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Dion Boucicault and the Nineteenth Century Theatre: A Biography.

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DION BOUCICAULT AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY THEATRE:

A BIOGRAPHY

A Dissertation

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

in

The Department of Speech

by

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B. A., West Virginia University, 1935
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MANUSCRIPT THESSES

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ABSTRACT

The nineteenth century Anglo-American theatre is remembered chiefly as an institution of great actors and theatrical personalities. The century was void of great plays, and as a result, little attention has been given to its theatrical accomplishments.

Dien Boucicault (1820/22 to 1890) lived throughout most of the century. He was the most prolific and successful writer of the time. Some critics have estimated that he wrote over 400 plays. He proved to be one of the most popular of the actors of comedy. He designed theatres, lectured on all phases of theatre work, was a successful stage-manager and a successful teacher of young actors. In fact, it would be difficult to study the nineteenth century theatre without finding him a dominant figure in all phases of theatrical activity. To study the life of Dien Boucicault is to study the theatre of the nineteenth century.

The purpose of this study is to bring together the widely scattered information concerning Dien Boucicault, and in some measure to evaluate his influence and contributions to the development of the drama during his century. The study is essentially a biography.
Newspapers of the period have been the primary sources for the study. The *New York Times* has been particularly valuable. Newspapers of other cities have given detailed information of Boucicault's appearances and activities in these particular locations. The only other single, important source has been the Theatre Collection in the New York Public Library, which provided much valuable information through its copious clipping files and its collections of original theatre programs and handbills.

Boucicault's rise to renown as a playwright was swift. If we are to believe his natal year to be 1822, as he would have us do, he was a lad of 18 when his first London presentation, *London Assurance*, was declared a success in 1841. He created a minor sensation in the field of dramatic writing when he took the techniques of the eighteenth century comedy of manners and put them into a modern setting in *London Assurance* and its companion pieces of the forties. Later, using the same process, he developed his "domestic drama." By omitting much of the moralizing influences of the sentimental play and by placing it in the framework of the melodrama, Boucicault devised a formula for successful playwriting which was to last him for many, many years.

Coming to America in the fall of 1853, Boucicault
first provided dramatic vehicles which were suited for the successful display of the peculiar talents of his actress-wife, Agnes Robertson. The following year, he introduced himself as an actor in America in his play Used Up on September 20, 1854, in Boston. He immediately began to receive good notices.

After two successful seasons in the North, the Boucicaults journeyed southward and arrived in New Orleans on January 21, 1855. So successful was Boucicault as a playwright and as an actor that he was invited to return the following fall to serve as manager of the new Gaiety Theatre.

By 1858, Boucicault had devised and perfected his "sensation drama" with the successful presentation of The Poor of New York, Fauvrette and Jessie Brown.

The New York season of 1859-60 is often referred to as the "Boucicault Season"; for during this time he designed the Winter Garden, wrote seven plays in less than six months, was house-dramatist for the Winter Garden and later for Laura Keene's Theatre, and wrote the first of his Irish dramas, The Colleen Bawn.

The Boucicaults returned to England during the summer of 1860 and remained there for 12 years. During this 12-year period, Boucicault dominated the English stage by providing scripts, organizing touring companies,
designing theatres and by acting in all the larger cities of England, and in Ireland and Scotland.

By the time he had returned to America in 1872, Boucicault had established himself as a writer of native plays as Arrah-na-Pogue and Kerry. Undoubtedly the greatest of these Irish plays was The Shaughraun written in 1874.

After The Shaughraun Boucicault wrote no great successes. He traveled a great deal trying to find new audiences. In 1885, he even went to Australia and New Zealand. But the spirit of his earlier successes had become outmoded and in his final years his romantic melodramas appealed only to the gallery.

Boucicault spent the last years of his life as a lecturer and teacher of acting at the Madison Square Theatre School under the management of A. M. Palmer.

Boucicault was the most prolific and the most successful English dramatist of his age. As an actor and stage-manager, he introduced and made popular a more realistic style of acting. Both as a writer and actor, he knew what comprised good theatre. He had an uncanny sense of theatrical values and he knew just what would appear well on the stage.

Since a standard of realism in art is not a static element, we tend now to laugh at his sensation scenes.
But his revolving towers, his snow scenes, his sham locomotives and real horse-drawn carriages, when judged in his day, were realistic projections of contemporary incidents and were applauded as such.

This biographical study of Dion Boucicault discloses a picture of the nineteenth century theatre, which was a vital part of America's cultural growth. Boucicault may not be remembered as a lasting influence, but he was of great contemporary importance and played an important role in this nineteenth century theatre.
INTRODUCTION

The name of Dion Bou(r)cicault appears again and again in the many works on American Theatrical History. As an active theatre artist Dion Boucicault had hardly an equal among his contemporaries. His practical success as a playwright was not exceeded in his day nor has it been since. Boucicault was the most prolific and the most successful English dramatist of his age. No one knows the actual number of his plays.

As a dramatic writer and producer, Dion Boucicault must be given a place in the history of American drama. His influence was a strongly felt one for fifty years. He dominated the New York stage for nearly thirty years.

Coming to America in 1853 as the author of a few successful plays such as London Assurance and Old Heads and Young Hearts, Boucicault quickly established himself as a writer for his popularly acclaimed actress-wife, Agnes Robertson. In succeeding years, he established himself as a successful actor, proved to the public that he could not successfully manage a theatre, but nonetheless became a successful director, and developed a style of melodrama which has since that time been synonymous with his name: the sensation play. The mounting of his sensation scenes created great excitement
and led the way to a more realistic form of staging. His multiple stages, divided stages and revolving sets were quite advanced for his day.

The present writer became especially interested in Boucicault upon discovering that he had been prominent in theatrical circles of New Orleans prior to the Civil War. From a cursory examination of the newspapers of New Orleans, it became evident that he was a respected man of the theatre, not only as a writer, but as an actor and theatre manager as well. This preliminary view stimulated curiosity and motivated a more complete examination of the dramatic career of this Irishman with a French name who spent the major part of his life in America.

Despite the fact that Dion Boucicault was obviously one of the most influential figures in the nineteenth century Anglo-American Theatre, there have been only two studies, and those brief ones, of his career. The only published book is one that Townsend Walsh did for the Dunlap Society in 1915.1 The other study is a graduate thesis done in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Chicago in 1926.2


The present study of a man who dominated the New York stage for nearly thirty years and whose influence was felt for fifty years, who was proficient as author, actor, stage-manager, designer, and lecturer, who toured all over the United States, England and Australia is basically a biography. Its primary purpose is to bring together the widely scattered information concerning Boucicault's work in America, and in some measure to evaluate his influence and contributions. His activities in England are considered only in a summary manner, and are left for detailed study by some subsequent writer. Much of the personal and social life of Dion Boucicault as such is purposely neglected, for interesting as it is, it has only an indirect bearing on this study.

The writer is fully cognizant of certain gaps in this record. Undoubtedly Boucicault played one-night stands and one-week engagements for which the writer does not have proper coverage. With the exception of the engagements in San Francisco, his western tours remain unreported. An account of his trip to Australia and New Zealand would make interesting reading were the material available. No attempt has been made to record, or even make reference to, hundreds of productions of his plays that have been done by other actors and companies.

The primary sources for the present study have been the newspapers of the day. The New York Times has been the largest single source of information. Other New York papers
have been considered when necessary. The Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, and San Francisco papers have yielded much important information on Boucicault at certain periods of his life. Such standard works as T. Allston Brown, History of the American Stage; Charles Durang, History of the Philadelphia Stage; Arthur Hornblow, A History of the Theatre in America; Joseph N. Ireland, Records of the New York Stage from 1750 to 1860; and George C. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage have been used as points of departure in establishing the dates in the various periods of Boucicault's theatrical life. The Theatre Collection in the New York City Public Library has provided a wealth of material. Newspaper clippings, original theatre programs and handbills found there proved to be of great value. The libraries of Congress and of Harvard University provided microfilm copies of certain rare books which were of great help in covering specific material that would otherwise have been neglected. Certain graduate studies have disclosed pertinent information about single theatres or regional activities. These include such works as The Theatre in Mobile 1822-1860, Mary Morgan Duggar, (University of Alabama, 1941); The History of the Theatre in California in the Nineteenth Century, Minette Augusta Ker, (University of California, 1922); A History of the Pittsburgh Stage, James Allison Lowrie, (University of Pittsburgh, 1943); A History of the Philadelphia Theatre 1878 to 1890, Thomas F. Marshall, (University of Pennsylvania, 1941); and The
This dissertation consists of thirteen chapters, arranged in chronological order. The first chapter contains preliminary information regarding the birth and early activities of Boucicault. Chapter II through Chapter VI cover the first seven years of Boucicault's activities in America. Chapter VII is a condensed summary of his twelve years in England during the Civil War and the post-war years, i.e., 1860 to 1872. Although Boucicault returned periodically to England during the remaining years of his life, most of his activities were in America. Chapters VIII through XII cover the last years of his life.

The chapters vary in scope. Some cover several seasons, particularly when Boucicault was on tour. Others cover a single season, when the amount and importance of his achievements demanded separate treatment. For example, Chapter III is on his New Orleans activity, all three of his appearances in the Crescent City having been placed together to make a single unit; Chapter VI consists of an account of but one season—the "Boucicault Season"—when he was house playwright for the Winter Garden Theatre and later, in the same season, playwright for Laura Keene's Theatre. Chapter XIII is a summary, in which an attempt is made to draw together all the main points of interest and to emphasize certain selections from his non-dramatic writings which give
his views and opinions on many theatrical subjects, especially acting, directing and dramatic composition.

The nineteenth century theatre was basically an actor's theatre. No great drama was written. Ordinarily, studies of this century stress the actors and their rendition of famous roles written during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. This study of Dion Boucicault discloses a phase of the written drama--the melodrama--and the development of staging techniques which are usually ignored by theatrical historians.
CHAPTER I

FROM BIRTH TO SUCCESS

"The life of a man does not begin at the moment of his birth. For a few years he is a vegetable. Then he becomes an animal, and at last—as the grub turns into the fly—his mind unfolds its wings and he lives under the sun.

From the very first exposure to theatrical activity, Dionysius Lardner Bou(r)cicault knew that there could be no other life for him. Once he had "trod upon the boards," there was no question in his mind and he knew then and there that he must be an actor. He could be called "a child of the theatre," for all that he knew about dramatic writing was learned in the theatre.

It is generally believed that he was born in Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin, Ireland. There seems to be little doubt that Anne Maria Darley was his mother. She belonged to a family of literati, and was the sister of the poet, George Darley, and of the Rev. Mr. Charles Darley who wrote 'Plighted Troth,' a play which failed so signally at Drury Lane. Boucicault appears to have shown some pleasure over this result, for his uncle had regarded his own (Boucicault's) first efforts as works of a schoolboy. 1

It may be presumed that Boucicault derived his theatrical propensities from his mother's side of the family. There was some literary blood in the family. Dion's elder brothers, Arthur and George Boucicault, when sent out as boys of twenty years of age to seek their fortunes in Australia, turned to the press for a livelihood. George founded and edited the leading morning journal in Melbourne, while Arthur founded the Northern Argus, of Queensland.\(^2\)

The common assumption is that his father's side of the family was descended from the Irish branch of the Boursiquota, those worthy but undistinguished members of the Dublin bourgeoisie whose Huguenot forebears came from Tours, in the south of France, on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

The Dictionary of National Biography designates the date of Boucicault's birth as December 26, 1820,\(^3\) but at the time of his death, 1890, on a silver tablet fastened to the lid of his oaken casket was inscribed: "Aged 68."\(^4\) The inscription is consistent with the date that he would have us believe to be his natal year, December 20, 1822. It has been


\(^4\)"Dion Boucicault," The New-York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
stated by some writers that Boucicault had moved the date forward two years in order to seem more precocious and that he had not quite reached the age of 19 when he produced his first significant play, *London Assurance*.

Particularly at the time of his death, much speculation arose as to what his true parentage was. The fact that Boucicault was named Dionysius Lardner and that a Dr. Lardner seemed to supervise some of his early education has caused much speculation as to whether Dion was the natural son of Dr. Lardner. In fact, some seemed to assign a "new" mother to him. One writer contended that he was not the protege but the son of Dr. Lardner, his mother being a French modiste named Mlle. Bourcicault, a resident of Dublin. One thing is certain. He had no fancy for engineering [Dr. Lardner's profession]. All his proclivities ran toward the stage, and his true education was received not from the learned Dionysius, but from the dramatic accumulation of the London University.

Charles Lamb Kenney, who became a journalist and author in his own time, writing plays and books for operas as well as for popular songs, was a close friend of Dion.

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5 "Dion Boucicault, Actor and Playwright," *The Illustrated American*, October 4, 1890, p. 7.

6 *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Sidney Lee, XXXI, (London, 1892), 7. Kenney was the author of 'Wanted, Husbands,' musical sketch, Drury Lane, 11 March 1867; 'Valentine and Orson,' pantomime, New Holborn Theatre, 24 Dec. 1867; et cetera. Books and words for operas were furnished by Kenney for 'Don Pasquale,' 1871; 'Lucia di Lammermoor,' 1871. He also wrote words to a 'Requiem' by Verdi in 1875, as well as numerous songs.
This friendship grew from an acquaintance made at the London University School in 1835. He felt that there was no doubt of the parentage of Boucicault and said:

Let this record set aside the report that Dion Boucicault is the son of Dr. Lardner, and derives his talent from that eminent source. He has no title to such distinguished parentage. When the Boucicault family left Ireland, in 1828, to settle in London, the sons were put to school. Misfortunes overtook their father, who returned to business in Ireland, leaving his sons under the care of Dr. Lardner, then a professor of the London University, in whose house they found a home in the holidays. The family of the Lardners and the Darleys had been neighbors and playfellows. Dr. Lardner's sons were named after Miss Darley's brothers and the youngest son of Mrs. S. Boucicault was named Dion, after the scientist.7

Another writer argued that if Dion were the lawful son of Samuel Smith Boursiquot, he would have had to be born at the earlier date, December 26, 1820, for "In 1819 Samuel Smith Boursiquot forsook the family roof-tree. I am not aware how many children had been born to the husband and wife up to that period, but it is noteworthy that Dion Boucicault had three uterine brothers, all remarkably unlike him in character and appearance."8 If S. Boucicault left his wife in 1819, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that either Dion was born in the year 1820, if

7 Kenney, op. cit., p. 4.
he had a right to the name of Boursiquot, or that he was illegitimate if born in the year 1822, as he claimed.

Louise Thorndyke Boucicault, the third wife of Dion, who later became Mrs. Josephine Cheney, wrote, June 17, 1926, concerning her first husband's birth:

Now his paternity could be questioned is beyond me—again and again he alluded to his parents and other relatives, to Dr. Lardner, to his home, etc. — all naturally in course of conversation, again and again. . . . Besides, he was not French — and Mr. B's qualities were a strong blending of the racial traits of his French father, a tea merchant in Dublin, and his Irish mother. . . . I have two beautiful miniatures of his father and mother which he gave me.9

By following a line of argument similar to that of Louise Thorndyke's, that he had many of the French characteristics and therefore must have got them from S. Boursiquot, one could point to a certain parallelism between Dion and Dr. Lardner. As will be shown later, Boucicault was married three times. At the time of his third marriage he had not obtained a divorce from his second wife, Agnes Robertson, and tried to dismiss the whole situation at hand by simply stating that he had never actually married. However, she had given birth to six children (Dion, 1855; Eva, 1859; Darley George, 1861; Patrice, 1862; Nina, 1867 and Aubrey, 1869) all fathered by Dion.

Lardner's bump of amativeness was very strongly developed. In 1815 he had married Cecilia Flood, a grand-daughter of the famous orator, and by her was the father of three children. Although no formal divorce took place until nearly thirty years later, it is noteworthy the two had separated in 1820. Subsequently Lardner eloped with Mrs. Heavyside, a military officer's wife, and in 1849, after the husband had recovered heavy damages for crim. con., made amendment by marrying the lady...

Whether Dr. Lardner was the father of Dion or not, we know that he stood godfather to the boy, and had him educated for a short while at his own expense in England, and in due time took him as apprentice to teach him civil engineering. If this were sheer philanthropy, it was certainly of a very whole-souled order.

Samuel Smith Boursiquot, according to one report, went utterly bad after his separation from his wife. After coming a commercial cropper in or about 1830, he obtained a position as a gauger in the Excise and went to Athlone, where he committed suicide by throwing himself out of an hotel window. The only thing he left behind him was an old family Bible, which was preserved for long by Mr. Turkington, the proprietor of the Athlone Hotel. Some few years ago this Bible was purchased by a Miss Wootton, an agent of the Boucicault family, who came on a special mission to Ireland to inquire into the antecedents of the distinguished author. All attempts on her part to trace Dion Boucicault's baptismal register ended in failure. But there are strong reasons to believe that the old family Bible contained an entry, which, if made public would practically clear up the mystery. In a moment

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10 Scaramuccio, op. cit., p. 216
of confidence Miss Wooton admitted as much
to a friend of the family before leaving Dublin. 11

Little is known of Boucicault's early life. In 1833 he was sent to a school at Hampstead. In speaking of his boyhood, Dion said:

The life of a man does not begin at the moment of his birth. For a few years he is a vegetable. Then he becomes an animal, and at last—as the grub turns into the fly—his mind unfolds its wings and he lives under the sun.

My first experience of life was at school at Hampstead in 1833, then a rural village three miles from London, now swallowed into the metropolis. It was a private school kept by Mr. Hessey, the father of the master of Merchant Tailor's School, and a dignitary of the church.

There were seven or eight of us. I was the stupidest and worst of the lot. In vain the patient, gentle old man tried to find some way into my mind; it was a hopeless task. It was not there. It was wandering into day-dreams and was not to be confined in a bare room, a pile of grammars and slates. Oh, how I hated Latin! The multiplication table was a bed of torture! Oh, for the sunny solitude of a dry ditch and a volume of the 'Seven Champions of Christendom!' I wonder if that wonderful book exists still and is read by boys of ten—if there are any boys of ten. 12

In 1835, Boucicault was removed from Hessey's school and transferred to London University. However he boarded in Euston Square, which was near the school in the home of the Rev. Henry Stebbing. It was during his first year at London University that Boucicault met and became

11 Ibid.
a fast friend of Charles Lamb Kenney. Kenney says that at this time Boucicault was thirteen years old. This would place his birth in 1822.

"A keen-eyed, black-haired boy, full of animal spirits, insubordinate, always in trouble, but extricating himself from every difficulty by sheer good humor," was Kenney's description of that boy of thirteen. He relates an interesting episode of Boucicault's school days which gives some insight to the character of the boy.

Equally incorrigible as scholars, black sheep in the school, we occupied the black hole alternately; this was the only punishment refractory pupils were subject to. We employed our leisure in prison by covering the walls with lampoons on the professors. Those composed by Boucicault were very libelous. He signed the worst specimens with my name. I did my best in the same line over his signature. We used to call it our mural literature. One day, however, . . . the Latin class was waiting for the arrival of our professor, a fiery vehement, red-headed German, named Rainbach. I crept up to the great blackboard, on which the master used to write an English verse when we were called on to translate as an exercise in Latin meter, and wrote in bold chalk letters:

"Rainbach was fiery hot,  
Irascible and proudish,  
His mother was a mustard pot,  
And his father a horse radish."

"The gentlemen will please put that into iambics."

The roar of laughter elicited by the doggerel had not subsided when we heard the voices of the head master, Mr. Key, accompanying Rainbach up the stairs into the classroom. I had no time to efface the damming evidence, but regained my usual seat at the foot of the class—a place, by the way, constantly disputed by Boucicault. We occupied it by turns. The two dons advanced amidst dead silence, and faced the slate. It
was an awful moment when Mr. Key turned to scan the class. His face was purple with the effort to suppress his laughter. But he mastered it. "Young gentlemen," he said, "I desire that the writer of those lines should stand out." With one movement Boucicault and I stepped out together. I regarded him with astonishment, while he assumed a look of penitence and guilt. "What," roared Key, "both of you! That is impossible." I insisted on bearing the blame alone, and appealed to the class. The head master said gravely that to hold up a professor to ridicule in this manner was a capital offence, and ordered my school-fellow to sit down. Boucicault, with a face I shall never forget, lifted his eyes to the skylight and declaimed, in a voice imitating precisely the well known tones of Mr. Key himself:

\[ \text{Hos ego versicullos feci} \\
\text{Tulit alter honorem,} \]

and putting on a dejected air, regained his seat. The effect was irresistible. Rainbach joined in the roar with all his big heart. I was condemned to rub out the lines, and I tendered a very humble and sincere apology to one of the finest scholars and best of men....

Boucicault's friendship with Kenney gave him his first real contact with the professional theatre. Charles Kenney's father was James Kenney, the dramatist, whose influence seemed to give the boys access to the London theatres. Kenney says, "Boucicault was my frequent companion when we two boys sat in the pit of the Adelphi or Drury Lane...".

\[ ^{13} \text{Ibid., pp. 4-6. It is interesting to note that this story is told in Townsend Walsh, The Career of Dion Boucicault (Dunlap Society, 1915), series 3, No. 1. pp. 14-16, as if the story were told by Boucicault. It agrees word for word with the exception of the interchange of proper names.} \]

\[ ^{14} \text{Ibid., p. 6.} \]
In the year 1838 Boucicault was attending a collegiate school in Brentford kept by a Dr. Jamieson when he had his first taste of acting. In the summer of 1839 the school prepared an exhibition, for which the boys presented Richard Sheridan's adaptation of Kotzebue's drama Pizarro. Boucicault recalled: "The part of Rolla fell to me, and then for the first time my mind seemed to splurge. I wanted to play every part in the piece, but satisfied myself by teaching all the rest how their parts should be given."15

As far as can be determined, it was for this "exhibition" that Boucicault wrote his first dramatic piece. It was felt that there was needed an afterpiece. Boucicault wrote it and it was later played at the Princess's Theatre, London, in 1842, under the title Napoleon's Old Guard. During this performance Boucicault felt the quicksilver flow in his blood. "The success attending this exhibition settled my mind. I would be an actor and nothing else."16

Confusion envelops the next two years. Boucicault records that on leaving Brentford he was apprenticed to Dr. Lardner as a civil engineer and became his pupil.

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15 "Dion Boucicault," The New-York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
16 Ibid.
My fellow pupil in his office was one Field, who gave extraordinary promise. We became greatly attached to each other. He was superior to me in every respect—a gentle, dear guide. He was killed in a railroad accident—then I floated back to my old love—the stage.17

Boucicault's heart was not in his studies, and Dr. Lardner soon discovered that he could not make a civil engineer out of his protege; "no great obstacle was placed in his way when he declared his intention of adopting a stage career."18

Boucicault gives a brief account of the two years following the leaving of Brentford:

In 1839 breaking away from all trammels, taking a few pounds pocket money, I started for Cheltenham, Gloucester and Bristol, where I found an engagement to perform and appeared in a few parts with encouraging success. After a few weeks I wandered away to Hull and to Brighton, returning to London in the Spring of 1840, penniless and with a portmanteau chiefly filled with hopes. During that year I lived anyhow, drifting from one poor lodging to another, selling the little I had to obtain the means of life, cleansing my own shoes, but refusing to return to my father's home in Dublin, and confess to being the prodigal I am (and have always been) . . . . There was no room for me at home excepting in my mother's heart, so I stayed away.19

17 Ibid. The same record is reported in the New-York Clipper, September 27, 1890.
18 Ibid. If Boucicault were under the tutelage of Dr. Lardner in 1838/39 he could not have taken up the professional stage in 1838 as Moses, op. cit., p. 117, reports: "In March, 1838, the first professional step was taken when Dion joined a dramatic company at Cheltenham, England . . . ."
Whether he adopted the professional stage in 1838 or 1839 is of relatively little importance. It would seem that his family was against his taking up the stage as a profession and that he appeared under the name of Lee Moreton (or Morton—both appear on programs and handbills.) It would appear that his maiden role was that of Norfolk in Richard III.²⁰

However, at the time of his death many reminiscences appeared and they do not always agree. Barton Hill, an actor who was appearing in the role of Malvolio in the Grand Opera House in Pittsburg at the time of Boucicault's death, gives an account of Boucicault's early thespian attempts which places his professional beginnings at an earlier date and assigns the role of Tressel in Richard III as his first role. He recalls:

"Probably no one now living... certainly no one in America, has known the late Dion Boucicault so long as my mother (Mrs. Charles Hill) and her children, for our acquaintance dates as far back as 1837. In that year my father was the lessee of the Cheltenham and Gloucester theatres in England. My mother remembers perfectly a very young gentleman applying for a position in the company, and being instructed with the part of Tressel in "Richard III," which, she says, he performed remarkably well. A few weeks afterward "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" was given under the patronage of a Lieutenant Colonel Bym, Sir Giles Overreach,

²⁰ Moses, op. cit., p. 117.
by "a young gentleman of this city." Young as I then was I distinctly remember seeing that performance. The Sir Giles was Mr. Lee Morton, for that was Boucicault's name until he attained his majority, the Tressel of a few weeks before.

I have by me a copy of "Bruce's Travels in Abyssinia" (a gift from him to my mother) with that name in his hand-writing, and my sister still preserves a set of Shakespeare's works, a present from him, in each volume of which he had written:

"To Rosalie Hill,  
'From her sincere friend,  
'Lee Morton  
'Brighton, May, 1838."

In that year, 1838, my father gave up the Gloucester and Cheltenham theatres and became the lessee of the Theatre Royal, Brighton. I remember that we stopped in London on our way to witness the grand procession at the coronation of the queen. \(\text{The mention of Victoria's coronation makes this evidence more conclusive.}\) Mr. Lee Morton accompanied us, and, in fact lived in the same house (Rutland House, Marine Parade) with us during his stay in Brighton, which must have been over a year, during which time he played, once only, I think, Rory O'More in the drama of that name. He may have repeated Sir Giles, but I am not certain.\(^2\)

If Mr. Hill's sister did have a book with Boucicault's signature with the date of 1838 in it Dion had taken to the stage by that time. Much of the evidence that is available seems to point to 1838 as the year that he began his theatrical career under the name of Lee Morton. Almost certainly he was active as an actor by the year 1838, and Nicoll credits him with a play, A Legend of the Devil's Dyke,

\(^2\) "Memories of Boucicault," Pittsburg Times, nd. Clipping found in the New York Public Library.
produced at Brighton in 1838. His career as an actor continued until the year of 1840, when he gave up acting and for over a decade devoted all his energy and time to authorship. He did not appear again as an actor until he played the title role in *The Vampire*. He may have abandoned the field of acting on account of pressure brought upon him by his family. "My mother," said Boucicault, "had the greatest repugnance to my being an actor. So, during the eleven years from 1841 to 1852, I never acted. But when she found I had married an actress, she immediately urged me to join my wife in her profession and not allow her to act except with me, and in my works." 

In this statement, Boucicault admitted that he had married Agnes Robertson. This statement will have greater significance in later chapters. First, it indicates that he had married Agnes prior to leaving England for America, and, secondly, it supports Agnes' claim, at the time of Dion's third marriage, of having been Boucicault's lawfully married wife.

During December, 1839, and January, 1840, Boucicault played at the Theatre Royal, Hull, in such roles as Tim Moore

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in The Irish Lion; Trip in Sheridan's The School for Scandal; \(^24\) the title role in Jack Sheppard; \(^25\) Gerald Pepper in The White Horse of the Peppers; \(^26\) the title role in Teddy the Tiler, an Interlude; Terrence O'Connelly in the farce His First Champagne; \(^27\) Phelim in 23, St. John-St. Adelphi; \(^28\) and a repeat of Jack Sheppard. \(^29\) The last record

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\(^24\) A handbill in the New York Public Library announces: "On Monday Evening, December 2, 1839 will be performed Shakespeare's Tragedy of OTHELLO To conclude with the popular Farce of The Irish Lion. Tim Moore... Mr. Lee Moreton (From the Theatre-Royal, St. James)... On Tuesday (First Fashionable Night) Sheridan's Comedy of The School for Scandal... Trip... Mr. Lee Moreton."

