16, 1631. Many
times during the play the horses make their appearance, but I shall quote

¹ Theatrical Examiner, No. 98, Sunday, July 28, 1611, p. 485.
only the most interesting stage directions:

"Enter the Chief, on the Bridge, R., cross and exit, L. -- Georgians, Soldiers, cross the bridge from R. to L., with banners -- a grand military band, and then the horses, followed by Zorilda, &c. -- the Tartars arrive on horseback, conducting Zorilda, dressed as an Amazon, holding an arrow, and wearing a quiver -- she is mounted on a charger, richly caparisoned, and attended by four African Boys in golden chains, and holding fans of painted feathers -- two of them prostrate themselves, the others throw a tapestry over them -- the charger kneels, and she steps on the Slaves to dismount, Abdalee giving her his hand -- the horses withdraw, after paying their homage to Timour."¹

The next scene really shows that the horses are the principal actors:

"Enter Kerim, R.U.K., and Samballat., on horseback -- they charge with lances -- at length Kerim's horse takes part in the combat, seizes Samballat, and drags him to the ground -- Samballat rises, and attributes the victory solely to the horse -- Kerim proposes to renew the combat on foot -- the horses are led away, and the fight begins -- Kerim falls and loses his sword -- His rival rushes to despatch him, when Kerim's horse leaps the barrier, prevents Samballat from advancing, picks up the sword, and carries it to his master -- Samballat, in fury, stabs the Horse, who falls and expires. . . Kerim's desire to avenge the faithful Animal increases his strength -- he disarms his rival, drags him to the horse, and sacrifices him on the body, during which all descend -- Salim rises -- embraces Kerim -- they cross to Zorilda, R., who crowns him -- but he takes off the wreath, breaks it, Stress the flowers on the Horse, and falls upon him, weeping -- Salim hange over them, greatly affected."²

In the last scene Agib leaps his horse over the parapet to save his mother.

¹ Act I, Scene 1, p. 18.
Here is the closing scene:

"Music. The horse rises out of the water, and rushes up the waterfall, C.F. bearing Agib and Zorilda -- the Tartars rally from the fortress, and endeavour to retake the Princess -- the Georgians come to her assistance -- a general engagement takes place, in which Timour is overthrown; but Zorilda spares his life, at the intercession of Agib and Oglou -- the Georgians form a group round their Sovereign, while Oglou expresses his joy, and Timour his desperation.

Disposition of the Characters at the fall of the Curtain.


Agib, Zorilda.

Abdallah -- Timour overthrown.

Horses. R.) Oglou Horses. L.)

Having horses rush up waterfalls became very popular with the people; it is not surprising, therefore, to see this same scene acted over and over again in equestrian plays. It was a good stunt, and it was very effective.

George Daniel, the nineteenth century critic, says in the remarks to the play that "the principal performers (the horses!) enacted wonders." And that is as it should be, because the equestrian drama is written as the medium for the acting horses; moreover, only the well-trained horses were selected.

1 Act II, Scene 3, p. 41.
2 George Daniel signed the introductory remarks to plays with P. O. These remarks, incidentally, are good for a study of the minor drama of the nineteenth century.
The plot of the story is very involved. Timour, the long-lost shepherd's son, returns as Chief of the Tartars to kill the king of his native land, imprison the heir to the throne, Agib, and upset thoroughly his own father, Ogloa, by such conduct, until the usual siege and capture of a castle by the Georgians, who come to rescue their queen Zorilda, rights all wrongs.

The plays produced at the Theatres Royal were legitimate dramas and not dumb-spectacles; dialogue was not in recitative. Musical accompaniment, however, was used throughout the plays. Incidentally, the time had not yet come for the minors to produce legitimate dramas. Watson tells us, "It was no less a personage than John Kemble who in 1811 completed the decoration of the majors by filching from the minors even their equestrian shows."1

Harold Child in his excellent but short treatment of nineteenth century drama in the Cambridge History of English Literature says that "shows and spectacles, performing animals and acrobatic exhibitions, with which licensed houses rescued themselves for their losses over 'legitimate' drama, flowed, at the Surrey Theatre, at Sadler's Wells, or at Astley's, into the stream (of melodrama.)"2

During the season of 1811, The Tyrant Saracen and the Noble Moor3 was performed at Astley's; this was followed with Voorn the Tiger; or The Roving Banditti.4

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1 Watson, op. cit., p. 43.
3 Produced on Monday April 15, 1811.
4 Produced on June 8, 1812.
Even though there had been much ridicule of horse spectacles, Astley's staged *The Siege, Storming and Taking of Badajoz* on Monday, April 4, 1812. Also on the program in the spring of 1812 was *The Battle of Salamanca: The Town Mayor and Spanish Heroine*.

"Mr. Astley's troop of 20 Horses, have been carrying all before them - and have we are happy to learn during the whole of the season, drawn very great houses. The promptness and patriotism, which this gentleman displays in delineating upon his stage with appropriate scenery, decorations &c. the conduct and gallantry of our late victories, cannot be too much commended; it is calculated to raise a spirit of ardour and loyalty in the breasts of the people, that may prove highly beneficial to the community at large."

The major theatres, however, still performed their spectacles. At Covent Garden, on April 24, 1812, *The Secret Wine* by John Savill Faucit, was acted. The plot of this equestrian melodrama is somewhat different from those we have already seen. Araza, the Hindoo Chieftain, son of the murdered Rajah, is being held prisoner by the Persians because he will not reveal the secret of the mine of precious rubies. Aided by Zephyra, the daughter of the Governor of Persia, he escapes from prison. She follows him to his country, becomes his queen, and they, together with their people,

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1 *The Theatrical Inquisitor*, September, 1812, p. 55.
2 Miscell lists a play of this name under John Fawcett in collaboration with T. J. Dibdin, but he does not list the play under John Savill Faucit, the name which appears on the title page of the play examined. The play was published in New York in 1823. No date is given for the performance at the New York Theatre. The writer believes that the play is incorrectly listed by Miscell, but that the date and place of production is correct, namely, Covent Garden, April 24, 1812.
defend the mine. The noble defense is given in the last two scenes:

"She (Zephyra) spurs her horse, ascends the shields, and enters the Mine. Araxa following at the mouth of the Mine, stops and orders his officer to remain with his men to surprise the enemy, he disappears, the mine closes, and all appears as before. (Drum nearer - voice without - Halt! Halt! - -) Officer in action orders his men to form behind their shields, they all cover themselves; Hyder enters cautiously, followed by Ismael and Infantry, and approaches the lower entrance of the mine; on touching it, it opens, when the officer rushes on Hyder; the soldiers come from behind their shields, and engage Ismael's Infantry, who are driven off; shield men return shouting, and exewnt into the mine; Ismael and Hyder return with cavalry and artillery drawn by horses; they discharge them 'till a breach is made, by which they all enter, when in, a mine is sprung, and the whole sinks, flies, falls, and discovers

Scene V.

The Mine as before, with such additions as may be supposed to have been constructed for its defence.

The two parties are discovered engaged. — After some fighting on the stage they take to the platforms and then again to the stage; while horse and foot are battling on the flying bridge the cavalry again take to the platform, when the artillery is levelled and discharged at those on the bridge, which breaks, and several infantry and some horse fall on the stage. By this time Ismael's party have placed faggots under the middle bridge, which is seen on fire, while a party of horse are fighting on it — and with a horrid explosion, the bridge sinks with horses, &c.

Zephyra is seen struggling with Hyder, and a part of the mine falls, and brings Hyder to the ground; he recovers from the fall, and again pursues the Princess.

Araxa on his horse enters, and seeing her danger, he dismounts, climbs the ruins after Hyder, leaving his horse on the stage. Zephyra is seen flying from Hyder, and followed by Araxa. Hyder and Araxa meet. — Hyder is overcome, and flies pursued by Araxa. The horse seeing the danger of Zephyra, who is in the midst of the flames, gallops up the platform, 'till he reaches where she is — she jumps on his back, and he brings her down the platform.
During this Aramaz has pursued Hyder up a staircase under which is a general fire. — The staircase gives way and both clinging to it, are borne on the stage. Aramaz kills Hyder, &c.¹

The equestrian performers, Davis and Parker, and their troop of horse, whose exertions in Timour and Blue Beard were so lucrative to the proprietors of Covent Garden, were brought to Astley's in 1815.

"Here the horses are in their proper sphere, and, here we feel pleasure in greeting them. The performances consist of a grand spectacle, called Ferdinand of Spain; or Ancient Chivalry; a Comic Pantomime, called the Four Gates, or Harlequin Key."²

The same year the Surrey re-opened on Easter Monday with Timour the Tartar; the horses at this performance were somewhat restive and hard to govern, although the production was attractive.³

The next account of a production at the Royal Circus is in August, 1814:

"The horses are, for the most part, beautiful animals, and admirably taught; their exhibition is not confined to the circuses; in the first piece, The Tiger Horde, they are brought repeatedly on the stage, and perform their several parts like veterans accustomed to tread the boards. The great width of the Circus stage gave ample scope to the display of their powers."⁴

¹ Act II, Scene 4 and Scene 5, pp. 35-36.
² Theatrical Inquisitor, May, 1813, p. 355. The authors of the plays are unknown. Both the plays were performed on April 19, 1813.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid., August, 1814, p. 127. The play was produced on July 4, 1814.
Philip Astley, after having erected nineteen amphitheatres in France, Great Britain and Ireland, died in 1816 at the age of 72. Since 1804 he had not managed his theatre which was in the capable hands of his son John Astley and W. Davis, who remained in charge until 1817. An interesting anecdote is related by De Castro, the famous comedian, in his memoirs. Astley owned a fine charger called the "Spanish Horse" which lived to the age of 42 in his service:

"This beast was accustomed, at a public performance, to ungirt his own saddle, wash his feet in a pail of water, fetch and carry a complete tea equipage, with many other strange things. He would take a kettle of boiling water off a flaming fire, and acted in fact after the manner of a waiter at a tavern or tea gardens. At last, nature being exhausted, he died in the common course of it, and Mr. Davis, with an idea to perpetuate the animal's memory, caused the hide to be tanned and made into a thunder drum, which now stands on the prompt side of the theatre, and when its rumbling sound dies on the ear of those who knew the circumstance, it serves to their recollection as his 'parting knoll.'"\(^1\)

Astley's the favorite place of summer amusement, opened the season in 1815 under a pleasing display of neatness and brilliancy:

"The painting this season is white, scarlet and gold, well harmonized, and tasteful in effect. The doors were opened to admit a crowd of holiday-folks, who closely filled every part before the curtain except the ride, which was reserved for feats of horsemanship of the most interesting description. The performances consisted of an equestrian pantomime, under the title of The Life, Death, and Restoration of the High Nettled Racer. This novelty affords a rich treat to the admirers of animal sagacity. The extraordinary acting of the horse, which goes through the gradations described in B. F. B. Dibdin's song -- 'The High-Nettled Racer,' is almost beyond the conception of those who have not witnessed the docility of that valuable quadruped. At the end

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\(^1\) The Memoirs of J. De Castro, Comedian, op. cit., p. 30.
of the piece he suffers himself to be carried as dead horses usually are, in a cart; and, being thrown on the stage, the angle sword of harlequin is flourished over his head; at that signal he rises with stage effect, and being on his feet, beats time to the music in a short jig. A real fox-chase, with at least forty hounds, was loudly applauded."1

Concerning this pantomime, Thomas Dibdin writes:

"I believe it was about this time (1812) I wrote for Mssrs. Davis and Parker of the Amphitheatre Royal, a pantomime on the subject of my father's excellent song of the "High Minded Kaiser," by the unprecedented run of which they acknowledged to have gained considerably more than 10,000 pounds."2

Since this is the first mention of an equestrian pantomime, it would be interesting to know that its origin was in France and not in England.

HenryLyonnaise, in his enlightening chapter on "Les Cirques," writes:

"J. -G. -A. Cuvelier fut en réalité le promoteur de la pantomime equestre; ce fut un innovateur en son genre, et le vaste plateau du Cirque Olympique se prêtait admirablement à ses projets. Mais pour le moment, 1807-8, il ne pouvait encore songer à mettre en action "l'Épopée." Il fallait se contenter de mettre en scène "l'Apothéose." C'est à quoi Cuvelier et ses frères Franconi ne vont pas manquer de s'empresser. Que fallait-il en somme? Une somptueuse mise en scène, une variété de tableaux présentant des époques différentes, des défils avec des costumes éblouissants, mettre des chevaux sur le théâtre et les faire descendre dans l'arène. Le pantomime equestre, assimilée sur le théâtre du Cirque Olympique ne doit pas toutefois nous faire oublier que les jeux du cirque y sont toujours en faveur et que les directeurs sont des éveurs de premier ordre."3

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1 *Theatrical Inquisitor*, March, 1815, p. 235. Nicoll lists the play as Meleagros, first performed at the Royal Amphitheatre in 1815.
John Astley, the son of Philip, was a famous rider like his father; he acted at Francesci's Cirque Olympique and undoubtedly on his return to England brought with him plans to produce similar pieces. While he was in France, W. Davis acted as manager until his return. Young Astley created such an impression in Paris that Marie Antoinette presented him with a gold medal encrusted with diamonds, and gave him the name of the English Rose.¹

During the season of 1816, Thomas Dibdin acted as manager of the Royal Circus. At the Royal Amphitheatre in 1817, Astley was the sole proprietor; W. Barrymore, stage manager.² Barrymore had had some of his works - including Pantomime, Spectacles, and the like - produced at Astley's, and thus his being appointed stage-manager stood him in good stead. That same year, 1817, Andrew Ducrow and Makeen performed with feats of horsemanship; on the same hill was the equestrian tableau of Uranus,³ which was rich, varied, and impressive. The Blood Red Knight was also acted during this season.

After the season closed, the stage at Astley's had again to be enlarged in mechanical scope. By a contrivance which drew back the flanking doors and the boxes over them, as well as the frame of the proscenium, the opening was increased to 60 feet. Across the back of the stage massive platforms or floors, rising above each other, extended from wings to wings, in the guise of battlements, heights, bridges, or mountains. Over them

² Theatrical Inquisitor, July, 1817, p. 80.
³ Miscell lists the play under unknown authors as Uranus the Enchanter of the Steel Castle, performed at the Royal Amphitheatre, Monday, April 7, 1817.
horsesmen could gallop and skirmish, or a carriage could be driven. Nicoll quotes from a handbill that the next year, when Astley's reopened on Monday, March 23, 1816, "after improvements," it displayed "A contracted and progressive extension of the New Proscenium, which with the stage doors will move and remove in sight of the audience."2

Another burlesque makes its appearance, this time at the Royal Circus on Monday, May 26, 1817. The month before, the opera Don Giovanni by Mozart was applauded at the King's Theatre. As a burlesque of this opera, Thomas Dibdin wrote the "Comic, Heroic, Operatic, Tragic, Fantomimic, Burlesque-Spectacular-Extravaganza," entitled Don Giovanni; or, A Spectre on Horseback.3

Success of the burlesque was immediate. It was produced at Drury Lane in 1829, at Covent Garden, the English Opera, and every provincial theatre in the kingdom. The lines terminate in doggerel verse; the songs are ludicrous parodies; and the music consists of a mélange of well-known popular airs.

In Act II, Scene 2, p. 25, there is an equestrian statue on a pedestal, inscribed "Don Quixone, late Commandant of Seville," in a church-yard on a moonlight night.

The cast of characters includes "The Marble Horse" played by a real pony. This is the first time that the horse is mentioned in the dramatic

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1 Disher, op. cit., p. 555 f.
3 Cumberland Minster, vol. 2.
personae; heretofore, the animal has been referred to only in the stage directions. Throughout scene two, the horse remains quiet; in the next scene, however, the statue gallops across on his pony, toward the supper room, at full speed. Part of scene four is a burlesque of Blue Beard:

"Giovanni. Why dost thou stare so, fellow . . .
What dost see?

Air. - Leporello (Trembling)

Air and Grand Chorus from Blue Beard.

I see him galloping!
I see him galloping!
I see him galloping!
He's nearly at the door!
Now faster galloping!
Now faster gallopping!
I never saw the like before!

Chorus. I see his gallop, As.

(The Statue rides on, R.D. - All run away but Don Giovanni and Leporello, who help the Statue off his steed - a pause - Leporello takes the horse's head - - Statue is following Don Giovanni to the table, turns back and speaks to Leporello.)

In the last part of the last scene, Leporello, seeing Don Giovanni disappear down a trap in a blaze of red fire, jumps on the Statue's horse, cries out "Go he Vanni!" and gallops off. "Then the ladies, gentlemen, Donna Anna, Octavio, and Statue, come forward -- Statue united Donna Anna and Don Octavio, and all join in --

FINALE -- Chorus.

This may, for want of better, be
As pretty sport as any;

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Then pray, kind patrons, come and see
Our saucy Don Giovanni.”

Among the first pieces written to suit the new conditions at Astley’s was Peregrine Pickle; or Hammer Truncheon on Horseback, performed on Monday, April 27, 1819. In this play the horses are introduced at a fox hunt. “The chandelier is lighted with gas instead of oil; the internal decorations are all new, and in very good taste, and the proscenium is one of the prettiest we ever saw,” is a description of the theatre after the opening night, Easter Monday. “The vaulting of Brown over the 9 horses is good. The pantomime called The Flying Horse is partly founded on one of the Arabian tails.”

Hypolita, Queen of the Amazons, by Monsrieiff, was on the bill at Astley’s when the theatre opened on Easter Monday the next year. “The sombre of chariots, horses, &c. and the conflagration produce some of the most striking stage spectacles we have ever witnessed,” says a reporter. This is the first time that there has been found a reference to races of chariots drawn by horses. One is reminded of the great popularity of Ben Hur during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Another equestrian spectacle, Richard Turpin the Highwayman, aided by its horses, its scenery, and its music, attracted many people.

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1 Act II, Scene 4, p. 27.
2 Theatrical Inquisitor, April, 1819, p. 299.
3 Ibid.
4 Rice lists the play under unknown authors; The Theatrical Inquisitor says that the play is “from the pen of Mr. Monsrieiff.”
5 Theatrical Inquisitor, April, 1819, p. 313.
during that season.¹

Appearing in the piece Napoleon Bonaparte at the Coburg Theatre, Mr. H. Kemble as Napoleon still held the public favor in July, 1821. His first appearance on horseback between the lines of his soldiery was very effective, and the method of the troops in marching down the stage from the gate, excellently managed.²

The major theatres, however, once again come into the limelight with something new. "The opera The Exile . . . was produced in a very altered state . . . the proprietors, calling to mind the immense profits which Every Lane had derived from the Coronation of a King, determined that Covent Garden should present a spectacle more rare - the Coronation of a Queen, and to make room for the splendor appertaining to that exhibition, a fourth act has been added to the drama. We now come to the grand spectacle of the public entry of the Empress Elizabeth into Moscow. The stage represents a triumphal arch, through which proceeds troops of foot and horse, ministers of the empire, foreign ministers and their suites, clothed according to the costume of their respective countries. The Chinese ambassadors and deputy from Tartary, mounted on 'barbed steeds,' then follow Elizabeth (Mrs. Faucit) in a triumphal car, drawn by 6 horses, gorgeously ornamented, escorted by the body guard in full uniform."³

¹ See. This play, of unknown authorship, was produced on Monday, November 8, 1819.
² The Drama, August, 1821, p. 204. Nicoll lists this play under unknown author; the title of the spectacle is Napoleon Bonaparte, General, Consul, and Emperor, produced on July 7, 1821.
³ The Drama, October, 1821, p. 294 f.
The best effort of the season at Astley's was *Uranda the Enchanter of the Steel Castle*, which almost rivalled the celebrated *Blood-Red Knight* in popularity. The revival of *Uranda* was much more successful than the original production in 1819. Also performed during the season were *Gil Blas of Cantillana;* or the Horse Banditti, and again the *Blood-Red Knight.*¹

*The Siege of Londonderry*, first produced during the previous season, on Monday, May 22, 1820, was used as an afterpiece.² Many of the old favorites were being played as afterpieces; they were never entirely shelved.

A clever reporter, covering Astley's during the season of 1821, writes:

"Your critics may from in their halls of disdain
For Astley can laugh without qualms or remorses -
Shakespeare swore the world was a stage, and 'tis plain
No stage in this world can go on without horses.³"

During the summer of 1821, John Astley, suffering from liver trouble, arrived in Paris, and then went to his father's house where he took up residence. Within a few weeks, he died in the same bed, and in the very same apartment as did his father. On the 19th of October following he was buried close to his father in the *Pere Lachaise* cemetery.⁴ Davis, who had been a partner with Astley, became sole proprietor; the stage management was under the able hand of Mr. Barrymore.⁵

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¹ *Ibid.* June, 1821, p. 102. According to Nicoll, *Gil Blas* was first performed on June 11, 1821.
⁵ *The Drama*, May, 1822, p. 309.
In 1822, however, money was spent freely to cope with the rage for dramatic versions of *Life in London*, which inspired Sadler's Wells, the Surrey and Astley's to stage pieces each called *Tom and Jerry* in imitation of other pieces at the Olympic and the Adelphi.\(^1\) The following is an account of the production at Astley's:

"To those who are acquainted with the peculiar facility which the extensive stage of this theatre, presents for any spectacle of an equestrian nature, a description of this scene (Epica Races) will be needless; it is a true and numerous picture of real life, and exhibits post chaises, gigs, tilbury, caravans, hackney coaches, carts, and four-in-hand barouches, all drawn by real horses — with gambling tables, pickpockets, sweeps, plunums, beggars and ballad-singers, and all the numerous and varied paraphernalia attended on these well-known scenes, concluding with a grand race between seven 'Bite of Blood' on extensive platforms taking in the whole width of the riding school. It is without exception the very best spectacle of the kind ever exhibited, we think, even on this stage."\(^2\)

The excellent specimens of horsemanship, for which the house was celebrated, nightly filled the theatre to the ceiling.\(^3\)

A few months later Astley’s staged *Alexander the Great, and Theaetetus the Ammon*, by Charles Dibdin, Jr. Nisell says the play was first produced on Monday, August 12, 1822. This date is the same as that given in *The Drama* for August, 1822, with this account:

"The career of 'Ammon's god-like son' is a theme well known, and well calculated for a display of Eastern grandeur — and in fact is more adapted for the peculiar

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1 Nisell, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 95, footnote 3, gives a list of these plays, which is by no means exhaustive.
2 *The Drama*, May, 1822, p. 359 f.
performances of this theatre than any we are acquainted with. The present piece embodies several of that hero's most celebrated actions, as his triumphal entry into Babylon - his victory over the Indian King Porus - his quarrel with and murder of the brave Clytus - and his various encounters with the celebrated Thalestris . . . The actors, however, which most delighted the audience, were the quadrupeds, whose unaffected zeal and natural acting called forth shouts of approbation. These sensible animals appeared in many instances to have a far better idea of stage affect than many of their two-legged brother actors, and were often so adroit that they 'quite shamed the rascals.'

Where'er with four legs native talent is best,
The manager's patronage doubly is due;
It goes twice as far, and has twice as much zest,
As where the full rascals have only got two.

The equestrian evolutions into which their services were pressed were executed with admirable precision. They waded through rivers, mounted perpendicular platforms, and immense waterfalls, opened gates, and were shot dead in an instant. But we have not space to recount their astonishing manoeuvres; they must be seen to be admired. The processions with which the piece commences are magnificent in the extreme, particularly Alexander's Entry into Babylon, attended by immense war chariots, &c. The whole of the Scenery, by Scuderyo, without an exception was beautiful - those scenes particularly so, were the stupendous waterfalls in the second act; Alexander's Banquet; the Camp of Porus; Statira's Power; Triumphal Arch; and Fortified Palace of the Indian King.1

The next production at the Surrey, on October 7, 1822, was The

Infidel Secret; or, The Invulnerable, from the pen of Mr. J. H. Amherst.

The scene of action is laid in Portugal. Montilla (Mr. R. Kemble), the Invulnerable, has entered into a compact with the arch-enemy of mankind, for the possession of wealth, power, invulnerability, and a life renewable for ever, provided that in each country he were an unstained Catholic

1 Ibid., August, 1822, p. 143 f.
female. The third century of his preternatural existence is about expiring, when the piece commences with his attempts to gain the hand of Isadora (Mrs. Pepa), the daughter of the Marquis Antaldi, the widow of a Portuguese nobleman. Montilla has endeavors to secure an interest in the lady's affections, by saving her husband from the hands of assassins, and twice rescuing her infant son, after the death of the father, from situations of imminent peril; but the mystery which attaches to his character counteracts all his efforts, and he at last leagues with the banditti, whose leader, Spalatro, he had delivered from the range of the Inquisition. Their joint efforts are ultimately defeated by the exertions of Theodore (Mr. Blanchard), a devoted servant of Don Alphonso's, who is deeply ensnared of Isadora. The termination of the period at length arrived, Montilla having been unable to prevail on Isadora, either by hope or fear, to accept his hand. The fatal hour of 12 strikes, when the third century of his existence being completed, and his part of the compact unperformed, he is destroyed by a bolt from heaven; his allies, the banditti, being at the same time totally defeated, and their cavern blown up by the military under Don Alphonso. Of this play, a critic informs us:

"This 'grand, serious, and equestrian melodrama' has been said to be founded on an obsolete Spanish tale of mystery; but the critic who hazarded this hypothesis, need not have allowed his imagination to wander so far back. We are of opinion, that its origin may be traced to Mr. Maturin's extraordinary romance, entitled Melmoth the Wanderer . . . . The scenery was exceedingly beautiful, and doubtless proportionately expensive. The 'Terrific Pass in the Pyrenees,' and 'Rocky Seashore, with approaching storm' merit particular attention. We must not forget to speak of the
aid which the piece derived from the "beautiful stud of horses;" and we should be tempted to dwell with enthusiasm on the astounding efforts of the wounded steed, had not the eloquence of the play-bills forestalled criticism, and obliged us either to quote them, or be altogether silent on the subject."

Sadler's Wells, the aquatic theatre, where nautical dramas were popular throughout the century, produced on August 12, 1828, Edward Fitzball's *Jean of Arc; or, The Maid of Orleans* as an equestrian drama. The subject is an excellent vehicle for spectacle. This particular story of the life of Jean of Arc is rather unusual. In the last scene just as Jean is about to be burned at the stake she is saved by Prince Charles of France, and the two treacherous French Generals, Richemont and Chalons, are taken prisoners amidst the tumult. George Daniel remarks rather facetiously:

"The burning of Jean of Arc at an aquatic theatre might be considered by the author as somewhat out of place; he has therefore set fire to the pile, but spared the maid."  

Real water is used in Act I, Scene 2, p. 12, and Act I, Scene 3, p. 20, as part of the scenery. Joan makes her appearance, many times throughout the play, on the bridge under which flows running water. There are, of course, the usual processions, sieges, and the like. The play is simply another equestrian drama; there is nothing unusual about the play except, possibly, the ending.

1 *ibid.*, October, 1828, p. 241.
2 *Cumberland Minor*, vol. 4, p. 3.
There is a lengthy and uninteresting account of the production at the Surrey of Nanninoello, the Fisherman of Naples, the Deliverer of His Country given in The Drama for January, 1823. Suffice it to say that Nanninoello (Mr. E. Kemble) appeared in armour mounted on a horse richly caparisoned; and in the last scene the accomplished horsemanship of Leona (Mrs. Pepe) excited universal approbation. The piece was superbly staged; the scenery was of the first order; and no expense was spared in platforms, carriages, dresses, properties, banners, and every appropriate decoration.¹

The Coburg Theatre on February 18, 1823, produced Sixteen String Jack, by Leeman Rede. Jack is a crook who robs his benefactor, leaves home, meets up with pick-pockets and card-sharps, and assumes many aliases so that he can gain admittance into wealthy society in order to rob them. He is finally caught and put in jail; but, through the intervention of his benefactor and the man he robs, he is pardoned while he is on his way to Tyburn Hill. Needless to say, he reforms, principally because of the Widow Marigold, his boyhood sweetheart, who begs him to give up his wayward life. This play is a typical melodrama.

The equestrian element in this play is almost negligible. In only one scene Jack appears on horseback,² robs the Major, and re-enters on horseback to rob Beau Brummel who appears with a horse and gig.³ The entire scene takes place on Hounslow Heath by moonlight. Incidentally, the leading role was played by the author, Leeman Rede.

¹ The Drama, January, 1823, p. 43 f. Nicoll lists a play of this title under unknown authors; the play was produced at the Coburg Minor, June 5, 1826.
² Cumberland Minor, vol. 16, Act II, Scene 4, p. 41.
³ Ibid., p. 44.
Ashley's opened on Monday night, March 51, 1823, with a new piece called Hyacinth or, Is it a Spectre? by Charles Dibdin, Jr. This piece was designated in the bills as "an equestrian, aero-comic malo-drama, with combat," and is certainly such a medley of horsemanship and hostility, murder and marauding, dungeons and daggers, as to warrant so grotesque an appellation; it was received throughout with unanimous applause by a full audience.1

"The young Hibernian afterwards made his first appearance in London as an equestrian, and performed a variety of feats with considerable agility, but at a greater expense of apparent effort than some of his predecessors in the same description of exercises. A Mr. Gray next exhibited his powers in leaping through hoops over a patehaine, and also over nine horses. These operations were in apprehension, we imagine, rather more painful than agreeable to the sensitive part of the spectators, but they were so well executed as to give general satisfaction . . . . A sort of equestrian pantomime, called 'The High-mettled Racer,' which some years ago was attractive at this Amphitheatre, in a revived form, concluded the entertainments of the night. . . ."2

Very likely the Theatres Royal were impressed by the combination of aquatic and equestrian elements that had been successfully staged at Sadler's Wells; furthermore, they had been so successful themselves with the horse spectacles that it was relatively simple to supply the public with real water. This they proceeded to do.

On November 5, 1823, Flamen's Cortez or the Conquest of Mexico at Covent Garden exhibited the charge of cavalry which astonished the poor Mexicans. Genest remarks on this production that "much praise cannot be

1 The Drama, April, 1823, p. 206 f.
2 Ibid.
given to a piece, written for horses and abounding in songs . . . the play was acted 12 times, then cut down to 2 acts, and acted five times more."¹

He also lists *The Enchanted Courser, or the Sultan of Cardistan*, by Rev. George Cruikshank, as having been produced at Drury Lane on October 29, 1824, and acted eleven times.² Gemest neglects entirely the productions at the minor theatres, and these are the only references he gives to equestrian dramas, because they were produced at the Theatres Royal.

The play that combined the equestrian and aquatic elements was *The Sultan of the Camels*,³ by William Thomas Moncrieff, produced at Drury Lane on November 27, 1825. D.—C. in his remarks to the play writes: " . . . in scenic magnificence and gorgeous costume, (this play) was pronounced the *magnus opus* of this species of entertainment. Astley’s Stud lent its powerful support; and the London Water-Furks were laid on to complete the spectacle."

The Rajah of Guzerat, to save his only child, a daughter, from the enmity of Bram, conceals her sex, and brings her up as his son and heir to his throne. The secret is confided to Mokarre and Matali, the parents of Iram, a young Hindoo warrior, to whom the princess becomes attached.

A war between the Rajah and Akbar, Emperor of Delhi, takes the former from his capital; and, in his absence, he invests Mokarre, grand Bra'min of his tribe, with the reins of government, engaging to confirm all acts done in

² Ibid., p. 282.
³ Cumberland’s *British Theatre*, vol. 33, London, ca. 1824. Fitzgerald, *op cit.*, p. 412, writes: "This strange piece was revived at the same theatre in the season 1874-75. . . . It was found stale and uninteresting. It was difficult to believe that it had drawn astonished and delighted crowds."
his absence. This is a glorious opportunity for the ambitious and hypocritical priest. An ambassador from the emperor craves audience of Mokarra; and (his master having been soundly beaten by the Rajah’s troops) offers peace upon the terms that Zamina, the supposed prince, shall wed the Princess Dessa, the emperor’s daughter; a project to which “the favored of Brahm” readily consents, in the hope that one day he will be viceroy of Gujarat when that kingdom becomes a province of Delhi. This puts all parties in a perplexity; the princess, fearing to reveal her sex, from the dreadful penalty that awaits the disclosure, implores a short delay till her father’s return; but the priest is inexorable, and the marriage rites are about to be performed with true barbarian splendor, when the Rajah unexpectedly returns, forbids the ceremony, and reveals the sex of his child. This is death by the laws of Brahm; but the compassionate bigot will compromise the matter, if the Rajah will appoint his mortal foe heir of his now childless throne, and offer up the beautiful Zamina a victim to the idol of Jagannaut. This proposal is rejected; and Mokarra hurries away his beautiful sacrifice to the pagoda of Jagannaut, in the centre of which stands the golden image of Brahm, seated on a throne, and supported on each side by his barbarous brother and sister, Bolenan and Shubudra. The slyly hypocrite now throws off the mask, and offers the princess a choice of evils: to gratify his unholy passion, or take a journey to the wilderness of Himalaya and ascend the funeral pile. Mokarra gives her one hour to decide, and, having taken a sly sup of good wine (a luxury forbidden to the vulgar) composes himself to sleep. Then, when she refuses to marry him so that he will be the heir to the throne, he pronounces her
Scene. A rescue party, headed by Mordaunt, an English Officer attached to
the Rajah, and Jack Robinson, his servant, arrives. Jahreja and Mah-
rattas follow. All are determined to prevent the sacrifice.

"Scene VI. The Sacred Wood of Himholga, leading to the
Cataract of the Ganges — as the scene draws
the whole of the Trees are discovered in
flames — agitated music."

Mokarra, the villain, leads in Zamine, followed by Brahmins, with lighted
torchas. As she is being led to the pile where she is to be burned, Iran
enters.

"(Brahmins seize Zamine — she shrinks and struggles — Iran
and Jahreja break through the burning Brush Wood, in the
background, and drive Mokarra and Brahins off — Zamine
rushes into Iran's arms — the burning trees fall on all
sides, and discover the terrific Cataract of Gangotri,
supposed to form the source of the Ganges — the Emperor
and the Brahins troops appear, pouring down the rocky heights
around the Cataract in every direction — Iran struggles to
force a passage for Zamine's escape, but is everywhere
opposed by the enemy — he now becomes personally engaged
in combat with two of the Mahomedan Chiefs.)

*Iran. Fly, Zamine, fly! my steed will bear you safely!
The Cataract! The Cataract! we have no other hope.

"(Zamine mounts the Courser of Iran, and while he keeps the
foo at bay, dashes safely up the cataract, amidst a volley
of musketry from the enemy on the heights — the Rajah,
Mordaunt, and Robinson enter at the head of the combined
Mahatta and Jahreja Army — the contest becomes general
— horse and foot are engaged in all parts — Mokarra
mainly endeavors to rally his forces, who are overpowered
by the Rajah — Mokarra is killed by a pistol shot from
Robinson — Iran brings forward Zamine in safety — the
Rajah joins their hands — and the Curtain falls on the
shouts of the Conquerors.)"*
One is better able to have some idea of the sumptuousness of the production
from the following:

"[March heard in the distance — the advanced Guard of
Nokarra's Procession enter up the avenue, in the back,
consisting of grand Military band, the Jahrajah and
Jhailah troops, with their appropriate banners, and
the Native European troops, the Sepoy regiments, in
the service of the Rajah, with the British colours.
They make a circuit of the stage, and range themselves
on the L. — side. — the distant march of the Em-
peror's Procession is then heard — Mogul troops, with
grand military band, splendid banners, etc. etc.,
center, and arrange on the R. — side — both parties
then unite, and perform various evolutions of saluta-
tion and unity, 'till they regain their respective situations
down each side of the stage — the Emperor and the
Officers of his Court then appear — lively music —
groups of dancing and singing girls enter, preceding
the Princess Desse, and the ladies of the Emperor's
Court — the Princess is borne in a splendid Palaquin,
by black slaves — she is followed by slaves, bearing
martial presents, and rich trophies from Delhi and
the Brunei; when the Emperor has assisted the Princess
to alight, a troop of Native Cavalry, in superb trapp-
ing, appear, and severally dispose themselves — the
two military, together with the orchestra bands, then
join in one grand flourish, and Nokarra enters with
Zamino in a magnificent Car, drawn by six horses three
abreast, attended by guards, slaves, etc. etc. —
Nokarra and Zamino alight.]"1

There is an original character in this piece: Jack Robinson, a
traveller in quest of strange adventures. Whenever a difficulty occurs,
and he is puzzled how to act, he turns for advice to a pocket edition of
his namesake, Robinson Crusoe. His early adventures were discouraging:
there was no storm, no wreck, no scarcity of provisions. All was calm
and provokingly comfortable. Then things changed; he penetrates the Holy

1 Act I, Scene 6.
of Helios of the mysterious pagoda of Jaggernaut, profanes the golden image of the idol by clambering up its colossal carcass, has the singular honor of conquering the Grand Brahmin and ridding the Rajah of a troublesome customer by shooting him through the head. This character is not merely incidental, but absolutely indispensable, in carrying on the plot with ingenuity and good humor. Robinson appeared in a goat's skin tunic, boots turned up with fur, belt, two pistols, short sword, teneiff hat with feather, and his gun on his shoulder, after the fashion of the renowned Crusoe.

A new and important figure in the history of the equestrian drama makes his appearance at Astley's. Andrew Ducrow, a Londoner by birth, who had been popular at Franceschi's Cirque Olympique where he astonished all classes by riding upon six horses, returned to England and was engaged in the opera of Caxton at Covent Garden. Offered by Davis a share in the Amphitheatre, Ducrow accepted and for his first venture he opened a new chapter of the equestrian drama's history by presenting J. H. Amherst's The Battle of Waterloo - not a dumb-spectacle, but a play - on Easter Monday, April 19, 1824.

Act I ends with the defense of the Bridge of Marchienne:


BLUCHER enters on horseback, meeting AIDE-DE-CAMP . . . .

Enter the Prussians, followed by a party of Black Brunswickers. The Generals BULOW and JOSKF cover the retreat of the Prussians, and being pressed by two French horsemen suddenly turn and discharge their pistols, which
take effect on one man, who falls with his foot in the stirrup, and is dragged off. During this action, the General SCHÖN has called to his soldiers to secure the bridge — they immediately form upon it, all levelling their pieces to the L. H. as the Prussians and French Horse enter from that quarter in close fight. Observe every third Prussian on the bridge fires and reloads, by which a dreadful discharge is kept up. HEY gallops at this moment in the centre of the stage in front, and makes an action for the cannon to be brought, which is done, and the devoted Prussians are fired on without mercy — part of the bridge gives way, and four men are precipitated into the water, a boat assists them. The French take advantage of this movement, and order their feet to advance, they do so, and succeed in clearing the bridge. The Prussian horse gallop to their assistance, but are closely pursued by the French, a dreadful contest on the bridge, and continual skirmishing below.

Enter BLUCHER and his Aide-de-Camp, who appear to have galloped merrily, they are closely followed by four Imperial Guards from the right, and a body of French horse on the bridge, who all discharge their pistols at once. Blucher's horse on the bridge rears and eventually falls wounded, and Blucher with him. The Aide-de-Camp is attacked and fights off — general attack of horse and foot till the contest becomes confined to the bridge. The Aide-de-Camp enters and raises Blucher, who tears his hair, and seizes his pistols, which placing in his Aide-de-Camp's hand, he begs of him to put a period to his life, rather than let him become a prisoner to France. The Aide-de-Camp raises the infirm old man, and placing him on his own horse, hurries him away from the field.

A general contest on bridge and stage by horse and foot. The French are disadvantaged, until an Officer of the Imperial Guards leaps from the bridge with an eagle and colours, and endeavour to stem the defeat; he strikes a Prussian soldier from his horse, but is shot; as he is expiring, he kisses his colours and his Cross of Honour. HEY snatches the colours — uprears them and after a short but animated attack, the French become victorious, the cries of 'Vive le Empereur' rend the air, and to a triumphant picture the drop descends. “1

1 Love’s Acting Plays, vol. 33, Act I, Scene 6, p. 6.
Then there is this scene:

"Scene II. -- Grand Review.

Enter the foot soldiers, who execute their evolutions, after which enter the cavalry, who prepare to receive the Duke and Staff. Enter LORD HILL, COLONEL SIR W. LANGOY, M. G. VIVIAN, PRINCE OF ORANGE, COLONEL CABBING, LORD VINTERG SOMERSET, SIR OF BRUNSWICK, MARQUIS OF ANGLESEA, then to a Grand Salute, His Grace the DUKE OF WELLINGTON, whose staff arrange so as to permit him to address the men and officers.