\(^25\) The Theatre Royal Program found in New York Public Library announces: "This Evening, Thursday, December 28th, 1839/ will be performed, First Time, An Entirely New Romantic & Historical Drama, in four parts, taken from the celebrated and popular Romance of W. Harrison Ainsworth, Esq. and adapted for representation by Mr. Lee Moreton, called JACK SHEPPARD... Jack Sheppard-- -Mr. Lee Moreton. To conclude with the laughable Farce, entitled Deaf as a Post."

\(^26\) Handbill for Theatre Royal, Hull, found in New York Public Library, announces: "Tuesday, January 14th, 1840, The Youthful Queen to be followed by The White Horse of the Peppers. In which Mr. Lee Moreton plays the part of Gerald Pepper. To be concluded with Hero and Leander."

\(^27\) Handbill for Theatre Royal, Hull, found in New York Public Library announces: "This Evening, Wednesday, January 15th, 1840, Deformed: or The Hunchback of Notre Dame. After which, the favourite Interlude of Teddy the Tiler. Teddy-- -Mr. Lee Moreton. To conclude with the Laughable Farce of His First Champagne. Terrence O'Connelly, from Cork-- -Mr. Lee Moreton."

\(^28\) Handbill for Theatre-Royal, Hull, found in New York Public Library, announces: "This Evening, Monday, January 27th, 1840, Mad Marian. After which the favourite interlude of 23, St. John-St. Adelphi. Phelim-- -Mr. Lee Moreton."

\(^29\) Handbill for Theatre-Royal, Hull, found in (Continued)
to be found of an appearance at Hull shows him to be both an actor and a singer. Later in the year of 1840, Boucicault appeared at the Queen's Theatre, London; in his own farce, Hard Up.\(^{31}\)

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\(^{29}\) (Continued) New York Public Library, announces: "On Monday Evening, will be performed, The Tragedy of Pizarro. To conclude with (first time at Half-Price) Jack Sheppard. Jack Sheppard—Mr. Lee Morton."

\(^{30}\) Handbill for Theatre-Royal, Hull, found in New York Public Library, announces: "Evening, Friday, January 31, 1840 on which occasion will be presented Three Entire New Pieces!!

"The performance will commence with Mr. Buckstone's last new successful Comedy of Single Life, or a Lesson for Bachelors.

"After which, first time, a laughable Farce, in One Act, entitled The Wandering Minstrel, or, Can't Move on Under a Shilling.

"To conclude with, first time here, an Operatic Burlesque Parody, called OTHELLO. According to Act of Parliament. . . . Iago (Othello's officer, once a native of the Gaulter Mountains, County Tipperary, Province of Munster, and Kingdom of Ireland)—Mr. Lee Moreton.

"Incidental to the Burletta, the following Parodies:—

Duet, 'Morn will soon be peeping,' -Air, - 'Barcarole,'---Mssrs. Lee Moreton & Hughes.

Song, 'Farewell My Dear Friend Roddy, 'Air 'Bow wow.'-- ---Mr. Lee Moreton.

Duet, 'Will You Go to the Senate?' (Air, 'Will you come to the Bower?')-- --Mssrs. Herbert & Lee Moreton.

Song, 'Meet me To-night on the Sly,' (Air, Meet me by Moonlight,')-- --Mr. Lee Moreton.

Song, 'Oh, She That's fair and never proud.' (Air, Ratty Mooney,')-- --Mr. Lee Moreton.

Duet, 'Oh! beware this Love!' -- --Mr. Lee Moreton & Herbert.

Song, 'Believe me, I'd rather my tongue,'-- --Mr. Lee Moreton.

\(^{31}\) "Death of Dion Boucicault," The New York Clipper, September 27, 1890.
With only two years of experience as an actor and only four scripts to his credit as an author, namely The Devil's Dyke, Hard Up, Napoleon's Old Guard (which was yet to be produced professionally), and A Lover by Proxy (yet unproduced) Boucicault prepared his first significant script, London Assurance.

The history of the writing of London Assurance is just as confused as many of the other facts concerning the early activities of Boucicault. Probably one reason for this confusion of details was due to the fact that Boucicault was such a splendid teller of stories, so that in later life his remembrances of his early life were colored with his ability to take a few facts and weave them into an interesting narrative.

If one is to believe Boucicault's description of the winter of 1840-41 as he described it in later life, he was certainly in dire straits, for he described it thus:

"Oh! the winter of 1840-41! How it came and went I cannot remember, but during that winter I wrote the comedy London Assurance. It was a boyish performance, a flood of animal spirits. It was written on penny copy-books, sometimes in pencil, when the ink froze and I crept into...

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32 "Dion Boucicault, Actor and Playwright," The Illustrated American, Oct. 4, 1890, p. 7. In this article Boucicault recalled, "My first piece was 'Napoleon's Old Guard,' and my second the farce of 'A Lover by Proxy.'" He had undoubtedly forgotten about The Devil's Dyke and Hard Up.
bed for warmth. When I had finished I gave it to be copied by an Irishman. I shall never forget his name—it was Blake. I dreaded to receive it back, for I knew it would cost $5 and I did not possess half that sum. Blake brought it back and before I could speak he said, 'Will you let me take you by the hand, sir? I have never copied any play that has given me so much pleasure, and I am proud it was written by a countryman.' It was the first note of encouragement I had received.'

During a lecture in 1853, Boucicault related the following colorful narrative of the history of the writing of *London Assurance*. He had arrived in London with a five-act tragedy. With a capital of only five sovereigns he engaged an attic and sent his play to Mr. Robert Bell. He was determined to sell the manuscript. In a few days he called to learn that gentleman's opinion. "My dear young friend," said Mr. Bell, "I am sorry to say that there is just enough merit in this play to encourage you. But are you not aware that the drama is the luxury of literature? You have begun at the wrong end, -- you have eaten the dessert first. There are tons of the finest poetry cumbering the shelves of managers, which can't get played."  


34 This story is excerpted from a review of one of Boucicault's early lectures entitled "A Literary Career in London," reviewed in the *New-York Daily Times*, Thursday, December 29, 1853, p. 2.
Undaunted by this discouraging retort, Boucicault put his tragedy into his pocket and stormed the office of Mr. Mathews, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre. This office was typical of theatre managers' offices. Mathews was surrounded by officials to protect him against the intrusion of strangers. "However," said Mr. Boucicault, "I had the courage of a mother; for I had got my child in my pocket. So I forced my way into the manager's room. 'What, in Heaven, does this young man want?' demanded the amazed manager. 'I want to read my tragedy to you, and I shall not go away till I have done so,' replied Mr. BOURCICAULT."

The fate of circumstance was with Boucicault for it would seem that at this moment Mathews was engaged to dine with two "noble lords," in one of whom Boucicault recognized an acquaintance. This man introduced Boucicault to the manager, who asked him to join the group and make a fourth at dinner.

At the table, said Mr. BOURCICAULT, I wanted to eat and read my play at the same time, but my proposition was over-ruled. After dinner however, I read it. At the end of each act the noble lords woke up, and said, "Cawpital; very good." At the end of the reading, the manager slapped me on the back, "That's immortality, certainly," lisped the lords. "I don't want immortality," said Mr. BOURCICAULT, "I want to get it played." The manager thought it unsuitable

35 Ibid.
for the stage. "Oh, unsuitable, certainly," echoed the lords. "Now, I'll tell you what I'll do," said Mr. BOUROICAULT. "you profess a wish to serve me; you are sincere in your profession, of course. You can't play my tragedy. What shall I write that you can play? Come, that's business." The manager stared. The noble lords were taken aback. "What does he mean by our being sincere in our professions?" asked one of the other. "Dem'd if I know," was the reply. "Write," said the manager, "a five act comedy depicting London fashionable life as it exists to-day." "What can he write about?" "What is there to describe?" said one of the lords. "Oh," replied Mr. BOUROICAULT, "I'll find enough to write when I set about it," and I took his measure as I said so. In a month from that time he figured on paper as Sir Harcourt Courtly, and my comedy of "London Assurance" was in rehearsal at Covent Garden.36

Moses reports that Mathews read the "original" London Assurance in the form of a one-act play. It was probably Boucicault's A Lover by Proxy. "Surprised on seeing such a boy before him, Mathews encouraged him, though handing back the manuscript."37 It was the thought that had the play been a longer, five-act play Mathews would have accepted it, which spurred Boucicault on to rewrite it and get it back into the hands of the producer as quickly as possible. Mathews, surprised by the speed with which Boucicault rewrote his piece, accepted it and placed it in rehearsal.

Madame Vestris (Mrs. Charles Mathews) had liked

36 ibid.
37 op. cit., p. 118.
the play from the beginning and offered words of encouragement to the then unknown playwright, Lee Morton. "We cannot tell what reception your comedy may meet with, but the public cannot alter my opinion that it is a brilliant play and that you will be numbered among the dramatists of the period. You have a fortune, and we are glad and proud to be interpreters of your first work." It was Madame Vestris who suggested the title, London Assurance. The play had been so hurriedly written that it had gone into rehearsal without a name. At one time, it was tentatively called "Out of Town."

Inexperienced as he was, Boucicault had the good judgment to model his play upon the lines of splendid theatre. It was to the style of Richard Sheridan's School for Scandal that he turned to pattern this first piece for Mathews.

Boucicault had originally written the part of Dazzle for John Brougham, who lived at the same house that Boucicault did, "making it an Irish part, but when Mathews read the first three acts, he took a fancy to the character, and asked me to eliminate the brogue, and I finished it with a reference to his acting the part."  

38 Dion Boucicault, "My First Play," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.

Not until the final rehearsals were the scenes definitely set.

"Scene after scene," said Boucicault in his pen-picture, "was rewritten at the prompt-table and handed wet to the company. Thus the last speech of the play, which is technically termed 'the tag,' was composed and handed to Max Earkaway. The next day, or on some subsequent day, Vestris took the author aside and said: 'Farren wants to speak "the tag." I suppose you don't mind?' 'Well,' said the author, looking up with his Irish smile, 'will it not sound rather strange in the mouth of Sir Harcourt Courtley?'

'Originally this role was called Sir William Dazzle, a surname later used for another character.' 'Oh, never mind--I am sure the public will not. Bartley does not object; in fact, he approves.' And so it stood."

The play was produced on March 4, 1841. The name of the author was unknown to the London theatre-going public. The program announced its author as "Lee Morton," and so a half-filled house assembled to witness the first performance. It was a cast well worthy of any play. Mrs. Nisbett and Madame Vestris are among the traditions of the stage. Mathews was Dazzle; Farren, Sir Harcourt; Mme. Vestris, Grace Harkaway; Mrs. Nisbett, Lady Gay; Anderson, Charles Courtly. Its success was instantaneous.

Lester Wallack remembers the opening night of London Assurance by saying:

... I remember standing behind the scenes at the Haymarket one night during the run of Bulwer's

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40 Moses, op. cit., p. 118.
"Money," then at the very zenith of its first and great success, when someone came hurrying in and announced, "An enormous hit at Covent Garden! The third act is over and it is tremendous; if the other two acts go in the same way it is an immense go." This was "London Assurance." I saw it the second night. It was really the first time that the perfection of the modern boxed-in scenery was displayed to the public. It was most beautifully done; I can see the whole thing now, the scenes and everything. It was, as I have said, something quite novel, and was, of course, a great success. When the curtain went down on the first act, the first night, there was dead silence. It is a very ineffective ending, and the scene was simply an anteroom, in which there was no chance for very great display; but when the curtain rose on the second act, the outside of "Oak Hall," there was an enormous amount of applause, and that act went with the most perfect "snap." The audience was in good humor from the moment of the entrance, as Lady Gay, of that most perfect actress, Mrs. Nisbit, for whom Boucicault wrote the part. . . .

It was more than a success—it was a revolution.

At the end of the play, the author, Lee Morton (Boucicault), was led on the stage by the manager, Charles Mathews. The whole house rose. "What an ovation for a boy of eighteen! The success was prompt and great. No criticism could arrest the torrent of public appreciation. . . ." That night, March 4, 1841, was the turning point in the life of Dion Boucicault, but he would have us believe that he was quite unaware of the tremendous success of the play, for he recalled:

"I had not the faintest conception of what it

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42 Kenney, op. cit., p. 9.
meant. I knew it had not cost me much trouble to write it... I wore a turn-down collar, as boys did then, over my jacket. My unconsciousness of the successful debut I made as an author was mis-interpreted: they took for pride or conceit what was simply indifference, arising from lack of appreciation of the play's success..."43

At the time that London Assurance came out, the dramatic world assumed that the manners, characters and incidents of the current period afforded no material for a legitimate comedy. All comedies had been fashioned on models of a former century. Frock coats and modern dress were no more acceptable in a five-act comedy than such a costume at a levee of the Queen. Boucicault seemed to break this prejudice down.

With the success of London Assurance, many writers turned to the stage and to this style of drama. A whole host of dramatists, some of whom had never essayed the stage before, tried their talents in the field of dramatic writing. Within three years after the production of London Assurance, Robert Bell, Mark Lemon, Douglas Jerrold, Sullivan, Mr. Charles Gore, Marston, the Rev. Charles Darley, and others, followed suit. Modern comedies on the plan of London Assurance flooded the stage to supply a new public demand. Among them, Boucicault contributed Old Heads and Young Hearts and the Irish Heiress, as will be shown later. The

former has retained its place in the drama, and perhaps is the only one of them that survived the period.

**London Assurance** is not a great play when compared with the plays of present day writers; one cannot compare Boucicault with a Shaw or an O'Neill. But taken as a literary piece of his day, it possessed a certain individuality and inventiveness. . . . The story itself is an impossible one, . . . Some of the characters are mere Reynolised 'humours,' but others stand out, if not with individuality, at least with a boldness and directness which testifies to a power lacking in the majority of the earlier dramatists. Lady Gay Spanker is not a masterpiece, yet she has a vivacity of her own and a genuine comic appeal. There is, too, in Dazzle a figure of quiet fun, and the situations in which he appears are conceived with a decided sense of the theatre. There is no wonder that **London Assurance** created a slight stir in 1841, for, however near in spirit it was to the sentimental manners style of Reynolds, it yet marked an advance upon the average contemporary production and indicated that the way was being prepared for Robertson. 44

The use of the "boxed-in scenery" which Wallack has already mentioned was presented with some degree of perfection in the production of **London Assurance**. This was not the first time that such a type of staging had been presented; for *The Theatrical Observer*, February 10, 1834, distinctly mentioned, in reviewing the Drury Lane production of Bunn's *The Minister and the Mercer*, "a beautifully

44 Nicoll, op. cit., I, 188-89.
painted plafond . . . lighted by an immense sky-light," which would indicate that the full box-set, complete with ceiling, had been evolved by 1834.45 "This was a 'royal apartment,' but a similar movement is to be traced also in the setting for humbler interiors. Mathews and Vestris, who had been originally responsible for many of the changes in scenery and costume, evidently caused a stir when in 1841 they produced Boucicault's London Assurance . . . using there 'not stage properties,' but bona fide realities."46

Without the earlier attempts at realistic staging, neither a Money nor a London Assurance would have been possible. Neither could have been done in 1810. The plays of this genre, created by Boucicault who was followed by Robertson and others, were inspired by this new school of scenic design. Planche had led a theatrical reform in an attempt at a more careful attempt at realism. He had been preceded with attempts at realistic effects by Loutherbourg and his successors with their use of gauze; even John Kemble, although he would be laughed at today for his attempts at realistic costuming, was headed in the right direction. By the time of Planche, gas was being introduced as a source for illumination. The use of gas, however crude,

45 Nicoll, op. cit., I, 38.
46 Ibid.
as a light source whose intensity could be controlled, led towards an effect of realism. By 1832 Daguerre and Bouton had exhibited their diorama in Regent's Park. Attempts at realism were constantly being demanded. Planche's reforms in costuming in the accurate period and the development of a more realistic style of staging had had its effects on both Boucicault and Robertson.

Both Lytton and Boucicault realized that with greater visual realism there was now a basis for suitable interpretations of comedies based, not like the earlier comedy-farces upon the theatrical types and conventions, but upon the manners and men of contemporary life. "The stage Irishman, the stage butler, the stage friend with his blundering ways, all are with us yet in pale replica--relics of the past; but fundamentally we may say that the whole tendency of the writing of comedy since 1840 has been towards realism, . . . ."47

Although a box-set was used for London Assurance, just how much influence an unknown playwright of eighteen had in obtaining it is rather questionable. Madame Vestris, at an earlier date, had been in America championing realistic staging. But in his characteristic fashion, at a later date, Boucicault claimed the credit and related with

47 Nicoll, op. cit., I, 45.
much gusto that when he suggested using a carpet in the
drawingroom, John Cooper, the stage-manager, murmured:
"What next? He will be asking for real flowers and real
sunlight in the Garden." We have had the real flowers
since, and the limelight furnished a very respectable sub-
stitute for sunlight.

With the successful production of London Assurance,
Boucicault's career as a playwright was assured. All of
his scripts were in demand, and as a letter to his mother
indicates within three days after the opening, he was per-
mitted to join the Dramatic Author's Society.

My dear Mother—I daresay—before this reaches
you—you will have heard of the triumph I have
achieved. I have made my fortune and my name.
On Thursday last, March 4, a comedy in five acts,
written by me, was played at Covent Garden Theatre,
and has made a tremendous hit. Indeed, so much so,
that it is played every night to crammed houses,
and it is expected to run the whole season. To-day
I was elected member of the Dramatic Authors'
Society.

I have now four pieces in Covent Garden all ac-
cepted. The present piece, "London Assurance," from which I shall get £ 300; "Woman," a play in
five acts, £ 500; "Sharp's the Word," a comedietta
in one act, £ 100; "The Old Guard," a drama in two
acts, £ 250—making £ 1,150, independent of pub-
lishers, which is worth about £ 300, and other
sundries.49

48 "Dion Boucicault," The New-York Dramatic Mirror,
September 27, 1890.

49 "King George's Fund for Actors and Actresses.
'London Assurance' and its Author," Daily Telegraph (London)
July 16, 1913.
Following that night of triumph, young Mr. "Lee Morton" plunged whole heartedly into play-writing. As indicated in the letter to his mother, he must have had three other scripts in his portfolio when he came to London. Within the next eighteen months three of his pieces were produced.

The Irish Heiress was produced in February, 1842. It was the first of his dramas to be produced under his own name. It was coolly received and proved to be a comparative failure at first, but was afterwards acted with considerable success both in England and in America. On April 21, 1842, A Lover by Proxy was performed. This, according to Moses, was the one-act play which Boucicault probably first showed to Mathews. And on September 19, 1842, Alma Mater, or a Cure for Coquettes was produced at the Haymarket. It was attacked as a play full of plagiarisms. The London critics accused the author of having taken the character of Gradus from Mrs. Cowley's play, Who's the Dupe, and to have borrowed the supper scene from a chapter in Charles O'Malley.

Boucicault had tasted success and was not hesitant in acknowledging himself as a successful "fellow author." Perhaps his ability in "puffing" his plays and himself was one

50 "Dion Boucicault," The New-York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.

51 Nicoll, op. cit., II, 259.
of his strongest characteristics. From the very beginning of his professional career to his death, Boucicault had faith in himself and in his ability to write good plays. The point is well illustrated in a letter addressed to Ben Webster, manager of the Haymarket in 1842, an actor, playwright, and member of the Dramatic Author's Society, who produced Boucicault's Alma Mater.

MY DEAR WEBSTER,

I greet you heartily as a fellow Author—not with any fulsome long-winded apostrophe, but with that spirit of straight-forward honesty which has stamped your reign in "The little Haymarket" with fashion and success. But I apprehend your banker's book is the most eloquent figure I could make use of to express my joint opinion with the public of your ability as a Manager. I leave it to the audience to attest your talents as an Actor. In these three capacities I tender you equal esteem, and in a fourth, permit me to return you my thanks—I mean as a friend, which you have been to a very young author, in many critical junctures. Time shall prove to you I never forget a kindness nor an injury—but away with this—will you accept the following Comedy, Farce, Opera (it has a song in it) or whatever the Press please to dub it? I do really wish it were more worthy of your name; but as you once expressed a kindly opinion of it, pray take it, and

Believe me ever,
Your most obliged and truly,
DION BOUCICIAULT

London, September 21, 1842.

On the same bill was performed a farce, also written by

52 Alma Mater; or a Cure for Coquettes, as performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, correctly printed from the Prompter's copy. Edited by B. Webster, Comedian, member of the Dramatic Author's Society. London: Webster and Co., 20 Suffolk Street, Pall Mall East.
Boucicault, entitled *Curiosities of Literature*.\(^{53}\)

The high regard in which Boucicault held himself is indicated by an incident in 1843. Mr. Webster found the supply of plays of the higher class diminishing. He offered a prize of £500, "together with contingent advantages," for the best five-act comedy. The manuscripts were to be sent in anonymously; a motto or a feigned name was to distinguish each work. The judges, men of literary merit, were Charles Kemble, Planche, and Robert Bell. More than a hundred comedies were submitted. Douglas Jerrold and Boucicault were at this time preparing comedies for the theatre. "Jerrold asked Boucicault if he intended to compete. The younger dramatist replied that he regarded the prize as tendered to the literary world at large, with the object of ascertaining whether there existed some unknown genius striving for recognition; and therefore he considered himself out of the contest."\(^{54}\)

After the unsuccessful production of his next comedy, *Woman*, at Covent Garden on October 2, 1843, Boucicault turned to the French school of dramatic writing for the source for his next play, *Used Up*. This play, produced at the Haymarket

\(^{53}\) Theatre Royal, Haymarket handbill in New York Public Library.

in February, 1844, was taken from a French play, *L'homme Blase.* This was the first of a long series of adaptations, translations, and direct thefts which Boucicault continued throughout his life. Writing at a later date, Boucicault blamed the system practiced by theatrical managers and the fact that no strict royalty system or copyright laws existed for his having to resort to such borrowing. He said:

To the commercial manager we owe the introduction of the burlesque, opera-bouffe, and the reign of buffoonery. We owe to him also the deluge of French drama of that period. For example: the usual price received by Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer, and Talfourd at the time for their plays was £500. I was a beginner in 1841, and received for my comedy, "London Assurance," £300. For that amount the manager bought the privilege of playing the work for his season. Three years later I offered a new play to a principal London theatre. The manager offered me £100 for it. In reply to my objection to the smallness of the sum, he remarked: "I can go to Paris and select a first-class comedy; having seen it performed, I feel certain of its effect. To get this comedy translated will cost me £25. Why should I give you £300 or £500 for your comedy, the success of which I cannot feel so assured?" The argument was unanswerable, and the result inevitable. I sold a work for £100 that took me six months' hard work to compose, and accepted a commission to translate three French plays at £50 apiece. This work afforded me child's play for a fortnight. Thus the English dramatist was obliged either to relinquish the stage altogether or to become a French copyist.\footnote{Moses, op. cit., pp. 136-37.}

Why should he, he argued, not turn to the simplest and easiest method of making money? For to Boucicault the measurement of success was always based on the size of one's
bank account. Money and success were synonymous in his vocabulary, and this interpretation of success became the motivating force for all his activities throughout his life.

Two plays of minor importance were produced at the Adelphi during the fall of '44. *The Fox and the Goose* was produced on October 2, 1844, and *Don Caesar de Bazan* quickly followed on October 14, 1844. The latter was written in collaboration with Ben Webster, based on the French of Dumanois and Dennery.

On November 13, 1844, *Old Heads and Young Hearts* was produced at the Haymarket. Although it did not receive a favorable review, the audience proved the critic wrong, and it took the town by storm. It retained its popularity and remained in the repertoire of many popular actors for many years. It reverted to the comedy of manner style which had proved so successful in *London Assurance*. One reviewer found it less of a comedy and more of a farce and censured the production obliquely.

**HAYMARKET. --THE NEW COMEDY.** --What managers call a new comedy, but what we should style an overgrown farce, in five acts, was brought out at the Haymarket on Monday evening. The author is Mr. Bourcicault, a writer who seems to take his notion of modern manners from the polite society of a boarding-house, and his dialogue from the sparkling slang of the wits who frequent the Wrekin. Some acquaintance with university life and those who live it, or leave it, has also added to Mr. Bourcicault's power of writing comedy that smack of raciness which relishes the conversation of a college wine party, where fathers are talked of only as "governors," to be plundered and cheated; and women are thought of
either as pocket-books, for which money is to be taken for current expenses, or mere instruments and toys of pleasure to be used and broken. The comedy is entitled Old Heads and Young Hearts. The old heads are shown to be foolish and senseless; the young hearts are deceitful, selfish, and frivolous.

However, the same critic reported, to his great disgust, that the "comedy was rapturously applauded—why, the audience knew not. There was great bustle, some rough joking, some farcical situations... many splendid dresses in the ladies, and much fine furniture and carpets on the stage." These, he pointed out, were the "ingredients necessary to the success of a modern comedy. Mr. Bourcicault has spiced the old heads and young hearts sufficiently with them, and therefore it is successful, and will draw crowded houses for the season." With the exception of London Assurance, this was probably Bourcicault's best play up to this time.

After Old Heads and Young Hearts was successfully launched, Bourcicault went to France for a four year visit. Undoubtedly, it was during this trip that he formed his acquaintance with the French drama, upon which he continued to fall back for plots for years to come.

Bourcicault's first marriage is shrouded in mystery, like so many facts concerning his life. No exact knowledge

56 "Theatres," Pictorial Times, November 25, 1844.
57 Ibid.
concerning this first marriage is available; only speculation and rumor. However, it is thought that it was during this visit to France that he met and married a comely widow of some means. Whether Boucicault fell in love with the lady or with her money has never been actually decided, but she left him £ 1,000 at her death, which was within a very brief period after their marriage. It was during this trip to France that the "loving pair" took a wedding trip to Switzerland. It is told that "the loving pair started one day to cross a mountain, but only the husband came down on the other side. He turned up in London shortly after, dressed in the deepest mourning for his wife, who, according to his account, had fallen down a precipice. There were not wanting people who ventured to hint that, perhaps, the husband had not been very anxious to attempt to rescue his wife, . . ." Charles Kenney summed up the incident by saying: " . . . while she and Dion were on a tour in Switzerland they ascended a mountain, and then Dion descended on the other side alone, with a black hatband."

58 "Death of Dion Boucicault," The New York Clipper, September 27, 1890.

59 "Men of the Hour." No. XVIII. DION BOUCICault. Taken from an unidentified clipping in New York Public Library.

60 New-York Spirit of the Times, July 21, 1888.
However, Boucicault was not to be forgotten in London during his sojourn in France and Switzerland. He had left enough scripts behind to keep his name before the public. On February 6, 1845, A Soldier of Fortune opened at the Adelphi. The following fall saw Enquire Within being produced at the Lyceum on August 8. The next year brought about a production of Up the bluff, or, What's in the Wind? at the Adelphi on May 11, 1846. This piece had been first called Felo de Se and was written in collaboration with Charles Kenney. None of these scripts have any great significance and were forgotten soon after their production.

In February, 1847, The School for Scheming was produced at the Haymarket. This play was written in the same style as his former successes. Boucicault had hit upon a formula which had caught on and he was going to play it to the hilt. Nicoll, in speaking of the play, says:

The plot is undoubtedly sentimental, being designed to show the false standards created by money and fashion as opposed to the natural goodness in an honest and not overcivilized heart. ... Much is artificial for Boucicault has retained many of those exaggerated tricks which were inherited by the forties of the century from the twenties; the jokes are often feeble; and the painting of contemporary manners is executed in a style which exhibits false proportion and inharmonious colors. . . .