Wellington. Gentlemen, the world has fixed its eye upon us. England expects much; no one is here, I trust, who would not rather die than disappoint his native country's hope. On this day's energy depends the rank we must henceforth hold in Europe for a time. We must win this battle, gentlemen, because superiority of numbers is with the enemy, and the very argument that makes for them should inspire us with true British pride. We may be found dead on the bed of honour, gentlemen, but we must give our names with credit to our children and to the pen of the future historians of England's sons and England's deeds. (Shout.) Gentlemen, I have just received advices; we must march on to Ligny; be our password, England's King and England's Honour.

(Music -- Review -- Grand military movement and exit.)"

Some of the speeches are very long. The important thing, however, is that the dialogue was not accompanied by music throughout the play. Recitative had become a thing of the past. To quote again, this time presenting Napoleon and his men:

"(Music -- Grand March. -- The advanced guard form so as to receive the soldiers and baggage, which are seen in the distance.)

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1 Act II, Scene 2, p. 6.
(Order of Procession all across Bridge and down Rake, L. -- Six Pioneers -- Brass Band -- two Drums -- three Side Drums -- two Officers -- Flags -- first twelve Soldiers -- two Officers -- Flags -- second twelve -- Officer -- Flag -- Cavalry -- Officers -- Staff -- Napoleon.)

Grand entry of baggage troops, &c., &c., and finally staff officers, to introduce the Emperor Napoleon. All the soldiers present and recover arms on Napoleon’s entrance, and cheer.

Napoleon. Gentlemen. -- Your conduct as patriots and soldiers will, I doubt not, always obtain my approbation. This defensive war must on our parts be conducted on the same great principle which has elevated France to the highest rank among the nations. With soldiers so resolute, and generals so talented, great results may be expected; recollect our former victories -- recollect how prouly our eagles have presumed to soar! No is with you who has always pointed out their victorious flight; he will now share your toils, your marches, and your daring, but most just defence of all a Frenchman holds most sacred -- the unpolluted liberty of his native country! (Three shouts and roll of drum. -- Turns and marks his eagles.) Soldiers, turn your eyes on these honourable ensigns of your country -- noble blood has earned them, and noble blood will yet preserve them! I see some faces here who have ascended the Alps, who recollect Graciosa -- standard upon standard taken, cannon, castles, generals, all subdued; and yet bravely threatened -- half Europe is arrayed against us -- good, be it so, difficulties give way to enterprise and resolution. I will teach this combination. I and my valiant Frenchmen know how to die, but not to compromise the honor or the safety of our beloved France. Onwards! -- march!... (Shouts.)

(Music. -- March -- The Emperor Napoleon distributes papers among the officers in front, the infantry and cavalry are fully occupied at the back, while the officers will cut the front.)

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1 Act 1, Scene 3, p. 4 f.
In the play there are many groupings of characters besides the main
element of the battle: Corporal Steadfast, who has been wounded and cap-
tured, is brought before Napoleon, through whose kindness he is released;
he joins his sweetheart Mary Cameron, who has followed him into battle
disguised as a soldier. Two characters - Maigre Maladroit, a tailor, and
Molly Malone, who peddles liquor to the soldiers - supply the comic element.
A minor love story involves Marinette, a Brussels girl, and Kousa, a
French soldier. The tragic element is supplied by Theodora and her child.
She seeks vengeance for the death of her sons and daughters at the hands
of the French soldiers; she also seeks her husband, Bredowski, who has
been captured. In spite of the many characters, the spectacle has a definite
unity; it is not merely episodic.

One account of the play is as follows:

"... It is very difficult to describe the total, except
by saying that the newspapers of that momentous period are
here dramatized with episodes picked up from military con-
versation. The scenery is unusually good, and the manoeuvring
of the forces leaves the Artillery-ground immeasurably be-
hind. But upon this point, no wonder: for the play bill
intimates that the troops were represented by '100 picked
Waterloo men'; and to this we would add, that the horses
of the cavalry behaved quite as well as if they had been
in the fight with their riders. The peculiar attraction in
the line of horsemanship is Mr. Ducrow which certainly out-
runs imagination. His first entry could be compared to
nothing but the swiftness of the wind, and he seemed as
little to need the saddle to support his feet. He is the
most expert, graceful, and surprising performer yet seen
in the ring. The whole of the entertainments went off with
thunders of applause." 1

From all reports that have been gathered, Astley's was the most

1 The Drama, April, 1884, p. 102 f.
popular minor house during the entire season. At the Surrey the actors
simply kept the theatre open in order to reimburse themselves for the
expenses of salary due to them, while at the other minor houses conditions
were not so bad. The cause assigned by the performers themselves for the
empty houses, is a curious one: The Battle of Waterloo had proved the
magnet of attraction to all the usual frequenteres at the other minor
theatres. This quotation verifies the actors' cause:

"The Battle of Waterloo together with the amazing horseman-
ship of Mr. Duerow have drawn such fashionable and crowded
audiences to this theatre (Astley's), that all thought of
producing further novelty has for the present been laid
aside. We understand the Duke of Wellington, the Marquis
of Anglesea and many other noblemen of distinction have
visited the theatre and expressed themselves highly pleased
. . . . . The character of Napoleon as performed by Mr. Comer-
cell is the nightly theme of admiration . . . ."1

Andrew Duerow was perhaps the greatest rider that has been seen upon
the equestrian stage, as well as the most perfect of pantomimists. Baker
cites Christopher North's unqualified admiration of his performances:

"The glory of Duerow lies in his poetical interpretations.
Why the horse is but the air, as it were, on which he
flies. What god-like grace in that volant movement,
from from Olympus? What seems the feathered Mercury to
care for the horse whose side his toe but touches, as if
it were but a cloud in the other? As the flight accele-
rates, the animal absolutely disappears, if not from the
sight of our bodily eye, certainly from that of our imagi-
nation, and we behold but the messenger of Jove . . . .
These impersonations by Duerow prove that he is a man
of genius . . . . Thus, to convert his frame into such
forms, shapes, attitudes, postures, as the Greek imagina-
tion moulded into perfect expression of the highest state

1 Ibid., June, 1824, p. 197.
of the soul, that shows that Ducrow has a spirit kindred to those who in marble made their mythology immortal.\(^1\)

For the most part, Ducrow was responsible for the successes at Astley’s. Nicoll writes, “In 1830 Ducrow became sole manager and the most famous period at Astley’s was under his management, 1830-1841.”\(^2\)

Discussions of the equestrian dramas so far have been from actual plays and accounts of plays from the theatrical journals. Except for a few scattered accounts, the writer has been unable to secure the various periodicals for the period 1824-1842; therefore, a treatment of this period will be based on actual plays that have been examined. It does not mean, however, that equestrian dramas were not popular during this period. On the contrary, a cursory glance through Nicoll’s hand list of plays will bring to light many plays that were produced at Astley’s and at the Surrey; however, only those plays which have been definitely checked as containing equestrian elements will be treated.

Military spectacles had been popular with the English people, for the early nineteenth century was a period of heightened national consciousness. Nelson’s successes in the naval battles certainly gave rise to the military drama; and it is reasonable to state that costumers with this type of drama we should have the equestrian spectacles which presented the victorious English or the defeated opponents.

\(^1\) Hostes Amphitriciae, quoted by Baker, op. cit., p. 225, f.
The immediate success of The Battle of Waterloo brought forth another play by J. H. Amherst: Invasion of Russia; or The Conflagration of Moscow, which was the attraction on Easter Monday, April 4, 1825. In the cast were the famous equestrian performers Mr. Ducrow, Mr. Cartlitch and Mr. Comerel. The author, J. H. Amherst, played the comic role of the French cook. In all, thirty-six characters appeared in this spectacle.

This spectacle is merely episodic, and whatever popularity it had was due to the beautiful scenes, the battles, the conflagrations, and the like, which may be seen from the program of scenery:

"ACT I.

Exterior of a Russian Cottage.
Customs attendant on a Russian Boor's Wedding.

FRENCH ENCAMPMENT.

Rest and rejoicing of the Soldiery -- Napoleon's Order to march arrives.

INTERIOR OF A RUSSIAN BOOR'S HUT.

A Russian Landscape.
Skirmishing between the French and the Russians.

Mountainsous Pass.
Bonaparte's Halt -- his Address to the Army -- Advance of his Grand Marshals, Hay, Beauharnois, &c., &c., Eagles, Cannon, Imperial Guard, Sappers, Artillery, Polish Lancers, Baggage, and Pack Horses.

Act II.

Palace Hall of Moscow.
Convocation of the Nobles and Authorities -- Bostophin.
The Governor's Address.

Encampment of the French.
A View without the Walls of Moscow -- Temporary point of observations of the French.

Landscape.
Exertion of Irish Humanity.
Near the Walls of Moscow.
Resolution of Rastopchin to Burn the City at the
sound of St. Mary's Bell — Napoleon's conduct
on that occasion — Main Street of

MOSCOW IN FLAMES!
Presenting one Wide and Terrific Scene of Conflagration.
Napoleon's Orders to Fire upon the Incendiaries —
Seeking of the City by the French Troops.

ACT III.

A Wind and Snow Storm.
Winter in Russia — Retreat and Rebellion of the French Troops.
Bonaparte's Arrival in his Sledge.

An Elegant Apartment.
Dismal Snow Scene — Burnt Cottage — Infuriated
conquest of the Cossacks to the French Prisoners —
The Word of Battle (so called from the loud Yells
of the Enemy) — Final effort of the scattered
Troops, who make one last attempt to stand against
their Enemies — Attack of Horse and Foot.

Wild Charge of Cossacks!
Final Overthrow and Defeat of the French Arms in Russia!"1

The play opens with a scene of mourning:

"ACT I, Scene I. — Exterior of Wooden Hut, on the road to
Moscow, surrounded by picturesque wood and
water, but no other habitation on the scene;
windows-shutters open — no glass; door in
centre practicable.

Music of a species of waltz character — piano, pipe, and
social accompaniments. The female Singers enter first,
and form on either side of the door. The Ladies of the
Ballet enter on either side of the stage, and move a
dance, as well as sing the following.

Air and Chorus.

Good day, good day, come haste away,
This marriage-time is holiday.
Without delay, come down we pray
And join us in our dance and play."2

1 Leary's Acting Plays, vol. 15, p. 3.
2 Act I, Scene I, p. 3.
In most of the plays the stage directions are not specific with regard to the musical accompaniment; simply the general term music is used. In the above directions, we find that specific musical instruments are called for.

The equestrian element is not stressed in this play; emphasis is placed on the spectacular, everything leading up to the burning of Moscow and the defeat of the French. Loburn, a French general, appears on horseback; and the usual: "Enter the VOLUNTEERS, most superbly accoutred, and on horseback: Generals NAPOLEON and MUR, on horseback; after some evolutions, NAPOLEON speaks." Also, "... an OFFICER gallops on and displays the following scroll: "Reward and honour to French or Russian who will extinguish the fire. — Napoleon Bonaparte." And finally, "horses dead." These are the only equestrian elements in the play.

Paul Jones — the celebrated naval adventurer, pirate and privateer — who died at Paris in 1792, is the subject of an ingenious melodramatic romance by Thomas John Dibdin. The incidents and characters in Paul Jones are so numerous and varied that no attempt will be made to follow the author regularly in his details. At the beginning of the story, Paul Jones

1 Act I, Scene 2, p. 8.
2 Act I, Scene 6, p. 18.
3 Act II, Scene 5, p. 23.
4 Act III, Scene 1, p. 28.
5 Cumberland Misc., vol. 2. The play in this edition gives the cast of characters for the performance at Sadler's Wells Theatre, n.d. Nicol gives the listing at the Adelphi on Monday, February 18, 1827. He also gives under the list of unknown authors a play Paul Jones, played at Sadler's Wells, Thursday, September 30, 1827. Obviously, then, two productions of a play about Paul Jones appeared at Sadler's Wells, one by Dibdin, the other by an unknown author.
is in Scotland and after having many adventures which finally culminate in his being accused of setting fire to an old lady's house, Mibdin introduces the bombardment of Whitchaven which concludes the buccaneer's adventures in Great Britain. We are now transported to the wilds of North America and introduced to a tribe of savages. Here too appear the most important of the dramatic persons: Robin MacCubb, the Presbyterian sailor, whose jargon is made up of pious phrases and nautical oaths; Justice Macmittime, by order of government; and Airgray. These three characters are condemned to be roasted alive and are released on the condition that they become the husbands of three beautiful squaws. The piece concludes with a grand sea fight between the vessels of Captain Corbie, the pirate, and Paul Jones; needless to say, Corbie loses. D.-G. remarks in the introduction: "Paul waves his flag triumphantly, the crew and audience give three cheers, and Paul has on shore, what he never had at sea, a pretty considerable rug."

This nautical play introduces the equestrian element. America is the place for the introduction of real horses in battle scenes between the Indians and the British, who are seen deploying beyond the bridge "over which a troop of real Cavalry is led by a trumpet -- they halt . . . ."\(^1\) And later, "... the cavalry gallop from the bridge, which is then occupied by a combat of infantry."\(^2\) The combination of the nautical and the equestrian elements were well received by the English audiences; so it is obvious that the popularity of this play was due to such a combination.

\(^{1}\) Act III, Scene 1, p. 52.
\(^{2}\) Act III, Scene 1, p. 54.
The first performance of Manoppa,\(^1\) an adaptation from Byron's poem by E. M. Milner, was on Easter Monday, April 4, 1883. In the cast appeared Mr. Cartlidge as Manoppa, but his performance was nothing to be compared to the later performance of Ada Isaacs Kenen. Since this play is the best known of equestrian dramas, it will be discussed in its proper place; for with it the equestrian drama may be said to have reached its peak of popularity. Suffice it to say that for this first performance it was destined to satisfy all that audiences could demand of this particular type of play. Milner says that "Nothing could surpass the magnificence of the getting up and costume or the gorgeousness of the scenery."\(^2\) In the remarks to the play, E.-G. writes: "It is but common justice to remark how effectively every piece is got up at this theatre. The equestrian performances are without parallel in the annals of horsemanship; and the scenery and decorations may vie with the proudest metropolitans."\(^3\) Darrow, who was manager of Astley's at this time, was responsible for the excellent productions; he was considered the best manager at the equestrian houses.

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1 *Cumberland Miner*, vol. 5. Bisell lists the play with a sub-title *Manoppa; or The Wild Horse of Tartary*. The date in Bisell's hand list corresponds with the date of production given above the cast of characters, but the sub-title does not appear on the title page of the play; neither does the sub-title in *Dick's 650*.

2 *Dasser, op. cit.*, p. 358, refers to the play as *Manoppa and the Wild Horse; or The Child of the Desert*. These various titles are for Milner's play. Bisell also lists a production of a play *Manoppa; or The Wild Horse of the Ukraine* at the Coburg Theatre, Monday, November 5, 1883, under another.

3 *Manoppa in Cumberland Miner*, vol. 5, p. 9.
There appeared at Covent Garden Theatre in 1829 a splendid farce of buffoonery, exhibiting Bonaparte in the several phases of his career. To ridicule such a piece of anti-English feeling, Mr. Moncrieff wrote the pleasant travestie of *Gipsy Jack*, which is a close and whimsical parody of the leading incidents of the Covent Garden absurdity. *Gipsy Jack* is a brigand upon a smaller scale: born on Blackheath, he becomes the hero of the Fives' Court, assists at the demolition of Norwood stocks, takes Norwood Common by storm, is made chief and generalissimo of the Finchley expedition, begins his second campaign by his celebrated pass of Highgate Hill, is crowned emperor of the typeset at South Wmns, makes an attack on the Finchley beggars, ravages Haddon and Barnet, and walks off the poultry and stray linen from the neighboring fields and hedges. His next exploit is a horse-stealing expedition: he burns his tent, retreats, is hotly pursued by the police and obliged to make a stand at Battle Bridge. His stronghold at Norwood is surprised; he surrenders himself, takes leave of his Hampstead friends previous to transportation, arrives at Newgate, escapes and is re-captured. Finally, he is shipped off to the Swan River.

This extravaganza is divided into six divisions, each one preceded by a *dramatic personage* and a sketch of what has happened between the divisions. The story consists simply of a series of episodes in the life of *Gipsy Jack*.

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1 *Cumberland Minver*, vol. 9.
2 Remarks by D.-G., p. 6. The burlesque at Covent Garden must have been intended for *The Battle of Waterloo* and *The Invasion of Russia*, for in both of these Napoleon appeared as the central character; moreover, these two plays by J. H. Amherst were very popular, all the more reason for the burlesque.
As a burlesque of equestrian drama, this play exhibits donkeys;
in order to understand the unusual form of the play, the reader may examine
the following:

"Second Division.

Passage of Highgate Hill. June, 1810, (before the Tunnel was made)

Dramatis Personae.

Gypsy Jack, First Leader and Generalissimo of the
Finchley Expedition, 31 years old.
Jesse Cooper, afterwards transported.
Bob Pierce, afterwards transported.
Fisher, Second to Jack.
Fenner, Bottle-holder to Jack.
Rathvon, Fiddler.
Robinson, Tinker.
Temkine, Chief Fiddler to the Crew.
Rusty, The Bun Dukes.
Swarell, Landlord of the Horns.
Margaret, Wife of Robinson.
Mrs. Swarell, Landlady of the Horns.

Jack's career between the First and Second Division. —
Jack made, for his services at Horwood, Chief of the Gang
and Generalissimo of the Finchley expedition, after having
fought several battles with West Country Dick, Jimmy from
town, &c. &c. besides various exploits against several
Egyptians, begins his Second Campaign by his celebrated
Passage of Highgate Hill."[1]

As Jack is about to depart on his campaign, he calls for his charger;

Fenner brings forward a donkey.2 In the next scene of the same division,
the Gypsies appear with their children, baggage and donkeys.3 When Jack
is proclaimed king of the Gypsies, he mounts his charger (a donkey) and
rides off as all his followers sing a chorus to the tune of "Drops of

Brandy," a Gypsy fiddler supplying the accompaniment. Then there is
a burlesque of the formations and movements of the horses in the famous
battles staged at Astley's and at the Surrey:

"Scene II. — Shuttle Ground in the Beggars' Bush;
Gypsy troops discovered with cudgels,
mounted on basket horses.

Enter JASS with BAGGS, attended by FAMUL, FISHER,
&c. &c. I. Gypsy troops go through a great variety of
mock cavalry movements."

This piece was performed at the Coburg Theatre on May 30, 1851.
According to Nicoll, the place of production is the same, i.e., the Coburg;
but the date does not appear in the text consulted. It is assumed, there-fore, that the date given by Nicoll is the correct one.

Bishop declares in his article that at the Christmas of 1833, Durow
returned to Drury Lane where he had signed a contract with the manager Bunn
to perform in the equestrian spectacle of St. George and the Dragon; or,
The Seven Champions of Christendom. Something has already been said about
Durow; it would not be amiss to add:

"In the November of 1852, the late King (William IV) sent
for Mr. Durow, desired an arena to be built within the
Pavilion at Brighton, for the purpose of witnessing the
performance of 'Raphael's Dream,' as well as several feats
of horsemanship. Since then he has signalized himself by
the production of St. George and the Dragon, King Arthur
and the Knights of the Round Table; and lastly, the chival-
ric spectacle of Charlemagne, all of which have had the
stage of Drury Lane for their arena."3

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1 Ibid., p. 24.
2 Bishop, op. cit., p. 856. Nicoll lists this play under unknown authors;
first performed at Astley's on Thursday, December 26, 1822.
3 Actors by Gaslight, no. 29, Saturday, October 27, 1857, p. 210 f.
Another account says that Her Majesty Queen Adelaide witnessed both the production of St. George and that of King Arthur; the same writer continues: "Queen Adelaide, to express her admiration of this spectacle [King Arthur] ordered 100 pounds to be distributed among the performers. The company of the Royal Amphitheatre also presented him with an elegant gold and silver snuff box, with a suitable inscription."¹

The Clerk of Clerkenwell; or, The Three Black Bottles,² by George Almar, was performed at Sadler's Wells Theatre, February 3, 1834. This is a local drama of intrigue, attempted murder by poisoning, and sorcery. There is also the usual triangular plot and its many complications. Marion Arthur is in love with Stanley Blake, a young physician; but her father prefers the Clerk of Clerkenwell. Planning thereby to get the rich estates and favour, this clerk prepares to poison Luke Arthur by giving him a poisonous cure contained in three black bottles. Just as Luke is about to take the contents of the third bottle, the daughter appears and implores delay; then the lover Stanley, who has in the meantime joined the army, makes an opportune entrance and induces Luke to submit the draught to analysis. Poison is the result and the Clerk is accused of an attempt upon the life of the Lord of Illington. But it seems that the Clerk has provided himself against contingencies by previously waiting upon Steel-Cap, a chivalrous marauder, whom he persuades, in consideration of a good bribe, to assume the disguise of a nobleman, and give him a character in case of need.

¹ Actors by Daylight, No. 20, July 14, 1838, p. 155.
² Cumberland Minor, vol. 7.
In the purse of gold is discovered some token of remembrance that proves the Clerk to have been the seducer of his [Steel-Cap's] sister, once tenderly loved. A woman of the wall is now brought up to receive judgment for sorcery. She turns out to be the sister of Steel-Cap, and the wife, not sometime, of the Clerk of Clerkenwell. Subsequently the Clerk is killed by Steel-Cap, who is pardoned by the King for his numerous delinquencies. In the end Marion and Stanley are united.

D.-C. remarks that Mr. Almey, who was the lessee of Sadler's Wells and also the author, has caught some of his predecessors in the production: in pageantry, splendid scenery, and magnificent costumes. "The scene of Jack Straw's Castle, the burning and destruction of Clerkenwell Monastery, and the Marriage Pageant, are every way worthy of a metropolitan theatre."1

Into this local romantic drama is introduced Master Methusaleh Hobeshoy, a boy of nineteen years and six months, who furnishes the comedy element. His steed, Bucephalus, is given in the cast of characters as a real pony. In one scene, Hobeshoy enters, mounted on a pony,2 and there follows a very comic scene between the young man and his father, Sir. Balsam. Unless there is something unusual about the horse's performance, he is not listed in the cast of characters; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Bucephalus's part was prominent, even though it was only during one scene.

The comic drama of Tom O' Shanter3 by Henry R. Addison was first produced at Drury Lane on Tuesday, November 25, 1834. During the nineteenth

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1 Ibid., p. 5 f.
2 Act I, Scene 1, p. 13.
century there were staged many plays that could easily be adapted to suit the equestrian spectacle. This, however, is the first that the author has examined which makes the appearance of the horse optional. The play itself is pure comedy and deals, of course, with Tam and his drunken escapades; there is also a minor love story. This scene with the equestrian element above Tam being frightened by witches:

"Scene IV. — Inside of Alloway Kirk in ruins. Several tombs. Behind them persons hid. MAGGIE disguised as a witch. DAVID with a flam-beau in a high window.

Tam enters all splashed with mud from his ride; he has been drinking, and he hears the

"Chorus.

Poor Tam O'Shanter soon must die.
The day that sees his Jeannie wed
To Souter John, he will be led
Into this church's cloistered nave,
And placed within you yawning grave.

(Tam, during this chorus, has expressed an agony of terror. Towards its conclusion, he throws himself on his knees and covers his face with his hands. The witches all come from behind the tombs, with lights and all kinds of horrors, and dance round him to the following chorus:-)

Tyrant, tyrant, know thy doom,
Keffin sprites prepare his tomb;
Let him lie with murderers' bones
With laughter mock the dying tones
Of him, who makes his daughter wed
'Gainst her will. Fates cut his thread;
Right and left now spread the fuss,
Tam will soon be one of us.

(The lights are suddenly extinguished; a sepulchral voice pronounces 'Fly for your life.' Tam ventures to look up, sees all is dark, gets up cautiously, and flies suddenly
through the door. The witches set up a shout, and exult 
screaming and laughing after him. At this moment a thun-
derbolt strikes the flint, which falls open, and Tam is 
seen to ride across on his grey mare, pursued by Cuttie 
Sark, who returns holding up the tail as the act drop falls.)

N. B. -- This business can be done by means of a transparency 
after the real horse has crossed the stage in front; 
but there is no absolute necessity for the horse, ex-
cept for an effect.

End of Act I. 1

A drama critic in 1836 makes the following pertinent statement con-
cerning the status of the drama:

"The theatres are just now in a rather flourishing state, 
but we must not flatter ourselves that the Drama is re-
viving. 'The world is still deceived by ornament.'
Spectacle has taken the whole town captive, and Pantomime 
is now joined with his old ally to cut off our escape . .
. . . The Bronze Horse, recently introduced here (Covent 
Garden), has got the start of the quadruped of the same 
name announced at the other houses; but though a showy 
animal of his class, he is no Eclipse." 2

With regard to the above statement, the reporter had in mind the usual pan-
tomimes that were regularly acted at all the theatres during the Christmas 
season. That the pantomimes and harlequinades were adapted to meet the 
demand for horsemanship, we have already seen.

Eugene Scribe's Le Cheval de Bronze was first performed in Paris on 
March 25, 1835. Dacier was quick to realize the possibilities of this play.
Shortly after, June 2, 1835, The Bronze Horse; or The Flying Palfrey of 
China, by an unknown author, was performed at Astley's. An adaptation by

1 Act I, Scene 4, pp. 5-6.
Edward Fitzball, *The Bronze Horse; or The Spell of the Cloud King*, appeared for the first time at Covent Garden on Monday, December 14, 1835. Still another, *The Bronze Horse*, was written by Alfred Bunn for Drury Lane, January 5, 1856.¹

The Duncome² edition of the play studied is by Fitzball. The music was written by G. H. Redwall, with the exception of the overture and two pieces by Auber, who had written the music for Scribe's opera.

*The Bronze Horse* is a story of enchantment. Prince Zamra, enamoured of the Princess Margolia who has been bewitched by the Cloud King, mounts the bronze horse and arrives at the planetary palace, where, in his attempt to rescue the princess, he himself becomes under the magic spell. Feki, the daughter of the former Tahin Lao - because her lover Koyan, a young soldier, has also been bewitched by being turned to stone when he attempts to reveal to the Prince the secret of the enchantment - attempts the venture and escapes the enchantment by not succumbing to the spell of the princess. She finally succeeds in extinguishing the flame of the sacred lamp and steals from the brazen statue the charmed ring with which she restores to life her lover Koyan, the Prince and also the Princess.

In the tale *The Bronze Horse* is played by a real horse. We are prepared for the first appearance of the horse whose story is told in song:

"Down in yon glen, so dark and drear,
Where wild boughs hide a cavern deep ---

¹ Biocic gives the following: *The Bronze Horse; or, The Flying Palfrey of China* (R. A. N. 6/6/1856). Bunn's *The Bronze Horse* (Drury Lane, 1856). I should say that the play by Bunn was not an equestrian play, but a fairy opera. Cf. *New Monthly Magazine*, January, 1856. The other play was most likely equestrian, since it was performed at the Royal Amphitheatre; furthermore, the sub-title might suggest such an equestrian element.

² No date is given for the Duncome edition.
At midnight evil fiends resort,
And there unholy revels keep.
They dance around with fearful cry,
With clasped hands and haggard mien —
While 'mid that ring, with eyes of fire,
'Tis then the Horse of Bronze is seen!
Yes, there — yes, there! the charmed steed —
Of him take heed!
Yes, there the Horse of Bronze is seen!

A youth for love distracted, wild,
Himself across the censer throw —
Then to the cloud, on eagles' wings,
The censer with its rider flew.
And never, from that fatal hour,
Have we the last one gas'd upon!
And all we know is, through the storm,
He with the Horse of Bronze is gone!
Yes, there upon the charmed steed —
Of him take heed!
He with the Horse of Bronze is gone.
(Thunder heard.)

Thus, in the midst of a storm, The Bronze Horse with Kyan on his back
descends through the air to his cavern on earth. The next scene is

"Scene III. — The Cavern of the Bronze Horse. The Horse
is on a rock, in centre, at back. — On one
side is a flight of natural stairs, leading
down into the cavern — the opening of which
shews foliage, &c., in bright sunlight, con-
trasting with the gloom of the interior."

To this place the Prince comes:

"Music. The Prince boldly approaches the Horse, pausing on
the steps . . . The Prince throws himself on the
Horse, which begins to ascend . . . The Horse ascends,
with thunder and lightning — the people gazing in
surprise, &c. as the Drop Falls."
The first actual play found by the writer to be called an equestrian drama is Turpin's Ride to York; or Benny Black Boss, by R. M. Milner. All the other texts of plays already given are called spectacles, melo-dramas, etc. First performed at Astley's Amphitheatre on Whit Monday, 1836, the play is very interesting. Heretofore, the horse has been introduced simply as an element of realism; he has performed in battles, sieges, processions, and the like. Now he is presented as the friend of his master. For the success of his daring ventures, Turpin gives his fast horse credit for his timely escapes; furthermore, he is rather sentimental about his horse:

"Let the lover his mistress's beauty rehearse,
And lend her attractions in languishing verse;
Be it mine, in rude strains but with truth, to express,
The love that I bear to my bonny Black Boss.

Mark, mark! how that eyeball glows bright as a brand,
That neck proudly arches, those nostrils expand.
Mark that wide, flowing mane, of which each silky tress,
Might adorn prouder beauties, tho' none like Black Boss.

Mark that skin, sleek as velvet and dusky as night,
With its jet undisfigured by one spot of white;
That throat brusched with veins, prompt to charge or caress.
How, is she not beautiful? Bonny Black Boss!"

A reward of five hundred pounds is offered for the capture of Turpin, and a further reward of two hundred pounds for the apprehension of his pal Tom King, the gentleman highwayman. When King discovers this he says:

"Turpin must know this. What can delay him with such a mare as Black Boss? Mark! I hear her hoofbeats! Hurrah! 'Tis he.

Music. — TURPIN rides on R. H."

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1 *Dick's Standard Plays*, vol. 17.
2 Act I, Scene 3, p. 6.
3 Act I, Scene 3, p. 5.
Through many adventures Turpin gallops on and off the stage on his black mare. When he is at a Roadside Inn on the road to York, he says:

"More than half the race is run; Bess has triumphed over every difficulty. Thou matchless steed! Yet brace fast thy sinews, hold on, the goal is not yet won.

Fled past on right and left, how fast each forest, grove, and bower,
On right and left, fled past, each city, town, and tower."  

Then, "ungirding his mare" . . . "Turpin scareps his steed."

By moonlight, in darkness, by night or by day,
Her headlong career there is nothing can stay,
She cares not for distance, she knows not distress,
Can you show me the coursers to match with Black Boss?"

Meanwhile, his pursuers come to the Inn, but Turpin outwits them; "Turpin ungirds their saddles, leaps upon Black Boss and rides off."  

"Turpin. Hurrah! the turrets of York Cathedral are in view!
'Tis won! and dear Bess, I owe it all to you! One short mile and all thy troubles will be over —
don't droop, old girl, I've sworn to accomplish it, and I will, though I drag thee every step; don't fail me now, old girl — she won't go much further, and I must give it — what, give up the race when it's just won? Come, come, old girl, one short mile. I have sworn it, and I will do it — come, come!

(Music. -- He persuasively urges her off, L. R.)"  

But Turpin never arrives at York with Bess:

1 Act II, Scene 4, p. 9.
2 Act II, Scene 4, p. 9.
3 Act II, Scene 4, p. 9.
4 Act II, Scene 5, p. 10.

Turpin. And art thou gone, Boss? Gone -- gone! And I have killed the best steed that ever was crossed; and for what -- for what? (Bell chimes.) I am answered. It was to hear those sounds --

Over highway and byway, in rough or smooth weather, Some thousands of miles have we journeyed together; Our couch the same straw, our meals the same mess; No couple more constant than I and Black Boss!

Turpin still has time to evade his pursuers:

"Never -- never! I'll fight it out here, by Boss's side! Poor Boss! I have killed her, but she has done it! Ha, ha! we have done it! (Falls convulsively across Boss.)"

The play ends with

"(Music. -- Gipsies rush out . . . Turpin protects the body of Black Boss with a brace of pistols. The constables are over-powered. The burning barn lights up the effective concluding tableau.)"

The above scenes show that Black Boss is the central figure in the melodrama. Turpin, her master, has no other love; moreover, the play may be called tragic, for, after the great build-up of sentiment for the horse, she is killed while trying to take her master to safety. This play must have been very popular, if for no other reason than the Englishman's love of horses.

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1 Act II, Scene 5, p. 11.
2 Act II, Scene 5, p. 12.
3 Act II, Scene 5, p. 12.
In 1833, the Ceburg was rechristened the Victoria, in honor of Her Majesty, who, when she was a Princess, once paid the theatre a visit. For many years old "Vie," as it was familiarly called, held a unique position among London Theatres; both its plays and its actors were regarded as representative of the most extravagant phases of melodrama. Richard Plantagenet, by John Thomas Haines, performed on December 1, 1836, is an example of this type of melodrama.

The author has availed himself of the story of Sat Tyler and exhibited the celebrated historical scene of the provocation and the revenge. He has blended the fierce discontents and feuds of the great nobles, and introduced the rude warfare of that barbarous age, when liberty and life were little respected; when the most atrocious crimes were tolerated, and even encouraged, by the powerful barons, and the nobility were obliged to make this singular appeal, that they would not retain or support any felon or law-breaker - a promise that was violated as often as it was made. He has imprinted upon Richard, who was miserably addicted to feasting and low pleasures, an affair with Effie, a young Scotch lass of humble degree, who comes to London; and after a variety of surprising adventures, she discovers her false lover in the person of the king. Driven to madness by the sense of her dishonor, and her father's keen and too well-merited reproaches, she swallows poison.

"Enter STANLISH, on horseback, R. U. K., bearing EFFIE, insensible, on a pavilion before him, followed by WINKFRED, on horseback, and two Servants, also mounted.

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1 Baker, op. cit., p. 228.
2 Cumberland Minor, vol. 15.
The Servants dismount, take Effie from the arms of Standish, and lay her upon a cloak. R. C. — STANDISH and WINEFRED also dismount — . . . .

Later, she is borne to the cloisters of the ruined abbey of St. Eldred.

While the monks are chanting,

"Enter the LANCASTERIAN party, on horseback, L. U. E. —
They ride down the winding path between the burning ruins, and range L., followed by DERBY, who dismounts and advances. C."

"Enter PLANTAGENET's Party, on horseback, from R. U. E. —
don the winding path, and range R., followed by KING RICHARD. — DERBY ascends the raised throne, L."  

Donald reproaches Richard with the desolation he has brought upon his hearth: at this moment, Effie, rising from her sleep of death, conciliates her father and pronounces her seducer's pardon.

"Richard. Effie, live for me! — I will resign dominion —
then shalt be my all!"

Finally, the King resigns the crown to Derby, Henry the Fourth of England:

"The celebrated Picture of Richard resigning his Crown is realized. — the flames of the abbey ruins blaze brightly, throwing a strong glare on all; and the curtain descends amidst enthusiastic shouts and waving of torches."

To lighten these scenes, Timothy Tagpoint and Tommy Tugstump play off their gambols, and, in pleasant rivalry, sue for the hand of fair Winesfred,

1 Act II, Scene 5, p. 36.
2 Act III, Scene 5, p. 56.
3 Act III, Scene 5, p. 57.
4 Act III, Scene 5, p. 57.
who laughs at and feels them alternately. The drama is rich in views of ancient London, and splendid pageant scenes of the olden time:

"The Hill of Old Bourns, in the distance — the broken gates of Old Bourns and Bridge over the River Fleet . . .

MUSIC, BELLS RINGING, &c. -- . . The Apprentices sing . . .

During the Chorus, the procession of the Lord Mayor's Pageant descends the hill as follows:

A band of Bowmen.
A City Company, with wands.
Six Sylphs, with flowers.
Three Sylvans, in chains.
A Band of Spearman.
Churchmen, with incense.
Six Knights, in full armour.
Six Esquires, in half armour.
Two Aldermen.
A Mace-Bearer and Sword-Bearer.
William Salworth, Lord Mayor.
Spearman.
Cog and Magog.
Timothy Tagpoint, as the Dragon.
Sylphs.
King Lud.

THE QUEEN on horseback, attended by Pages.
Nobles of the Court, (all the Characters.)
KING RICHARD on horseback, attended by Knights.
Nobles of the Court, (all the Characters.)
Spear and Bowmen.

. . . . . The King and Queen now descend the hill on Horseback, attended by Pages and the Nobles of the Court.
-- as they advance, the Apprentice Club Lawmen sing . . ."

The scene of the rebellion contains the usual equestrian element:

"Scene V. — An Ancient Village, now calledworth, with a distant view of the rebel encampment on Blackheath — a high-raised road or street running across from L. U. E. to R. U. E. — antique houses behind."  

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1 Act I, Scene 4, p. 21 f.
2 Act II, Scene 3, p. 41.
“TRUMPHS. — Knights and Nobles cross the high-raised street from L. U. E., on horseback, followed by STANDISH, WALNORTH, SIR JOHN HOLLAND, and KING RICHARD, also mounted — they alight, and descend, R. U. E. — a Knight, with a white flag, rides after the rebels, R. S. E. — Richard motions the Soldiers off L. U. E., to keep back — a trumpet without is answered by another at a distance.

TRUMPHS. — Re-enter the Knight, mounted, R. U. E. followed by VAT TYLER, on a jaded horse.”

During the rebellion Nat Tyler is killed and the King pardons the rebels.

Dauro opened Astley’s as usual with an equestrian spectacle entitled The Passage of the Deserts, or The French in Egypt, on Monday, April 17, 1838. The following month he had in preparation a grand equestrian pageant in honor of the approaching coronation of Queen Victoria. On the same program was the equestrian spectacle The Conquest of Babylon.

Later, an amusing riddle was written about Dauro and his horses:

“Why are Dauro’s horses like gossiping women? Because they are tailbearers.”

Some critics took great delight in making fun of the horses; others complained of the odors of the circus. The following appeared in The Daily Delta, a New Orleans paper:

“The amphibious style of amusements they are having here (The Amphitheatre), made up of well-trained horses and

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1 Act II, Scene 9, p. 42.
2 Actors by Daylight, Saturday, April 21, 1838, p. 62. Kicoll lists this play under unknown authors.
3 Ibid., May 26, 1838, p. 103.
4 Ibid., June 2, 1838, p. 111.
5 Ibid., June 22, 1838, p. 126.
badly trained actors, did not draw an immoderately large house last night. This union of the green room and stables may be delicious to some tastes, but is scarcely the most compound imaginable to delicate olfactories."\(^1\)

The other issues of *Actors by Daylight* for the remainder of the year do not cite any new productions, although *Aladdin* is given as a successful revival in September. For the next few years, because I have not been able to secure the documents, I have been unable to verify productions.

On June 8, 1861, Astley's Royal Amphitheatre was destroyed by fire, and Durow's losses, amounting to 20,000 pounds,\(^2\) so preyed upon his mind as to cause his death. Nicoll declares that "its most famous period was between 1830 and 1861, when Durow was manager."\(^3\) Disher writes:

"Before his death in 1862, Durow had exhausted the rightful province of the equestrian drama. To his successors he left not only a circus in charred ruins, but also the ring's romance in like state. Later managers of Astley's had to borrow what they could from the novel, the theatre, the opera and the newspaper.

'Every trick that horse can achieve (wrote the critic of *The Times*), and every species of interest in which a horse can stand as the central point, seems to have been brought before the public, till the power of excitement is destroyed by familiarity.'\(^4\)

It is true that Durow was a good showman and an excellent equestrian performer; and, as a manager, he was considered the best - this combination

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1 *The Daily Delta*, New Orleans, February 17, 1859. I used this quotation simply because it expresses best what various critics were writing throughout the century.


3 Nicoll, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 225.

made him successful. But, to say that he had exhausted the rightful province of the equestrian drama is an extreme statement. Any play — whether it be an original or an adaptation from whatever source possible — is an equestrian drama if it is designed principally for horses. It is a fact, too, that the privileges and rights of production at the various theatres were constantly violated. A play, successful at one theatre, was certain to be produced at another theatre, or at other theatres. This, I am sure, accounts for the great number of borrowings from various sources.

William Cooke — about whom we shall have much to say later — was a manager at Astley’s who adapted successfully because he was far-sighted enough to discover what material could be suited to the performance of horses.