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61 Nicoll, op. cit., II, 259-60.

62 Ibid., I, 188-89.
The exact date of Boucicault's return to London from France is not known. But he was definitely back in London during the summer of 1848 when he applied to the Court of Bankruptcy, under the Debtor and Creditor Private Arrangement Act, or, as it was termed "The Clandestine Bankruptcy Act," but at this time his petition was dismissed. Despite the fact that he had made a considerable amount from his plays and received £1,000 from his first wife, he had gone through all his income and in December, 1848, we find him a petitioner in the Court of Bankruptcy.63 "His luxurious habits were already too much for his purse—as, indeed, they were up to the day of his death..."64 The evidence disclosed at the trial clearly indicated that Boucicault was living beyond his income. In reality, this incident was a forecast of his inability to handle his finances in an expeditious manner.

Following The School for Scheming, in rapid succession came Confidence, (Haymarket) May 2, 1848; The Knight of Arva, (Haymarket) November 22, 1848; The Willow Copse, (Adelphi) November 26, 1849;65 The Broken Vow, (Olympic) and The Queen

63 London Illustrated News, 1848. Clipping found in New York Public Library.
64 "Death of Dion Boucicault," The New-York Clipper, September 27, 1890.
65 Nicoll, op. cit., II, 260.
of Spades, (Olympic) April, 1851; the last two being adaptations from the French. 

With the writing of The Willow Copse, Boucicault reverted to a previous literary style—the melodrama. Kenney, who collaborated with him in this piece, stated that with the production of The Willow Copse he revolutionized the melodramatic stage. ... He told me he desired to produce a drama in which the higher attributes of comedy and tragedy should clothe a melodramatic action and a domestic interest. Before that all melodramas were devoid of literary merit in the dialogue, and the characters were commonplace instruments for the plot. He furnished melodrama with well-drawn characters and poetical or brilliant language. He elevated that form of work by the production of The Willow Copse, Janet Pride, The Corsican Brothers, and Pauline and the Vampire.

Boucicault always reduced everything to a formula. He had used a formula in creating his successful London Assurance. He had taken the genre of the comedy of manners and placed it in a contemporary setting with modern costumes. In adapting the melodrama to his needs, he used the same formula to develop, what he termed, domestic drama.

The melodrama had grown out of the sentimental play, the comédie larmoyante, as Goldsmith chose to call it. Sentimentalism stressed the virtues of man rather than the vices.

66 "Death of Dion Boucicault," The New-York Clipper, September 27, 1890.

and follies. Woman became the main subject and a weak character. Pity was the greatest virtue. Therefore it was an easy step from the sentimental play to the melodrama. All that needed to be added was the villain. The action was swift and violent, with the emphasis not on character but on the action itself.

It was this element of action that Boucicault seized and used. All he needed to do was to place the action in a domestic setting of contemporary time and the actors in modern costumes and he had created his "domestic drama."

This element of action cannot be stressed too strongly. Since action was the all important element in melodrama, minute detail had to be observed in order to tell the story. Pantomime became important! And in order that the actors would perform the correct business and action in his plays, Boucicault took over the rehearsals of his plays. He became a very effective stage-manager. "Boucicault paid minute attention to the working of stage tricks, to the controlling of the lights and to the placement of his actors."68 He became a director in the modern sense of the word. Likewise, it was this development of action which was later to motivate the many staging devices which Boucicault used and devised to aid him in the staging of simultaneous action in his "sensation dramas."

68 Nicoll, op. cit., I, 5.
Following The Willow Copse came Sixtus V; or the Broken Vow. This piece received its first production at the Olympic on February 17, 1851. It was a five-act melodrama and proved to be "highly successful." The immoderate length it ran to on the first night nearly proved of serious injury; "it has now been cut down to a proper standard, and is as interesting and powerful a melodrama as has been produced for years."69

During the year 1851, Boucicault became the "stock" playwright for the Princess Theatre which was under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean and Mr. Keeley. It was while he was employed at the Princess that he met his second wife, Agnes Robertson. Had this meeting not come about, his life's story would undoubtedly have been different. Because it was for Agnes Robertson and her peculiar style of acting that he fashioned his plays for the next twenty years. Agnes had made her debut at the Princess's Theatre in January, 1851,70 playing the part of Nevil, the page in A Wife's Secret, and in Mr. Kean's famous series of Shakespearian revivals she appeared as Nerissa, Hero, and Ophelia.71

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71 "In the Days of My Youth," M.A.P., July 1, 1899, p. 636.
Agnes Robertson said that she was a Scotswoman by birth, but in all other respects she was Irish. "There is an Irish strain in my blood. I was christened Agnes Kelly Robertson."\(^\text{72}\) She was born in Edinburgh in 1833 on Christmas day. She reported that her family was "terribly, terribly, orthodox. Above and before all, the theatre was the abomination of desolation to my people, the very antechamber of the pit. . . . Ours was a clerical family. My grandfather. . . was the Rev. Thomas Dunsmore Muir, Principal of the High School, Edinburgh."\(^\text{73}\) Since Agnes is to figure prominently during the greater part of Dion's professional career, it is pertinent here to let her tell her story.

Quite early in my childhood—. . . not more than six or seven— I developed an excellent singing voice. (trained by Mr. Yapp). . . I remember that I sang in Aberdeen at four concerts in one fortnight, with great success. Indeed, it was that "engagement". . . which really launched me on the stream of theatrical life. . . .

. . . So anti-theatrical was my child-life, that I was never in a theatre but once before I played. It came about in this way, through a schoolfellow of mine who afterwards became an actress, in the Christmas of 1843, when I was ten years old.

She was playing the boy in Pizarro at the Royal Theatre, Edinburgh, and there was to be a pantomime after the piece. She begged my parents to allow me to go and see her play, and as there was a pantomime as well, and my birthday fell on Christmas, the

\(^{72}\) Ibid.

\(^{73}\) Ibid.
permission was accorded as a very special favour.

From the rise of the curtain I was in ecstasies. Finally, the Fairy Queen fired my imagination and I never ceased acting after that, to the horror of my parents.

. . . during my visit to Aberdeen, I sang at four concerts. During our stay there some calamity befell the manager of the Aberdeen Theatre, and a benefit performance was arranged to assist him. As a wunderkind I was a tremendous "draw" . . . and my mother was promptly approached . . . with a view of securing my services in a play, and not merely as a child-singer either, but as a child-actress . . . the permission was given. The play was The Spoiled Child.

. . . Miss Julia Nicoll, afterwards the well-known Mrs. John Harris, of Dublin . . . came to the rescue. It was she who taught me how to say the very first words I ever spoke in the theatre . . .

The Spoiled Child was the beginning of the end with me. Immediately after the benefit performance I was offered, and permitted to accept, a star engagement with the play for a fortnight.

They then moved to Dublin. . . .

I next went to the Theatre Royal, at Manchester, where John Knowles was manager. There I met Marie Wilton . . . She was younger than I, and we divided the children's parts between us, she taking those in the piece before the pantomime and I those in the piece following it. At Manchester also I played with Fanny Kemble, on her return to the stage, and also with Mr. Macready, playing under him the Fool in King Lear, and the First Singing Witch in Macbeth.

My next engagement was at Hull, where I met the Terry family . . . Dancing especially I learnt, and practiced hard . . . Great was my delight when I was accounted worthy to be put down on the bill for a pas de fascination in Cinderella with Mr. Terry himself . . . Mrs. Terry played the Desdemona and the heavier parts. And Kate Terry . . . she and I played together . . . the two Princes in Richard III.

I next had an engagement in Glasgow with Edmund Glover. . . . Thence I came south to London . . . . It was in the year 1850, and I was in my seventeenth year.74

74 Ibid.
After Agnes came to London, she became the adopted daughter of Charles Kean and Ellen Tree. Whether it was their love for her or the loss of a promising young actress which motivated their opposition to a marriage between Agnes and Dion is not known, but when the two slipped off together to settle the question themselves, Kean never forgave Dion for taking Agnes from him.

The next script which Boucicault produced for the Princess's Theatre was a new comedy in five acts entitled *Love in a Maze*, presented on March 6, 1851. It was one of his happier works and a special London correspondent for *The Spirit of the Times* reported:

> . . . I have scarcely time now to speak of the merits of the new production. The piece is considered the best of all Mr. Boucicault's works, and met with a very flattering reception. . . . The comedy is put on the stage in a most effective manner; every scene and every character show the most thorough study. "Love in a Maze" will greatly advance Mr. Boucicault's fame as a dramatic author, and will long occupy a prominent position on the stage.\(^76\)

*Love in a Maze* had quite a run, for on Monday, April 28, 1851, a handbill for the theatre announced: "for the 40th time a new and original comedy in 5 acts by Dion Boucicault, Esq. entitled *Love in a Maze*.\(^77\)

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\(^{75}\) Moses, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

\(^{76}\) Saturday, April 5, 1851.

\(^{77}\) Handbill of Royal Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street, under management of Mr. C. Kean and Mr. Keeley. In New York Public Library.
By February 24, 1852, Boucicault had perfected his "domestic drama" when *The Corsican Brothers* was presented. By this time he had "definitely found his footing." It was such a success that it played throughout the remainder of the season and was still on the boards when Alfred Wigan announced his benefit on June 2, 1852. "From this time on, his most characteristic pieces were plays wherein were mingled elements taken from all worlds--of sentimentalism much, a flash or two of broad wit and above all a series of exciting incidents recalling the familiar technique of early melodrama."80

One of the especially interesting staging devices used in this play was "the visual presentation of action occurring simultaneously in the lives of the twin brothers. . . . All of this was staged in the conventional manner of vampire traps, with a double for the actor playing the twins, and using preset vision scenes behind shutters subsequently withdrawn to reveal the vision."81

With the production of his next piece, *The Vampire*,

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78 Nicoll, *op. cit.*, I, 84.

79 Royal Princess's Theatre handbill. In New York Public Library.

80 Nicoll, *op. cit.*, I, 84.

on June 14, 1852, Boucicault made his reappearance as an actor. This play, like so many of his others, came from a French source. 82 Boucicault had drawn a character that was so horrible and terrible that nobody would attempt the part; so Boucicault "put the wings on his own shoulders, and brought down the gallery. It was a lucky accident. From that time forward his career ran in double grooves." 83 His makeup as the Vampire had a ghastly fascination for London audiences of that day, and his acting was considered exceedingly clever. Agnes reported that Dion wrote the piece in six days, without sleeping, or trying to sleep. It was not only popular with the galleries but "the Queen came three times in one fortnight to see it, . . ." 84 It was a popular piece and was later revived in America.

In the statement above, Agnes Robertson has intimated that Boucicault was a tireless worker and that he worked with great speed. All during his life, Boucicault seemed to be working against time; he developed an ability to go without sleep and never seemed to tire.

82 "Dion Boucicault," The New-York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
83 "Dion Boucicault, Actor and Playwright," The Illustrated American, October 4, 1890, p. 8.
84 "In the Days of My Youth," M.A.F., op. cit.
A writer who signed his name as Q relates an incident which, if true, indicates the pressure under which Boucicault forced himself to write. Q had been taken ill and was "broke". Boucicault gathered him up and took him to his home to recover.

... I then began slowly to rally, and one day, while he was writing, having noticed him break a small piece from a lump of something which he replaced in his waistcoat pocket, while he conveyed the indefinitely little particle he had rent from it, to his mouth, I became interested enough and summoned sufficient energy to ask him, what it was?

"Oh! That! Why, it is opium."

"And do you actually eat opium?" I asked in my intense astonishment.

"Yes! Sometimes. When I have work to do, as I have at present, which must go on--day and night--until it is finished."

For the first time, during many months, was my curiosity excited.

"Is De Quincy's picture of its effects, a true one?" I asked.

"Not with me, most certainly," he emphatically replied. "It makes me more capable of mental labor, whilst I eat it. That is all. But as for visions of beauty, palaces of gold, rivers of wine, lakes of honey, mountains of amethysts, et cetera--Pshaw! I suppose my skull must be too thick, and my brain too commonplace to entertain them."85

It was during the early fall of 1853 that Boucicault left England for America. However, he left some scripts behind, four in number, in order not to be forgotten. Louis XI, King of France (Princess, January 13, 1855), altered

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85 Charles G. Rosenberg, You Have Heard of Them (New York: Redfield 110 and 112 Nassau-street, 1854).
from the play of Casimir Delavigne, and Faust and Margaret (Princess, April 19, 1854), containing the roles of Louis and Mephistopheles, were left for Kean to perform. Two other scripts, Pierre the Foundling (Adelphi, December 11, 1854) and Eugenie; or a Sister's Vow (Drury Lane, January 1, 1855) had also been completed before he left.

Boucicault was 31 years old when he left for America, but he had spent fifteen of those years in the professional theatre in London and the provinces. In those few years, he had provided more scripts for the stage than most playwrights do in an entire lifetime. He had developed a formula for domestic drama and a modern comedy of manners. He had proved himself an actor of merit, married once and found a second wife. He had "conquered" the London stage. He was now ready for new worlds; so he turned to America.
CHAPTER II

FIRST APPEARANCES IN AMERICA

Dion Boucicault did not arrive in America as an unknown playwright. Some of his more successful London scripts had already found production in America. His

*London Assurance* had found fashionable favor at the old Park as early as October 11, 1841, and it had had subsequent productions at both Wallack's and Burton's Chamber Street theatres. *Old Heads and Young Hearts* had been performed simultaneously at the Park and the Bowery theatres on December 2, 1844, and *Used Up* had had its American premier at the Park on January 9, 1845.

At the time of his death, much speculation arose as to what the real reason was for Boucicault's coming to America. Nym Crinkle, writing in the *World*, stated that Boucicault left England "disgusted with the English Theatre" and that "he was without money and with no immediate prospects,"¹ while others reasoned that he left England to escape his creditors, he had come to America to manage Agnes Robertson, and still others, that he had come

to supervise a series of his plays which were to be performed at Wallack's Theatre that fall.

The dates for his departure from London and his subsequent arrival in America are not known. But it is rather doubtful that he was on hand when Wallack opened his theatre or when Wallack produced Boucicault's first piece that fall. Wallack's Theatre, after having undergone "various and extensive additions and improvements with regard to the comfort and convenience of the audience," opened its doors for the fall season on September 5, 1853. The first of four plays by Boucicault was presented on October 11, 1853. It was *Love in a Maze*. This was not the first performance of the piece in America, for Burton's had played it on Saturday, September 10, 1853.

In rapid succession, the remaining three plays of Boucicault, which Wallack was to produce that fall, followed. On November 7, 1853, *Love and Money; or The School for Scheming* had its first American showing after being "revised and altered from the original expressly for this Theatre by

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4 *Tribune*, Saturday, September 10, 1853.
the author, DIGN BOURGICAULT, Esq." It ran until November 20. One reviewer felt the play was improved by the revisions and that

"Love and Money" is more remarkable for a succession of excellent situations than for any striking originality in the plot. . . .

. . . .

Estimated by the highest standard of criticism, "Love and Money" is defective in the unity of idea. After the first act we lose sight of the leading feature of the play--the equality which the race for riches insures. . . .

The dialogue is in Mr. BOURGICAULT'S happiest vein. There is an elegance and an evenness in it which we have seldom heard excelled. Its brilliancy is that of subdued power rather than of effort, and the points that are emphasized flow naturally, and without concerted preludes. If we add to this strong commendation the highest approbation of the dramatic situations, we shall have endorsed most of the popular elements of modern comedy. . . .

Of the remaining two plays, the Irish Heiress was presented on November 23 with a cast headed by Lester and Miss Keene, and A Cure for Coquettes; or Alma Mater was played for the first time in America for Brougham's benefit on November 29. The Tribune commented: "It is made up of the adventures and experiences of student life at Oxford, is full of boisterious fun, and went of exceedingly well . . . ."

5 Times, Monday, November 7, 1853.
6 Times, Tuesday, November 8, 1853.
7 Times, Wednesday, November 23, 1853.
8 Tribune, November 29, 1853.
Didon and Agnes did not leave England together. Apparently Agnes had arrived first in New York alone, and upon finding the city ravaged by disease she was compelled to change her plans, and so went to Canada for a short tour. It was during this tour in Canada that Agnes appeared for the first time in The Young Actress, a play which she kept in her repertoire for many years. The Young Actress was described as "a musical interlude, by Dion Boucicault, altered from an old piece called the 'Manager's Daughter.'" There would appear to be some question as to just how much "adaptation" was done for this piece, for one writer expressed himself thus:

'The Young Actress' is only the 'Manager's Daughter' with a new name—Mr. Boucicault being undoubtedly the author of the new name, but not of the farce; for it was written several years since, by Mr. Edward Lancaster, for Miss J. M. Davenport, at that period a child. We are in possession of this interlude, which was published immediately after its production at the Theatre Royal, Richmond, England, when the late Mr. Davenport, father of the present eminent tragedienne, was manager of that theatre.

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9 "In the Days of My Youth," M.A.P., July 1, 1899, pp. 636-38.
10 The Montreal Gazette, September 21, 1853.
Agnes was received in Canada with good notices and as soon as the newspaper reports had had time to circulate, she was flooded with offers of engagements from all parts of the United States. She recalled: "... thus, by a single performance, seven whole years of my career were mapped out for me, for from that year—1853, which was also the year of my marriage with Mr. Boucicault—until 1860 I remained playing in America to crowded houses, North and South." 13

In order to follow the life of Dion Boucicault, it is necessary to follow the activities of Agnes Robertson for at the present, it would seem that the formula for his success was to provide her with suitable scripts.

Agnes Robertson first appeared in the United States at Burton's on October 22, 1853. 14 For this performance, she repeated the protean farce, The Young Actress, which had gained such favorable notices for her in Canada. It ran until the 27th. As a protean farce, the piece called on her to assume the parts of six different characters, namely: "Maria, the manager's daughter, Paul, a French minstrel boy, Effie Heatherbloom, a Scotch lassie, Cormey, an Irish

13 "In the Days of My Youth," op. cit.
14 Tribune, October 22, 1853. The complete bill included Trying It On, The Young Actress, and Old Dutch Governor.
bogtrotter, Mlle. Rachel, and Mme. Grisi—in which last part she sang the Casta Diva."¹⁵ She received good notices and was long to be remembered: "... the Scotch lassie and the Irish lad still haunt us. The highland fling of the one, and the 'Widow Machree' of the other, were charming to see and hear; and, indeed, Miss Robertson was charming altogether."¹⁶

On October 28, Agnes appeared in the role of Master Robert Kettles in a new commedietta by Boucicault entitled To Parents and Guardians. She was ably supported by Moore, Placide and Burton.¹⁷ This ran until November 22, when The Young Actress was revived and the two pieces alternated on successive nights until November 21. On November 14 a "laughable prelude of Antony and Cleopatra" was added to the bill, with Agnes playing Cleopatra to the Antony of George Jordan.¹⁸ On November 22, it was played again as a curtain raiser.¹⁹

¹⁷ Tribune, October 28, 1853.
¹⁸ Tribune, November 14, 1853.
¹⁹ Tribune, November 22, 1853.
On November 23, was announced the opening of Boucicault's new comedy of the Fox Hunt; or, Don Quixote, The Second. 20 The Fox Hunt ran without interruption until December 14. Again, Agnes received a good notice:

MISS ROBERTSON rendered this character [Laura St. Leger] in a perfectly delicious manner. Her acting is one of the most delightful treats to be enjoyed in the Metropolis. Laura is a character peculiarly adapted to her powers, and it is consequently the most appreciable character we have ever seen. There is a spontaneous quaintness about MISS ROBERTSON that cannot be described. It is entirely the result of uneffort, and appears to be determined by the moment. . . . 21

With the recording of this review in the Times, the Daily broke its established custom of not covering Burton's performances. But with the announcement of The Fox Hunt by Dion Boucicault, the critic felt obliged to cover this opening for "Mr. BURTON has stepped aside from his usual course in producing the 'Fox Hunt'. . . ." 22

Although the critic found the production more than adequate, he found the script wanting in originality.

We are aware that this is a trifling objection in the present day, but it nevertheless holds good. . . .

According to the documentary evidence of the theatre, the Comedy of last evening was entirely new and original; and was "never acted" till then.

20 Tribune, November 23, 1853.
21 Times, Thursday, November 24, 1853.
22 Times, Thursday, November 24, 1853.
In reality it is a translation, or rather adaptation from a popular French drama called "Sullivan." But the critic did find some merit: "In adapting it to the English stage, Mr. BOURGICLAULT has availed himself of all the resources of a well stored dramatic mind. He has imparted to the dialogue a tolerable amount of brilliance, and has introduced sufficient contrast to bring the salient characteristics of each individual prominently before the public."24

Little did the critic realize that he had hit Boucicault in one of his most vulnerable spots—he had attacked his honesty. Boucicault was quick to answer and here began one of the many, many exchanges of heated words between Boucicault and the press.

It was not the fact that the critic had accused Boucicault of adapting, or even of stealing the plot, from the French, but the fact that the critic had accused Boucicault of false representation. For Boucicault said:

... I have sold my comedy to Mr. BURTON as a new and original piece; as such Mr. BURTON has announced it to the public. Your charge against me, therefore, is simply an accusation of dishonesty, which I presume you would not have made without due caution and

23 Times, Thursday, November 24, 1853.
24 Ibid.
A week later, the critic answered: "A difficulty in procuring the French original has alone prevented an earlier response to Mr. BOURCICAULT'S demand." The critic's answer appeared on the front page of the Times and ran for two and a half columns. He prefaced his answer by the remark:

If the resemblance which we find between Mr. BOURCICAULT'S play of the "Fox Hunt," produced last week and M. MELVILLE'S drama of "Sullivan," produced at the Theatre Francaise, Paris, on the 11th Nov. last year, be the result of chance, we must give that goddess credit for more unity of purpose and clearness of design than either moderns or ancients have bestowed on her. . . ." 

The critic then began to support his contention by listing, point by point, similar situations in the two plays. He had his facts well in hand. He began by drawing parallel plot developments; he illustrated by quoting a long scene. He added that since he did not possess a copy of the Fox Hunt and naturally felt "a delicacy about borrowing the manuscript from the author for such a purpose," he found it difficult to quote "coincident passages in juxtaposition." But, he maintained: "So close, so sustained, so perfect in trifling details is the above resemblance, that Mr. BOURCICAULT must

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25 Times, Saturday, November 26, 1853.
26 Times, Wednesday, November 30, 1853.
27 Ibid.
pardon us for saying that, if it be not a plagiarism, it must be a miracle. . . ."28

Boucicault answered the above thus:

There is one short scene in the first act of the "Fox Hunt," acknowledged to be founded upon an anecdote in the life of Garrick.

. . .

By this elaboration of one single incident, which is, necessarily, in both pieces, you insidiously convey the idea that you are giving the entire plot of my comedy. . . .

In fact, you cautiously avoid all reference to four acts and three-quarters of my comedy, which, by your silence you confess to be original, even beyond your conscience to doubt.

Boucicault ended his rebuttal with a challenge to the critic:

. . . Bring this comedy entitled "Sullivan," and my comedy, "The Fox-Hunt," before a jury of twelve literary men of eminence; and if you can get a verdict to the effect that my comedy is either a translation or adaptation of "Sullivan," or any other piece whatever, I will pay $1,000 to any charitable fund which the New-York Daily Times may select. If, on the contrary, the verdict is the other way, you shall do the same penance. . . .29

On December 2, the critic answered by attacking Mr. Boucicault's choice of language and utter lack of dignity: "there was a careful selection of the most unpleasant words, and a blending of language not usually presented to the public through the medium of a respectable newspaper." And he continued, hitting hard and low:

28 Ibid.
29 Times, Thursday, December 1, 1853.
When Mr. BOURCICAULT remembers, or learns, his position in this country, he will awaken to a sensation of regret that he has insulted its press by proposing to it the last argument of a baffled man—a bet. It has not, nor will it ever be, our method of determining the truth. Neither the editor of the Daily Times or its critic are in the habit of sanctioning or inditing malicious articles against man. Least of all has Mr. BOURCICAULT reason for suspecting us of such an inclination. The imputation is unworthy and could only originate with a gentleman fertile in expedients as Reynard himself. 30

It was, apparently, this last accusation which made Boucicault realize the wisdom of keeping the friendship of the press and his answer was full of contriteness.

SIR: When you informed the public that my Comedy the "Fox Hunt," was a translation or adaptation from a French piece, . . . I thought it possible that you had not seen the gravity of your charge, and how far it attacked my character as a man of honor and truth. . . .

You first imputed to me a gross act of public and private dishonesty. . . . Now, Sir, a blow is a blow, whether it be struck with the gloved hand or the naked fist.

I cannot however, pass over the imputation of ungentlemanly bearing which has been addressed to me this day for the first time in my life. You drove me to my defence; but if in the heat of advocating my own cause I used any excess of language, I am bound to retract it, and in offering an apology to you, I am only making a due atonement to myself. . . . 31

With such an apology the critic could do nothing more than end the discussion by justifying his original accusation

30 Times, Friday, December 2, 1853.
31 Times, December 5, 1853.
In disputing the originality of the "Fox Hunt," we did so in our capacity of critic. . . . If criticism were to be silenced by the negation of an author, it would be narrowed to very unsatisfactory limits. . . . He would find that all works were original, and that such a thing as a plagiarism was totally unknown. Mr. BOURCICAULT must pardon us for telling him that authors are the very last men we should think of consulting, either on the merit or the originality of their works.32

If Boucicault learned anything from this exchange of notes, he learned that space in the newspaper—just any kind—was good publicity. Such a controversy as this caused great curiosity amidst the theatre-going populace and they thronged to see what was the basis for all this discussion. The Fox Hunt ran until December 14.

Agnes Robertson's engagement at Burton's lasted until January 9, 1854. On December 14 and 15, The Young Actress was revived. On December 16, The Fox Hunt was added to the bill. December 22 saw Agnes in The Maid with the Milking Pail and a new comedy by Boucicault was presented on December 29, entitled Masks and Faces. This was an adaptation of Tom Taylor's Peg Woffington. In this piece Charlotte Mitchell made her American debut and Agnes was not listed as appearing in this piece. On January 2, 3, and 4, Agnes appeared again in The Young Actress and on January 6 and 7 she appeared as Jenny Transit in Advertising for a Wife; or Winning a

32 Ibid.
Husband. She closed her New York engagement on the 9th by playing in the Maid with the Milling Pall and To Parents and Guardians.33

During the month of December, Boucicault appeared in a series of "At Homes," "Literary Soirees," or "Winter Evenings," at No. 718 Broadway—the address of Hope Chapel. The following schedule was announced:

Tuesday, Dec. 6 -- Sketches of European Society.
Thursday, Dec. 8 -- The Story of the Stage, or the Life and Adventures of Two Muses, a Classical Tale.

Thursday, Dec. 15--Pen and Ink Sketch of "Woman."
Thursday, Dec. 22--My Life, or literary career in London and Paris. Anecdotes of Literary and Political celebrities in Europe. The originals, of London High Life, from which Mr. Bourcicault drew the popular characters in his comedies &c. 34

The announced schedule was not strictly followed. These "Winter Evenings" were given in a very informal manner, with Boucicault relying on his personality, charm, and his style of delivery to carry him through. He obtained a good house for the first two lectures. In fact, his lecture on The Story of the Stage had such a favorable audience that it was re-scheduled. These "at homes" were scarcely more than a series of rambling narratives strung together by a central idea and told amusingly. They were not especially successful

33 Times, December 14, 1853-January 9, 1854.
34 Times, Monday, December 5, 1853.
from a financial point of view. For one thing, the weather was against them, for on the last of this series "The night was frosty, and the audience perhaps, in consequence, was not an over flowing one. There were, probably, more seats vacant than filled. Cold was the atmosphere without, it was scarcely warmer within the building, which if it was heated at all, failed to convey the information to our shivering limbs and almost benumbed extremities." A reviewer from the Tribune summed up the general effect of these lectures by saying "there was sufficient of the species of egotism in the discourse to make it not only entertaining but amusing."