Batty rebuilt the house and changed the name to Batty’s Amphitheatre, but true to the tradition of Astley’s he continued to produce equestrian dramas. For the season of 1846 The Conquest of Lahore, The Sikh Invasion, and an elaborate spectacle The Stead of Syracuse, or The Flight of Damon were popular. Maccabea, and The Wild Horse was revived in October in all its ancient glory. The next month a new equestrian spectacle was brought out called The Demon Horse; or the Twelve Fishes and the Charmed Bit, which was a successful adaptation from the French drama of Le Cheval Diable:

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1 The Theatrical Times, No. 1, (Saturday, June 18, 1846) p. 6. This play is not in Nicoll’s head list.
2 Ibid., No. 3, (Saturday, June 27, 1846) p. 20. Nicoll lists this The Sikh’s Invasion; or, The War in India (R. A. M. 1/6/1846).
3 Ibid., No. 12 (Saturday, August 29, 1846) p. 95. Not in Nicoll.
4 Ibid., No. 19 (Saturday, October 17, 1846) p. 123.
5 Ibid., No. 24 (Saturday, November 21, 1846) p. 205. Nicoll gives the date of production (R. A. M. 9/11/1846).
"The fortunes of a youth, the son of a miller, who is possessed by the demons of ambition, are set forth in a series of tableaux equestrian feats, and dramatic incidents of moving matter by flood and field, and are most graphically delineated. Cavalcades, wild stag-hunts, entries of armed knights, in all the blaze of chivalric glory present an ever varying scene, until the triumph of the whole is manifested in a grand tableau illuminated by a magnificent display of pyrotechnic art. The spectacle has been produced in the most lavish style, and bids fair to enjoy a lengthened run. The scenery and effects were particularly good."

During December The Demon Horse continued to run with unabated vigor. There was also a revival of The Battle of Waterloo — in which Comeraw sustained his original character of Napoleon — as an afterpiece; later in the month another afterpiece, Bob Roy, was successfully staged:

"The piece is splendidly put on the stage — and the scenery is beautiful, the auxiliary aid of the horses, and a variety of characteristic dances were successfully introduced."

The Forty Thieves; or, Harlequin Ali Baba and the Robber's Cave, a new Christmas pantomime, was produced on Saturday, December 26, 1846. The story is as follows: The opening scene represents a fairy grotto by moonlight, surrounded by a silver lake; Hope, a fairy, calls together her sister fays, who instantly appear in charmed shells, magic gondolas, dolphins, etc. They trip lightly round, when Celestine, the fairy queen rises from her pearl palace, through the silver lake: she relates to the court the potency of her forest foe, Oceobrand, who is about to sacrifice a brave youth. She

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid., No. 29 (Saturday, December 12, 1846) p. 246.
3 Ibid., No. 30 (Saturday, December 16, 1846) p. 254.
explains:

Let it be our task to foil his plan,
Virtue to save, and do a good to man.

Her magic power brings to our view a grand fairy vision, showing Ali Baba
the honest woodman and his son, young Canem, at their daily labour; they
promise her their aid, and

To save the fair and save the good,
At once depart o'er wave and wood.

The scene suddenly changes by magic agency, to the interior of the forest,
with the Robber's Cave. Ali Baba and his son commence their work, when
Canem, mistaking his finger for a tree, chops it to the bone. He is dis-
patched home for a plaster; Ali Baba, being left alone, fastens his donkey
to a tree and is about to shop away, when the signal horn of the robbers
fills him with alarm. To save himself he mounts a tree. Two well-known
thieves make their appearance; they prowl about. When they see that all is
safe, they pronounce the charm "Open Sesame." The rods instantly split,
discovering to the astonished eyes of Ali Baba the Robber's Secret Cavern.
A grand procession here takes place, introducing to us the entire forty
thieves. The plunder is safely deposited, and they return to attack the
caravan. Ali Baba descends, trembling with fear; he gains courage and pro-
ounces the charm. At this moment his son Canem returns; they fill the
pennials with gold instead of wood, and then they leave. Hassenea suddenly
appears and discovers that treachery has been at work; he calls to his aid
mighty Gehobrand, who presents him with a magic dagger to slay the intruder.
He takes his leave and departs to accomplish his revenge. This brings us
to the interior of Ali Baba's cottage; all is poverty, until the return of Ali Baba and Casmam, who change the state of things by the production of their treasure. Caga Baba runs for a measure to find out the extent of their wealth; in doing so she is interrupted by Cassim Baba and his prying wife Zodio. Informed of the secret, they rush off to secure a prize. Here Casmam invites Marjiana to become his wife. The scene passes on to a street in Bagdad, with the well known cobbler's stall. A jelly son of Crispin is hard at work when Hassaroo arrives. Having heard of the fate of Cassim Baba, he makes some inquiries of the cobbler, who tells him of his last night's job. Hassaroo, prompted by revenge, offers him a purse of gold if he can paint out the house; he consents, stating he must be blindfolded and placed across a swift horse. Hassaroo replies:

You shall have a swift charger without delay,
No matter what the charge is, I can pay.

A splendid horse is brought in, and the cobbler starts, followed by Hassaroo. He now arrive at the residence of the late Cassim Baba, now occupied by Ali Baba. The horse stops, throwing its rider. After recovering, he receives the purse and departs to purchase a stock of wax and leather.

Hassaroo knocks and produces his card as a travelling oil merchant. Ali Baba, thus deceived, gives him a generous welcome. We now find ourselves at the verandah at Cassim Baba's with the forty thieves secreted in large oil jars. Marjiana, finding her lamp gone out, is about to replenish it at one of the oil jars, when a thief's head pops up to know the time; she, checking her fear, replies, "Not yet!" and runs off, returning with a large saucepan of boiling oil, with which she exterminates the entire band
with the exception of Hassanac. Ali Baba, Hassanac, Camen, Coga arrive.

Morgiana is requested to dance for the amusement of their guest. She watches very closely and observes Hassanac in the act of despatching Ali Baba with the chammed dagger, when she plunges it into his heart. This noble deed accomplished, the jare instantly change to a splendid fairy boxer, discovering the fairy queen. She instantly changes Camen to Harlequin, Ali Baba to Glean, Coga to Pantalone, and the intrepid Morgiana to Columbine. The comic business follows, containing the popular hits of the day, ending in the Pearl Palace of the Fairy Queen, with the court in picturesque attitudes, mounted on cream colored horses.¹

The most popular production at Astley's in 1846 was the equestrian and fairy spectacle of The Battle of the Amazons, by Thomas E. Wilks.² The scene is laid when the Moors ruled in Spain, and their monarchs held court at Granada. Zulma, a beautiful Moorish maid living in a village near Granada, is betrothed to the commander of the Moorish army, Ismael, who has just returned from a successful war. The fame of Zulma's beauty has reached the ear of Mohammed the King, who in disgrace enters the village to satisfy himself as to her charms. He becomes enamoured of her and orders his slaves to convey her to his seraglio. Ismael arrives in the city amid a grand procession of soldiers (one of the most effective scenes in the piece) and is received by the King with all favor - he being unaware of

¹ [Note: The text contains references to dates and sources, which are not translated into English.]
² [Note: The text contains references to dates and sources, which are not translated into English.]

[Note: The text contains references to dates and sources, which are not translated into English.]
Zulma's betrothement and the general not knowing of her presence in the harem until he sees her amongst the slaves. He immediately doubts her fidelity, but having received a promise from the king that whatever he asks shall be granted, he determines to give her a chance to leave the palace and accordingly requests the freedom of all the slaves. The monarch pretends to accede to his demand, but secretly gives instructions that Zulma alone shall be detained.

A benevolent fairy now comes to the rescue of the Moorish maiden in the disguise of a slave, giving her a magic rose which is to assist her in every emergency. Zulma's former companions in captivity, finding she is not released, determine to share her fate or procure her liberty. The rose is now put to use and the edalissans by its power are supplied with spears which become transformed into harps on the approach of the troops. At last they force their way out of the Alhambra and occupy the mountains adjacent to the city, where, joined by a numerous body of insurgent slaves from all parts, they become a powerful body. Here Ismael, disguised as a dervise, comes, and perceiving Zulma asleep, steals the rose as a love token. An envoy accompanied by the King in disguise now visits the Amazonian camp before when a grand review of the infantry and cavalry takes place, and the monarch obtains permission from the leaders of the rebel forces for some of his attendants unarmed to enter the pass with presents. These are chests filled with rich articles of female attire, and splendid ornaments which so captivate the warriors that they throw down their arms to secure the attractive finery. Mohammed's followers immediately seize the weapons and make prisoners of the
rebels, while Zulma, seeking her magical protector, is terrified at finding
she has lost it, and the whole army is led away captive to Granada. Israel
is ordered for execution by the King; at the moment he is led forth to
death, he restores to Zulma her companions who are gathered around to dispute
the monarch's authority. A conflict ensues between the royal troops and
the Amazons, in which the latter are victorious, and the spectacle terminates
with a magnificent tableau descriptive of the triumph of the slaves over the
Morish soldiery and the union of the lovers Zulma and Israel.

The Theatrical Times has an interesting account of Marmion, by Fitzball,
produced at Astley's on Monday, June 12, 1848:

"A grand chivalric and historical pageant has been produced
at this establishment (Astley's from Sir W. Scott's romantic
poem of 'Marmion' (by Mr. Fitzball). The magnitude
of the stage, and the various resources of this theatre,
particularly adapt it for the production of spectacles and
equestrian shows; but we doubt much of the poetic beauties
of a work like 'Marmion' can be effectively portrayed amidst
the din of carpenters and scene shifters, and the trampling
of equine auxiliaries and human supernumeraries. Some alter-
cations have been made in the story by the adapter, not,
indeed, with remarkable consistency or probability, but
sufficiently so to make the piece more melodramatic than
it would otherwise have been. The fate of Constance, the
man she had broken her vows, and fled from her convent with
Lord Marmion — for though she is condemned to the punish-
ment of being imprisoned in the dungeons of the convent, she
is liberated from her subterranean prison by an old smuggler
and his son, who having made these gloomy vaults a place of
concealment for their contraband goods, discover, in one of
their professional visits, the offending Constance. After escaping
from her fearful death she accompanies the
smugglers to their wild haunt, and witnesses the supposed
phantom fight between Marmion and Milton. An effective
tableau is formed at the conclusion of this scene by the

1 Miscell lists this play by Fitzball as Marmion; or The Battle of Flodden
Field, June 12, 1848.
prostrate figure of Marmion and the mysterious warrior on his dark steed bending over him, while from every rock and cliff issue the smuggler band, clothed to represent demons and spirits, and waving torches, rush out and fill the scene. In the last scene where Marmion, mortally wounded, is carried from Flodden Field to die beside the Sybil's Fountain, the man who tends him in his last moments proves to be the deserted Constance de Beverley, who sinks upon the body, and expires with her false lover. The piece was well put upon the stage, and there were some splendid groupings and magnificent chivalric pictures, but there was little novelty, either in the pageant or the scenic effects... The spectacle was, however, received with general applause by very numerous audiences during the week.¹

Edward Fitzball wrote one success after another; most of his successes, however, were adaptations. Occasionally, he would produce something original. Such was the case with The White Maiden of California, staged at Astley's on April 9, 1849. Fitzball saved the spectators by the hero's dream of dead Red Indians. From the graves around where he sleeps their spirits rise. Ruth bestrides a Hanoverian cream of the breed of the royal stables. While soft music is being played, the riders' heads appear above the level of the stage. Still as statues, they and their mounts are pushed upwards through the tapis - as motionless as if sculptured in marble.²

This was so successful that Fitzball adapted Azenel, The Prodigal, his version of Scribe and Auber's l'Enfant Prodigue, into Azenel; or The Prodigal of Memphis.³ Azenel, anxiously awaited by his father Rueben, chief of the Israelites, and his betrothed Jepthale, brings two travelers, Amnonpha and his sister Nefta, to share their meal. Having heard so much from his new acquaintances about the astonishing things in Memphis, Azenel becomes

¹ Diby, No. 113 (Saturday, July 1, 1849) p. 212 f.
³ Duncombe's Edition.
dissatisfied and wishes to heave with them. His old father reluctantly
grants his consent only after Jepthale says that Aaasel will return much
happier. Aaasel, warned by his father of the wickedness of the city, promises
to return. Act I closes with

"Music . . . During this trio Aanolphis and Neffe quit
the stage, L. E., and re-cross in procession on horse-
back, with camels, guards, &c., from L. to R. The cara-
van driver announces to Ruesben that the cavalcade is
about to depart. Jepthale puts on Aaasel's mantle L.,
baggage is carried across; Aaasel embraces Jepthale, then
his father. Shakes hands with them all; then, springing
on the back of his horse, gallops off. The procession
re-crosses in distance; the domestics waving their caps,
as Ruesben sinks on a seat, and Jepthale, now giving way
to tears weeps bitterly."1

In the following act Aaasel arrives in Memphis; then caught witnessing in
the temple of Isis the bacchanalian orgy of the followers of the high priest
Basharis, he is offered as human sacrifice by being thrown into the River
Bile. Saved by a camel driver Beemond, he again meets Neffe and her brother
when he upbraids and then forgives. He is left on the desert to die because
of his rashness, and the Spirit of the Desert appears to him, gives him
strength and points the way home. Arriving at home safely he begs forgive-
ness. Both Jepthale and Ruesben rejoice. The play ends with

"Music . . . People enter on all sides, contemplating in
silence the happy group as the center sheaf of corn ex-
spends, and the Spirit of the Desert rises, spreading its
wings over Aaasel and Jepthale as they kneel at the feet
of Ruesben, who confers on them his benediction. Tableau."2

1 Act I, Scene 1, p. 9.
An unusual pantomime, *Harlequin and O'Donoghue; or The White Horse of Killarney*, I was first performed at Astley's on Thursday, December 26, 1830. The play consists simply of short scenes:

"Scene I.

The Glen of Mischief.

The Bag of Mischief, over a Peat Fire, is still trying to elicit from an Eileen Still the Evil Spirit of Ireland, in the form of WHISKEY; she, though still in the Still, won't be still, but 'waste his Silver' and stands confessed the NEAT POTENTI. This powerful Spirit is sent by the Bag of Mischief, under the disguise of FAIRY CARRY, to tempt and ruin the followers of 'Father Mathew' and the 'Water Cure,' whom, she says, are the especial favourites of the 'Water Drinking Peel.' O'Donoghue. Whiskey swore he'll do her bidding, for he'll 'fire them with drink, by making them as drunk as blazes.' Mischief parts from Whiskey with 'a drop in her eye,' but Whiskey is not so affected; for he is sure that where Whiskey is, Mischief won't be far off.

"Scene II.

The Lake of Killarney.

The entrance to the Mansion of Lord Bullfrog is on one side, on the other a little Inn. It being in Ireland, the sign was to have been 'a Bull,' but bulls not being in fashion at present, it has been changed to the 'Queen's Head.' It being May-Day Eve, the Fairies of the Lake are seen dancing and strewing flowers on the water, as if sweetly beseeching the road, preparatory to the appearance of

O'DONOGHUE ON HIS WHITE HORSE.

He gallops across the Lake, says much that is well worth hearing, puts on the habit of a Beggar, and 'O charming May,' what a time for making a little love; so think the fair Kathleen and her Lover, — but instead of making a little, they make a great deal. She realizes the Beggar's wants, and then wants to have a little more love. It has long since been an established fact, that even Cupid, who can change any man into a goose, sometimes has his own 'geese cooked,' and so it proves now, for Lord Bullfrog's
Cockney, discovers the lovers, flares up, a broil ensues, and all are thrown into a perfect glee. At this critical moment, Lord Bullfrog, with his jovial companions, return from the chase. Lady Bullfrog (to see her is to love her,) with her interesting little family, comes to meet him. She flies into her husband's arms -- and thus, (as many married ladies have done before) stands 'in arms against her husband.' Lady Bullfrog is enraged with the lovers, so to punish Dermot, who is in his debt, he seizes his only friend, his Horse, by way of payment, but gets 'more kicks than he's pleased.' O'Demoghue, as the mendicant, aids the lovers, and Dermot's Horse is restored. Lord Bullfrog, being determined to get rid of his plague of a daughter, puts her up as a 'A Prize,' which makes her look very blank as he explains.

Who'er to-sorrow brings the fairest steed,
The one that keeps the best, has greatest speed;
Shall have fair Kathleen -- yes, and all her tin,
So try your lucks, and let the best horse win.

All disperses, leaving Dermot alone with his Horse, by whose aid, he feels certain to win his heart's dearest hope. But, alas, 'the course of true love never did run smooth.' Whiskey comes in the way, and whisks away his senses -- then his money -- and at last his Horse: Whiskey mounts the Horse, and, setting up a horse laugh, gallops off with it. Dermot, in despair, determines to try the 'Water Cure,' by drowning himself, but is prevented by O'Demoghue, who promises to lend him another Horse for the sorrow's race, and at once takes him to the bottom of the lake.

Scene III.

The Coral Stable of the Thousand Steeds.

O'Demoghue's White Horse is seen quite at home enjoying his banquet, waited upon by Ponies and Water Fairies. He is in the prime of life. "None of your has-beens," for he 'Never has been' but dines off his three courses like a gent, consisting of a TURKEY OF PUMP SOUP, a dish of STEWED HORSE LEGS, and a plateau of CLOVER WINE. Having a turn for tennis, he stands no shafter, and having cut his own, has no objection to a little dance. Dermot chooses a Horse, which, as might be expected, proves 'one in a thousand.' He feels 'quite up in the stirrups,' and as he is changing his clothes, he is closed in by changing the scene to
Scene IV.

The Laughing Forest.

Whiskey and Mischief meet again. The Evil Spirit tells the Hag, that he has obtained Dermot’s favourite Horse, and on it he hopes to win the race, and thus bring Kathleen within their power. The trees enjoy the fun, and though precious old ones, 'laugh like newfuns.'

Scene V.

MAY-DAY in the MILLS of KILLARNEY.

Here we find Morris Dancing, Running in a Sack, Grinning through a Cellar, and other delicate amusements previous to the GREAT TRIAL! All the competitors seize their stirrups, and some of them put their foot in it. But where is Dermot? If they start without him, there will be a start with a vengeance. But not he is coming and very becoming he comes. All is prepared; off they go. This proves true enough, for many go off over their horses’ necks. Dermot leaps his Lordship’s gate after a style of his own. Whiskey being a lad of Spirit, is not at all behind. Now for the race, which is to decide all! Kathleen trembles. Whiskey must put his strength to the proof. Kathleen takes courage, for to her Dermot is far too winning to lose — nor does he; but whiskey getting possession of Kathleen, and the Fairy Stead, flies off with them. All consternation — 'Pursue, pursue.'

Scene VI.

The Pursuit through the Laughing Forest.

O’Donoghue again befriends Dermot, by lending him his own White Horse — Cockey has mounted her Arabian Stead, which, clever as she thought him, proves a perfect ass.

Scene VII.

THE LAKE OF KILLARNEY.

(as before.)

The Evil Spirit and Kathleen fly across. The Horse knows his own stable, so vanishes beneath the Lake, and thus water overcomes the power of whiskey. Dermot on O’Donoghue’s White Horse, flies to the rescue of his love, and brings
her safely to land again -- when, as might be expected, Dermot is changed to Harlequin, Kathleen to Columbine, Lord Bullfrog to Clown, and Blousabella Brisket, the fat Cook, to Pantaloon. That follies comes after, and the Harlequinade begins.\footnote{\textit{Idem}, p. 4 f.}

"GRAND TRANSFORMATION OF CHARACTERS" ... 

"Here we get Paul Frelie! kite! Tripe! Skits!"

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SCENE VIII

Under the Jurisdiction of the Commissioners of Paving and Lighting.

Happy Meeting and General Subjects for the Great Exhibition of 1861. A United Family -- England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales -- and LOYAL TERMINATION.

SCENE IX.

PORT and QUAY of NEW YORK, U.S.

A regular Broadway Swell of the latest cut; ditto Feminine to match -- Import arrival of the Swedish Songstress -- General Excitement -- BARNUM on the qui vive -- a Rival Crow, wearing Nightingale -- Salt at a Premium -- Managers in a Fix -- Dickey! Dickey! Dickey! -- Ballooning Ex-tra-or-di-nar-ry -- BARNUM on the Alert -- Mr. B. saved -- Oppurtune Arrival of the Veritable, Real, Original, and only AMERICAN SEA SERPENT -- Clown's Unique Balloon Feat, and Wonderful ASCENT OF A REAL DONKEY.