Agnes Robertson and Dion Boucicault left New York City sometime during the month of January, 1854. Agnes had come to the Empire City unknown and "unpuffed." But before a week of playing, she was receiving top billing and had firmly established herself as an individual as well as an actress.

... It was this winsome womanliness, shining softly and subtly out through every environment of costume and of character, which made an unconscious but imperative demand on all sympathies, and even called forth affection; filling up our appreciation of praise for the accomplished actress. She seemed, on the

35 Times, Thursday, December 29, 1853.
36 Tribune, December 30, 1853.
scene, in every variety of part and of play, the ideal embodiment of innocence, artlessness, sweetness, simplicity; moving with a grace, speaking with an intelligence, which took captive mind and heart, at once. In the juvenile comedy of her earlier days, and in boys' parts, she was bright and bewitching; showing a mingled dash and delicacy most rare on the boards. In the commonplace Protean personations, at one time so popular, she gave a bounding Irish boy, a stolid German lad, a sprightly Scotch lassie, and all the rest; each done daintily, each with its own proper patois, all graceful to look at. . . . 37

Boucicault was overshadowed by Agnes during this first visit to New York. He had come, a known and established playwright. At first his name was the drawing card at Burton's, but soon Agnes' name replaced his as the featured attraction. Although Boucicault charmed a small group of auditors at his "Winter Evenings" with his easy style and cultured and well poised personality, he added little to his popularity. He had four of his scripts produced at Wallack's and seven at Burton's. He created some mild excitement by defending his "honor and honesty." He had done himself no harm, neither had he done much to further his cause as an author. Agnes appeared in some new plays of his, but whether he had brought them with him from England or had written some in America is not known. This New York sojourn had been dominated by Agnes' success rather than Dion's.

Agnes Robertson and Dion Boucicault left New York

for Boston in January, 1854. With such favorable reviews as Agnes had received in New York, she could hope for a successful tour throughout the rest of the country. Although news releases traveled slowly, Boston had already heard of the success of Agnes and eagerly awaited her arrival.

As in New York, the first public appearance of Dion in Boston was as a lecturer. He repeated his lectures but with only a limited degree of success. The thought that perhaps the "provinces" would "go" for this type of performance undoubtedly encouraged him to repeat the lectures. But not much curiosity was evinced by the citizens of Boston either to see or hear the author of London Assurance in the "Literary Soirees" which he gave at the Meionacon Hall in Tremont Temple. It is apparent that he rambled along in much the same style and manner as in his New York lectures. The Journal reported that he spoke in a "chatty, good-natured way, flinging out here a bit of sarcasm and there a good joke. If he were a book," said the Journal, "we would say he was just the thing to spend a pleasant evening over." Although few people came to hear Boucicault ("there was a wretched attendance"), it was reported that

The lecturer had a very graceful style of delivery, spoke with a slight brogue—a brogue that denoted

[38 The Boston Journal, January 11, 1854.]
him a true "Dublin jackeen," and altogether, made a very favorable impression. He was attired in a faultless evening dress, and, although he was then in his 32d year, did not appear more than 20. . . . 39

But the story of Agnes in Boston was entirely different. Little did Moses Kimball, manager of the Museum, realize what a success he was to have on his hands when he engaged Agnes to appear for two weeks at the Museum. At first she completely won over all the young ladies of Boston, then her popularity gradually grew until young men at Harvard pawned their clothes to buy tickets to see her; mobs of girls collected in the ice-cream parlor across the street from the theatre and followed her to her hotel; special trains brought thousands into the city to see her. 40

The engagement was prolonged from two to four weeks, then to six, and subsequently to eight weeks. By this time the furore had become beyond all precedent. The tickets of admission were sold at a premium of five and six dollars each, and at her benefit, the last night of her engagement, the applicants for seats blocked up the access to the theatre and the street in front. The manager, Mr. Moses Kimball, induced Miss Robertson to prolong her performances for the ninth week, and within four hours, such was the crowd, that every seat in

39 "Dion Boucicault in Boston. His First Appearance Here Excited Little Curiosity," unidentified clipping in Boucicault file in New York Public Library.

40 Catharine Mary Reingolds Winslow, Yesterday with Actors (Boston: Cymphles & Hurd, 1887), p. 65.

41 Dion Boucicault, Andy Blake, or, The Irish Diamond, French's Minor Drama, No. CX. Preface.
the theatre was bought for the ensuing week. Such was the enthusiasm created by Miss Robertson among the ladies of Boston, that her promenades through the streets were beset with crowds who followed her from place to place. The corridors of the Tremont House, where she resided, were blocked up with fair admirers, who fairly invaded her apartments. The child-like grace, and sweetness of manner, with which she received all these honors that fell so suddenly and thickly upon her, won more hearts to her cause than the exquisite power of her acting on the stage.  

Agnes appeared in no new productions, nor did she need to, but Boucicault encouraged her to revive some of his older London successes. On January 23, 1854, Napoleon's Old Guard appeared, accompanied by the ever popular The Young Actress and Betsey Baker.

The ninth week was a busy one, for a handbill from the Museum announced:

The Eminent Artist Miss Agnes Robertson, Last week of her engagement. On Monday Evening, March 13, 1854, 'Twould Puzzle a Conjurer! to be followed by the Excellent Comedietta, the Maid with the Milking Pail. Milly. . . . Miss Agnes Robertson. In which she will sing--"The Maid with the Milking Pail." To conclude with the Highly Successful Vaudville of characters, called the Young Actress. Agnes in six parts as usual.

Tuesday. . . . . . . Parents and Guardians

Wednesday. . . . . . . Andy Blake and Asmodeus

Thursday . . . . . . . Cupid in a Convent, and Invisible Prince.

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43 "Boucicault's Career in Boston," The Globe, September 19, 1890.

44 Boston Museum handbill in New York Public Library.
It was during this successful run in Boston that Boucicaut announced his marriage to Agnes Robertson. Up to this time he had held the opinion that the American public preferred an unmarried actress to a married one and would flock in larger numbers to see the former, and so Agnes had appeared under their maiden name and Boucicaut, with his usual wile, kept their marriage secret. Perhaps the sudden and tremendous success of Agnes had something to do with this change of mind, for Dion certainly would want to be associated with such success. In any event, Boucicaut realized that he had misjudged his public. "Convinced that he was wrong when he came to know America better, he proclaimed his marriage from the stage at Boston, and settled down here as a family man."45

Following this tremendously successful nine weeks at Boston, successful at least for Agnes, the two traveled south to Washington, where from March 27 to April 8, 1854, Agnes Robertson favored the Washington public with her "delightful rendition" of The Young Actress, Andy Blake, Bob Nettles (originally called To Parents and Guardians), and "other well-tried pieces."46


Upon the completion of the Washington engagement they moved to Philadelphia, where Miss Robertson made her first appearance on April 10, 1854, at the Chestnut Street Theatre in *Milly; or, The Maid with the Milking Pail* and *The Young Actress*. She was engaged for twelve nights, "playing with powerfully attractive qualities." Again she was warmly received and the public thronged to see and hear her. According to one critic, her presence checked the decay of the old Chestnut Street Theatre, which from her "gained new life; once more thousands thronged its old porches and shook its roof with their thunders of applause. She gave an extension of life to the Chestnut."

Durang, reporting on her first appearance, felt that "her personal appearance was Nature's self: it was very naïf. Her pretty looks and round, comely features, with simplicity of manners, gave you at once all the characteristics of a country English lass of the farm. Her Yorkshire dialect was perfect, as that English patois is spoken by its natives." Durang gave Boucicault credit for providing

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47 *The Philadelphia Public Ledger*, April 10, 1854.

48 Charles Durang, *History of the Philadelphia Stage, Between the years 1749 and 1855* (Scrapbook, Arranged & Illustrated by Thompson Westcott, 1868), VI, 414.


50 *op. cit.*, VI, 371.
Agnes with the type of pieces that she could play so excellently.

... Her pieces were cleverly adapted to her simple but forcible style of acting, by that great master of stage effects, both in action and language, Dion Boucicault. All these petite dramatic pieces were ingeniously adapted to her peculiar talent, and could not fail to please the taste of the day. Boucicault's perceptions are acute, and with a very brilliant fancy and fertile invention, he selects subjects (taken from the French or old English dramas, if you please) for his plays, wherein he draws the phases of modern character with the accuracy of the sun's pencil. Although mostly manipulated from other authors or from passing events, he touches with beauty what he thus takes, and so makes the amende honorable to the wronged, leaving, in his light, melange dramas, an apologue, to teach some moral truth. 51

Agnes' repertoire in Philadelphia was the same as that in Boston. On April 12, she appeared in Andy Blake and on the fourth night of her engagement in Bob Nettles. "This was a very comic-drama, and pleased prodigiously." 52 On April 17, along with Milly; or, The Maid with the Milking Pail, was presented "a very funny mock heroic fairy spectacle, entitled 'The Davisible Prince'--Don Leander, Miss Robertson, which she played with infinite gout and consummate burlesque grace." 53 On April 21, she appeared as Carlo in the comic drama, The Devil's in It 54

51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
So successful was her first engagement that she was persuaded to remain for a new engagement which began on April 24. She opened this new engagement by appearing in the characters of Milly and Paul (nicknamed "Poll the Pet") in a comedy-farce entitled Cupid in a Convent. In this latter piece Mr. Jefferson played the character of Zephyr, the dancing master to the convent. This was "only the farce of 'The Pet in Petticoats,' with new jokes engrafted upon the old ones of the piece."  

...This was truly a very droll and merry conceit, attended with peals of laughter and applause; and we must say in all these burlesques there was nothing offensive to modesty—nothing but what could have been offered to the intellectual of the refined drawing-room. They were, however, very meagre affairs, but yet entertaining. All the public require is exhilarating pleasure for a couple of hours at a theatre. They do not want to be tired out with intellectual thought to appreciate your entertainment. ...  

Agnes completed the week by appearing in the character of Margaret in The Prima Donna on April 26 and on Saturday, April 29, she took her benefit, for which she played The Fox Hunt and The Young Actress. She "had a very good house considering the times, the declined state of the theatre and its unpropitious surroundings."  

55 Ibid.  
56 Ibid., VI, 371.  
57 Ibid.
Still another "re-engagement" was begun on May 1. On May 3 a benefit was given for the sufferers from the late disastrous fire in New York. Miss Robertson volunteered her services and repeated The Fox Hunt and The Young Actress. On May 5 she closed this happy series of engagements with three pieces: Prima Donna, Milly and Bob Nettles.  

Leaving Philadelphia, the Boucicaults then played the principal theatrical cities in the South and West.  

By June, 1854, the Boucicaults had worked their way west to Chicago, where Agnes Robertson was scheduled for a two week engagement at the Rice Theatre on Dearborn Street. This was the second of the Rice Theatres; the first being built in 1847, and this, the second, was opened to the public on February 3, 1851. The Boucicaults had come at the end of the theatrical season, when it was a challenge for the best of artists to draw a good crowd. The chances that Agnes would make a "go" of it were quite slender for she had just been preceded by Julia Barrow, Margaret Davenport and Julia Dean, and the theatre patrons were fairly well tired out. But nevertheless she "made one of the most immediate successes ever made by a new actress at the Rice Theatre. . . . She became so popular at once

that the receipts from her first week exceeded the receipts for any other week of the year." For the first week the receipts were $2071; for her second, $1663.60

It was not only a financial success, but she received public acclaim as well. The Chicago Journal of June 15, 1854, reviewed her engagement as follows:

Public interest has been excited in this city in a measure quite unprecedented by the elegant performances of Miss Agnes Robertson. Her progress through the stage has been a wreath of triumph to which we cannot but believe Chicago must have contributed as enthusiastically as any of our Eastern cities. The theatre has been densely packed every night and families which have hitherto seldom patronized amusements have been out night after night. . . . Without instituting comparisons, we presume that no one who has seen her extraordinary performances, can doubt that this lady in her peculiar line excels everything we hitherto have seen in America. We regret to observe that her engagement ends this week. It has been the most profitable of the year to our worthy manager, Mr. Rice. 61

Soon after the June engagement at Rice's Theatre, the Boucicaults returned to the East. No record of any theatrical activity is to be found for the month of July. It was very difficult to keep a theatre open during the hot summer months. The radiation of the hundreds of gas jets necessary to light a theatre of that day, when added

60 James Napier Wilt, "The History of the Two Rice Theatres in Chicago from 1847 to 1857" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1923), pp. 288-89. He lists the plays for each day with the daily gross receipts.

61 Ibid., p. 290-91.
to the normal summer temperature, made it all but impossible
to attract a house of any size.

Early in the fall of 1854, Agnes opened a short run
in Buffalo, New York, on August 7, which lasted until August 19. The most important item of this engagement was the
production of Janet Pride on August 11, 1854. 62 The exact
time of the writing of this script is not known. Boucicault
could have written it during the month of July when they
were not playing. But critics have tended to group this
play with Boucicault's earlier French adaptations, implying
that it was written before he left England. The play is
an adaptation from D'Ennery's Marie-Jeanne. The year 1855
is the date usually assigned to the first performance of
this play. If that is the date of its first presentation
in London, America saw the play before England did.

Miss Robertson returned to Chicago on August 28,
1854, for the second engagement of that year. 63 It is
not known whether Boucicault accompanied her on this trip.
If he were there, he kept himself well in the background,
for his name does not appear except as author of many of the
plays in which Miss Robertson appeared. This two-week
engagement was not as successful, financially, as the

62 The Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, August, 11,
1854.

63 Wilt, op. cit., p. 299.
previous engagement; the cholera epidemic had been going on all summer and not as many people were going out as in June. In comparison, the theatre took in only $1389.25 the first week and $1483.25 the second. At the completion of the Chicago engagement, the Boucicaults returned to the East, stopping first at Boston, where they appeared at the National Theatre.

Probably the most important fact of the Boston engagement is that Boucicault made his American debut as an actor at this time. Walsh states that "Boucicault's first American appearance as an actor occurred November 10, 1854, at the Broadway Theatre." Anderson is a little closer to being correct when she says, "As nearly as I can learn from the theatrical records in the Boston Journal, Boucicault made his debut as Sir Patrick O'Plenipo in the farce, The Irish Artist, on September 22, 1854." However, neither was correct for a handbill of the National Theatre dated September 20, 1854, announced:

Engagement of the Author of London Assurance!
And the return to Boston of the Fairy Star. First appearance of Mr. Dion Boucicault! Who will perform in his own Comedy of Used Up.

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64 Ibid., pp. 299-300.
Miss Agnes Robertson! In 6 Characters! 4 Songs! 2 Dances! First Night of an entirely new Piece, The Fairy Star! or the Heirs of Bally botherem! Written expressly for Miss Agnes Robertson by the Author of "London Assurance."

On Wednesday Evening, Sept. 20, 1854, The performance will commence with the charming Burletta entitled Milly! or the Maid with the Milking Pail.

Milly. . . . . . . . . Miss Agnes Robertson
To be followed by the Comedy in 2 acts, written by Mr. Dion Boucicault, entitled Used Up!

Sir Charles Coldstream, Bart. . . By the Author
To conclude with the entirely new Musico-dansio-fantastico Burletta, in 1 act, entitled

The Fairy Star.

Written by Dion Boucicault.

The Fairy Star. . . . Miss Agnes Robertson
Micah Mittens, A Quakeress from Philadelphia, Miss Agnes Robertson
Fib, A Midshipman, fresh from the Baltic fleet. . . Miss Agnes Robertson

The Banshee, an Irish Sprite. Miss Agnes Robertson

Tomorrow evening, Miss Agnes Robertson! and Mr. Dion Boucicault! will appear.67

Now unless the performance did not come off as scheduled, Boucicault made his American debut as an actor in Boston at the National Theatre in the character of Sir Charles Coldstream in his play Used Up on September 20, 1854. Boucicault first brought this play before the public in 1844 at the Haymarket. It was written in collaboration with Charles Mathews, who was then manager of the Haymarket.

With the successful performance of the play entitled The Fairy Star, Agnes Robertson became known all over the

67 Handbill in Theatre Collection in New York Public Library.
country as the "Fairy Star." The Fairy Star itself was a popular piece which she played throughout the country during the next few years. It was a protean piece in which she danced two numbers and sang four songs. In the character of Micah Mitters she sang "the new Nigger Melody 'Chicaboo'"; as the character of Fib, she sang the "Bay of Biscay" and danced the Middy's Hornpipe; and in the character of the Banshee she sang the "Banshee Cry" and danced a Pas de Deux with herself called The Shadow Dance.

The engagement at the National Theatre was a successful one, as usual, that lasted until October 5, 1854. From Boston the Boucicaults went south to New York.

It is difficult to avoid making a few speculations as to the reason for Boucicault's appearance as an actor at this time. It seems rather apparent that this was the logical time for him to put in an appearance as an actor in America. During the first appearance of Agnes, beginning in New York, then Boston, and during all the remainder of the previous tour, she had been the drawing card and Boucicault had been content to furnish her with starring vehicles. Now that they were making return engagements to these large cities, it is not at all impossible to imagine that Boucicault

68 Handbill of National Theatre, Boston, in New York Public Library.
69 The Boston Journal, October 5, 1854.
felt that some new attraction should be added to the bills. That something new would be himself! Therefore, their return engagement in Boston was the logical time for him to introduce himself as an actor. It is entirely possible that Boucicault wished to have a "try-out" period before opening in New York City and Boston was the logical place to do this for they were scheduled to go on to New York at the close of this Boston engagement.

On October 30, 1854, Agnes Robertson made her second New York appearance at the Broadway Theatre, which was then under the management of E. A. Marshall. During this first week she appeared in Milly, or the Maid with the Milking Pail and The Young Actress, October 30; Andy Blake and The Young Actress, October 31; The Invisible Prince, November 2-6; and The Fairy Star, November 6. Again she received favorable notices; with one reviewer saying that she was "without any exception, the most charming comedienne on the American stage." When she appeared in The Fairy Star on November 6, a local critic felt that it was she who was the "hit" of the evening, not the vehicle.

BROADWAY THEATRE.—A Comic sketch called the "Fairy Star," written by DION BOURCICAULT, was played here last evening. It is written for the display of Miss AGNES ROBERTSON'S versatility, and although slight, is sufficient for that purpose. The lady rattles through five different characters in a very delightful manner.

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70 Times, October 30-November 6, 1854.
71 Times, November 1, 1854.
manner, and sings a multitude of songs and dances a variety of dances agreeably. Miss ROBERTSON, in addition to being the most pleasing and lively actress on the stage, has the advantage of a good voice. Her singing is really delicious—so clear, so melodious and so tasty.72

Of especial interest to this study is the benefit which she took on November 10, for it was at that time when Boucicault made his New York debut as an actor. It is this performance which most writers have described as Boucicault's acting debut in America.73 For this benefit three pieces, all written by Boucicault, were selected; Andy Blake, Used Up and The Young Actress.74 It was a successful benefit, for the "house was filled completely." Agnes had appeared in these pieces before, and so the reviewers covering this performance spent most of their comments on the newly added element—Boucicault's debut in New York.

...Mr. DION BOURCICAULT, the dramatist, made his debut here and produced a favorable impression on the audience, who cheered him repeatedly. At the conclusion of the play Mr. BOURCICAULT, in obedience to a very general call, stepped before the curtain and addressed the audience. He apologized for ill health; thanked them for their kind reception; disclaimed any idea of being an actor; thought they would have a

72 Times, Tuesday, November 7, 1854.

73 See Walsh, op. cit., p. 52. Also The New York Clipper, September 27, 1890, "Death of Dion Boucicault." The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890, "Dion Boucicault," states that he appeared in New York on November 10, 1854 as Sir Charles Coldstream in Used Up. Both papers have him playing at Burton's.

74 Times, November 10, 1854.
natural curiosity to see an author in his own work, ("Used Up," ) and so made his appearance before them. The evening passed off with much congeniality.75

Agnes and Dion continued at the Broadway until November 18. No new scripts were added to the bills. On November 17, Agnes took her farewell benefit, at which both she and Dion appeared. The program consisted of Used Up, Bob Nettles, and The Fairy Star.76 In covering this farewell benefit, the Times reported that

In reply to a very general call, Mr. BOURGIC AULT appeared before the audience and thanked them for their reception, then and heretofore. He had come to this country with no intention of interfering with any dramatist, but simply to meet with such encouragement as his works might receive. He felt more than satisfied, and was willing to devote the remainder of his life and services to their amusement. If they would accept his ensuing works with the same favor they had bestowed on those already produced they would prove he was not "Used Up" yet.77

Boucicault had an eye for the future and he could not leave New York without letting them know that he would be back! It was announced that they would leave New York for Philadelphia for a three-weeks' engagement and then would proceed to New Orleans for six weeks.78

They arrived in Philadelphia as scheduled and Agnes

75 Times, November 11, 1854.
76 Times, November 17, 1854.
77 November 18, 1854.
78 Ibid.
opened at the Walnut Street Theatre on November 20, 1854, in *The Maid with the Milking Pail* and the well tried and popular *The Young Actress*. Ably supported by Mr. a'Becket as Lord Philander, A. H. Davenport as Algernon, and a Mr. Chapman as Diocon, she received the following critical notice:

"This actress (Miss Agnes Robertson) was truly a very pleasing and talented artist, of comedy variety. She sung with ballad skill and most agreeable melody. She was an agile dancer of graceful motion, with modest attitude and costume. She had a most musical speaking voice, constituting an ensemble of attributes of the most fascinating style and manner."

During their last week of this engagement on November 24, "Boucicault, ... a most fertile genius in manufacturing local subjects, produced a new home topic, or plot, called 'Apollo in New York.'" Agnes appeared as Apollo, while Chapman appeared as Sandy Hook, a "funny bundle of sticks, bound up with a band of local jokes, hints, and quizzical suggestions and references to non-personalities."

*Apollo* was the first of a series in a new type of drama which Boucicault helped make popular: the dramatization of local and contemporary events. He developed the technique used in *Apollo* to a high degree of proficiency in such later pieces as *The Streets of New York, The Siege*

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of Lucknow, The Octoroom and many others. The Times gave some idea of what the piece was about and how Boucicault handled his subject matter in reviewing the piece when it was produced at Burton's in New York on December 11, 1854.81

...A good humored but sharp piece of local satire was produced here last evening, called "Apollo in New York," from the pen of Mr. DION BOUICICAULT. The leading idea of the piece, for it has no plot, is a little behind the times, but the dialogue is su-
courant. Apollo, or Apollonini, a grand Italian Tenor, is of course SIGNOR MARIO, and of his reception here, and of Miss COUTT'S strange infatuation, the burlesque treats funny. In the matter of experience Apollo makes some strong and decided hits, and indulges a keen observation with appropriate expression on all current topics. He inclines strongly to the Know-Nothing principle in politics, and opposes foreign interven-
tion with a good deal of force. Some of the sarcasm is occasionally indiscreet because suggested by in-
experience; generally, however, it is innocent.

In a literary point of view "Apollo in New-York" owes its success to localization rather than brilliancy. There are but few good jokes, and the rhymes, in many instances, are strained and clumsy for burlesque writing—which, of all other writing requires ease and fluency. The localization, however, is clever, and considering the short time Mr. BOURCI-
CAULT has been in the country, displays much observa-
tion.82

For her second benefit, December 1, Miss Robertson repeated Apollo and Boucicault made his appearance in Philadelphia as Sir Charles Coldstream in Used Up. So popu-
lar had been this engagement that Agnes was "re-engaged" for another week, December 4 to 9.

81 Times, December 11, 1854.
82 December 12, 1854.
During this "re-engagement," on December 4, Boucicault appeared in the role of Monsieur Tourbillion in a performance of *Bob Nettles; or To Parents and Guardians*. Agnes, as usual, appeared as Bob Nettles and they were supported by "ten other female characters by young ladies of the boarding school by the Misses of the company." 83

Agnes took her final Philadelphia benefit on December 8 and Dion took his first American benefit on Saturday, December 9. On both of these occasions *London Assurance* was presented. With the presentation of *London Assurance*, Boucicault added the character of Dazzle to his repertoire. Durang sums up this engagement as "most brilliant." 84

Leaving Philadelphia, the Boucicaults traveled to Richmond, Virginia, where they played in the John T. Ford Theatre, which was then under the management of Joseph Jefferson. According to Jefferson, the Boucicaults added much to the success of that season at Ford's. He records,

In the year 1854 I became manager for John T. Ford of the theater in Richmond, Virginia. . . . The season was altogether quite a brilliant one, and included among its attractions some of the first stars of the country. Miss Agnes Robertson, known as the "Fairy Star," accompanied by her husband, Mr. Dion Boucicault, headed the list, which

83 Durang, op. cit., VI, 407. Durang credits the authorship of *To Parents and Guardians* to Tom Taylor.

84 Ibid.
terminated with Edwin Forrest. 85

On January 1, 1855, Eugenie; or A Sister's Vow, by Dion Boucicault was produced at the Drury Lane Theatre, London. 86 This fact coupled with the fact that Boucicault was not in New York for a period of time, led several writers to believe that he had returned to England during the winter of 1854-55. Writing at the time of his death, the New York Dramatic Mirror stated: "On his return to England Mr. Boucicault produced Eugenie at the Drury Lane Theatre on Jan. 1, 1855, ..." 87 and the New York Clipper likewise stated: "Returning temporarily to England, he produced (Jan. 1, 1855, at the Drury Lane) his drama, Eugenie, following it a month later, at the Adelphi, with 'Janet Pride.' ..." 88 Both papers were incorrect; these two reports contain several inaccuracies and this was one of them. Boucicault was on his way south, for on January 4, 1855, the Boucicaults arrived in Mobile, Alabama, and


86 Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama, II, 267.

87 "Dion Boucicault," September 27, 1890.

88 "Death of Dion Boucicault," September 27, 1890.
commenced an engagement at the local theatre that very evening.  

Agnes Robertson, "the most faultless and agreeable actress we have ever had on the Mobile boards," opened with *Milly, or the Maid with the Milking Pail* and *The Young Actress*. These pieces were followed with *Andy Blake*, a repetition of *The Young Actress*, *The Fairy Star* (four times), *Bob Nettles* (three times), *Margery or the Rough Diamond*, *The Swiss Cottage*, *Love and Money* and *The Devil's in It*, each being presented twice.

Bouiccault's first appearance as an actor in Mobile was in *The Swiss Cottage*; presented at Miss Robertson's first benefit. Thereafter, he made frequent appearances in the plays in which she appeared.

Johnson Jones Hooper, who was editor of the Montgomery Mail in 1855, chanced to be in Mobile at the time the Bouiccaults were playing there. Although he had reported that he did not like them in the earlier pieces of the week, such as *The Fairy Star*, he had a change of heart after seeing them in *Bob Nettles* and wished he could "blot out" the words of

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criticism he had written earlier, "possibly, in an unappre-
ciative mood." For, he said:

... Mr. Boucicault is one of the most unassuming,
pleasant little gentlemen in the world, and as a
dramatic actor, in a certain line at least, he cannot
be excelled. His delineation of the aged, decayed
French gentleman, Mr. Tourbillon in "Bob Nettles,"
/sig/ is the most consummate acting we have ever seen.
The very air of the poor old gentleman appeals to the
heart, with a pathos so subdued, so simple and so
touching, that the tears will come, do what we may.
In the same play, Miss Robertson gives way with
absolute perfection, the rollicking, larking, but
fool-hearted, school-boy Bob Nettles. Her rendering
of this character—and of all such—leaves no room
for improvement. Archness, piquancy, simple pathos
unite with a petite style of beauty to give her the
power of "bewitching 'em," and the longer we look,
the more we are bewitched. The truth is, she and
her husband are twin gems, of rare and beautiful
brilliance.93

At the conclusion of their engagement in Mobile
on January 20, 1855, the Boucicaults made the short journey
to New Orleans and commenced an engagement there on the 21st.

93 Mary Morgan Duggar, "The Theatre in Mobile 1822-
1860" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Alabama, 1941),
pp. 199-200. The above is quoted from Marion Kelly, "The
Life and Writings of Johnson Jones Hooper," pp. 93-95.
CHAPTER III

THE BOUCICAULTS IN NEW ORLEANS

On January 21, 1855, the Boucicaults arrived in New Orleans. This was the first of three visits to the Crescent City that extended over a period of two years. The first visit lasted for four months. During that period, Dion and Agnes completely captivated the citizens of New Orleans with their performances. The second visit began with the opening of the Gaiety Theatre on December 1, 1855, and lasted until March 12, 1856. The third visit was relatively short; running from January 5 to January 24, 1857. On each visit they played under a different management and in a different theatre: the first at the Pelican, under the management of J. H. Calder, the second at the Gaiety, under Boucicault's own management, and the third at the St. Charles Theatre, under the management of Ben DeBar.

When the Boucicaults first arrived in New Orleans, the city was much in need of a good theatre. The Varieties had burned. The only operating theatre at the beginning of the year 1855 was the old St. Charles Theatre. It was the time of year when people came to the city seeking amusement and entertainment. The rivers were rising "and our country friends want a number of amusements to visit when they come"
to town, ... ."¹. People from across the river sought out New Orleans' entertainment. Mr. Wm. Randolph had "kindly consented to run his ferry-boat from Algiers to the Canal street Ferry, occasionally at night," for the accommodation of the people in Algiers who desired "to attend the theatres and other places of amusement in ... the city."²

The St. Charles Theatre was not the most attractively managed theatre that one could choose to attend. Ben DeBar, manager of the St. Charles, was a bit too parsimonious to suit the people of New Orleans. An account of the benefit for Miss Julia Dean certainly indicates what the New Orleans public faced:

The St. Charles Theatre was filled on Saturday night last with one of the largest audiences ever assembled within that edifice, on the occasion of Miss Julia Dean's benefit. If there ever was an occasion which called for the exhibition of some liberality on the part of a manager, it was this, and yet, to save a few dollars, this noble audience was kept in a semi-darkness during the whole performance of "The Lady of Lyons," . . . but, out of his profits of four or five hundred dollars on last night's house, the manager could not spare four or five dollars' worth of gas to enable the audience to see across the theatre.³

The Delta was quite incensed with the management of

¹ The New Orleans Daily Crescent, January 6, 1855. Hereafter it will be designated as Crescent.

² New Orleans Daily Delta, January 11, 1855. Hereafter indicated as Delta.

³ Ibid., January 1, 1855.
the St. Charles and with Mr. DeBar in particular. On the
21st it carried the following story:

The St. Charles last night produced a comedy, and
(for a wonder) a good one. Gabriel Ravel did not
play in it; Ben DeBar had only a secondary part,
and the magnificent "stock" of the establishment had
nothing at all to do with it.

The principal performers were sea captains—genuine
sons of salt-water—who have more fun in their little
fingers and more ideas in the remotest corners of their
crania than the whole management, stock, call-boys,
promoters and scene-shifters of the St. Charles.

They came to see the play. They took a front box.
They had read the Delta, (all sea captains do) and
knew that the St. Charles was so badly lit that
ordinary vision would be unable to discern its attrac­
tions, so they brought along their telescopes! Good,
long, useful telescopes—available night or day; no
pretty gim-crackery articles fit for an opera box,
but the real things with first-rate tubes and glasses,
warranted to enable them to see anything—even the
St. Charles.

Enter Busby (and other policemen) in a rage.
"You must put down those things," cries the grim
Busby, imitating the resonant voice of Mr. Fopel, "Put
them down, or shut them up."

"Shut up yourself, old cuss," replied one of the
salts, coolly.

"It's agin the riglations," said Busby.
"'Taint," says a Captain, "no ship's right without
the fixins, not even this here sinking, leaky concern;
we want our telescopes to take observations, d'ye see."

Enter DeBar, comically tragic.
"Public opinion," cries Ben, "I mean policemen, do
your duty."

"Go ahead, old son of thunder," said a sailor, "do
your darndest. If that chap in the tight choker has
a right to squint through a machine with two eye-holes,
we will keep ours, which has only one."

"But that's a hopera glass," cried Ben, aspirating
the h, as he always does when particularly pointed.
"Well, ours is a comedy glass, or a pantomime glass,
or any other kind of glass; perhaps it's a night glass,
the best for this establishment."

"Put 'em out," cried Ben.
"Try," said a Captain, who had an arm like a capstan.
"Come along," cried Busby, grim as death.
"Hello, old fellow, look here," cried one of the party,
"you're an ugly old customer, but if you attempt to interfere with the rights of an American citizen we'll handle that brazen knocker of a countenance of yours in such a way that you'll be thought handsome all the rest of your life."

"Hurray!" shouted the audience.

"Gentlemen," said Ben, "I appeal."

"Bosh," from the pit.

"Is it a free fight?" from the gallery, "if so, count us in."

"You're a river hand," said one of the Captains to Ben, as he retired disconsolate.

"And he's a lubber," said another, evidently alluding to Busby.

"Hurrah!" shouted the audience again, and so the scene ended. The Captains were right, and we were there to back them."

Since the St. Charles was the only theatre in operation at that time, the New Orleans theatre-going public welcomed with much hope and anticipation the news that Dan Rice had sold his amphitheatre on St. Charles Street and that J. H. Calder and some of the Varieties Company intended on opening it.5

When the Varieties burned, it left its manager, Tom Placide, and his stock company without either money or a theatre in which to play. They had made an attempt to survive for a few unhappy weeks at the old and out-of-the-way American theatre in Poydras Street, but were forced to give it up. It was then that the Variete Association was formed and arrangements were made for them to appear at Rice's old

4 Ibid., Sunday, January 21, 1855.

5 Ibid., Sunday, January 7, 1855.
amphitheatre. Calder, who had been treasurer at the Varieties, was made manager, George Holland assistant manager, and Barton Hill stage manager. Apparently Placide had nothing to offer but his ability as an actor. It is not known why he was not asked to manage the new enterprise, but the burning of the Varieties had stripped him financially.

This new theatre, named the Pelican, was greeted with great anticipation and eagerness on the part of the theatre-going public. Calder had not only remodeled the amphitheatre into a pleasing house but he had assembled a good group of actors. The principal members of the corps were Mrs. Coleman Pope, "a finished and lady-like actress"; Mrs. Barton Hill, "an exquisite vocalist and graceful woman"; Mr. George Holland; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hill, "both attentive and excellent performers"; and several others.6 With such actors as these, Boucicault could expect to have good support in his plays.

Manager Calder lived up to the greatest expectation of the public. He not only offered good plays, well done, but a comfortable house to observe them in.

It is often one of the most difficult questions to decide where ladies may find a rational evening's amusement in public, and feel certain that their ears will not be polluted by coarse expressions or their senses outraged by the

6 Ibid.
extravagance of the plays and the players. This matter, however, is no longer the one of doubt, for Manager Calder has made the Pelican Theatre the most agreeable and fashionable place of resort in the city. He has the most talented company of the day, and the selection of pieces in which they appear, always shows great taste and discernment. The theatre is brilliantly lighted, so that no person can be in the dark as to whom is sitting next to him, --and to add to the comfort of the ladies more especially, twenty boxes, each containing five chairs, have been enclosed in the parquette.  

It was not long after Calder opened the Pelican with a performance of Sheridan's *The Rivals* on Monday, January 8, 1855, that the arrival of the Boucicaults was announced.

The brilliant author of "London Assurance," "Old Heads and Young Hearts," and many other admirable comedies, is expected to arrive in this city with his talented wife, . . . The enterprising manager of the Pelican Theatre, Mr. John Calder, has entered into an engagement with Miss Agnes Robertson, to appear in all her most celebrated characters, and we believe her first performance will take place very shortly. . . .

And certainly the New Orleans theatre-going public eagerly awaited the arrival of Agnes Robertson and Dion Boucicault. How could they do otherwise when the *Daily Delta* carried such news items as the following about them. This one is in regard to Agnes' opening in Mobile.

8 *Crescent*, Monday, January 8, 1855.
9 *Delta*, Thursday, January 18, 1855.
MOBILE ITEMS

THE FAIRY STAR.—The Mobile people are in raptures with Miss Agnes Robertson, . . .
Everybody was infatuated; indeed I never witnessed a more emphatic illustration of the much abused word "furor" than on this debut night; a bona fide furor it was. The parquette seemed the incarnation of applause. Miss Agnes is beautiful, reminding one, by-the-by, very much of that piquant little lady of irreproachable ankles--Mrs. Skerrit, who performed here a number of years ago. She possesses

"The sweetest eyes that ever drank sun for soul
As subtly tender as a summer Heaven,
Brimmed with the beauty of a starry night."

Her voice, though not powerful, is remarkably flexible, and is capable of endless intonation, always.
"Like to a harp-string stricken by the wind," deliciously melodious." . . . 10

Thus, when the Boucicaults arrived in New Orleans, there was an anxious audience, a newly opened theatre, and a new and competent organization waiting to take them in. They were welcomed to the Crescent City enthusiastically:

GLORIOUS NEWS FOR THE ADMIRERS OF THE DRAMA.—Miss Agnes Robertson and Mr. Dion Boucicault have arrived. The celebrity of the lady as the finest comic actress of the age, and one of the most beautiful women in creation, and the fame of Mr. Bourcicault as a brilliant dramatic writer, a lecturer and an actor, will ensure for them a most flattering reception at the Pelican Theatre on Tuesday evening. 11

On January 23, 1855, the Boucicaults began an

10 Ibid., Monday, January 15, 1855.
11 Ibid., Sunday, January 21, 1855.
engagement profitable both for themselves and the management.
The reputation of the artists had preceded them and as a
result "The house was crowded; not a vacant seat was left
from the stage to the door, and many ladies (a capital
symptom of the increasing popularity of the Pelican) were
present to welcome the fairy star."^{12}

For the opening performance both Agnes and Dion
made appearances. Agnes performed in her time-tried
favorites, *The Maid with the Milking Pail* and *The Young
Actress* and Dion played the role of Sir Charles Coldstream
in *Used Up*. It was a critical audience that welcomed them
on their opening night. "Among those present" were "a great
many of our oldest play-goers as well as a great many actors."^{13}

The critical comments on the morning following the
opening were hurriedly written. Lack of time between the
"ring down" and time for printing caused the comments to be
rather general. But enough was said to indicate that the
Boucicaults' debut in New Orleans was a tremendous success
and that they could play in New Orleans for quite a time.
The *Crescent* commented:

\[\ldots\] Often as we have seen the first pieces
of the evening performed *Willy* and *Used Up*--
we have never seen anything that at all

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^{12} *Ibid.*, Wednesday, January 24, 1855.

^{13} *Crescent*, Wednesday, January 24, 1855.
approached the reading of the last evening. The characters, sentiment and whole acting were new and most excellent. Miss Robertson is a charming little lady, and Mr. Boucicault an excellent actor as well as an author. He creates points that have never before been brought into notice, and she discovers beauties hitherto unseen or over-looked.

The Delta stated:

...that she [Agnes] was all that man could find to recompense Him for the fall of humanity. Apples became sweet in her presence; and Milton, himself, had he been there, would have arrived at the conclusion that Paradise, instead of being lost, was regained through the light of such a 'Fairy Star.'

When, on the third evening of their engagement, Agnes appeared in the name parts of Andy Blake and Bob Nettles and Boucicault in the role of Monsieur Tourbillon, the critic of the Delta was inclined "to think the Schoolboy the best part..." that he had seen this charming young lady assume." And as for Mr. Boucicault, who played the old French tutor, the reviewer stated: "Nothing could be more perfectly true to life than the last scene, where he lays aside the pedagogue, to remember that he is a father. Mr. Bourcicault is the most perfect actor who has appeared on the New Orleans stage for a very long period."

14 Wednesday, January 24, 1855.
15 Thursday, January 25, 1855.
16 Ibid., Friday, January 26, 1855.
On Friday night, January 26, an "unseasonable cold snap" came along, usually a signal for everyone to stay home. But the popularity of the Boucicaults was so great that the attendance for the Friday night's performance "despite the coldness of the weather, filled the house in every part and and left the late-comers only indifferent seats." Even though the Boucicaults attracted thousands to the Pelican every evening, "had the theatre been twice its present size, it would scarcely have accommodated their patrons."  

By the end of the first week Agnes had acted Milly, in The Maid with the Milking Pail, six different characters in The Young Actress, Andy Blake, and Bob Nettles. Boucicault had appeared as Sir Charles Coldstream in Used Up and M. Tourbillon in Bob Nettles. Of Boucicault as an actor, the Delta said: "He is a perfect artist, self-possessed, calm, and true to nature in every word and action. His voice is excellently modulated, so that not a syllable is lost by the audience."  

It was a gala occasion on Monday night, January 29, when Agnes took her first New Orleans benefit. The piece

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17 Crescent, Saturday, January 27, 1855.
18 Delta, Sunday, January 29, 1855.
19 Ibid.
selected for the occasion was London Assurance and was concluded with "by particular desire for the fourth time, the favorite Protean burletta, entitled The Young Actress, . . ."20 By this time Tom Placide had returned to the Pelican company as an actor and Dion was proud to present him in his original role of Mark Meddle. Agnes played her usual role of Grace Harkaway (the original role of Vestris), while Dion appeared in a relatively minor role of Sir Harcourt Courtly. Agnes had splendid support, for the actors who made up the house company were good. J. S. Browne played Dazzle; Thos. McKeon, Max Harkaway; C. B. Hill, Charles Courtley; Geo. Holland, Dolly Spanker; and Mrs. Pope, Lady Gay Spanker. The benefit was such a success that the Delta announced on Tuesday, January 30:

"In compliance with the general public request and in order to accomodate the hundreds unable to gain admission last night, Bourcicault's great comedy of LONDON ASSURANCE will be repeated to-night, . . ."21

Tom Placide was a popular actor in New Orleans and his name alone would assure a good house. Boucicault took advantage of his presence in the company and scheduled him in almost all of the remainder of the performances. On the ninth night of the "fairy star," the comedietta, The Swiss

20 Ibid., Monday, January 29, 1855.
21 Ibid., Tuesday, January 30, 1855.
Cottage, was performed. Agnes appeared as Lisette, in which "this talented young lady displayed wonderful grace and ability, and gave general delight to the large number of persons assembled. She sung [sic] two songs with great taste." For his third appearance, Placide played the role of Natz Tuck and "was admirable." The Devil's in It was used as a curtain raiser; in which Miss Robertson appeared as Carlo, "a part in which she shines in a true star-like manner." 22

On February 3, the farewell benefit for the Boucicaults was announced by the Pelican. Since the comedy, London Assurance, had been so popular when done earlier for Agnes' benefit, Boucicault selected another in the same vein. This was one of his older scripts, which, when performed originally in 1847, had been called The School for Scheming. At this performance he chose to call it Love and Money. The New Orleans audience did not take too well to the piece: "The incidents of the piece are very few, and are partly local in their character, therefore a New Orleans audience can hardly be expected to take much interest in the scene. The dialogue too, is not so pointed as 'London Assurance,' ... and none of the personages excite the sympathy of the

22 Ibid., Thursday, February 3, 1855.
spectator." But the house was well attended by a "very large and fashionable audience. The ladies came forth in great numbers and the appearance of the theatre was brilliant in the extreme." 24

In Love and Money, Boucicault appeared "in his celebrated character, the West End Exquisite," and was well supported by Miss Robertson, Mrs. C. Pope, Messrs. Thomas Placide, J. S. Browne, Barton Hill and George Holland.

Mr. Bourcicault acted a foppish lord with fine humor; Miss Robertson as a school girl, who induces the lord to run away with her, displayed her usual intelligence. Thomas Placide gave a very broad reading to the part of Claude Plantagenet, but still a very amusing one. J. S. Browne as Macdunnun, a character written for Buckstone, was hardly at home. When Lord Fipley speaks of his little imitator, it looked odd to see a man considerably larger than the lord himself. Mr. Barton Hill as Acton, showed his fine appreciation of the character and his own careful study. This young actor is one of the most promising performers of the day. Mrs. Rowe as Mrs. French, was all that could be desired. 25

The following night had the same list of plays for Agnes' benefit, namely, Love and Money and The Young Actress. 26

The Boucicaults did not leave New Orleans at the close of their engagement. Agnes was to have a child and

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23 Ibid., Monday, February 5, 1855.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., Monday, February 5, 1855.
26 Ibid., Sunday, February 4, 1855.
they decided that New Orleans was the place for it to be born. The exact date of Dion, Jr.'s, birth is not clear. R. L. Sherman states that the child was born on May 10. However it is safe to say that sometime between the middle of February and the 17th of May, Dion, Jr., was born. He became affectionately known as "Dot," (the name of the play that Boucicault fashioned upon Dickens' Cricket on the Hearth). He ultimately became a theatrical manager and went to Australia; finally he was killed in an English railroad accident.

From the close of their engagement in February to their departure in May, the Boucicaults were most generous with their talent. They appeared in many benefits for the members of the company of the Pelican who had supported them so admirably during their engagement at that theatre. On February 7, Placide took his benefit. He was well liked in New Orleans and at the time of his benefit the Crescent commented: "Few of the theatrical managers that this city ever had have done so much towards keeping up the drama, to what it should be, as he has, . . ." Dion performed on that occasion Teddy the Tiler in the farce of that name, and Sir Charles Coldstream in Used Up, and Agnes appeared in

28 Crescent, Tuesday, February 6, 1855.
29 Delta, Monday, February 5, 1855.
a new comediatta which had been previously "written expressly for her, and called The Fairy Star."\textsuperscript{30} Agnes also appeared as Lisette in the leading part of the Swiss Cottage with Placide. "The four pieces passed off with great effect; Miss Robertson... played with her usual spirits; and Mr. Bourcicault, as Sir Charles Coldstream, and 'Teddy the Tiler,' was excellent."\textsuperscript{31}

On February 17, the Boucicaults appeared in the benefit for J. S. Browne. Dion wrote for this performance a little number in which Agnes had the peculiar experience of playing herself in Miss Agnes Robertson at Home. The characters were: "Miss Agnes Robertson, by Miss Agnes Robertson; Mr. Bourcicault, by Mr. Bourcicault; Mr. Browne, by Mr. Browne."\textsuperscript{32}

The Boucicaults did not appear again until May 17, 1855, when they offered their services for the benefit of Mrs. Charles Hill. Mr. Boucicault gave his "Comic Sketches of European Society" for the first time in New Orleans, and the company presented an early play, Alma Mater.\textsuperscript{33}

Speaking of Mr. Bourcicault's lecture, the Crescent observed:

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., Wednesday, February 7, 1855.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., Thursday, February 8, 1855.
\textsuperscript{32} Crescent, Friday, February 16, 1855.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., Wednesday, May 16, 1855.
It can scarcely be called a lecture, it was rather a literary panorama, consisting of a series of brilliantly colored sketches. Its interest lies for the chief part in the style and humorous characters with which Mr. Bourcicault endows it. . . .34

At the close of the season of the Pelican, the press gave the Boucicaults much credit for its success, along with due praise for the efforts of Manager Calder and his talented company.35 "To the complete salvation from failure. . . . Mr. Bourcicault and the charming Agnes Robertson have been the chief contributors. The versatile wit and genius of these accomplished artists dispelled the circus odor which had heretofore clung around the place. . . ."36

One of the reasons that Dion and Agnes remained in New Orleans until May could have been that Boucicault had been approached already by the Variété Association to become manager of the new theatre which they were to build during the following summer. He could have used this time in formulating plans and engaging artists for the coming fall and winter season. It is entirely possible that Boucicault had a hand in the early planning and designing of this theatre, for it is not known who did actually set up the specifications for the new theatre.

34 Delta, Sunday, April 8, 1855.
35 Ibid.
36 Crescent, Saturday, February 17, 1855.
Sometimes during the last of May, the Boucicaults left New Orleans, for they were to play in Philadelphia during the month of June.

During the summer and fall of 1855, the new theatre rose on the site of the old Varieties. "The new building was of brick, four stories high. Owing to the fact that a clubroom was introduced under the auditorium, it was necessary to ascend a flight of stairs to reach the parquet. This stair-case was treated with a good deal of architectural flourish, and furnished an attractive feature to an otherwise not outstandingly elaborate interior. The dress circle 'was on a plane with the parquet at the back, but elevated a little on the sides near the stage'--."\(^{37}\)

No evidence has been discovered to indicate just when or how early in the fall Dion came back to New Orleans. Agnes was on tour and her husband was not mentioned as being with her. Boucicault could have arrived very early in the fall to aid in the readying of this new building. Certainly he was back in the city by November.

Boucicault chose to call the new theatre the Gaiety, a name which he borrowed from the famous Gaiety in Paris. The opening was announced for November 28, 1855,\(^ {38}\) but


\(^{38}\) New Orleans *Picayune*, November 27, 1855.
it was postponed until December 1. His staff included: Mr. F. N. Thayer as acting manager; Mr. Conway as stage manager; a Monsieur Robert Stopel as conductor of the orchestra; Mr. Boulet as scenic artist; Mr. Ellsworth as mechanist and a Signor Mezzadri as costumer.  

Much excitement and expectation was evidenced by the public when this "new and beautiful temple dedicated to the Goddess of the Drama and to those more mirthful divinities who preside over the domains of Comedy" was inaugurated. Someone, it may have been Boucicault, knew what made a comfortable theatre, and careful plans had been laid out, enabling the construction of a "noble and elegant building placed by the merchants of New Orleans in the hands of the present management."  

The plan of the interior is altogether different from that of any other house we have ever seen—being lighter, airier and more graceful. The dress circle is supplied with magnificent cushioned sofas in front, and large easy arm chairs behind. The parquet forms a part of the dress circle, being a continuation of it, and the entrance to it being through the dress circle. The second tier or family circle, is furnished with comfortable armchairs similar to those in the back part of the first tier. Over the --- of the second tier or family circle, in place of the third tier which disgraces so many places

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39 Crescent, Saturday, December 1, 1855.
40 Ibid., Monday, December 3, 1855.
41 Ibid., Saturday, December 1, 1855.
of amusement, there is a false gallery, illuminated by thirty-two burners; this false gallery contains a large and elegant display of the most beautiful flowers indigenous to our climate, and serves [sic] as a relief to the front of the building.

On either side of the stage are two private boxes, admirably arranged for commanding a view of the house. They are decorated in the handsomest and most costly style, and are not, to our knowledge equaled by any in the Union.

The house is most admirably lighted—the most perfect we have ever seen—the chandeliers and burners are so arranged and distributed as not to intercept a full view of the stage from any part of the building. The ceiling is frescoed in an elegant and artistic manner—in a chaste and pleasant style which does great credit to Mr. Boulet, under whose supervision and from whose designs the work was performed. The house is ventilated in a manner that will obviate altogether the faults heretofore found with nearly all of our public buildings. . . .

In those days, not only the box-office indicated the success of a theatre, but also the number and frequency of ladies present. It is evident that the designer of this new theatre had the ladies in mind when the plans were formulated for the furnishing of the plant, for

The satin sofas are reserved exclusively for parties with ladies. Particular attention is respectfully called to this rule, as parties of gentlemen will on no account be permitted to occupy them. 43

An unusual program was designed for the opening night. Boucicault had written a special address which was

42 Crescent, Monday, December 3, 1855.
43 Ibid., Saturday, December 1, 1855.
"spoken" by him. It would seem, from the review of the opening night, that this opening address was "interrupted" by the members of the stock company, the interruption serving as a means of introducing each member to the New Orleans audience. Mr. Boucicault's opening remarks were "interrupted" by the following-named players: Mr. John E. Owne; Mr. W. F. Johnson, (the principal comedian of the Boston Theatres); Mrs. E. Place; Mr. Herndon; Mr. Copland; Mr. Morton; Miss Hetty Hudson; Miss Woodward; Miss Fanny Blake; Miss Emma Blake; Miss Howard; Miss Williams; Miss Atkins; Miss Josephine; Miss Helen Yates; Miss Labedie, Miss Mildred and Miss Jessie McLean; and Mrs. Salizman. To complete the opening ceremonies, the comedy Used Up and a farce entitled Forty Winks were performed.

The Gaiety, like the other important theatres of that day, hired a group of actors that comprised the permanent "stock" for the season. As the list of names above indicates, Boucicault saw to it that he had a good company to present the plays for the coming season. His aim was to give the theatre a brilliant position in the social activities in the city of New Orleans. In order to assure this objective, "the plays were always thoroughly rehearsed and faultlessly produced; he was a strict disciplinarian.

44 Ibid.
and his system produced satisfactory results." 45

After the opening, the Gaiety moved along in a rather uninspired manner. No new plays were produced and little if anything seems to have been done that attracted any attention in the press. John E. Owens was the strongest attraction; appearing in such pieces as The Ladies Club, Forty Winks, the well-tried Toodles, Paul Pry and Log Hut Life. His rendition of the "doleful history of 'Villikins and his Dinah'" was an ever popular attraction. 46 Boucicault revived and appeared in many of his older plays; namely, The Old Guard, December 6, 7 and 17; Used Up, December 15; and Lover by Proxy on December 17. Apparently these pieces did not draw capacity houses as could be inferred from the Crescent's observation that "All the better seats were occupied and the house was well filled generally, . . ." on the 7th when the Old Guard was offered. 47

On Tuesday, December 18, 1855, the Crescent announced that Agnes Robertson would "commence an engagement of a limited number of nights, . . ." Either she did not arrive in time to open on that night or there was not time for adequate rehearsal, for she did not open until

45 Mrs. John E. Owens, Memories of John E. Owens (Baltimore: John Murphy and Company, 1892), p. 76.

46 Crescent, Monday, December 3, 1855.

47 Ibid., Saturday, December 8, 1855.
Undoubtedly Dion was as happy over Agnes' return as the press was over her arrival when it announced:

MISS AGNES ROBERTSON--We are happy to notice the return to our city, and the reappearance on our stage, of Miss Agnes Robertson--the "Fairy Star"—who, last winter, won an unprecedented success here by the arch and spirited manner of her acting and the originality of her delineations, as novel and pleasing as they were graceful and captivating. . . . Her arch songs and life-inspiring dances will diversify the entertainments. We predict a glorious and hearty reception for the greatest favorite our stage ever knew.49

With the arrival of Agnes at the Gaiety, new life was added and a new hope was given to Dion's latest venture, the role of theatrical manager. On December 20, 1855, Agnes opened in a new protean farce, written by Boucicault, entitled The Chameleon, which had its initial production at this time. Agnes assumed the roles of four different characters in this piece; playing the parts of Laura, Billy Reefer (a Midshipman), in which she danced her celebrated Middy's Hornpipe, Nancy (an Irish colleen); and Mademoiselle Celestine (a danseuse from the Grand Opera), in which she danced a grand pas, supported by Mr. Stoddart. Afterwards she appeared in Bob Nettles, supported by Boucicault and John E. Owens playing, respectively, Tourbillon and Waddelove.