SCENE X.

EXTERIOR OF MUSIC HALL -- CONCERT MONSTRO!

Here or Anywhere.


Betty's Celebrated Provincial Menagerie.

\footnote{\textit{Idem}, p. 19.}
COMMUNAL APARTMENTS IN A PRIVATE HOUSE.

SCENE X.

VITAL STATISTICS IN THEIR TOTALITY.

SCENE XI.

INTELLIGENCE OF THE INTERMITTENT PEACH-AWARDS.

SCENE XII.

PARFET RENEE, BAGNIERES, & TOUCHEAUX'S SHOPS.

SCENE XIII.

COMMUNAL BUNKHOUSE.

SCEEN X.

COMMUNAL EMPIRE OF 1023.
Section Appearance of the Demon — Horrida Bella — and COOL RECEPTION in the COUNTRY CHURCHYARD, on a SNOWY NIGHT.

SCENE LAST.

RETREAT OF O'DONOGHUE AND HIS FAIRY COURT,

and

ALLEGORICAL TABLEAU. —

It has been necessary, because of the peculiar format of the play, to give the scenes just as they appear in the text. The first seven scenes appear in the program which precede the text; the remaining scenes are in the actual body of the pantomime. There is much singing and dancing, but there is very little dialogue. Emphasis is placed on action.

The next manager at Astley's was William Cooke, member of one of the most prolific of circus families. During the season of 1853-1854 Mazepa and, occasionally, Turpin's Ride to York, or Timour the Tartar, were still required as stop-gaps even when the Crimean War inevitably called forth in the autumn of 1854 The Battle of the Alma, which was enriched by the Battles of Balasлавa and Inkerman the next February.

Yet the fickleness of the public of those times still kept Cooke busy, the bill having to be changed every month. Cooke then decided to adopt celebrated works from the general dramatic stock in order to fit them out with horses whenever occasion presented itself. To mount Shakespeare on horseback was his first and most successful idea of this kind. Richard III.  

1 Ibid.
2 The accounts of these adaptations have been taken from Disher, op. cit., vol. 108, p. 187 ff. Since Ricoll's hand-list covers the period 1800-1850, I have had no way to check the exact dates of productions.
which opened on August 4, 1855, achieved a run of ninety performances and was repeatedly revived.

After Mrs. Beecher Stowe's Pec; or A Tale of the Dismal Swamp had been equestrianized on November 15, Cooke adapted Macbeth. Then in January of 1857 there was performed an equestrian drama based on Carrick's version of The Taming of the Shrew. The following month saw a version of Rob Roy. In March King Henry IV. -- Part I was staged with equestrian illustrations. In April followed The French in Algiers; or The Battle of Constantine.

Still a further sensation was created, for then Cooke announced that grand opera would be aided by extraordinary equestrian and scenic effects. Among the operas performed were Il Trovatore; or The Gypsy's Vengeance, and La Scaramouche.

Both Shakespeare and the opera had now had their day, but Cooke's resources had not yet given out. With The Bar Trail; or, The White Horse of the Prairie in the October of 1857, and Jibbenminassy; or The White House of Dink of the Fools in the February of 1858, he instituted the vogue of the Wild West in London. The Indian Mutiny inspired The Storming and Capture of Delhi, and the war in China The Bombardment and Capture of Canton.

Halter Scott enjoyed another vogue, for there were pieces called Kenilworth; or, The Golden Days of England's Elizabeth, and The Covenanters; or The Battle of Bothwell Brig. But still Manoppa regularly appeared and continued to do so even after Cooke had given up the reins at Astley's.

And so we come to the final sensation of the equestrian drama - the female Manoppa. Adah Isaac Menken, after having repeated successes in
the United States,\(^1\) sailed for England on April 22, 1864. E. T. Smith, manager at Astley's, was a good showman, and soon London was to see Mazeppa with Menken in the title role. The gala opening took place on October 3, 1864, and was an immediate success.

Lord Byron's Mazeppa had found its way to the stage as the one outstanding equestrian drama, and it was performed again with the accompaniments of appropriate scenery, alternately savage and splendid; gorgeous processions, dresses and decorations; gallant knights and ladies fair; banquets, tournaments, and real horses. Byron's story has been considerably varied and amplified by H. M. Milner, to bring these powerful auxiliaries into full play, and an imposing spectacle is the result.\(^2\)

Olimska, daughter of the Castellan, is beloved by Mazeppa, who passes under the name of Cassimir. Her father has provided, however, a more substantial suitor, in the person of the Count Palatine. He is too magnificent a potentate to leave his palace and lay his coronet at her feet until his proposals be duly accepted; so he despatches an envoy to propitiate her by proxy. The lady reluctantly consents — the diadem is placed on her head — she ascends the nuptial car, when the delight Count, drawing aside the curtains, welcomes his beautiful Olimska, and in flattering terms explains the cause of his appearance, at once so unexpected and gallant. Then there is a scene of the Grand Arena prepared for the tournament, the

\(^1\) For a good treatment of Menken's performances in America, consult the Master's Thesis Adah Isaacs Menken: The Biography of an American Actress, by Catherine Leech, L. S. U., 1937. The thesis contains in the appendix a list of plays in which Menken appeared; only some of the plays are equestrian dramas.

victor to be crowned by Olimska. The galleries are filled with spectators:

"Music. — The Castellan sits — Rudzoloff makes a signal on which a trumpet sounds, and the respective champions take their stations — first a small sword combat, between two of the pages — then a tilt of mounted and armed Knights, with spear and battle-axe, of whom Cassimir is one — then a sword combat on horseback, between Cassimir and his opponent — in both of these Cassimir is successful — then a broadsword combat of four, in which Cassimir is also the victor — the conquerors advance towards the Castellan."

On the evening before the marriage, Naseppa secretly enters the chamber of the Count, defies him to single combat; a battle ensues, and the Count is wounded. Naseppa retreats, but an alarm is given and he is taken; for the Castellan determines to make him an example of single vengeance.

"... The Outer Terrace of the Castle, overlooking a tract of desolate country, composed of precipitous mountain ridges, abounding with cataracts — the rocky pathway crosses a stupendous waterfall, by a slight rustic bridge, and is finally lost in a chain of lofty eminences, stretching into the distance."

He orders the vile Tartar to be stripped; the fiery untamed steed is brought forward by three or four grooms, who, with difficulty, restrain him. Then Cassimir is bound to the horse's back. Olimska implores pity for him, but in vain. Amidst the glare of torches, savage shouts, and benson fires,

"Music. — The Horse is released, and immediately rushes off with Cassimir, W. 3rd S. — he presently re-appears

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1 Act I, Scene 3, p. 22.
on the first range of hills, from L. to R., all the specta-
tors rushing to the L., and as he crosses again from R. to
L., they take the opposite side — when he has reached the
third range of hills, they commence pursuing him up the
hills, and as he progresses, they follow . . . .

Act II opens with a Moving Panorama of the Course of the Dnieper
River. On the flat is seen its banks, with a tract of wild country — a
tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, hail and rain. The horse dashes
up mountains, down precipices, fords rivers, devoting his unhappy rider to
searching seas, piercing blasts, devouring hunger, and parching thirst.
Savage wolves follow in quick pursuit and threaten to rend him piecemeal,
and a vulture hovers over his head, impatient for its expected prey. Finally
they reach Tartary. The frightened peasants, beholding the wild horse
furiously pursuing its course, take it for the Valpa, which, according to
popular superstition, is a demon form that whirls across the wilds of Tar-
tary, foreboding death and desolation. A thunderbolt strikes a tree, which
falls to the ground. At this moment the fiery steed sinks down exhausted,
Mazeppa, apparently lifeless, extended on its body. Abdur Khan, against
when a plot exists, headed by Thamar, a rebel chief, to drive him from his
throne, enters and beholds the wounded stranger, whom he recognizes by a
jewelled star, the emblem of the tribe, as his lost son. This discovery is
fatal to the scheme of Thamar, who has aspired to be ruler because the Khan
is old and childless. Thamar successfully attempts the life of both father
and son, but is foiled in his attempts. Mazeppa recovers, recognizes his

1 Act I, Scene 6, p. 27.
father, whom he has miraculously rescued from the dagger of the assassin, and is hailed King of Tartary. But he cannot be happy without Olińska; so, accompanied by his father, he prepares to leave for Poland.

"Music. — A superbly caparisoned steed has been led on for Mazepa, another for the Khan — they mount — a general parade and movement of the army takes place, on which the drop falls."

The horse, once the instrument of torture, is now the messenger of vengeance. The warlike expedition moves off in triumph and reaches Poland, when the King, Mazepa, and a faithful chief, disguised as Tartar peasants, to the palace of the Castellan and are engaged by Drolinski, an officious officer of the household, to perform grotesque dances and dexterous feats, after the manner of their country, in celebration of the long-delayed nuptials between the Count Palatine (who has recovered from his wound) and Olińska. Mazepa's father contrives to get from Drolinski the keys of the great gates of the castle, and a chosen band of warriors, who lie concealed in a neighboring forest, are secretly introduced. The nuptial procession advances and there is a

MILITARY CHARACTERISTIC BALLET.2

Then Mazepa rushes forward and forbids the banes. After he throws off his disguise, he proclaims his titles. There is a general combat and Mazepa wins his bride by force of Arms:

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1 Act II, Scene 6, p. 44.  
2 Act III, Scene 5, p. 51.
The Polish troops in the garden fire at the steps -- a general conflict ensues -- a charge of Tartar cavalry is made along the upper terrace -- they are met by the Poles, issuing from the principal portal -- the attendants endeavour to force Cinsin through the tumult into the castle -- the cavalry appear in front, and after skirmishing off on both sides, a charge in line, from L. to R., is executed by the Tartars -- the front then becomes occupied by pairs of combatants -- Abder Khan is on the point of cutting down the Castellan, when Cinsin rushes in and interposes -- she is followed by Naseppa, to whom the Castellan resigns her, which is the pledge of peace -- Perseus has been mantling overcome by a Tartar warrior, and the Poles altogether vanquished -- Abder Khan, Naseppa, the Castellan, and Cinsin hasten to mount the steps, to stop the slaughter, and on the top form a group -- the females line the terraces -- subdued Poles and triumphant Tartars fill the scene, which is lighted by the conflagration of the Forest -- and on the general picture the curtain falls. 1

There are many interesting accounts, some in praise and some in censure of this famous production. The London Post, October 7, carried the following notation:

The revival of the popular spectacle of Naseppa, which took place at this theatre on Monday evening, under the management of Mr. E. T. Smith, was attended with such unequivocal success that the performance is likely to improve the fortune of the establishment. The immediate object of the reproduction of this long remembered piece was to afford the public an opportunity of witnessing another 'sensation' in the shape of a lady playing the part of Naseppa, and performing those feats of agility and prowess which have heretofore been accomplished, not by Naseppa himself, but by 'deputy'. The name of the lady is Ada Isaacson Menken, and she appears to be gifted with all those qualities which tend to make a graceful and impassioned actress, where physical rather more than mental force is essentially required. She went through the entire representation with a strength of nerve and an amount of masculine vigor and intensity which certainly startled the spectators, and, when lashed to the back of a wild steed, she performed the perilous journey over the rocks, they rewarded her with the most vociferous tokens of their entire satisfaction and approval.

1 Act III, Scene 3, p. 52.
regards the costume worn by the lady, it may be right to say, in the face of the pictures which have been exhibited of her throughout the metropolis for some time past, that, although it is by no means according to the most approved laws which govern the fashions, even of the stage, it is not so objectionable to the eye of delicacy as the numerous visitors to the theatre have been led to anticipate. The piece is admirably mounted, and the numerous well trained horses seemed so perfectly at home in their old quarters, that the entire spectacle "went off" in a manner which must be considered fully worthy of the bygone days of Astley's."

John Crawfurd of the London Times, October 7, wrote:

"Miss Hanks plays her game without a dummy, and fairly ascends the greatest possible height. The combats and other athletic feats belonging to the part she performs with wonderful vigor and spirit, a magnificent figure greatly increasing the effect of her achievements. Something should be said about her costume. Female attire is as ticklish a subject to touch upon as spirit rapping. One can hardly refer to either without offending somebody, and whether the speaker leans toward prudery or coquetry, his peril will be about the same. However as many may recollect the very scanty attire worn by Mr. Cartlidge and his successors in the performance of Mazepa, and many think that this ultra-classical costume must look odd upon a lady, it is but fair to state that Miss Hanks has made the Polish oppressor much more merciful than of yore to the wardrobe of the young Tartar. Her dress is certainly not one that Queen Elisabeth would have recommended to her maids of honor, but certainly, also, it is not a whit more objectionable than those of the female Highland boys and mythological beauties who are not accepted as matter of course."  

The critic of the Illustrated Times wrote:

"There is a sufficiently lavish revelation of feminine symmetry to warrant spectators in pronouncing the exhibition as extraordinary. The new appearance . . . attitudinized with great effect. Planske, in one of his wittiest extravaganzas, says of the Mazes Plastiques that 'they are an endless exhibition; and their termination cannot be anticipated.

1 New York Herald, October 22, 1864.
2 Ibid.
Since every day they're less inclined to clothes;
Group follows group, each has its brother,
Trying, the wags say, to outstrip the other.**1

Mark Lemon, the editor of Punch, was among the adverse critics:

"Here's half the town — if bells be true —
To Astley's nightly thronging,
To see 'the Menken throw aside
All to her sex belonging.
Stripping off woman's modesty,
With woman's outward trappings —
A bare-backed jade on bare-backed steed,
In Cartlich's old strappings!

'Who live to please' — no need on us
That stale excuse for thrusting —
There is a way to please one-tenth,
The nine-tenths by disgusting.
Your shame why let these bills, wherewith
You plaster London's wax, hem?
'Bring forth the horses!' Yes, Mr. Smith,
But don't bring forth the Menken!"**2

The Illustrated London News was milder:

"The result is, however, a discreet compromise between
the objectionable and the prudent; for, though the lady's
figure is displayed on horseback, care has been taken that
the rules of decency should not be too violently transgressed.
As an actress Miss Menken is not without merit; she has a
pretty face and a symmetrical form. But it is as an equestrienne
that she must be judged; for even her acting consists
principally of attitudes. She poses better than she speaks.
The spectacle in which she appears has been lavishly appointed;
and with hundreds of supernumeraries, plenty of accessories
and processions, some good scenery, and a numerous stud of
horses, the manager will probably find the speculation proft-
table."**3

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**1 Copied from Bernard Falk, The Naked Lady; or Storm over Adah; a Bio-
**2 Ibid., p. 90.
**3 Illustrated London News, October 8, 1864.
Menken acted in many plays, some successful, some failures; but she always returned to Manon in which she performed many times at Astley's. From the many reports of the performance, one is conscious that there was much criticism concerning Menken's attire; moreover, many doggerels, such as the following, were written:

"Lady Godiva's fair outcome,
And Peeping Tom's an arrant duffer
Menken outstrips them both in one
At Astley's now the Opera Buffet."

"Behind a cab-horse,
Beyond Charing Cross;
To see Miss Manon
Ride on a wild horse.
Rise on her figure
As everyone knows —
She should have rough music,
Wherever she goes."

Imitators sprang up immediately and a burlesque extravaganza of Manon, by Henry J. Byron, originally produced at the Royal Olympic Theatre, December 28, 1829, was revived and performed at the Royal Strand Theatre on Wednesday, October 23, 1844, shortly after Menken's performance at Astley's.

This very amusing burlesque follows the original play very closely. Except for the addition of a few characters - Huski, Boskisoff, and Pilski... (Small Poles, but by no means Sticks) - the names of the characters

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2 Falk, Bernard, op. cit., p. 78
3Lady's Acting Plays, vol. 46.
4 Ibid., p. 2.
are the same. The program has this:

"In this Scene we have a specimen of a rash breaking out in despotism. The Castellan breaches the subject, and gives his daughter an ear-ring, but she despises the Count and his gift, for her heart is with her God—oh— The Wedding comes to a full stop at an awkward period, which bores another soul on the parent head. — An'asty rick hands over the ill-fated lovers, and a universal note of intercession is heard from all — Dreadful revenge on the part of the horse-tete parent. 'BRING FORTH THE FIERY UNTAMED STEED.'

A ROCKY AND VERY PRETTY PASS

In this Scene the Cream of Tartars turns sour, proves himself anything but the cheese — the Milk-maid walks her chalks, leaving the Khan upon the steppes — the Volpass 'AGAIN HE URGES ON HIS WILD CAREER'. — the Fat King falls to thinking, and asleep — the long lost chee—ild Maseppal — Delirium

EXTRAORDINARY PERFORMANCE OF AN IMAGINARY BARE-BACKED STEED,

by Signor Rainami.

Scene 5. — This Scene illustrates the moral of a popular ballad, — namely, how hard a thing it is to surrender the hand to an individual who can never be in possession of the accompanying heart, — also, the unchangeableness of woman's love, — also, that you may lead a horse to the fountain, without having the power of inducing him to imbibe, — also, that it is as well to be off with the old love before you are on with the new, — also a variety of other matters, too numerous to mention, but which all tend to the downfall of evil, and the introduction of

A PERFECT FOREST OF PALMS."

1 Ibid., p. 2.
"Laurinaki. Enough of your vile presence we'd be freed!
  What -- ho! Bring forth the fiery untamed steed!
  (A Leather Arcade rocking-horse, on wheels, is brought
  in -- two Green hanging to its head)

Lem. (with fiendish malignity) I give him to you!

Glinaka. 'Fa, your heart is stone!

Lem. There, look upon you pye-bald as your-roan.
  (Glinaka rushes to Mazepa)

Mas. Farewell, Glinaka! Nay, what's this, a tear?
  Are this saloon I quit — hear up, my dear —
  One final kiss!
  (Laurinaki makes a movement of disapprobation)
  (appealingly) Nay, say! for pity's sake!
  The last saloon buss I shall ever take! (kisses her)
  (to Count) Oh, treat her gently, sir! you cannot know
  The jewel I have lost! So dearest, sol
  (gently unwinding her arms)
  Though you may tie me to that horse with knots,
  Untieable by th' Brothers Davenpots,
  Still I shall yet assume, proud castellan,
  (a la Miss Hankey) The attitude of freedom and of man.

Concerted Piece. — "Bronze Horse."¹

The scene closes with this direction:

"All having galloped round in the manner of circus horses,
  dance off to the air, L. Mazepa borne off through
  curtains."²

In the third scene, Abdur Khan laments his long lost son; Zamba rushes in
to tell that he has seen the Volfes!

"Abder. Do you mean it?
  (a faint cry of 'Help!' is heard, and the Tartars rush
  off with a scream of terror, L., Abdur Khan laughs
  contemptuously at their fear, but looking round, sees
  the wild horse and its rider, which alarms him so,
  that he rushes after them immediately)
The wild horse, with Maszepa fastened to his back, wheels on a short distance, R.

Mas. Help! help! help! help! It's no use calling, thought! They take me for a ghost — away they go!
Poor horse — poor horse! how every one flies from it! (seizing its tail) Said toal! perhaps they take him for the comet!
This horrid knacker's frightened at the rumbling,
He's also got a horrid knack o' stumbling;

... . . . . ❄

An amusing song, sung by Drolinsko, Zemba, and Abder, with a chorus of Tatars, is the following:

"Song. -- Air. -- 'Sewing Machine.'

Dro. There was a most unlucky chap,
    Whose name was Cassimere;
He fell in love with a demisell,
    But her pe' did interfere.
He put him on a rocking horse,
    The biggest that ever was seen;
And tied him tight, without any remorse,
On that dreadful see-sawing machine!
Oh, he fairly lost his heart!
    And wishes he never had seen,
The beautiful girl, with her hair in curl,
Or the dreadful see-sawing machine!

Chorus. Oh, he fairly lost his heart, &c. . . . .

Abder. His story soon got known,
    A play of it they made,
And ever so many hundred nights
    The melodrama was played.
The last sensation out,
    Is Adah Issacs Monkeen,
Whose classical style of dress has not
    Much troubled the sewing machine."  

1 Act I, Scene 3, p. 24.
2 Act I, Scene 4, p. 34.
Mazeppa, after his long trip across the wilds of Tartary, is taken care of by his father, Thamar and Zomba. In order to revive his son, Abder gives him a flask which he promptly drains. Then Mazeppa takes his father for a horse:

"Man. Hi, hold up, old horse!