48 Ibid., Friday, December 21, 1855.
49 Ibid., Thursday, December 20, 1855.
Agnes' name was magic. The house was "densely crowded—one of those houses that fills a manager's heart with gratification and joy, and his pockets with money!"\textsuperscript{50} And apparently the spectators were not disappointed, for, said the \textit{Crescent} "few audiences have ever been dismissed from a theatre more entirely satisfied with the performances than the one that left the Gaiety last night."\textsuperscript{51}

The \textit{Chameleon} and \textit{Bob Nettles} were repeated on the second night of Agnes' return.\textsuperscript{52} On the third night, December 22, Dion appeared in the "petit comedy" of \textit{A Lover by Proxy}, followed by \textit{Bob Nettles}, in which both he and Agnes appeared, and with the old favorite \textit{The Young Actress}, in which Agnes played her usual six characters. She was ably supported in these two pieces by Mr. John B. Owens. On the 24th \textit{Milly, or the Maid with the Milking Pail} was substituted for \textit{Bob Nettles}.

This Christmas season was a busy one for the theatre-going public. Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams were appearing at the St. Charles Theatre in \textit{Irish Assurance}, \textit{Bashful Irishman}, and \textit{Law for Ladies}. The Orleans theatre was open and was presenting the grand opera \textit{Jerusalem} in

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}, Friday, December 21, 1855.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}, Friday, December 21, 1855.
which Buluc, Jubca, Grant and M'Me Cambier were appearing, while the "old and original Campbells" were playing at the Odd Fellows' Hall in a Christmas pantomime by the Black Ravel Family. Other attractions were "Peel's Southern Opera House--Shakesperian Festival, songs, dances, and bur­lesques by 'West & Peel's only and original Campbell Min­strels.'" At the corner of Poydras and Baronne streets "a grand display of equestrianism" was being presented by Smith's American Circus. And Vannuchi's Museum was presenting "Wax statuary and cosmoramas," at 107 St. Charles Street.53

Christmas night was a night of festivities in New Orleans. All theatres were converted into ball-rooms for the Christmas-night dances, therefore "curtains" were announced one-half hour earlier so that the performances would terminate in time to allow for this transformation. Boucicault, determined to get his share of the celebrating public that night, offered three popular plays: Milly, The Young Actress, and Bob Nettles.

Agnes Robertson continued playing the familiar pieces until January 1, 1856, when a new piece, The Serious Family, was added. The major parts were played by J. E. Owens as Aminidab, Browne as Captain Murphy Maguire,

Copland as Torrens, Miss Robertson as Mrs. Torrens, Mrs. Place as Lady Creamly, Miss Jesse McLean as Mrs. Dalmaine, and Miss Alleyn as Miss Torrens.

The review of this production indicates the deft hand of Boucicault's direction. Naturalness was one of the dominating characteristics of his style of acting and direction. This seems to be particularly true in reference to John Owens' performance.

... The play in itself needs no commendation, though the manner in which it was performed certainly deserves more mention than we are able to give it. The part of Aminidab, which is, perhaps, the strongest and most telling of all, was, as rendered by Mr. Owens, less broad and less comic than it is generally made, but far more correct, both in conception and filling up. It was near to life and might have walked from a portrait. Mr. Browne, too, who never fails in anything which he attempts, rendered Capt. Murphy Maguire, in accordance with the authors evident meaning, a gay and volatile, but nevertheless, an honorable, true, conscientious man; a man scorning deceit, and much in love with fair play in everything.

Mr. Copland did well as Charles; but the pith and strength of the performance was divided between Miss Jessie McLean and Miss Robertson, in the parts of Mrs. Ormsby Dalmaine and Mrs. Charles Torrens. The merit of their acting lay in the fact that there was, seemingly, no acting about it, above and beyond that which appertains to everything that is said and done, as well off the stage as on it. ...  

Prior to Agnes' benefit on January 3, the theatre advertisements had carried the notice that Agnes Robertson was "engaged for a limited number of nights." However,  

54 Ibid., Wednesday, January 2, 1856.
after the benefit it was announced that a "re-engagement of the Fairy Star" had been arranged. For her benefit, the theatre advertisements announced a new play by Boucicault: "THIS EVENING, January 3, 1856. First representative of the new five act play entitled VIOLET; or The Life of an Actress.

This was not, in reality, the first presentation of the play, but only the first presentation in New Orleans. Agnes had played it in Cincinnati earlier the preceding fall under the title of Grimaldi, or, Scenes in the Life of an Actress. But Agnes was a strong drawing card in New Orleans, and by renaming the play Violet; or the Life of an Actress, she would have the lead role. Violet was "produced. . . with a very strong cast and in a very admirable manner. There was an exceedingly full house and everything passed off to the acceptance of those present." Boucicault played the role of Grimaldi; while Miss Robertson played Violet; Thayer, Lord Shafton; Morton, Maltravers; and Miss Jessie McLean, Julia. The production was "very handsomely and appropriately mounted, well dressed and well played.

. . ." The piece ran until January 10.

55 Ibid., Thursday, January 3, 1856.
56 Ibid., Friday, January 4, 1856.
57 Ibid., Saturday, January 5, 1856.
On January 10, Miss Robertson took another benefit by playing, for the second time in New Orleans, the character of Helen Plantagenet in Love and Money. She was ably supported by Owens, Johnson, Boucicault, Browne, and Thayer. This appearance was announced to be her last. With the same announcement, it was disclosed that a "new grand Biblical Drama, entitled Azriel; or The Child of Israel," was in preparation. But on January 14, Agnes Robertson was "re-engaged" to play in The Windmill and to appear as Minetta in a Cat Changed Into a Woman. On the 15th, the "last night of the RE-ENGAGEMENT OF MISS AGNES ROBERTSON, . . . January 15, 1856," was announced. Both Agnes and Dion appeared in the two pieces that were billed for the evening; A Cat Changed into a Woman in which Agnes played Minetta and Boucicault the part of Karl; and Violet, with Agnes in the lead part.

It is of passing interest to note that during this time there were only two plays being offered for an evening's entertainment. Boucicault felt that three plays in an evening were too long. Also he had set the time for "curtain" at seven-thirty rather than at seven, as had been customary the previous year. This was something new.

58 Ibid., January 10, 1856.
59 Ibid., January 14, 1856.
Later Bouicault was the pioneer in giving only one play per night, cutting out the farce and the curtain-raiser.

For the next eleven days, Bouicault was busily employed with a new type of activity. As theatrical manager he engaged M. Louis Keller and his company of twenty performers to appear at the Gaiety. They had been touring throughout Europe and were in Havana when Bouicault contacted them and made arrangements for them to appear at his theatre. This was the first appearance of the Keller troupe in America. They were not actors. Their forte was the posing of living pictures. Taking the pictures of the great painters, chiefly Rubens, Titian, Michaelangelo and Raphael, they posed living people to reproduce these great paintings. Their claim to fame was stated in the opening announcements by stating that they had performed "by command of His Holiness the Pope, and that they had "performed in the Palace of the Vatican at Rome, the realization of the immortal picture of Rubens; The CRUCIFIXION, forming the most noble exhibition and exciting the most holy sentiments of which the human breast is capable."60

Azael was a new biblical drama which Bouicault had written. It was based on the parable of the Prodigal Son, "exhibiting the SIMPLE JEWISH CUSTOMS, THE LUXURIOUS

60 Ibid., Wednesday, January 16, 1856.
EGYPTIAN IDOLATRY, THE MYSTERIES OF ISIS, MYTHOLOGICAL TABLEAUX, RELIGIOUS PICTURES, JOY IN HEAVEN OVER THE RETURN OF THE LOST SHEEP."61

January 17 was announced as the "first night of the new Biblical Drama entitled AZAEL; in which Mr. KELLER and his Company of twenty persons will make their first appearance in America."62 But Azazel was not ready for public showing on the 17th and its opening was postponed one day. On the 18th the Crescent announced, "The rehearsal for 'Azazel, or, The Child of Israel,' not having been so complete as the management desired, there was no performance at that house last evening."63 This type of announcement is to be found again and again with Boucicault productions. He was a "stickler" for perfection and would not open without adequate rehearsal.

The presentation did open on the 18th and the piece merited the following review:

With regard to the piece, the first thing is its excellence as a drama; and, secondly, its dramatic excellence or merit in performance. Of the first point, it may be said that, though religious dramatic representations are new here, and, in fact, very rare--except in sacred oratorios--anywhere, they are far from being novelties; are, in fact,

61 Ibid., Wednesday, January 16, 1856.
62 Ibid., Thursday, January 17, 1856.
63 Ibid., Friday, January 18, 1856.
older than any others, and actually the germ of our present stage.

As an acting and scenic piece we do not know that we have ever seen anything surpassing this one. It is not only well mounted in the principal parts, but all the properties and minor details are gotten up with a close eye to what is correct and effective. The scenery, the costumes, and many small matters whose full importance can be known only by their omission, have been profusely supplied.

Mr. Keller, who has had experience and won a deserved reputation for his skill in forming tableaux, so manages those incident to this piece as to make them seem like statuary in the most life-like form, which, indeed they are. The groupings come from old masters and must please all who see them.

For this engagement of the Keller troupe, Agnes was "re-engaged" and appeared in the role of Lia. Dion played the title role of Azael. Neft was played by Miss McLean and Amnenophis was played by Fred H. Thayer. John E. Owens was not used in the production, for there was no comic part in this serious drama, based upon the Bible. However, Boucicault could not stand to see his leading comic actor remain idle, and didn't see why the largest salary ever given to an actor should be drawn for naught, and so he had Owens sing Villikins and his Dinah after the curtain fell on Azael. "However, supplementing 'Azael' may have arisen from a desire to strengthen the attraction, as the biblical drama did not meet with much favor, notwithstanding its magnificent setting, costuming, artistic effect and

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64 Ibid., Monday, January 21, 1856.
65 Mrs. John E. Owens, op. cit., p. 78.
Azael was not the tremendous success that was anticipated. Bouicicault tried about every trick that he knew to make it "go." Special days were set apart for the admission of the children of the public schools. The tableaux were changed often and new items were constantly being added. These frequent changes would indicate that the piece was not "drawing."

In those days New Orleans was filled with strangers during the winter, and Azael was probably beyond their understanding.

... As for instance, after the curtain fell on one of the grandest scenes, "Temple at Memphis," a rural party discussing the play, agreed that it was altogether incorrect "There is no such building there," said one. "No; nor do they dress that way in Memphis," rejoined another. "We have been there often enough to know something about the town." The schoolmaster was evidently abroad when Egypt and Tennessee could be thus confounded.

On January 30, a complimentary benefit for Agnes Robertson was sponsored by a group of business men of the city. This complimentary benefit had been a long time in planning for on the 17th of January a letter was written:

To Miss Agnes Robertson:
The undersigned, permanent citizens of New Orleans, having witnessed with pleasure and

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66 Ibid., p. 79.
67 Ibid.
Gratification your artistic and able delineations of many characters, difficult to be rendered in accordance with truth and the requirements of art, not only during the present season, but when you were here before, and having understood that it is possible you may hereafter be more closely identified with the Crescent City by a permanent resident in it; and, more than all, feeling it to be their duty, as well as their pleasure, to recognize acknowledged talent whenever it is placed before them have the pleasure and honor of embracing the present opportunity of tendering you a complimentary benefit, which it is hoped may in some feeble degree evince the regard they entertain for you as an actress and a lady.

Should the purport and object of this communication be in accordance with your wishes, you will confer a favor by naming a day, as may be most agreeable to yourself.

[The letter was signed by 29 names]

Agnes answered thus:

GENTLEMEN: I thank you very sincerely for the offer you make. I need not say that the dearest associations of my life are with New Orleans, and the proof you wish to afford me that I have so many dear friends here, causes me feelings of gratitude deeper than I can express.

I accept your kind proposal. I find that next WEDNESDAY, January 30th, can be set apart at the Gaiety Theatre for the purpose you design; if that evening will suit your convenience.

I beg to subscribe myself your obliged servant,

Agnes Robertson Bourcicault.


London Assurance was performed for this complimentary benefit. Mrs. Mary Provost Addams, who was well known in New Orleans, volunteered to appear in the character of

Crescent, Wednesday, January 20, 1856.
Lady Gay Spanker. The rest of the bill included three tableaux by the Keller company, and a new local musical sketch entitled Rachel is Coming. "The compliment was no empty one, as every seat in the house was filled, and all the standing room fully occupied. . . ." 69

January 29 had been announced as the last day for Azael, but it was still advertised for the 31st. The same announcement also carried the information that an "entirely new Drama, founded upon the episode in the Telemaque of Zenelon, entitled GROTTO OF CALYPSO, in which Mr. KELLER and his Company of Twenty Performers" would appear was in preparation. 70 But apparently Dion had trouble with Calypso. It did not open on the 31st as announced, nor did it open on February 1. The local papers announced that "In consequence of the continued demand at the Box Office, AZAEL, . . . Will be given T0-NIGHT and SATURDAY, being the fourteenth and fifteenth nights of the most extraordinary success ever achieved in New Orleans." 71 It was also stated that this was the last week of the Kellers and Agnes Robertson.

On February 2, 1856, the Gaiety announced a "new

69 Ibid., Thursday, January 31, 1856.
70 Ibid., Thursday, January 31, 1856.
71 Ibid., Friday, February 1, 1856.
great Biblical Drama, entitled UNA" was in rehearsal. One can only speculate what must have happened to Calypso. Either Boucicault did not find the production up to his standards and would not present it, or he renamed it Una. Although Una was scheduled to open on February 4, it was again postponed. "In consequence of the great preparation necessary for the production of the new Drama, UNA, its performance must be postponed until TO-MORROW..." and again Azael was performed for "The Eighteenth Night and MOST POSITIVELY THE LAST..." Again on February 5 the same announcement appeared. Boucicault must surely have been having added difficulties. On the 5th Azael was given its nineteenth performance and "MOST POSITIVELY THE LAST..."

On February 6, 1856, Boucicault finally got Una on the boards. It included six new tableaux, namely:

First Tableau—"Suffer Little Children to Come unto Me"--Murillo.
Third Tableau—Calvary--Raphael.
Fourth Tableau—The Descent from the Cross--Raphael.
Fifth Tableau—The Foot of the Cross--Raphael.
Sixth Tableau—The Triumph of Religion--Paul Varonese.

Boucicault played the part of Pontius Pilatus, (the Governor

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72 Ibid., Monday, February 4, 1856.
73 Ibid., Wednesday, February 6, 1856.
of Jerusalem), while Agnes played the daughter of Pilate, Una; F. M. Thayer appeared in the part of Sergius Paulus (a young Roman).

Una evidently was not the success that would have been desired, for on the second night of its performance, Azael was added to the bill. The announcement also carried the information that this was the "Last Night but Three of MISS AGNES ROBERTSON." Another indication that Boucicault was fast running out of an audience was the fact that on the second night of Una an "ENTIRE CHANGE OF ALL THE TABLEAUX" was announced, along with new tableaux for Azael.

Until February 18, the Kellers were at the Gaiety producing various pictures that seemed to attract some attention. The Crescent commented:

... The Ciglorama, exhibited by M. Keller, at the Pelican Theatre, was seen last evening by a large audience, which testified their approval by warm applause. The contrast, in the first part, between the bleak and wintry aspect of the frozen sea and the populous streets of London and Paris—running through so many degrees of climate and civilization—is markedly interesting and satisfactory. The view of the Bosphorus and Golden Horn, Moscow, St. Petersburgh and Copenhagen, are more than usually gratifying at this time, when attention is so strongly directed hitherwards. The closing part which embraces Spain and the Mediterranean coast, as far as where Etna burns its eternal fires to the watchful mariner, is well deserving attention.

Ibid., Thursday, February 7, 1856.
After the cglorama there was an operetta, entitled the "Rose of the Alps," embracing a number of national Spanish dances, which were very well executed.\textsuperscript{75}

The last performance of Una was on February 13, and for the remainder of the week various types of tableaux were presented, one of them being the "celebrated Picture, WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELWARE, an Apotheosis composed and dedicated to the AMERICAN PEOPLE," along with various lighter pieces of comedy.

On Monday, February 18, 1856, Boucicault took a benefit. For this occasion Agnes appeared as Violet and Madame Rachel. The following evening, Still Waters Run Deep was presented.\textsuperscript{76}

Beginning on Wednesday, February 20, Boucicault announced "FIRST NIGHT OF THE MUSICAL SEASON," for which he had engaged the Pyne and Harrison English Opera Company for four nights. The following schedule was announced: Sommambula, February 20, Crown Diamonds, February 21, The Bohemian Girl, February 22, and The Barber of Seville on February the 23.

On Monday, February 25, the "Farewell nights" of Miss Agnes Robertson were announced for "EIGHT NIGHTS

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., Tuesday, February 12, 1856.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., Tuesday, February 19, 1856.
Thayer played the part of Evelyn; Mr. Boucicault, Blount; Ovens, Graves; Browne, Smooth; Mrs. Gladstone, Clara; and Miss Robertson the part of Georgina.

Boucicault lasted as manager of the Gaiety until March 8th, 1856. He left with Agnes for Charleston, S.C. The company of the Gaiety held together until March 12, and the productions were announced "Under the management of THE COMPANY." On Wednesday, March 12, was announced "Benefit of the 'GAIETY COMPANY.'" The following night the Gaiety was dark. The following day, the management passed into the hands of W. H. Crips.

Boucicault was not a success as a manager, "however expert he might be in confecting plays to suit the requirements of himself and his charming wife, . . ." The announcement of the benefit for the "company" indicated as much.

". . .We desire to say, however, that the Company--individually and collectively--deserve at the hands of the New Orleans public a generous response to this appeal. It is no fault of theirs indicating that it was the management that greater success has not crowned the season. They have exerted themselves to the utmost to please and gratify. Among them are some of the best actors in the country; for where are those more excellent, both by education and experience, than Browne and Ovens? They

80 Ibid., Monday, March 10, 1856.
81 Ibid., Wednesday, March 12, 1856.
82 Kendall, op. cit., p. 362.
On the 25th she appeared in Bob Nettles supported by J. E. Owens as Waddell and Boucicault as Tourbillon. On the 26th she played The Young Actress. On the 27th, Agnes appeared as Don Leander in "the new and interesting extravaganza of THE INVISIBLE PRINCE," which was preceded by Milly, The Maid with the Milking Pail.

Agnes took her final benefit on Saturday, March 1, by playing again Don Leander in The Invisible Prince. The next day she was scheduled to depart for Charleston S.C. However, she had written Mr. Thayer:

My Dear Mr. Thayer: I shall delay my departure for Charleston, to enable me to play for your Benefit. You need not consult me as to the performances. I will play anything. Mr. Bourcicault has just written for me a new piece. If you would like to accept its first performance on this occasion, it is very much at your service.

Thayer availed himself of this offer and Agnes remained and appeared in Rachel is Coming, with Boucicault and Owens in her support. The other piece presented for Thayer's benefit was Bulwer's Money with an all star cast. Mrs. Gladstone, (a sister of W. H. Crisp) of the St. Charles, "with permission of manager DeBar," volunteered her services.

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77 Ibid., Monday, February 25, 1856.
78 Ibid., Wednesday, February 27, 1856.
79 Ibid., Friday, February 29, 1856.
have, however, been disappointed in their expectations, and the best and only thing to be done towards remedying this disappointment now, is by filling the house on the occasion of their benefit, to its utmost capacity. . . .

This news release clearly indicates that the season at the Variety had not been a financial success. To a certain extent it had been an artistic success. New Orleans had been provided with a new and comfortable theatre. Just how much Boucicault had to do with this is not exactly known. Boucicault had secured a good resident stock company that was headed by John E. Ovens, Thayer and Browne. However, it was not until Agnes Robertson returned from touring the Mid-West that the season began to show any real signs of life.

As manager, Boucicault produced many of his previous successes. He provided only a few new scripts, such as *The Chameleon, A Cat Changed Into a Woman* and *Rachel is Coming*. He attempted to create something new in his spectacle-dramas, *Azazel* and *Una*, but they were not successful.

As actors, Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault were highly praised, as always, and well received. But as a manager, he was unable to make the theatre a paying proposition. Undoubtedly Boucicault would not give the task of

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83 *Crescent*, Wednesday, March 12, 1856.
managership the painstaking care that such a job demanded. Boucicault was a man who demanded change. He must be constantly doing something different. The routine, day-by-day activity of a manager undoubtedly bored him and he would not devote enough time to the task to do a good job of it.

During the summer of 1856, Mr. Ben DeBar, the lessee and manager of the St. Charles Theatre, gave his "entire building, both inside and out," a "complete RENOVATION." On November 10, he announced the opening of his theatre for the winter season. His opening announcement carried the information regarding the stars engaged for the winter season; among such stars as Mr. Davenport and Edwin Booth, the Boucicaults were included.85

It was not until January 5, 1857, that the Boucicaults arrived. They made their initial appearance in an old, well-tried piece which had been played in the city again and again during their previous engagement at the Gaiety under Boucicault's management. Mr. Boucicault took the part of Grimaldi and Agnes appeared in the character of Violet in Violet, or the Career of an Actress.86

As usual, the Boucicaults were "greeted by a fine

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84 Ibid., Monday, November 10, 1856.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid., Monday, January 5, 1857.
house" on their opening night and "acquitted themselves with their accustomed ability, and to the unqualified satisfaction of their auditors."\textsuperscript{87} After having been there for two days, and enough time having elapsed to rehearse a new play, new at least for New Orleans, Boucicault produced The Phantom. Much "to-do" was created about the fact that one hundred years were supposed to have elapsed between the first and second parts, and that Agnes took the parts of two different persons during the drama. The Phantom proved to be quite a success and was played for eight consecutive nights. Such old favorites as Bob Nettles, Milly, The Invisible Prince, and The Chameleon were performed along with The Phantom.

In view of the rather long run of The Phantom it can be assumed that it was popular with the audience; otherwise a change of bill would have ensued. However, the critic of the Crescent carried the following statement about the St. Charles Theatre:

ST. CHARLES THEATRE.--There will be three features of great attractiveness at the St. Charles theatre tonight: first, the new drama of "Victor and Hortense," in which Miss Robertson, Mr. Bourcicault and Mr. Bovers appear; second, the comedy of "Andy Blake," in which Miss Robertson and Mr. Bourcicault appear; and third, the non-performance of that horrible thing, "The Phantom," which has been shelved, and we hope forever. Instead of "The Phantom," the sentimental piece of "The Two

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., Tuesday, January 6, 1857.
Buzzards" will be given. Good. Two buzzards, a
dozen buzzards, a whole flock of buzzards for us,
any time, in preference to one "Phantom."  

For the farewell benefit of Miss Agnes Robertson on January
17, Used Up, Blue-Belle and Andy Blake were performed.  

This week had been announced as the final week of
the Boucicaults' stay in New Orleans; but they were per­
suaded to stay for one week longer, and so on Monday,
January 19, the papers announced the "Re-engagement of Miss
Agnes Robertson and Mr. Dion Boucicault, for 6 nights
only." For the opening night of the "Re-engagement" they
presented London Assurance. Now one can only speculate,
for complete information is not available, but London
Assurance had been previously announced to be presented
on January 15.  

But for some reason it did not "come off" as announced, and the above-mentioned bill was pre­
sented. Perhaps the scenery was not ready or Boucicault
felt that the play had not had adequate rehearsal. How­
ever, the play was "very handsomely performed" on the 19th.
The review commented:

... There was more attention paid to the scenery
than is usual in that theatre, and all the per­
formers were ready and correct in their parts. Mr.
Bourcicault's Dazzle and Miss Robertson's Grace

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88 Ibid., Thursday, January 15, 1857.
89 Ibid., Saturday, January 17, 1857.
90 Ibid., Wednesday, January 15, 1857.
were all that the most fastidious could require. Mr. J. S. Browne's Sir Harcourt and Mrs. Gladstone's Lady Gay were most admirable. Mrs. Gladstone being particularly spirited and charming in her part. Mr. Walters, doubtless helped on by the excellence that surrounded him, was better in Charles than usual. Messrs. DeBar and Bowers, as Mark Meddle and Dolly Spanker, were sufficiently comical, but we opine slightly more clownish than the author intended those characters to be. There's no use complaining--DeBar will wear bob-tail coats in all his characters. Taken all through, the performance was the best we have seen at the St. Charles for many a day; and we perceive with pleasure that it is to be repeated tonight. The popular extravaganza of the "Blue Bell," in which Miss Robertson, M'lle Vallee and Mr. DeBar appear, will be given for the afterpiece.91

The review indicates here, that the presence of Boucicault seemed to make a difference in the quality of the performance when he was in charge. Repeatedly, Boucicault's presence was an indication that adequate rehearsal and more complete staging would be given to a piece.

On January 21, "Last night but 3 of Miss Agnes Robertson and Mr. Dion Bourcicault" in New Orleans; The D----'s in It was performed with Agnes playing Carlo, "the Little D----;" and Victor and Hortense was the accompanying piece with Agnes and Dion playing the name parts.

On Thursday, January 22, the comedy Used Up, the vaudeville piece The Maid with the Milking Pail, and the fairy extravaganza Fortunio and his Seven Gifted Servants were presented. The Crescent stated; "Mr. Bourcicault will

91 Ibid., Tuesday, January 20, 1857.
appear in the comedy, Miss Agnes Robertson in the vaudeville, and Miss Mary Shaw, M’lle Valle, Mr. Bowers and Mr. DeBar in the extravaganza."

On Friday, January 23, "Last night but one" of the Boucicaults, there was presented for the first time a new drama entitled Pauline, with Agnes taking the name part and Dion playing the part of Horace.

Saturday night, January 24, found Agnes taking her farewell benefit in New Orleans. Four pieces were announced for this benefit: The Old Guard; Used Up, in which Mr. Boucicault appeared; Blue Bell; and The Young Actress, in which Miss Robertson appeared. For her announced benefit the local paper could give nothing but praise for Miss Robertson and her acting.

"Miss R.'s claims to a benefit, and a genuine benefit, are very strong. She is, in the first place, a most estimable lady; in the second place, she is a very charming and versatile actress; and in the third place, she possesses a merit which is altogether too rare on the stage—that of not striving beyond her capabilities, and attempting performances to which she cannot do justice. The consequence of these three merits has manifested itself at the St. Charles, as it will do at any theatre, in the shape of a popularity of the highest and most valuable kind. In the light comic pieces which she has selected as her own, she is without a rival, and opine it will be many a day before we see an actress as good. A fourth merit of Miss Robertson, and the most charming of all, is that she never sinks the lady in the hoydenish and masculine parts.

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92 Ibid., Thursday, January 22, 1857.
she assumes in some of her madly pieces. The broadest comic character on the stage is that of the wild Irish boy; yet even in this, although the portraiture is good, and sufficiently amusing, Miss Robertson carries with her the manner and the look which a lady can never part with under any disguise.

This was the last appearance of Dion Boucicault in New Orleans.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE MOVE, 1855-1857

When the Boucicaults left New Orleans in May, 1855, they traveled northward. It is rather doubtful that they stopped to appear in any theatres along the way, for they appeared in Philadelphia during the month of June.

Mr. E. A. Marshall planned a season at the Walnut in Philadelphia during the summer of 1855. This was rather unusual, for during the summer months the theatres were usually closed due to the heat. However, to enable him to attract an audience during these hot months, "The lessee, Mr. Marshall, to add to the comfort of the public during the hot weather, made a contract with Mr. Barry to introduce into the auditorium ten thousand feet of cold air per minute. The machinery was put into operation on this opening night for the first time"1

Mr. Marshall had engaged the Boucicaults to play during this "summer season," and on June 16, 1855, they opened with Andy Blake, Used Up, with Boucicault playing Charles Coldstream, and The Swiss Cottage, "in all of which

1 Charles Durang, History of the Philadelphia Stage, Between the Years 1749 and 1855 ( Scrapbook, Arranged and Illustrated by Thompson Westcott, 1868), VI, 410.
Miss Robertson was the polar star of attraction. She proved the personification of a *dramatis personae* in one person. Nightly she pursued her old characters, Mr. Dion Boucicault assisting and strengthening the casts with his very clever tact in acting.  