Abd. (in deep grief) He takes his father for a horse!

Man. (fiercely) Who cries out wan? (seizing Abder)

Abe. (deeply alarmed) No, no!

Man. Don't wee at all! Fly, fly! increase thy speed!

Ha, ha, ha, ha! Now this is life, indeed!

Oh, oh, oh, out over barrier, brush, and brake!

You brute! why did you that vile stumble make?

All right — all right! He's up and off again!

Oh, how the cool breeze fans by boiling brain?

Away, away, away, away we go!

Ha, mind this chem — mind! mind! he's cleared it — so

Fly on, good horse! on — on! past everything!

Stay! am I not at Astley's, in the ring?

I'm on a yellow steed, with pale pink eyes,

Which round the ring methodically flies.

Sea, there's the clown — he stands there in the middle,

About to ask an idiotic riddle.

A tune, too, I remember years ago,

Plants on the breezes — Ooplah! and off we go!

(an old circus tune played in orchestra — Mazeppa goes through a daring equestrian performance)*

The play ends with

"Finale — Air, 'Barbara Allen.'

Zomba. The curtain's coming down, and you

Will surely now befriend us;

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1 Act I, Scene 3, p. 22.
Olin.  By coming down, kind public, too,
    Then good luck will attend us.

    Air changes to 'Ratcatcher's Laughter.'

Max.  We've only burlesqued a favourite play,
    On the other side of the water,
    Then say a kind word for Mazeppa, pray,
    And the pretty little Castellan's daughter.
    (All repeat first four lines)"1

After the revival of Mazeppa with Adah Isaacs Menken in the title role
there is really nothing in the annals of Astley’s amphitheatre, or any other
theatre, that calls for any particular notice. There were many productions,
but none were of any special significance except Fox Cooper's Ivanhoe,2
which was first produced at Astley’s on Easter Monday, 1869. The dramati-
ization of novels had begun in the latter half of the preceding century, but
it was not until the time of Scott that the whole field of fiction was eager-
ly and systematically ransacked.3 From 1816, when there appeared the first
adaptation, by D. Terry and Scott himself, of Guy Mannering at Covent Garden,
March 12, 1816, until past the middle of the century, there were innumerable
versions of Scott's novels.

There were many versions of Ivanhoe throughout the century. Nicoll
lists seven versions that made their appearance in 1812. The Lists of Ashby;
or The Conquest of Ivanhoe, an anonymous version, was given at Astley's on
Monday, March 27, 1857, and there is every reason for the writer to believe
that this was an equestrian version, since it was produced at Astley's. Fox
Cooper's version is the only one that I have examined.

1 Act I, Scene 5, p. 39.
2 Dickens' Standard Plays, No. 385.
3 Nicoll, pp. cit., vol. 1, p. 91 ff., gives an interesting and accurate
account of the Scott vogue.
Ivanhoe, disguised as a Palmer, has many stirring adventures: he defends the Jew Isaac and saves his daughter Rebecca by fighting for her against Brian de Bois Guilbert; and he, together with Robin Hood and his merry band of outlaws, helps to restore Richard Coeur de Lion to the throne of England which has been usurped by Prince John and his followers.

In the first scene of the play, some of the characters, including Bois, enter in the habits of Knight Templars; they are all mounted. The next appearance of horses can best be seen from the stage directions:

"Scene V. — The Road to Ashby . . . .

Music. — Enter L., the Grand Procession to the Tournament, consisting of mounted Knights, their banners, armed Esquires, Pages, Heraldic, Peasants in the rear — old woman on donkey, &c. . . ."2

The second act opens with the entrance of the Black Knight on horseback. After dismounting he fastens his steed to a tree.3

"Act II, Scene VI. The Castle of Torquilstone is seen burning. Robin Hood and the Outlaws discovered issuing from the gates, fighting with Sir Brian de Bois Guilbert's Soldiers, whom they overcome. The Castle falls, Ulrica appears exulting on a lofty pinnacle. The Black Knight, Locksley, and Cedric are fighting their way into the Castle. Sir Brian carries off Rebecca (in spite of great opposition) on horseback; . . . ."4

1 Act I, Scene 1, p. 3.
2 Act I, Scene 4, p. 7.
3 Act II, Scene 1, p. 9.
The last scene of the play is the best. Just as Rebecca is about
to be burned at the stake for witchcraft, Ivanhoe comes to the rescue:

"... . . . The Tilt Yard of the Preceptory of Templestowe.
The Funeral Pile, Stake, and other Paraphernalia of execu-
tion. In front of centre the State Chair and Table for the
GRAND MASTER, who is discovered seated C. Knight Templars,
horses and feet, arranged R. and L. Banners, &c. Full Stage.
Bois Guilbert's Saracen Slaves, holding lighted torches on
each side of the faggots to C. A crowd of Guards at back of
Bridge. --- Music."1

After Ivanhoe defeats Bois, there is a general combat between the rival
forces:

"Music. --- Hurrahs and general combat between the Knight
Templars and the outlaws, in which the Black Knight is
mired up; after a desperate conflict, the Black Knight,
on horseback, rushes up to the pile with Gurth, and
they release Rebecca. --- Tableau."2

The Black Knight then reveals that he is Richard of England and announces
that Ivanhoe has won the freedom of Rebecca.

Ivanhoe, by Fox Cooper, the last play that the writer was able to get,
was produced on Easter Monday, 1869. For the most part, the equestrian
dramas produced after the revival of Mazeppa were simply revivals of earlier
successes. It is curious that after examining the dramas for the equestrian
elements we should have completed the circle and are back at the very begin-
ing of the equestrian drama. Let us recall what Dibdin said: "I proposed,
therefore, that it (horsemanship) should embrace all the dexterity and
reputation of ancient chivalry; that tournaments, running at the ring, and

1 Act III, Scene 3, p. 15.
2 Act III, Scene 5, p. 15.
other feats of equestrian celebrity, should be performed." Practically all
the plays had processions, tournaments, conflagrations, and the like. This
version of Ivanhoe, however, was a play, and not a dumb-spectacle. In its
growth development, the equestrian drama became more melodramatic. But
even after the patent laws were abandoned in 1848, the equestrian dramas
continued to be performed with music and songs; these elements seemed to be
a necessary part of this type of play.

No one writer can be said to have contributed more than any other to
the development of equestrian drama. What Dibdin started was continued.
Many writers - such as Fitzball, Dibdin and Amherst - were active in writing
because they realized that the audiences wanted spectacles. But the same
is true of other less prolific dramatists. The equestrian drama was distinctly
a type of drama that sought to amuse and entertain in a spectacular way.
The dramas as such were not very good; their appeal was sensual, rather than
intellectual. They appealed to the eye - with processions, cavaledaes,
tournaments, battles, combats of horse and foot - and not to the ear; fur-
thermore, the stress was on action and plot, and not on character, although
there were the stock characters of melodrama: hero, heroine, villain.

Throughout this chapter we have considered the equestrian element and
the men - namely, the managers - responsible for the success of the plays:
The Astley's, Hughes, Dibdin, Dacres, Batty, and Cooke. Productions were
considered at the equestrian houses, Astley's and the Royal Circus (later
the Surrey); other productions were given from the Theatres Royal, Covent
Garden and Drury Lane, and also productions at some of the minor theatres,
when these productions were of any significance.
And so, there would be no better way to end this chapter than to quote from one of the last of the equestrian managers, one who had performed successfully on two continents:

"The aim of the equestrian performer is to amuse and to interest, and that is all; while the actor goes far beyond this; at one moment splitting our sides with mirth, at another reading us a moral lesson, and at another harrowing our souls with the dread outpourings of the tragic muse. To no such heights does the equestrian aspire." ¹

CHAPTER III

Classification of Equestrian Dramas

There are many ways that one can group the equestrian dramas. In Appendix D are to be found the various terms used contemporaneously and the number of plays classified under each. Nicoll¹ lists sixty-six different terms for classifying dramas in the nineteenth century; equestrian drama is one term of the group. Naturally, I am using equestrian drama or melodrama as a general term; for all the terms listed without the adjective equestrian, it is necessary to add the adjective in order to get the specific type of equestrian drama. Thus, in Appendix D, two extravaganzas are listed; hence, these two are equestrian extravaganzas. I have used throughout Chapter II the terms given for the plays in the accounts found in periodicals, those given by Nicoll in his handlist, and those found on title pages of the twenty-three plays treated in more detail. Where there has been a conflict, I have used my own judgment. For instance, Nicoll lists The Bronze Horse as either Melodrama or Music Drama. The title page has the term operatic spectacle. I have chosen to list the play under operatic spectacle because the designation is more nearly correct. When the listing in Nicoll is in conflict with an account of a play given in one of the periodicals, I invariably choose the listing in the periodical because the account followed closely the production of the play.

Melodramas

Equestrian melodrama of the nineteenth century was spectacular, with the emphasis on action—particularly of horses. Many classifications of

equestrian melodramas are possible. One classification may be as good as another; no one classification can be complete. Roughly then, I have selected three main divisions: the romantic, the supernatural, and the domestic. Romanticism, however, always loves the strange and the unsunny, and we are not surprised to have fairies, furies, and spirits freely mingling with mere material personages on the stage. Thus, in Azazel, The Prodigal, the spirit of the desert appears; in both The Cloud King and Blue Beard there is the supernatural element of enchantment. The supernatural elements, however, may be found in both the romantic and the domestic equestrian dramas. The Clerk of Clerkenwell combines all three: romantic, supernatural, and domestic. The romantic alone is concerned with fanciful kingdoms, as in The Bronze Horse; with gloomy castles, moats, dungeons, caverns, and ruined abbeys, as in The Secret Mine, The Clerk of Clerkenwell, Joan of Arc, and Richard Plantagenet. The domestic type has contemporary English settings such as we find in Turpin's Ride to York, The Life, Death, and Restoration of the High Motted Racer, and Peregrine Pickle; or House Trumpton on Horseback.

The romantic type, however, is the commonest. The love of foreign settings appealed to the masses. Thus, Mazeppa is set in Poland and Tartary; Don Giovanni, in Spain; The Cataract of the Ganges, in India; The Cloud King and The Secret Mine, in Persia; Blue Beard, in Turkey; Timour the Tartar, in Georgia, Tartary, and Mingrelia.

All of these types — domestic, supernatural, and romantic — share common characteristics other than scenes with horses. Music, songs, and dancing are introduced, and the action proceeds to the accompaniment of various instruments which strives to be as appropriate as possible. In
The Clerk of Clerkenwell the piccola is used; and in The Bronze Horse, 
lyres are played by the spirits; harps are used in Paul Jones. These are, 
however, exceptions. For the most part the tinkling of the piano was 
used as musical accompaniment for all the plays. That the music afforded 
pleasure seems obvious because it persisted even after the Act of 1843 
removed the so-called "burlatta" restrictions. And Nicoll says, "Perhaps 
an unconscious aesthetic feeling was at work, the slow or frenzied music 
harmonizing with the artificial sentiments expressed in dialogue and the 
unnatural characters introduced."¹

These unnatural characters form the second common characteristic of 
the equestrian plays. There are, of course, the stock characters: hero and 
heroine - the latter almost always in distress - humorous confidant for 
the former and confidante for the latter, arch villain or perhaps villainess. 
In Blue Beard Fatima is rescued from a fate "worse than death" by Selim 
who attacks Abenalique's castle. Likewise, Lady Isabella in The Blood Red 
Knight is rescued at the proper time. The humorous characters are integral 
parts of almost all the plays. Sometimes they are closely related to the 
hero and heroine; at other times they are not. Jack Robinson in The Cataract 
of the Congo is the comical English servant who is a friend of the hero 
Irak. Keo-Jan and Ping Sing in The Bronze Horse are part of the sub-plot 
which deals with the love of Koyan and Peki. The villains are prominent 
as they usually are in melodrama. I have been able to distinguish two 
types: the supernatural villain and the natural villain. The former is a

Some or making who resorts to spells, enchantments, and the like, to carry out his villainy on poor mortals. The natural villain is motivated by lust or power, or both. Lust is the force which makes Timour, Abonelique, and Maharra villains. Maharra and The Blood Red Knight are motivated by lust and power; both of these characters are jealous because of their position in life. Sometimes the hero is the central character, as in Paul Jones, Aurel the Prodigal, and Ivanhoe; sometimes the heroine, as in Joan of Arc; and often the villain is the central character, The Cloud King, The Blood Red Knight, Blue Beard, and The Clerk of Clerkenwell.

The third characteristic of the type is rapid action, and this was the principal reason for the introduction of horses. Since Chapter II treats in detail the performances of horses, I shall simply say that every possible situation was used so that horses could be brought on the stage. There were processions, cavalcades, tournaments, jousts, battles, horse races, fox hunts, chariot races, and individual performances of a horse running up mountains, up cataracts, jumping over streams of water, fording streams, and swimming in streams.

Burlesques and Extravaganzas

With the equestrian melodramas naturally go the melodramatic burlesques and extravaganzas of the type. It must be remembered that performances started at 6:30 and lasted until midnight or after. Under these conditions there was ample time for perhaps a three-act play, a burlesque or extravaganza, and a pantomime all on the same evening. The audiences demanded, and got, them all. And so we have Don Giovanni, Mazeppa, Guadepada, or The Manager's
Lost Kick; and Quadrupeds of Casablanca, or The Rovers of Waimar. Gipsy Jack is the unusual extravaganza in six divisions. In all of these burlesques and extravaganzas, except Don Giovanni and Tam O'Shanter, either dembays or basket horses were brought on the stage; mock cavalry movements were performed, burlesqueing the performances of horses in all the various scenes that were so popular to the audiences.

All of the plays, therefore, can be reduced to these two main divisions: equestrian dramas and burlesque equestrian dramas, or farces.
CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

The equestrian drama was a natural outcome of social, dramatic, and political conditions existing at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The lower classes sought dramatic entertainment, but they were not educated sufficiently to appreciate the legitimate drama; it was the spectacle chiefly that could appeal to them. The patent theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, had been enlarged, and as a result, the audiences could not hear the actors very well; and even if the words were heard, the people could not have understood them. And too, the licensing acts prohibited the performance of legitimate plays at the minor houses. What was to be done? The survival of the drama depended upon some compromise. Melodrama was the answer. Plays that emphasized action and not character were the solution; but these plays, produced at the minor theatres, had to satisfy the so-called "burletta" requirements. Thus it is, therefore, that melodrama arose as a result of social and dramatic conditions, and with it a specialized form of melodrama - equestrian drama.

The political conditions of the time fostered the equestrian drama; they furnished, for the most part, the material from which equestrian dramas were written. In the early part of the century the people had already developed a heightened national consciousness, for the English had been successful in battles on sea and land. It was only natural for them, therefore, to enjoy seeing these battles on the stage. Then, it was only natural
to turn back the pages of English history to find material that could be equestrianized. In addition to the fact that the battles appealed to the Englishman's sense of pride and love of country, they also appealed to his desire for spectacular entertainment. Thus, there was almost a natural demand for new types of plays. Undoubtedly, the Englishman's love of horses was a contributing factor to the popularity of the equestrian dramas.

These general conditions, therefore, were already at work when in 1763 Charles Dibdin, manager at the Royal Circus (the Surrey), conceived the idea of staging equestrian spectacles involving jousts and tournaments, and it was he who bridged the gap between the circus ring and the stage. In 1767 Philip Astley borrowed Dibdin's idea of setting off his riding with a "Burletta." But these early productions were merely dumb spectacles. From 1793 to 1806 John C. Cross was responsible for collecting the apparatus - storms, sieges, battles, conflagrations - which are always associated with the equestrian drama. These early forms were very crude; they nevertheless contained all the essential elements.

Although the idea of equestrian dramas originated at the Surrey, it was Astley's which popularized these dramas. In 1807 John Astley, son of the founder of Astley's riding school, wrote the first piece intended primarily for the performance of horses - The Brave Cossack; or Perfidy Punished. Thereafter, the equestrian spectacles were so popular with the public and so profitable to the managers at Astley's and the Surrey that the managers at Covent Garden revived Colman's Bluebeard in 1811 as an
equestrian drama so that they could recoup themselves from the losses over
the legitimate drama. Shortly after, Drury Lane followed with Monk Lewis's
Timour the Tartar. Each patent theatre tried to outdo the other in the
productions of gorgeous, spectacular equestrian dramas. These two dramas
are the first equestrian dramas performed at the major houses. In a sense,
Bluebeard, even though a revival, may be called the first authentic eques-
trian drama because at the patent theatres there were no "burletta" restric-
tions. That is, Bluebeard could have been performed without musical accom-
paniment; however, music, along with the other apparatus, had become so
closely associated with equestrian dramas that it was used throughout the
century at both the major and minor theatres in all productions.

At the minor houses, Astley's and the Surrey, and at other minor
houses which turned to productions of equestrian dramas for financial reasons,
equestrian dramas were performed under the "burletta" restrictions: no more
than three acts, music, and dialogue in recitative, or dialogue to the ac-
companiment of music. Gradually, however, the equestrian spectacles col-
lected the elements of melodrama and farce.

After Philip Astley's death in 1814, his son John and W. Davis managed
the amphitheatre. When John Astley died in 1821, W. Davis became proprietor
with W. Barrymore as manager. The most successful manager at Astley's and
probably the greatest equestrian performer was Andrew Ducrow. Under his
direction Astley's most famous period was from 1830 to 1841. Ducrow's
performances were not restricted to Astley's; he performed in many successes
at the Theatres Royal. In 1841 Ducrow died shortly after Astley's had burned.
Batty rebuilt the amphitheatre and became manager. Although he changed
the name to Batty's Amphitheatre, the playhouse was always referred to as
Astley's. Batty's managership has no special significance; he merely con-
tinued what Daecrow had become famous for, that is, the production of elabo-
rate equestrian spectacles with beautiful costuming and scenery.

In 1843 the Theatre Regulation Act was passed, but the policies at
Astley's and the Surrey remained unchanged. Although free to produce legiti-
mate plays, these two theatres continued to produce equestrian dramas with
musical accompaniment. People had always associated music with the produc-
tions and it would have been bad policy for the managers to discontinue
what had already become established in the minds of the people.

The next figure of importance in the history of equestrian drama is
William Cooke who became manager at Astley's in 1855. He is principally
known for his adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, and his ability to adapt
current events into equestrian dramas. Likewise, he is known for his eques-
trianized operas and equestrian dramatizations of Scott's novels.

During Cooke's managership the equestrian dramas had begun to lose
popularity, and it was only due to his ingenuity that the dramas held
the stage. In order to satisfy the demanding tastes of the public he had to
change productions very often. The time had passed when one equestrian
drama would be performed at least a hundred times. Old successes were re-
vived, but there was not enough novelty to appeal to the fickle public.

E. T. Smith, the last manager at Astley's, realized what had to be
done. In the revival of Manzepa in 1864 he secured Adah Isaacs Menken to
play the title role. Its immediate success was due to the fact that a woman
performed daring and dangerous feats of horsemanship. Menken acted in
many other equestrian plays, but they were not well received; she always
returned to this one play which made her famous and somewhat notorious.

So it is, therefore, that the equestrian drama may be said to end.
The audiences had had their fill of the spectacular; they had seen every
kind of novelty in which horses could perform; they had seen equestrian
adaptations of novels, plays, operas, and current events. The equestrian
dramas lost their novelty and hence fell into disfavor. Perhaps the
burlesques contributed to the decline of the equestrian dramas, but this
factor must not be over-estimated.

That the equestrian drama contributed partly to the decline of the
popularity of the legitimate drama cannot be doubted, since the Theatres
Royal in 1841 deserted the legitimate drama and resorted to equestrian
dramas to recoup themselves from financial losses and continued to produce
them. But after the passage of the Act of 1845 the legitimate drama
gradually came into its own, thus causing a partial decline of the equest-
rian drama.

For a brief statement of the rise and development of equestrian drama
it can be said that horsemanship turned into spectacle, and spectacle
gradually became melodrama and farce. Finally, there is something ironical
in the manner in which the equestrian drama worked itself out to its ultimate
decline; that is, the very spectacular qualities that made it so popular
were the qualities that finally palled on the taste of the theatre-going
public. Then too, with virtually every possibility for the spectacular ex-
hausted, the equestrian drama, already senile, simply passed away.
Appendix A

The following Memorandum on Theatres, dated March 12th, 1868, is taken from P. H. Fitzgerald's *A New History of the English Stage*, London, Tinsley Brothers, 1868, p. 436 to p. 441.

That the Chamberlain's authority proceeded from the sovereign alone is clear, from the fact that no Act of Parliament, previous to the 10 Geo. II c. 29 (passed in 1737), alludes to his licensing powers, though he was constantly exercising them. The office records prove that between 1688 (when they commence) and 1660, the Lord Chamberlain licensed and closed theatres, interfered in the copyright of plays, and either personally, or through the Master of the Revels, had complete control over managers and actors. In 1662 and 1663, King Charles the Second granted the two well-known patents to Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant, for all kinds of stage entertainments as therein named, and by these two patents all other companies in London and Westminster were silenced. The two patents were united by indenture in 1688, the intention of the combining patentees being to create a monopoly for their exclusive advantage. In 1695, King William the Third granted a licence to Betterton and his company of actors to set up another theatre, and from that time forward there were again two theatres in London. The Licence granted to Betterton was renewed from time to time, and at last converted into a patent of twenty-one years' duration.

About the year 1731, the theatre now known as the Haymarket Theatre came into existence; it was occasionally licensed from 1749, was known as Foote's Theatre, and, after 1778, received an annual license for the regular drama, but only during the summer months. In 1809, the Lyceum, which for some years before had been licensed for music and dancing, was licensed for
"musical dramatic entertainments and ballets of action." And about the
same time the theatre now called the Adelphi was permitted to give "bur-
lettas, music and dancing, with spectacle and pantomime." In 1813, the
Olympic was licensed for the same performances, and for horsemanship; and
another minor theatre in Catherine Street, Strand, was similarly licensed.
Burletta licences were also granted for the St. James's Theatre in 1835,
and for the Strand Theatre in 1836. At this time also various theatres
had been established beyond the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction, such as
the Surrey, the Coburg, Astley's, and others; and several places called
saloons sprung up, which were really public-houses, enlivened by theatrical
entertainments. These theatres and saloons were beyond the liberties of
Westminster, and there was no law in existence under which they could be
licensed; they pretended, however, to be open under a magistrate's licence
for "music, dancing, and public entertainments;" but this authority afforded
them no protection when it was thought worth while to prosecute the managers.
As regards legislation between 1660 and 1843, it may be remarked that the
early Acts of Parliament relating to players were, in reality, Vagrant Acts,
and it was not till 1757 that the question of theatrical licenses, and of
the censorship, received a solution at the hands of Parliament. The 10
Geo. II c. 23, passed in that year, empowered the Lord Chamberlain to grant
licences for theatrical entertainments, as therein defined, within the city
and liberties of Westminster, and wherever the sovereign might reside, and
it constituted him licensor of all new plays throughout Great Britain. The
28 Geo. II c. 20, passed in 1761, enabled the justices of the peace to
license houses for music, dancing, and public entertainment after five
o'clock in the afternoon, but sect. 4 of the Act excepts the patent
theatres, Crown licenses, and the Lord Chamberlain's licenses from the
penalties of the Act. Under this power, therefore, the Lord Chamberlain
granted licenses for music, dancing, recitation, conjuring, and many kinds
of public entertainments, which cannot be classed as stage-plays, from
1751 to 1843. He ceased to grant these licenses in 1843, when the 6 & 7
Vict. c. 60, was passed, believing it to be the intention of the Legislature
that his licenses should therefrom be limited to stage-plays; but the
law officers of the Crown have recently reported (1866) that his powers to
grant licenses for music, dancing, and miscellaneous entertainments under
this Act have not been repealed by the 6 & 7 Vict. c. 60. In 1787, the
39 Geo. III. c. 30, enabled justices of the peace to license theatrical en-
tertainments occasionally under the restrictions therein contained, but
they could not grant licenses within twenty miles of London, nor near any
royal residence. Theatrical matters stood thus immediately before the Act
of 1843.

The Act of 1843 (6 & 7 Vict. c. 60) extended the Lord Chamberlain's
jurisdiction from Westminster to the Parliamentary boundaries, and so de-
finied the word "stage-plays" that the Lord Chamberlain decided to grant
the same license to all theatres, both those in Westminster and those brought
within his authority by the new Act. The managers of all theatres and
saloons were licensed to give stage-plays in the fullest sense of the word,
and during the whole year, under a bond with the Lord Chamberlain, as pre-
scribed by the Act of Parliament, twenty-four theatres or saloons were thus
licensed at Michaelmas, 1843, after the passing of the Act; of these, seven
had been previously licensed by the Lord Chamberlain; and ten theatres and seven saloons came, for the first time, under the Lord Chamberlain's authority. All respectable places of entertainment established before the passing of the Act were licensed; and in the case of saloons, the Lord Chamberlain ruled that the entrances to the stage should not be through the bars or tap-rooms of the taverns to which they were attached, that no drinking or smoking should be allowed during the hours of performance, and that no saloon should be open before five o'clock P. M.

The form of license to the saloons was somewhat altered in 1845, smoking being still interdicted, and refreshments allowed only during the intervals between the performances, as at theatres. Tables or stands for refreshment were also forbidden.

In deciding upon applications for new licenses, the question of safety has been the first consideration, but the Lord Chamberlain has been in other respects guided by the interests of the public. He has required that an applicant should produce a petition, signed by many of the inhabitants in the immediate vicinity, in favour of the proposed theatre; he has requested the Police Commissioners to verify the truth of the petition, and to report whether inconvenience was likely to result in the way of interruption of traffic, or otherwise, from the establishment of a new theatre. He has usually obtained the opinion of the parish authorities.

The Opera-house in the Haymarket was surveyed between 1825 and 1827; and in 1828, the Covent Garden Theatre proprietors were compelled to produce

1 Although no condition against smoking or drinking appears in the license to theatres, it was clearly understood that they were forbidden.
an architect's report of the safety of the building before it was opened.
In the same year the Surveyor of His Majesty's Works caused a survey to
be made of all the theatres in the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction, at the
request of the latter. The first move in this direction was made in 1850,
when the Commissioners of Police were requested by the Lord Chamberlain to
report as to the means of access from all the theatres in London. They
reported unfavourably of five theatres. In 1852, the Lord Chamberlain,
after consulting the official referees under the Building Act, required from
the proprietor of every theatre a certificate as to the safety of the
structure, to be made either by the district surveyor or some other compe-
tent architect or surveyor. In 1853, the Lord Chamberlain addressed a cir-
cular to all the Managers, recommending improved ventilation in their
theatres. In the licenses of 1854-55, a condition was attached to the grant
of every license making its validity depend on an observation of the rules
as to ventilation, facility of access, and other precautions, which the Lord
Chamberlain might think fit to make during the currency of the licence. In
the autumn of 1855, the first annual inspection took place of the whole of
the metropolitan theatres. It was made by an officer of the Lord Chamber-
lain's Department, assisted by a surveyor, and the chief points of investiga-
tion were, first, means of access in case of fire, improvement of ventila-
tion, means of extinguishing fire, safe hanging of chandeliers, and cleanli-
ness of the building.

In the spring of 1856, letters were sent to the managers, pointing out
the defects which had been observed, enjoining them at once to remedy the
most important. Since 1856 the metropolitan theatres have been examined
once every year from roof to basement, and the inspector reports that very
great improvement has resulted from the examination. The Lord Chamberlain
has further, within the last few years, extended his inspection to some
of the stage arrangements, in consequence of fatal accidents which occurred
to dancers from the ignition of their dresses. Without relieving the managers
from their responsibility in these respects, he has enjoined that the foot-
lights shall at all theatres be protected by wire guards, and that no lights
shall be placed at the wings lower than four feet from the ground. He has
also, without making a positive order, recommended the use of unflammable
material for women's dresses on the stage.

The returns show that from the beginning of 1858 to the end of 1865,
2816 plays were submitted for license, out of which only 10 were rejected;
of these, two were from Scripture subjects, seven were of the swell-mob and
burglary school, and the bulk of the remainder were French plays of an im-
moral tendency or English versions of them. In order, however, to make the
supervision effective, the playbills of all London theatres are sent weekly
to the Lord Chamberlain's Office, and examined by the Reader of Plays, who
also attends any performance when important alterations have been made in a
piece submitted for license. By a circular to the managers in 1847, the
Lord Chamberlain expressed his disapprobation of the practice which had
existed of admitting prostitutes into the theatres, as such. In 1846, he
required that the police should be admitted to all London theatres, and
particular tickets were then provided for the purpose. At various times the
Lord Chamberlain has prohibited at theatres certain performances which had
became popular from the excitement of the risk attending them, such as the exhibition of trained wild beasts, and performances like those of Blondin. He has also discouraged masquerades, which, if they have taken place at any of the theatres, have been contrary to his express wish. In 1845, the Lord Chamberlain was memorialised by the manager of the Surrey Theatre to order a discontinuance of the low prices which had been commenced by some of the saloon managers, and followed by the smaller theatres; his lordship, however, declined to interfere, looking to the meaning of the law, which, by allowing the additional theatres and saloons in 1843, had no doubt in view the enlargement of the means of entertainment to the poorer classes of London.

The practice of introducing pantomime and ballet in the music-halls commenced some years ago at Canterbury Hall, and was soon followed by other music-halls. The managers of theatres who considered their licenses to be invaded by this innovation, requested the Lord Chamberlain's interference; but as the law does not make him prosecutor, he preferred to leave the matter in the hands of those whose interests were most concerned. The managers of theatres thereupon took proceedings, and various decisions, chiefly adverse to the music-halls, were obtained. The late decision, however, in the Court of Common Pleas, though it went to the question of fact, and not to the question of law, has practically left the music-hall proprietors in a position to give ballets with costume and scenic effect, without any such control or precautions as are exercised in theatres under the Lord Chamberlain's authority. The length of the litigation was due, no doubt, to the obscurity of the definition of the word "stages-plays" in the 5 & 7 Vict. c. 68, and of
"music, dancing," and public entertainments in the Act 25 Geo. II. c. 30.

It should also be mentioned that, up to 1861, the theatres in the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction were closed for dramatic performances during Passion Week. In consequence, however, of the strong representations made by the managers of the hardship inflicted upon them by restrictions which were placed upon no other class in the community, the limitation clause as to Passion Week was omitted in the licenses issued in 1861, always excepting Good Friday, and the question of opening in Passion Week is now left to the discretion of managers. Another point to be mentioned is that of late years the theatres have been used on Sundays for prayers and preaching. An application was made to the Lord Chamberlain to put a stop to this, but as, in his opinion, no harm could result from it, he declined to interfere.
Appendix B

The following is a chronological list of plays mentioned in Chapter II. Plays marked with an asterisk (*) are of unknown authorship. The type of equestrian play is given in parenthesis.

**The Magic Flute**, John C. Cross, (Pantomime)

**The Blind King; or Magic Rope**, John C. Cross, (Melo Drama or Musical Drama)

* *Caino and Sansho; or Harlequin Warrior*, (Pantomime)

* *The Fair Slave; or the Moors and the Africans*, (Spectacle)

* *Knights of the Sun; or Love and Danger*, (Spectacle)

**The Brave Seaman; or Fortify Punished**, John Astley, (Spectacle)

**The Blind Red Knight**, J. H. Amherst, (Melo-dramatic Romance)

**Blue Beard**, George Colman, (Dramatic Romance)

* *Quadrupe*, or The Manager's Last Kick*, (Burlesque)

* *Quadrupe* of Quedlinburgh, or The Rovers of Seimar*, George Colman, (Extravaganza)

**Timour the Tartar**, M. G. Lewis, (Romantic Drama)

* *The Tyrant Saracen and the Noble Moor*, (Spectacle)

* *Veson the Tiger; or The Hero Banditti*, (Spectacle)

* *The Siege and Capture of Badajoz*, (Spectacle)

* *The Battle of Salamance: The Town Mayor and Spanish Heroine*, (Spectacle)

**The Secret Mine**, John Sevill Fessitt, (Equestrian Melodrama)

* *Ferdinand of Spain; or Ancient Chivalry*, (Spectacle)

* *The Tiger Horse*, (Spectacle)

**The Life, Death, and Restoration of the High Matled Racer**, Thomas Dibdin, (Equestrian Pantomime)

* *Urania, The Enchanted of the Steel Castle*, (Equestrian tableau)

**Don Giovanni; or, A Spectre on Horseback**, Thomas Dibdin, (Burlesque)

* *Peregrine Pickle; or Hawker Trumon on Horseback*, (Burletta)
* The Flying Horse, (Pantomime)

Hyppolita, Queen of the Amazons, Thomas Moncrieff, (Melo-drama)

* Richard Turpin the Highwayman, (Equestrian Spectacle)

* Napoleon Bonaparte, (Spectacle)

* The Exile, (Opera)

* Gil Blas of Santillane; or The Horse Banditti, (Melodramatic Spectacle)

* Tom and Jerry, (Burletta)

Alexander the Great, and Thalestris the Amazon, Charles Dibdin, Jr. (Melodrama or Musical Drama)

The Infernal Secret; or, The Invulnerable, J. H. Amherst, (Melodrama)

Ivan of Arc; or, The Maid of Orleans, Edward Fitzball, (Melodrama)

* Maseaniello, the Fisherman of Naples, the Deliverer of His Country, (Spectacle)

Sixteen String Jack, Leman Rede, (Spectacle)

Bessie the Base; or, Is it a Spectre? Charles Dibdin, Jr., (Burletta)

Corote, or The Conquest of Mexico, James R. Planche, (Melodrama)

The Enchanted Courser, or The Sultan of Curdistan, Rev. George Croly, (Melodrama)

The Cataract of the Ganges, Wm. Thomas Moncrieff, (Melodrama)

The Battle of Beterly, J. H. Amherst, (Spectacle)

Invasion of Russia; or The Conflagration of Moscow, J. H. Amherst, (Spectacle)

Paul Jones, T. J. Dibdin, (Nautical Play)

Merope, R. M. Milner, (Romantic Drama)

Gipsy Jack, Wm. Thomas Moncrieff, (Extravaganza)

* St. George and the Dragon; or The Seven Champions of Christendom (Equestrian Spectacle)

* King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, (Spectacle)
* Charlemagne, (Chivalric Spectacle)

The Clerk of Clorkeswell; or The Three Black Bottles, George Almer, (Romantic Drama)

Tom O'Blunder, Henry R. Addison, (Comic Drama)

The Bronz Horse: or The Spell of the Cloud King, Edward Fitzball (Operatic Spectacle)

Tyrpin's Ride to York; or Benny Black Boss, H. N. Milner, (Equestrian Drama)

Richard Plantagenet, John Thomas Haines, (Historical Drama)

* The Passage of the Deserts, or The French in Egypt, (Equestrian Spectacle)

* The Conquest of Babylon, (Equestrian Spectacle)

* Aladdin, (Romantic Spectacle)

* The Conquest of Lahore, (Spectacle)

* The Sikh Invasion, (Spectacle)

* The Steed of Syracuse, or The Flight of Damon, (Spectacle)

* The Demon Horse; or The Twelve Wishes and the Charmed Bit, (Equestrian Spec.)

* Rob Roy, (Spectacle)

* The Forty Thieves; or, Harlequin Ali Baba and the Robber's Cave, (Pantomime)

The Battle of the Amazons, Thomas K. Wilks, (Equestrian Spectacle)

Marmion, Edward Fitzball, (Spectacle)

The White Maid of California, Edward Fitzball, (Spectacle)

Assal; or The Prodigal of Memphis, Edward Fitzball, (Operatic Spectacle)

* The Battle of the Alma, (Spectacle)

* Harlequin and O'Donoghue; or The White Horse of Killarney, (Equestrian Pantomime)

Richard III, adapted by William Cooke, (Equestrian Drama)

Dred; or a Tale of the Dismal Swamp, adapted by Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Drama)

Macbeth, adapted by Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Drama)

The Taming of the Shrew, adapted by Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Drama)
King Henry IV, Part I, adapted by Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Drama)

The French in Algiers; or The Battle of Constantine, Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Spectacle)

Il Turatore; or The Cypri's Vengeance, adapted by Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Opera)

Mediterranean, adapted by Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Opera)

La Scaramouche, adapted by Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Opera)

The War Trail; or The White Horse of the Prairie, Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Drama)

Fathomless Sea; or The White Horse of Nick of the Woods, Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Drama)

The Storming and Capture of Delhi, Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Drama)

The Bombardment and Capture of Canton, Wm. Cooke, (Equestrian Drama)

* Kemilworth; or The Golden Days of England's Elizabeth, (Equestrian Drama)

* The Covenanters; or The Battle of Bothwell Brig, (Equestrian Drama)

Hespera, Henry J. Byron, (Burlesque Extravaganza)

Ivanhoe, For Cooper, (Historical Drama)

* The Lists of Ashby; or The Conquest of Ivanhoe, (Drama)
Appendix C

The following is a list of the authors and their plays given in Chapter II.

Addison, Henry E.

Tom O'Chanter

Almar, George

The Clerk of Clarendon; or The Three Black Bottles

Amherst, J. H.

The Blood Red Knight
The Battle of Waterloo
The Infernal Secret; or, The Invulnerable
Invasion of Russia; or The Conflagration of Moscow

Astley, John

The Brave Consec; or, Perfidy Punished

Byron, Henry J.

Masopps

Colman, George (The Younger)

Blue Beard
Quadruped of Quandiborough; or, The Beavers of Heimar

Cocks, William (The following is a list of adaptations)

Richard III
Dread; or, A Tale of the Dismal Swamp
Macbeth
The Taming of the Shrew
Henry IV, Part I
II Tavantes; or, The Gypsy's Vengeance
Maritana
Geoke, William (continued)

_Le Sammara_  
The Bar Trail; or, The White Horse of the Prairie

Cooper, Fox

_Ivanhoe_

Grevy, Reverend George

_The Enchanted Courser, or The Sultan of Cordistan_

Green, John C.

_The Magic Flute_  
The Cloud King; or Magic Rose

Hibbitt, Charles Jr. (Charles Isaac Mungo)

_Alexander the Great and Thalestris the Amazon_  
_Repair the Base; or Is it a Spectre?_

Hibbitt, Thomas J.

_The Life, Death, and Restoration of the High Hattled Racer_  
_Dan Giovanni; or, A Spectre on Horseback_  
_Paul Jones_

Fenuit, John Sevill

_The Secret Mine_

Fitzball, Edward

_Jean of Arc; or, The Maid of Orleans_  
The Bronze Horse; or The Spell of the Cloud King  
The White Maiden of California  
_Amali; or The Prodigal of Memphis_  
_Merlita; or The Battle of Flidden Field_
Haines, John Thomas

Richard Plantagenet

Lewis, N. G.

Timur the Tartar

Miller, R. M.

Mazepa
Turbia's Ride to York; or Bonny Black Bess

Moncrieff, William Thomas

Hyppolita, Queen of the Amazons
The Cataract of the Ganges
Gipsy Jack

Planché, James Robinson

Cortez, or The Conquest of Mexico

Rode, Leemn

Sixteen String Jack

Wilks, Thomas E.

The Battle of the Amazons
Appendix D

Classification of the eighty-four plays in the dissertation according to type. Since Appendix E gives the type, only the number of each will be given.

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<td>Romantic Drama</td>
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<td>Romantic Spectacle</td>
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Gret Anthony Girard, Jr., was born on January 15, 1910, in New Iberia, Louisiana. He attended Mount Carmel Convent until the fourth grade, and then he transferred to St. Peters College, from which he was graduated in 1926. In September of that year he enrolled as a freshman at Loyola University, New Orleans. He resigned at Easter of 1927 so that he could prepare for entrance as a plebe at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. In December, 1929, he resigned from the Naval Academy and returned to Loyola University at the beginning of the second semester, 1930. He was graduated from Loyola University with a Bachelor of Philosophy degree, 1931. He enrolled as a graduate student at Louisiana State University in 1933 and received the Master of Arts degree in the summer of 1934. After playing music professionally for a year, he returned to L. S. U. in 1935 on a fellowship in the Department of English. He taught from 1935 to 1938 and then was appointed Assistant in English. He is a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English at the graduation exercises August, 1939.
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Candidate: Clay A. Girard

Major Field: English

Title of Thesis: The Equestrian Drama of the Nineteenth Century

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

A. J. Bryan

W. A. Read

W. J. Oline

Date of Examination:

July 15, 1939