On June 19, Boucicault produced his comedy *Love and Money*, in which he played Lord Fipley with Mr. a'Becket as Claude Plantaginet and Miss Robertson as Lady Rose Lawless. On the same bill, *The Old Guard* was presented, in which Boucicault appeared as Haversack "with much graphic humor of the Napoleon veteran." 

For Miss Robertson's benefit on June 29, *London Assurance* was performed. The season closed with a production of *The Invisible Prince* on Independence Day, July 4, "for the benefit of Agnes Robertson and her guiding star, Dion Boucicault." 

No record has been found to indicate any theatrical activity on the part of the Boucicaults after the close of the "summer season" in Philadelphia. The theatres in New York had closed for the summer months. There would be few, if any, theatres in operation anywhere at this time. Probably the pair did nothing but rest and enjoy the company.

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of their five-months-old son.

Early in September, 1855, they were playing in Cincinnati. The Daily Enquirer announced their arrival at the National Theatre with most complimentary anticipation.

National Theatre.—Mr. Dion Boucicault, the great author and genius, and Miss Agnes Robertson, commence an engagement tomorrow night, upon which occasion will be presented the piece of Grimaldi, or Scenes in the Life of an Actress, a production eminently adapted to exhibit the versatile abilities of the fair debutante. Since the time when Vestris was in the full tide of her palmiest career, there has been none found, until the captivating Agnes flashed like a meteor in the theatrical firmament, worthy to don her mantle, and as the "Young Actress" in the piece to be presented we understand her varied excellences will be brought in their most promising traits. Mr. Boucicault enacts the character of "Grimaldi"; it will be remembered that he is the author of one of the most successful of modern comedies—London Assurance.5

As far as can be determined, this was the first presentation of Grimaldi. The piece has caused much confusion because it was renamed several times. When it was first presented in New Orleans, in 1855, it was re-titled *Violet, or Scenes in the Life of an Actress*. And later it was called simply *The Life of an Actress*.

Quinn regards Grimaldi as being Boucicault's "first

significant play to be produced... in America. In this first production, the Boucicaults were supported by Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Sothern and J. G. Burnett. The performance was a pronounced success, as the following eulogy would imply:

National Theatre. --Dion Boucicault and Miss Agnes Robertson.--On Monday evening, Mr. Dion Boucicault and Miss Agnes Robertson made their first appearance in this city at the National Theatre, and were greeted with an overflowing house. The reputation that these distinguished artists have made abroad was fully sustained here, and it has been a long time since we have witnessed a more delightful and pleased audience within the walls of the old National.

Bourcicault's play of Grimaldi, or Scenes from the Life of an Actress, was produced with an excellent cast. The part of "Grimaldi," the veteran clown, was personated by Mr. Bourcicault with much effect. The affectionate, warm-hearted old actor, watching with deepest interest the result of his protege's debut; his rejoicing at her success; his love for her virtues, and patient watching over her, were portrayed with a faithfulness that enlisted the sympathies of the audience and drew tears from many an eye.

Miss Robertson, as "Violet," the young actress, was admirable. She entered into the spirit of the play with feeling, and her acting throughout was characterized with purity and chasteness.

Appearing not only in Grimaldi, but in Andy Blake, Used Up, and London Assurance, the Boucicaults completely won over their public as well as the press. For when they


7 The Daily Enquirer, September 26, 1855.
left Cincinnati on September 27 for Louisville, the Enquirer commented:

Gone—Mr. Dion Boucicault and his wife, the bewitching Agnes, left on Sunday for Louisville. The kind regards of all theatre-going Cincinnatians go with them, also the most fervent prayers for their speedy return. The last visit of this estimable couple to the Queen City has endeared them to the hearts of her citizens as they have never been before. We prophesy a most successful sojourn in the Falls City.

Elaborate preparations were made at the Louisville Theatre for the arrival of the Boucicaults. The theatre was "newly and elegantly decorated," an "excellent" stock company secured, and an "efficient" police force engaged to keep order.

For their opening night the critic had nothing but praise to offer them. He showed partiality to Agnes by saying:

The Theatre.—The theatre was crowded with one of the most fashionable audiences that has ever been between the walls, and the most unbounded delight manifested itself in constant applause. Miss Agnes Robertson took the house by storm, and may consider herself in a fair way to become a favorite with our play-going public. She has such a winning way with her that no audience can resist her efforts to please them. As the young mischievous but good-hearted Bob Nettles she was almost bewitching. We can't altogether approve of a young lady's appearing in male characters, but we can scarcely find fault with Miss Robertson for

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8 Ibid., September 26, 1855.

9 The Daily Louisville Democrat, October 8, 1855.
playing Bob Nettles, for it is a very good character in the main, and yet not too deep for a boy to perform. Mr. Bourcicault has also established himself too as a favorite, and we anticipate much pleasure in witnessing the performances of himself and his talented wife.  

On their second night's engagement at Louisville, in which Mr. Bourcicault appeared as Sir Charles Coldstream and Miss Robertson took the part of Milly and Maria, they again received good notices.

More perfect readers we don't think we ever saw; we are confident we have very seldom is ever seen comedy rendered more genteelly than they render it. There is in their acting, a refinement which is no less the result of study than of great talent—a clear insight into human nature, teaching how to read, and study, teaching how to delineate. The more we see of them the more we are pleased.

By the third evening's performance, Bourcicault was receiving notices as favorable as his wife's. His appearance as Lord Piply in Love and Money on the 10th received the following notice:

Mr. Bourcicault wins every evening fresh laurels for his brow as an author, and gains more and more hold upon the people as an actor. And his talented wife has become already a favorite with the people—she is so full of spirit and life—gay, joyous life.

On October 11, Andy Blake and Bob Nettles were presented. Miss Robertson took her benefit on the following

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10 Ibid., October 9, 1855.
11 Ibid., October 10, 1855.
12 Ibid., October 11, 1855.
13 Ibid., October 12, 1855.
night, October 12, and the company gave *Love and Money* and *The Young Actress*, while on the last night of their engagement in Louisville, October 13, Bouicault appeared in *Used Up*.  

The months of October and November were busy months for Agnes. She toured, with long jumps between stands. Dion is not mentioned as being along in any of these appearances, and it is to be supposed that he was in New Orleans, for on Saturday, December 1, 1855, the Gaiety Theatre, under his management was opened.

From Louisville, Agnes Robertson went to Baltimore, where she appeared at the Museum from October 18 to October 23. There, as usual, the public enjoyed her Milly, Maria and Andy Blake.

After the Baltimore engagement, Agnes went back to the Mid-West and played in the St. Louis Theatre from November 6 to November 20.

It was during this St. Louis engagement that Agnes performed in two new pieces which Bouicault had provided. On November 8, she appeared in *Rachel is Coming*, a four-part protean piece which Dion had written especially for her, in

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15 *The Baltimore American*, October 18, 19, 23, 1855.

16 *The St. Louis Missouri Republican*, November 6-20, 1855.
which she played the parts of Arabella, Jenny Lind (singing "Lube Vole"), Semorita Sota (with a Spanish dance), and the mad Rachel. On November 12, she appeared in "the fairy piece" entitled *The Cat Changed into a Woman*. It was initially performed in St. Louis at this time and not, as Townsend Walsh records, at Boston in 1856.

Upon leaving St. Louis, Agnes returned to Louisville, where she repeated her former successes, along with the two new pieces just added to her repertoire, *Rachel is Coming* and *The Cat Changed into a Woman*. Again, as on her previous visit, the local critic showered her with compliments, calling her work a "triumph of nature," hoping she would return, and adding his "sincere and earnest wishes" and that she might "prosper and be happy--very happy."

It is entirely probable that Agnes came on down the Ohio and the Mississippi after this last Louisville performance, for during the months of December, January, and February she appeared under her husband's management at the Gaiety in New Orleans.

At the conclusion of their stay in New Orleans, March 8, 1856, the Boucicaults headed northward. On their

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17 Ibid., November 8, 1855.
18 Ibid., November 12, 1855.
19 *The Daily Louisville Democrat*, November 26, 1855.
way, they stopped and played wherever they could be booked. They played in Charleston (then spelled Charlestown), South Carolina, from March 13 to the 29th, at the New Theatre, which was under the management of Mr. Sloan. This was not the first time that they had been scheduled to appear in Charleston, for on February 5, 1855, arrangements had been made for their appearance immediately following their first New Orleans engagement. But, as will be recalled, Agnes was expecting a child and could not travel at that time. Ketchum reports that:

In February of the preceding year (1857), Sloan had announced that Boucicault and Miss Robertson had been engaged and would appear on the fifth of that month. The Courier for that day conveyed the information that the contract had been broken by the players, and that they would not appear. To Boucicault, who was in New Orleans at the time, this seemed to misrepresent the facts, and he wrote a letter to the Courier stating his side of the case. Miss Robertson, he said, was not in good health. He had advised Mr. Sloan a month in advance that they would not be able to appear in Charlestown and had expressed his hope that "this early intimation" would enable him to replace them with some other attraction. Sloan did obtain the services of other performers, Mr. and Mrs. Conway, . . . The manager's announcement of the stars when he knew they would not appear seems like a piece of managerial obstinacy.21

However, this publicity of the preceding year had only heightened the popularity and acceptance of the

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20 The Charlestown Courier, March 13-29.
Boucicault. Boucicault appeared in the roles of Grimaldi in *Violet, or The Career of an Actress* (March 17), Sir Charles Coldstream in *Used Up* (March 19), Karl in *The Cat Changed into A Woman* (March 20); Lord Fipley in *Love and Money* (March 22), and Haversack in *The Old Guard* (March 25).  

Agnes, as usual, received much praise. "Her success in Charlestown was 'one continued ecstasy and excitement.' In spite of the weather, which was tempestuous, she was received with cheers from crowded and delighted audiences for more than two weeks."  

The stage at no period has possessed a more requisite actress than Miss Robertson. . . . This lady has invented a school of acting perfectly original. . . . Her portraits are dramatic paintings on ivory; they may be examined by the microscope of criticism, and then they reveal a minuteness of perfection which escapes the casual auditor. . . . she possesses a bird-like flexibility of voice that while it mocks, triumphs over the most difficult passages of music. . . . The performances of Miss Robertson and Mr. Boucicault are of the kind we desire to see, and the crowded assemblages which greet them prove that Charlestown will always appreciate and amply reward the

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highest merit.  

Continuing northward, after the Charleston engagement, they stopped again, for the second time, at the Richmond Theatre, Richmond, Virginia, which was still under the management of John T. Ford. Joseph Jefferson was acting as stage director. As usual, Agnes was the more enthusiastically heralded of the two when they opened on April 7, 1856, with Bob Nettles and The Young Actress. However, Dion attracted his share of attention when he announced that he would appear in Used Up for his wife's benefit on April 12. The local paper stated:

The second piece is from the pen of Mr. Bourcicault entitled "Used Up", and what adds greatly to the attractions of the performance, Mr. Bourcicault takes the part of Sir Charles Coldstream. He is said to play it to the life. It will be a matter of no ordinary interest to see the author of such plays as "London Assurance" and "Old Heads and Young Hearts", which have given delight to so many thousands of people himself taking a part in one of his brilliant comedies.

Ending their engagement on April 15, 1856, at the Richmond Theatre, the Boucicaults headed for New York,

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24 Ibid., quoted from Courier, March 29, 1856.
25 The Richmond Daily Dispatch, April 9, 1856.
26 Ibid., April 12, 1856.
27 Ibid., April 15, 1856.
where they opened at Burton's Chambers Street Theatre on Monday, May 19, 1856, in Andy Blake and The Young Actress. 28 This was the first time that Andy Blake had been presented at Burton's. On the second night of their short engagement, Boucicault appeared as Sir Charles Coldstream in Used Up. This was presented along with the two pieces of the first night's engagement. The remainder of the week was taken up with repeats of old pieces such as Milly and The Chameleon. On Saturday night, May 24, an announcement was made that for the benefit of Miss Robertson the first night of Violet; or The Life of an Actress would be presented. This is the announcement that caused Walsh to believe that this was the first presentation of the script in America. As already indicated, the play had been done earlier in Cincinnati under the title of Grimaldi, or Scenes in the Life of an Actress, and in New Orleans under its new name.

The announcement also carried the added information that "the importance and length of the new play forbids the performance of any other piece on the same evening." 29 From the time of the restoration of Charles II and the resulting rebirth of drama in England, it had been the

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29 Ibid., May 24, 1856.
custom to offer three pieces as an evening's entertainment. Earlier, in New Orleans, Boucicault had cut the number of pieces to be performed during an evening to two; now he had reduced it to one.

Boucicault received his first real "rave" review as an actor in this production of *Violet*, in which he appeared as the character Grimaldi.

In watching Mr. BOURCICAULT'S performance of Grimaldi, we were strengthened in the conviction that all really fine acting, every genuine inspiration, must be the product of spontaneous feeling, of individual nature directed by the mimetic art. . . . In such characters as Grimaldi, requiring not passion or force, but delicacy of delineation and exquisite network of detail, Mr. BOURCICAULT'S genius finds affinity. There is a quietness and ease in his performance, and a smoothness and finish now rarely seen, and so strong is the feeling he throws into the character that more than once the assumed emotion appeared to derive reality from actual experience. In that most trying part of acting, the momentous transition from gayety to sadness, and from sorrow back to cheerfulness, and the mixture of grotesqueness with dignity, Mr. BOURCICAULT, especially at the close of the second act, was inimitable. . . . There is, however, one defect, in an occasional appealing look to the audience, as if he recognized them, and was watching the effect produced. This may arise from want of confidence; if so, he need want it no more.30

The notices given to *Violet* were so enthusiastic that the Boucicaults were persuaded to stay over another week. They could have played the piece much, much longer,

30 *Times*, Monday, May 26, 1856.
but they were forced to withdraw because they were booked to appear in Boston the following week.\textsuperscript{31}

The Herald, which seemed to be at odds with all other papers (and sometimes the theatres themselves refused to carry advertisements in it), intimated that this rave review which the Times carried had been written by Boucicault himself. The Times, greatly angered, defended itself by saying:

\ldots the dramatic reporter of that journal \textit{New-York Herald} has thought proper to assert that a notice in our journal of this comedy was from the pen of Mr. BOURCICAULT himself. We would willingly excuse a mendacity, which we know to be often the compulsion of necessity, and from which those who are compelled to resort to it shrink in private with gentlemanly disgust; but, in justice to Mr. BOURCICAULT, more than to ourselves, we are bound to pronounce the statement of the New-York Herald an unblushing falsehood. Neither Mr. BOURCICAULT or any other Mr. has ever, in this or any other instance, either written directly or indirectly, or influenced the writing of a line in our columns.\textsuperscript{32}

This was the kind of free publicity on which Boucicault thrived, and it is surprising that he did not follow up with some kind of letter or answer to keep the publicity going. However, it was hardly worth it, since they were to leave for Boston within a week.

They played in Boston from June 9 to June 27.\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{31} \textit{Times}, Friday, May 30, 1856.
    \item \textsuperscript{32} \textit{Times}, Wednesday, May 28, 1856.
    \item \textsuperscript{33} \textit{The Boston Journal}, June 9-27, 1856.
\end{itemize}
Nothing new was presented at this time. Boston was the one place where the Boucicaults always were warmly received, and they tried to play there at least once or twice each year they were in America.

Since the Boston engagement was so late in the spring, it might have been thought that this would end their tour for the summer. However, William Stuart had engaged Wallack's Theatre in New York for the summer and reopened it July 1, 1856, calling it the Summer Garden. Stuart had engaged Lester Wallack as stage manager and Boucicault as general director. The opening on July 1 was well attended. It was a cool evening, "the ventilation had been . . . well attended to, and the flowers and shrubbery distributed about the house, gave it a pleasant and garden-like look. . . ."35

As general director, Boucicault revived an old timer, The Phantom. This was his old play, The Vampire, which he had played in London before coming to America. The Phantom was one of the better examples of the "horrible" school. It is rather surprising to find that it was so favorably received. Critically, it had not been too well received in New Orleans when it had been revived there. The New York review commented that "the parts

34 The New-York Herald, July 1, 1856.
35 Times, Wednesday, July 2, 1856.
personated by Miss ROBERTSON and Mr. BOURCICAULT were rendered with a degree of artistic excellence which elevated them to the rank of pure tragedy. The "Summer Garden" seemed to have burst into bloom with the unmistakable odor of success.

The Phantom, in which both Boucicault and Agnes Robertson appeared, ran until July 14, accompanied by The Young Actress. Although it was replaced on July 15 with The Life of an Actress, (as Grimaldi/Violet, or Scenes from the Life of an Actress had been shortened to by now), it kept reappearing and seemed to "pull" the crowds in and "netted ten thousand dollars in a run of eleven weeks, unparalleled at the time in the history of the New York stage."

As had been illustrated in the past and was to be in the future, the Boucicaults were always willing to help out their fellow-man, especially those connected with the theatre. On July 15, a benefit was announced for the widow of the manager of the old Olympic by W. Stuart, Esq., for "which occasion Miss AGNES ROBERTSON and Mr.

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
DION BOURCICAULT have proffered their valuable services.

The Life of an Actress was presented on this occasion. Agnes and Dion played the parts of Violet and Grimaldi, and were supported by Miss Jessie McLean, who took the part of Julia. This was her first appearance in New York. Nothing but praise was offered for the production. The Times said:

We doubt if there is a better drama on the stage than "Violet; or, The Life of an Actress", played here last night. It is one of those touching narrative pieces which occasionally illumine the common dullness of the theatrical world and warm it into fresh life. It is constructed with all Mr. BOURCICAULT'S known power, and written with more than his customary earnestness. There are touches of pathos in it and of humor, worthy of a more classic vehicle.

The play has been placed on the stage in a very superior manner, and the costumes are more excellently appropriate than we are accustomed to look for. In the last act there is a picnic scene, and for the first time in our recollection it was worked out with joyousness and the summery elasticity essential to such occasions.

The Life of an Actress ran without interruption through July 28, with the exception that on Thursday nights The Phantom was produced.

Usually, when an actor announced his benefit, it indicated the end of an engagement. But this was not the case when Agnes announced her benefit on the 29th. On

39 Times, July 11, 1856.
40 Thursday, July 17, 1856.
this occasion, Agnes appeared in her old favorites, *The Chameleon* and *Bob Nettles*. She was too much of a drawing card to relinquish and she was "Reengaged" and on Wednesday, July 30, for "the seventeenth time, and last night but one; the new legendary Play, The Phantom," was produced. 41 Also on the same bill, for the first time in New York, was performed the *Invisible Prince*, with Agnes playing the role of Don Leander.

The Phantom and *The Chameleon* were played on the 31st. On August 1, the "last time... of Mr. Bourci
cault's incomparable play of The LIFE OF AN ACTRESS" 42 was announced and on Saturday, August 2, *The Phantom* and *The Invisible Prince* were announced. The *Invisible Prince* had been announced earlier in the week, but no review was carried and on Monday, August 4, a review appeared stating, "the 'Invisible Prince,' was revived here on Saturday night..." 43 which leads one to wonder whether it was actually played on Wednesday night, the 30th! The review comments:

It seems to be a comical kind of lay figure which may be decorated with all sorts of

41 *Times*, Wednesday, July 30, 1856.
42 *Times*, Friday, August 1, 1856.
43 *Times*, August 4, 1856.
garments and put into the queerest positions with impunity. Mr. BOURCICAULT possesses a special talent for embroidering such works with the gay fashions of the day, and, moreover, is one of the few men who can write burlesque with kindly severity and humor. We were a little surprised to find that he has somewhat neglected his opportunity on the present occasion, and has allowed the agitations of a very political community to pass by unheeded. His usual aptness in this respect has often made us regret that he does not more often favor us with a specimen of his craft. No community in the world stands in greater need of the caustic wit of the burlesque writer than this, and it is difficult to find another where there are more moot points for ridicule. Our audiences are, perhaps, a little insensible to the European style of wit, and generally miss nine points out of ten if they are wrapped up in the European style. But they are keenly alive to political allusions, and appreciate a vigorous kind of fun in the heartiest way. The rest will come soon enough, if they are but tempted properly. So far as we are aware, all home-made burlesques have been more or less successful, and have produced abundant laughter from our somewhat overearnest audiences. They manage who shall naturalize the satirical burlesque of England will do well and do good. Wallack's Theatre is rather small for the experiment, but neatness and completeness are not incompatible with diminutive size. The "Invisible Prince" has been put upon the stage in a clean, smooth-working manner; the scenery tolerable good, and the costumes, as usual, excellent. Mr. WALLACK ought to thank Mr. BOURCICAULT for keeping up the reputation of his theatre in these respects.

The weight of the piece falls on the charming shoulders of Miss ANGES ROBERTSON who bears it gallantly as the dashing Leander, and does full justice to the musical and rhetorical accomplishments of that hero. The burlesque was highly relished by a large audience, and was consequently another success.
Mr. Stuart did not leave a stone unturned to make his "Summer Garden" a success. For this performance it was reported that he "had secured a number of boys to circulate among the audience with refreshing fluid. We heard it whispered that he intends substituting iced lemonade for water to-night." 45

The sixth week of the Boucicault's engagement at the "Summer Garden" was announced as their last week. During the week, on the 32nd performance, Dion took his benefit, for which was presented Life of an Actress, "Being most positively the last performance for this year in New York." 46

Their "regular" engagement ran until August 12, 1856. On August 7, The Phantom and The Invisible Prince were done; on August 8, Used Up and The Young Actress; on August 9, The Phantom and The Invisible Prince were repeated. For Miss Robertson's benefit on the 11th, "the last of her engagement," she appeared as Ada Raby in The Phantom and in Andy Blake. This was the first time that Andy Blake had been played at the Summer Garden.

The reviewer of the benefit reported that "there was a magnificent house to do honor to the occasion,"

45 Ibid.
46 Times, Tuesday, August 5, 1856.
that "it was very well done," and that "Miss AGNES ROBERTSON was repeatedly and loudly applauded"; but he added,

What was better than the play, however, was the announcement that Miss AGNES ROBERTSON's engagement had been renewed. She will play for four nights more during the present week, and will then take a short rest. After this she will commence a fresh engagement, and continue at the Summer Garden until the end of the season.47

For the four remaining nights, the following-named pieces were produced: August 12, Used Up and the Young Actress; August 13, Andy Blake and Milly; August 14, Andy Blake and Bob Nettles; and on August 15, Used Up and The Chameleon.48 With this, the Boucicaults retired from the city for a much needed rest.

But the Boucicaults did not stay "retired" for long. On August 18, 1856, a series of programs were given at three of the principal places of amusement in aid of the Dramatic Fund. For this occasion the Academy of Music was opened and a number of distinguished artists "Metropolitan and Provincial" assisted in the performances. For the Dramatic Fund benefit the Boucicaults returned to town and appeared at Wallack's Summer Garden Theatre. They chose to appear in Bob Nettles, which was preceded by "the roaring farce of 'Rather Excited,'" with M. T. B.

47 Times, Tuesday, August 12, 1856.
48 Times, August 12-15, 1856.
Johnston as Doublequill Barn. The third theatre to offer its services for the benefit was the enormous house of Manager Brougham. He announced the production of *Life in New-York; or, Tom and Jerry on a Visit* (an adaptation of *Tom and Jerry*), and the "ever popular burlesque" *Pocahontas*. With such bookings as these, the Dramatic Fund must have soared to the satisfaction of all.

On Monday, August 25, the Boucicaults were back at the Summer Garden with a new play entitled *Victor and Hortense, or, The Pride of Birth*. It was during the ten-day "lay-off," from August 15 to 25, that Boucicault had penned this new play. It was not a tremendous success; but one can not say it failed because it was got ready so quickly. Many of Dion's best pieces were written in much less time. It was one of those romantic stories written in the style of the *Lady of Lyons*. The play was written with Boucicault's "accustomed neatness, and was received with every demonstration of satisfaction."

But Boucicault felt that the play had not had adequate rehearsal and during his curtain speech he "gracefully" criticized the defects of the performance, "and asked permission to repeat the play in a more perfect manner—

49 *Times*, Monday, August 18, 1856.

50 *Times*, Monday, August 25, 1856.
which it is unnecessary to add was conceded with perfect enthusiasm."

Boucicault received good notices for his portrayal of the hero, Victor, by playing it in a "calm, masterly manner; without any mannerism, and without the slightest taint of that spasmodic sentimentality which in most cases supplies the place of genuine emotion."

But the character of Hortense was not strictly "within the range of Miss Robertson's powers." However it was "rendered by her with an elegance and intensity of feeling which held the audience in breathless attention, and left them nothing to desire but a more vigorous physique for a role which really makes demands on a stronger frame than Miss Robertson's."  

On the second night of the Boucicault's return, which was, incidentally, the forty-third night of their summer engagement, Agnes took a benefit. Victor and Hortense was repeated along with The Young Actress.  

Victor and Hortense was played for the next three nights along with Andy Blake, The Phantom, and Used Up, respectively.

51 Times, Tuesday, August 26, 1856.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
On the forty-ninth night of the Boucicaults at the Summer Garden, they played the Life of an Actress, "In consequence of the general desire expressed by many families now visiting the City. .." The following night, September 1, Boucicault took a benefit. For this occasion Victor and Hortense and The Phantom were played.

The Boucicaults played until the close of the summer season, chalking up sixty-one nights, the "greatest number of consecutive nights ever played in New York by any star!" Nothing new was added to the bill in the way of new plays. Continuing this late into September, they had played right into the winter season!

Up to 1856, there had been no adequate copyright law which would protect an author's script. Until this time, anyone was permitted to perform any script, at any place, or at any time he might choose. This certainly did not encourage American playwrights to write and above all to publish their material and so make their writings available to all for playing.

Robert Bird had introduced a copyright law in the forties, but nothing came of it. In 1853, George Boker had made another futile attempt to secure the passage of a copyright law. In 1856, Boucicault added his influence.

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54 Times, Saturday, August 30, 1856.
to these previous attempts and finally in August, 1856, a form of law was passed. It was not as effective as desired, but it was a step in the right direction. It gave the author "along with the sole right to print and publish the said composition the sole right also to act, perform, or represent the same."55

"Though this law failed to achieve all the results hoped from it, or to protect his plays from pirating, Boucicault sent out several companies to act them. This inaugurated the 'road' as we understand the term."56

A month after the passage of this law, a curious reporter from the Times made a trip to the District-Attorney's office, in College-place, where the authors had registered their plays and he reported:

The first dramatic work which we found registered on the pages of the leger, was the great American comedy in one act, (taken from the French,) entitled "My Wife's Mirror," by Mr. E. O. F. WILKINS, of the New-York Herald. It is, we believe, Mr. WILKINS' first, and (as yet) only production, but yet merits the prominence which it has thus obtained.

Second on the list we find a comedy in one act entitled "A good Fellow," of which Mr. CHARLES WALCOT claims to be the author and proprietor. Mr. WALCOT is, we believe, author of a number of celebrated comedies in which

Mr. and Mrs. BARNEY WILLIAMS have been in the habit of appearing, but which with a singular modesty he has refrained from copyrighting.

Third on the list comes Mr. DION BOURCICAULT, the Alexander of the dramatic world, who, having subdued France, sighs for some new realm to conquer. We find nine plays claimed by Mr. BOURCICAULT. . . .

On September 6, 1856, Burton reopened his old Chambers-Street Theatre for one night to take farewell of the audience, and announced that on Monday night he would receive them "in sumptuous style at his new house up town." The "up town" position was on Broadway opposite Bond Street. Old Tripler Hall had been entirely redecorated for the opening, "the faulty construction of the Stage had been remedied—the unsightly Boxes in the Second Tier removed, and the whole proscenium reconstructed."

Burton did not have a permanent stock company like Wallack. He was taking advantage of the newly found "star" system for all it was worth. Variety was what the public wanted, and he intended to give it to them; in his opening announcement he informed the public that arrangements had been made with the following-named celebrated artists to appear:

57 Times, Tuesday, September 9, 1856.
58 Times, Monday, September 8, 1856.
59 Ibid.
Miss AGNES ROBERTSON; Miss POLLIE MARSHALL, the most popular Comedienne of the English Stage; Miss MARSHALL, her sister; Miss FANNY VING, now Mrs. E. L. Davenport; Miss SALLIE ST. CLAIR, the lovely relic of the Western theatres; Miss FANNY BROWN, from the Boston Museum; Mrs. MILTON RAINFORD, her first appearance here; Mrs. CHARLES HOWARD; Mrs. HUGHES, her last season on the stage; Miss GEORGETTE FISHER, daughter of the late John Fisher, of the Park, Mrs. S. PARKER, Mrs. DUNN, Miss TREE, Miss MILLER, Miss MCCOSMICK, Miss FLORENCE, Miss EVERETT. . . . Mr. E. L. DAVENPORT, the popular American; Mr. DION BOURGICAU LT; Mr. THOMAS PLACIDE, his first appearance in New York for several years; Mr. CHARLES FISHER; Mr. MARK SMITH, from St. Louis; Mr. D. HOWARD, of this Theatre; Mr. BARCOURT. . . . Mr. L. C. BISHOP, from Providence; Mr. J. MOORE. . . .

And twelve more men were listed. 60

This was an imposing list of artists to appear at any theatre.

Meanwhile, the Boucicaults brought to a close, on their sixty-first night, the summer season at Wallack's by playing the "great melo-drama with which it was inaugurated"; The Phantom and Milly.

Wallack's, along with the Boston Museum, had remained a landmark in the establishment and in the keeping of a permanent stock-company for the presentation of its plays. Its opening announcement for the winter season of '56 stated:

This theatre will open for the season on

60 Ibid.
WEDNESDAY next, Sept. 17.

Its object will be, as it has been, to sustain the Drama in artistic purity and intellectual respect. The company, through whose energies and abilities this object has been so successfully attained, will remain substantially the same as in past season.

Mr. WALLACK will appear for EIGHTEEN FAREWELL NIGHTS, previous to his visit to Havana, where his health demands that he should pass the Winter.

"The Fairy Star," Miss AGNES ROBERTSON, will perform for EIGHTEEN NIGHTS, previous to a long series of engagements South and West. . . .

It was also announced that Mr. Boucicault, who was to appear along with "the Fairy Star," would produce two new dramatic works, "upon the composition of which he is now engaged."

The return engagement of the Boucicaults began on Monday, September 29. They inaugurated this series of performances with their first New York presentation of Boucicault's most famous work, London Assurance along with Milly as a curtain raiser. The performance on the whole could hardly be anything else but a success; it was a good script and Dion certainly had the pick of actors from the house of Wallack to play the supporting parts. Agnes played her usual character of Grace Harkaway, and Dion appeared in the part of Dazzle. The remainder of the cast list read:

61 Times, Tuesday, September 16, 1856.
Mr. Blake will appear. . . . . as. . . . Meddle
Mr. Walcot. . . . . . . . . . . as. . . . Sir Harcourt
Mr. Lester. . . . . . . . . . . as. . . . Charles Courtley
Mr. Burnett. . . . . . . . . . . as. . . . Max
Mr. Peters. . . . . . . . . . . as. . . . Dolly Spanker
Mrs. Hoey (for the first time). . . . Lady Gay Spanker
Miss Mary Cannon. . . . . . . as. . . . Pert

Fifteen years previously, during the month of October, this famous play had opened at the Park and created as much success as it did at this time. The length of time which this revival ran was sufficient proof that the audience eagerly accepted the piece as good drama. It ran until October 11, 1856.

Although the production was pronounced a success, there was at least one critic who pounced on Boucicault's interpretation of Dazzle. Boucicault, ever anxious to enter into a controversy with the press, immediately challenged the writer. The Spirit of the Times, in a review of the play, had commented upon his performance of Dazzle as a novelty, "intending to let it drop here;" however, Boucicault thrust himself before the public in a letter to the Tribune, and challenged the criticism. The Spirit of the Times related the incident as follows:

This letter was elicited by a supposed fault-finding criticism which appeared in that paper the previous day; but which, to our thinking, reads

62 Times, September 27, 1856.

63 The New York Spirit of the Times, October 11, 1856.
vastly more like a friendly peg stuck out for him to hang his arguments on, and to reply to with a dashing proclamation of his own excellence as an actor. Mr. Bourcicault has a most exalted idea of his own talent, and also of the gullibility of the American public. He seems to think they can swallow anything. We know not whether to admire his London Assurance, or to laugh at his mistaken ideas of the critical acumen of the public—for both are superlative...

Mr. Bourcicault says that his views of the character were taken by Charles Mathews; we won't question that fact, but merely reply that he had a very different way of exemplifying it. We saw him play the part the first time the piece was ever performed, and frequently afterwards, and Mr. Bourcicault's version is not a bit like it, or any other Dazzle either on or off the stage; he says he dresses it the same—or rather "exactly after the original"—true, it's a long way after the style the original would dress it now, we apprehend; there is sometimes great virtue in a dress; but what was a fashionable costume ten or fifteen years since is no longer so—clothes which Mr. Lee Morton would wear then, Mr. Bourcicault would not put on now. Again, Mr. Bourcicault tells us that he has studied all his characters, and drawn them from persons whom he met with in life—he must have found not only some very dull, but also some very extraordinary acquaintances, if he ever discovered "in life," such a Dazzle, or a Phantom, to say nothing of some of his other parts; if these be true to nature we have done, and at once state our preference for the ordinary stage representations which he condemns. But we see plainly the drift of Mr. Bourcicault's letter writing; he desires to make a little more capital by it, and increase his popularity as actor, author, and scholar, instead of which, if he does not take care he will jeopardise all three. The houses, malgre the Dazzle drawback, have been crowded mightily.64

Indifferent to whether the press liked Boucicault's Dazzle, the public seemed to like the production as a whole

64 Ibid.
and thronged to see it. For example, the *Times*, on
October 2, announced: "There having been upwards of four
hundred persons turned from the doors last night, from
the inability to afford accommodation, the management
venture to impress on those who are desirous to see
Mr. BOURCICAULT'S great comedy . . . . to secure their
seats early in advance." A new piece, announced
for Monday, October 6, had to be postponed, "as the over­
flow of Friday and Saturday has already engaged the house
for Monday and Tuesday nights." *London Assurance* ran
through October 11.

*London Assurance* was replaced by "an entirely new
drama, first time in New York, by Mr. Bourcicault," en­
titled *The Prima Donna*; accompanied by Boucicault's *Love
and Money*. Beginning on the 13th, the play ran until
October 18, when the Boucicaults took their benefit. Agnes
Robertson played the role of Margaret, "as played by her a
hundred nights at the Princess's Theatre, London;" Lester
played the part of Rouble, the banker; Sothern, Count Eric
von Mansfeldt; Burnett, Dr. Holbein; and Mrs. Hoey, Stella,
the prima donna. Boucicault played Lord Fipley in the

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65 *Times*, Thursday, October 2, 1856.
66 *Times*, Saturday, October 11, 1856.
companion piece, *Love and Money*. The *Times* reported that the piece was produced on Monday night "with success."

The piece is slight in its texture and will not wear long, but it is pretty; and when placed on the stage as it was last night, cannot fail to please. The weight of the piece falls on the shoulders of Mrs. HOEY, and to the excellent acting of that Lady the unequivocal success of last evening may be mainly attributed. Miss AGNES ROBERTSON, as Margaret, is fitted with a little affectionate natural role for which she is well adapted. Mr. LESTER, as Rouble, was, as he always is, admirable. Mr. SOTHERN slightly phlegmatic, Mr. BURNETT slightly heavy. . . .

On October 17 a tremendously long bill was offered. "In consequence of very numerous applications," *London Assurance* was performed; "and as the PRIMA DONNA cannot be withdrawn (having met with the most enthusiastic reception)" these pieces were performed together. 69

For the last night of the Boucicaults, and the benefit of Agnes Robertson, *The Life of an Actress* was presented along with Andy Blake. The following week the Boucicaults were replaced by the appearance of Mr. Wallack in *Hamlet*.

For the second time that year, 1856, the Boucicaults went to Boston and played there from October 20 to November 8. 70

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68 *Times*, Wednesday, October 15, 1856.
69 *Times*, Thursday, October 16, 1856.
At the completion of the Boston engagement, the Boucicaults returned to New York and began an engagement of eighteen nights at Burton's new theatre. The piece selected for the initial performance on Monday, November 17, 1856, was a new historical spectacular drama, entitled *Genevieve; or, The Reign of Terror*. The opening announcement stated:

...under the direction of the author, Mr. Dion Boucicault. This dramatic picture, drawn from the celebrated historical novel of Alexander Dumas, demands the gigantic proportions of this theatre to display its local scenery—all entirely new—and the picturesque action, aided by new costumes, properties and appointments, representing the great epoch of the first French Revolution.

Miss Agnes Robertson, Mr. Burton, Mrs. Davenport, Mr. E. L. Davenport, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Setchell and Mr. Bourcicault will appear in the principal characters.

Although this piece was announced as "new," it was new only as far as New York and America was concerned. It had been previously played in London. It is of passing interest to note that the piece was long enough in itself, consisting of seven tableaux, to fill out the evening, and so no other attraction was advertised for that evening.

The *Times* carried no actual review of the piece, because upon arriving, the critic found the better seats taken and he was forced to take a position in the back part

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71 *Times*, Monday, November 17, 1856.

72 *Times*, Tuesday, November 18, 1856.
of the parquette, where he was unable to hear any of the
drama, and finally, "with many hundred companions, left
the unwelcome spot, with no impression at all of the play,
except weariness."^73

It is surprising that Boucicault would consent to
play in such a poorly designed theatre. It must have been
poor, for the critic of the Times took up most of the space
of his comments on Genevieve with a condemnation of Burton's
new theatre.

Mr. BURTON'S theatre, in spite of its elegance,
is the worst contrived dramatic temple in New
York. Built originally for an opera house, it
lacks all the essential points of a theatre,
and is utterly bad for declamatory purposes.
In the first circle, and in most of the parquette-
circle, (where we were stationed), it is impossible
to distinguish any specific language in the drum­
mming sound which is borne to the ear. An indis­
tinct and drowsy murmuring, mingled with an
occasional bellow, is all that can be heard.
When the building was first opened, under the
gorgeous management of Mr. EDDY, we referred to
these defects, and experience only teaches us the
justice of our strictures. One third of the
audience at Mr. BURTON'S cannot hear. They can
see to be sure, and that is something in a theatre,
but for critical purposes the two faculties are
needed. Contenting ourselves with one, we will
observe that the tableaux in Mr. BOURCICAULT'S
piece are interesting, and seem to be produced with
more care than we are apt to find displayed on such
matters at this establishment. Are we wrong in
attributing this foreign element of taste to Mr.
BOURCICAULT? For the rest, if the author of this
play will favor us with the manuscript, we shall
take much pleasure in examining it, and expressing
our humble opinion of its merits. Those of our

73 Ibid.
readers who are anxious to see it performed
had better do one of three things; secure their
seats in the daytime, or take their station at
the door by six o'clock, or—stay away. With
our present impression of the comforts of Mr.
BURTON'S theatre, we advise the latter course as
the safest, although not the most cheerfully ac­
ceded to. 4

Apparently the critic for the Spirit of the Times
could hear, but thought little of the piece, for he said:

... We were told in the official advertisements
that Mr. Burton had placed the entire and vast
resources of his establishment at the command of
Mr. Bourcicault, and that the gentleman who had
made the fortune of Charles Kean in London, and
elevated his theatre to the summit of popularity,
was about "to devote his intellect and his life"
to the production of something at Burton's which
would astonish all New York. Bent on being as­
tonished, we attended the theatre on Monday
evening...

The new piece was entitled Genevieve, or The
Reign of Terror, and in it we at once discovered
an old London acquaintance, whose debut in the
dramatic world had not been remarkable for success.
In a few words, the second title in an apt one; the
piece is unmistakably a "Reign of Terror" from be­
ginning to end.

The plot is a confused, and anything but moral
medley—mere Dumas' revolutionary incidents thrown
together, with the accompaniments of double scenes,
underground passages, and hackneyed melodramatic
situations. ... Genevieve possesses the usual
elements of a domestic heroine; Genevieve (Mrs.
Davenport); a royalist, Chevalier St. George (Mr.
Morton); a good young man, Maurice (Mr. Davenport),
whom she loves very improperly, for she is already
married to Dixmer (Mr. Fisher), an O'Smithian scoun­
drel of the true Adelphi breed; a funny man,
Dolabella (Mr. Burton), and a chambermaid, Artemise
(Miss Robertson), whose principal business is to
come on in carpenter's scenes, and endeavor to keep
the people amused with coarse jests and vulgar

74 Ibid.
allusions, whilst the set scenes are preparing behind. . . .

'The dialogue is commonplace in the extreme; the situations, as old as the hills; and the effect of the ensemble worthy of the prestige of either that intellectual establishment, The London Victoria (where the heroes tear a passion to fragments in stentorius tones, and "bring the house down" with fearful leaps from "twenty foot platforms")—or the New York National. We are in doubt if Genevieve, as it was produced on Monday evening, would be tolerated at the Bowery under its present regime; and we feel certain it would not enjoy an existence of a week at any other theatre on Broadway than Burton's, and not there if the manager consulted his own interests, and the popular taste. . . .

. . . We almost forgot to state that the distinguished author enacts a genteel low, low comedy republican officer, which is extremely ludicrous, but not as Mr. Bourcicault intended it should be. The reader can imagine a "Vampyre," with sepulchral tones, endeavoring to be "jolly" and then form some idea of Bourcicault's light, low comedy powers. The author, be it remembered, has taken pains to tell us that all his characters are sketched from life, and that they are portraits of people with whom he has been acquainted. We can only say that if the dramatis personae of Genevieve are obnoxious to these remarks of his, that the company he keeps is the reverse of select, and that he deserves the immediate "cut" by respectable people and "our best society" for forming such disreputable acquaintances.

Nevertheless, the play ran November 19, 20, 21, and 22, and on the 24th and 25th "the capital farce" of To Parents and Guardians was added to the bill. On Wednesday, November 26, 1856, The Life of an Actress was revived with Agnes and Dion appearing in their "original" roles, along with a farce entitled Catching a Governor.

75 New-York Spirit of the Times, November 22, 1856.
Blue Belle, a new musical fairy piece written by Boucicault, was produced on the 27th, with Agnes playing the name part of Blue Belle; Bob Barleycorn, Mr. Burton; the Countess, Miss Polly Marshall; the Count, Mr. M. Smith. The Herald reported that again, as usual, Miss Robertson created an immense furore.\textsuperscript{76} The length of the run of Blue Belle would indicate that it was popular, for it was carried along with old favorites of Boucicault's until the close of the run on December 5. On December 6, Boucicault took his benefit. The bill included The Phantom, Blue Devils, and The Young Actress.\textsuperscript{77}

With the close of the Burton engagement, the Boucicaults disappeared from the New York scene until the following fall. Speculation has said "it is likely that Boucicault made another brief trip to London at the close of the season at Burtons, for there is no record of his being in New York at that time, . . . ."\textsuperscript{78} Actually he was not in England, but had gone south again for his third appearance in the Crescent City. On the way, the Boucicaults played in Charleston, S. C., from December 15 to 27, 1856. No new plays were performed, only the plays in which they

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{76}] The New-York Herald, November 27, 1856.
\item[\textsuperscript{77}] Times, Saturday, December 6, 1856.
\item[\textsuperscript{78}] Anderson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 70.
\end{itemize}
had been successfully appearing were produced. "One performance was given especially for children on which occasion Miss Robertson performed in Bob Nettles and Blue Belle, an extravaganza by Boucicault."  

After this Charleston engagement the Boucicaults journeyed onward and arrived in the Crescent City, where they opened at the St. Charles Theatre on Monday, January 5, 1857. Their engagement has been recorded in the preceding chapter.

On leaving New Orleans, January 24, the Boucicaults headed north again. They went immediately to Mobile, and on the 25th they opened with Violet, or Career of an Actress. After giving Bob Nettles and The Young Actress, they repeated the opening piece. Later, during the engagement, they played such other favorites as London Assurance, The Phantom (four times), The Chameleon, Boucicault's new play Pauline, The Devil's in It, and scenes

79 Ketchum, op. cit., pp. 118-19. She lists the plays as: Dec. 15, Violet, or the Career of an Actress and The Young Actress; Dec. 16, Love and Money and The Young Actress; Dec. 17, London Assurance and The Young Actress; Dec. 18, Violet and The Chameleon; Dec. 19, London Assurance and The Chameleon; Dec. 20, The Phantom and The Young Actress; Dec. 22, Blue-belle; Dec. 23, Andy Blake and Blue Belle; Dec. 24, Victor and Hortense and Andy Blake; Dec. 25, The Phantom and The Young Actress; Dec. 26, Bob Nettles and Blue-belle; and Dec. 27, Victor and Hortense and The Chameleon.

80 Ibid., p. 87.
from Blue Bell. They closed this engagement on February 7, 1857. During the following month the Bouccicaults may have played engagements in other cities on their way north.

On March 9, 1857, Agnes Robertson and Dion Boucicault began a three weeks' engagement at the Boston Theatre. They opened with The Life of an Actress, with Boucicault playing Grimaldi and Agnes Robertson playing the part of Violet. As usual, the review of the opening was favorable.

BOSTON THEATRE.--A full house assembled last evening to greet Miss Agnes Robertson on her return to Boston. She was received with cordial applause, and trod the large stage of the Boston Theatre as gracefully as the smaller scene of the Museum where her early triumphs were achieved. The "Life of an Actress" in which she appeared last evening, is a somewhat protracted but interesting drama, in which she finds an ample field for the exhibition of great histrionic talent; but it does not permit the display of the peculiar fascinations of her acting, so attractively as some of the lighter pieces which are fresh in the memory of her admirers.

There was much fine acting in the piece; several passages received enthusiastic applause, and others that higher meed of approbation, the breathless stillness of the audience, when every sense is engrossed by the action on the stage. Mr. Boucicault's Grimaldi was a faithful and effective personation; in the second act we thought the old Frenchman a little too fussy, but afterwards he redeemed his character. The rest of the cast was excellent.

Miss Emmons, as Julia, did herself more credit than in any part in which we have previously seen her; she not only looked well, but acted with spirit and


effect. In the first act she should speak a little more distinctly. Mr. Belton's Lord Shafton was well performed; not exaggerated, as lords are apt to be upon the stage. Mr. Gilbert and Mr. John Wood contributed to the strength of the cast. The play was admirably put upon the stage.

We must recur to Miss Robertson, to speak of the beauty of her appearance when dressed for Camille in "Les Horaces," and the especial gracefulness of all her attitudes, in the 3d and 4th acts, while clothes in that costume.

We could wish the play were somewhat abridged, yet scarcely know what portions we should desire to omit. On a second representation it will perhaps be performed more quickly. It is announced for repetition this evening.

The engagement of Miss Robertson having been thus auspiciously begun, we have no doubt that it will prove brilliantly successful.

The same bill was repeated on the 11 and 12th. On March 13, Miss Robertson took her first benefit. For this performance The Phantom was performed, with Dion playing the Phantom; Agnes played Lucy Peveril and Ada Raby; Mr. J. Gilber, Dr. Rees; John Wood, Davy; and Miss Lizzie Emmons the part of Jenny. The evening's entertainment concluded with The Young Actress.

It would seem that the benefit was well attended and very well received.

BOSTON THEATRE.—A full house greeted Miss Agnes Robertson last evening, on occasion of her benefit. The "Phantom" proved to be a piece of powerful dramatic effects, dealing much with the horrible and super-natural. The character of Ada

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83 Boston Daily Advertiser, Tuesday, March 10, 1857.
84 Ibid., Friday, March 13, 1857.
gives little room for the display of Mrs. R's fascinations. The Phantom is the character of the piece, and this was performed with fearful earnestness and seeming reality by Mr. Boucicault. The scenic effects were produced with great skill. At the conclusion of the piece, Messrs. Boucicault and John Gilbert and Miss Robertson, were called before the curtain. The "Young Actress" brought Miss Robertson again before her admirers in one of her old pieces.85

The same bill was announced for afternoon and evening performances on Saturday, March 14, and for March 16. On March 17 the Boucicaults appeared in Bob Nettles, with Boucicault playing Tourbillon and Agnes appearing in her old part of Master Robert Nettles. The performance that evening concluded with The Phantom. On Wednesday evening, March 18, Agnes appeared in the role of Andy in Andy Blake, with John Gilbert supporting her in the part of General Daly. Again The Young Actress was repeated. On Thursday, March 19, The Life of an Actress was repeated.86

For Friday night, the following notice appeared:

BOSTON THEATRE.—MISS AGNES ROBERTSON most respectfully announces to her kind friends and patrons that her Benefit will take place on FRIDAY, March 20, on which occasion will be performed, first time in Boston, a new Comic, Fairy Drama entitled the BLUEBELLE! with, by request, BOB NETTLES. Miss Robertson will appear in both pieces, supported by the comic strength of the company.87

85 Ibid., Saturday, March 14, 1857.
86 Ibid., March 14-19, 1857.
87 Ibid., March 19, 1857.
Dion did not appear in *Bluebelle*; but Agnes had the support of Miss Lizzie Emmons, John Gilbert and Mr. Davenport.  

On Saturday, the following account of the benefit appeared:

**BOSTON THEATRE.**—There was a full house at the Boston Theatre last evening, on occasion of the benefit of our Boston "fairy-star," Miss Agnes Robertson. Every seat in parquet, balcony and boxes was occupied, and the large audience was evidently highly pleased with the entertainment. The first piece in the bill was a new fairy drama, wherein the fair beneficiary appeared as Bluebelle, a character which keeps her constantly upon the stage, talking, singing and dancing with inimitable grace and elegance. At the end of the play, she was summoned before the curtain; she was loudly applauded, several bouquets were thrown at her feet, and among the flowers was some jewelry. The performance concluded with Bob Nettles, which was finely played. Miss R. appears in no part where she excites more admiration than the noble-hearted but roguish English school-boy. When the curtain fell, she was again called out to receive the plaudits of the audience. The same excellent bill will be repeated this afternoon.

It was announced that Saturday, March 21, was the final night of the Boucicaults, but the Monday papers announced the "Re-engagement of the Fairy Star Miss AGNES ROBERTSON for one week, and positively no longer."  

On Monday night Andy Blake and *Bluebelle* were

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played. For Tuesday night, a benefit was announced for Dion Boucicault.

To this earnest and unwearying laborer in the field of the drama—one to whom we all owe many a pleasant hour during the last sixteen years—the Management believes it accomplishes the desires of the public in tendering this evening's performance. For which occasion will be produced, for the first time, Mr. BOURCICAUT'S Drama of intense interest, entitled "PAULINE," derived from the novel of that name.

Mrs. Barrow will appear as Pauline; Mr. D. Bourcicault as Count Horace; and Miss Agnes Robertson in a celebrated character, interspersed with her delightful and varied songs and dances.  

On Wednesday, March 25, 1857, final nights were announced. "Last night but two of Miss AGNES ROBERTSON and Mr. DION BOURCICAUT." For that evening's representation, Pauline was presented, with Boucicault playing Count Horace de Beaupre and Mrs. Barrow appearing as Pauline. The performance concluded with Miss Robertson in her five different characters in The Young Actress. For the "Last night but one," Andy Blake and Bob Nettles were presented, with Agnes appearing in both and Dion playing Tourbillon in the latter piece.

On Thursday, March 26, 1857, a farewell benefit was announced for Agnes Robertson "on which occasion she will

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91 Ibid., Monday, March 23, 1857.
92 Ibid., Wednesday, March 25, 1857.
93 Ibid., Thursday, March 26, 1857.
appear for the 1st time on any stage, as Gertrude, in the *Little Treasure!* The complete evening's bill included *Used Up,* (with Boucicault playing Sir Charles Coldstream), and *Little Treasure,* concluding with "THE CHAMELEON!"

Laura, Miss Agnes Robertson; Billy Reefer, Miss Agnes Robertson; in the character she will dance the Midshipman's Hornpipe. Nancy, an Irish Ballad singer, Miss Agnes Robertson, in which character she will sing 'Sally in our Alley.'

A local critic reviewed the benefit by saying:

**BOSTON THEATRE.**—Miss Agnes Robertson had a full and cordial house at her benefit last evening, and the occasion passed off most agreeably. Mr. Boucicault's performance of Sir Charles Coldstream in "Used Up," was worthy of high praise. Miss Robertson showed herself a genuine little treasure in the piece of that name, sustaining her part with charming grace and spirit. She was called before the curtain at the end of the piece, and was loudly applauded on her appearance. Several bouquets were thrown at her feet, and a large basket of flowers was handed up from the orchestra chairs. Mr. Barry was cordially greeted on his appearance as Sir Charles Howard. The performance closed with the "Chameleon."

This afternoon is the farewell of Miss Robertson. She has won a host of new admirers by her pleasing performances at the Boston Theatre, and her old friends have been delighted to see her upon the ample scene, supported by the excellent company and surrounded by the perfect appointments of that spacious theatre. We part from her with reluctance, and hope to welcome her again at no distant day.

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The next six months of Boucicault's life is a bit vague. No record has been found of any activity in the United States. He could have returned to England. There are at least two reports that tend to indicate such a journey. A new play written by Boucicault was brought out at the Adelphi in London.

ADELPHI.--It has taken Mr. Webster many years to attain the position of a great actor; but, having arrived at the eminence, he maintains it proudly and surely. On Wednesday he gave the public another example of how well he can support and realise a life-hero throughout five acts, in every variety of biographical exigence. The drama provided for this purpose has been written by M. Bourcicault, and is entitled "George Darville."

... Admirably acted throughout, this well-conceived and capitaly-written drama will doubtless rival "Janet Pride" in popularity. ...
CHAPTER V

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SENSATIONAL DRAMA

The financial crisis of 1857 had its effect upon the theatre world as well as the financial world. Gate receipts for the theatres were not what they had been, not even with the stellar attractions. Charles Mathews, whom we have met before as manager of the Princess's Theatre, London, where so many of Boucicault's earlier plays had been produced, came to America for a second visit. His "calamitous visit with Mme. Vestris, in 1838-39" could still be recalled by many theatre goers "as reflecting but little credit on the American people, ...". Mathews was considered the "finest living exponent, on the English stage, of the light patter comedian--a style he had been largely instrumental in establishing."  

Burton's theatre opened during the fall of 1857 with the "young and promising Edwin Booth." Booth cannot be thought of here as the historic Edwin Booth, first of

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2 Ibid.
American tragedians, but as that Booth in the making. In September, the great Charlotte Cushman appeared at Burton's, supported by Charles Fisher and Ada Clifton. Later Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Davenport, Hacket, and a return of Booth were scheduled at Burton's.

Joseph Jefferson was booked to appear at Laura Keene's New Theatre.

But with all these noble attempts to make the New York theatre "pay," the season was not profitable. The Herald of November 3, 1857--the panic time--listed the receipts of the theatres of the night before. Only a selected few are listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theatres</th>
<th>No. of audience</th>
<th>Receipts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Academy of Music</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burton's</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadway</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hibble's Garden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Keene's</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wallack's</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>300</td>
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</table>

Boucicault's activities for the fall of '57 began with an appearance at Wallack's. Odell reports that

The second and last of William Stuart's terms of management of Wallack's began on September 3rd, with a special performance of London Assurance. The cast was excellent, including Walcot as Sir Harcourt, Norton as Max, Blake as Meddle, Lester as Charles, Boucicault as Dazzle, John Wood as Dolly, A. H. Davenport as Cool, Russell as

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3 Ibid.
Solomon Isaacs, Mrs. John Wood as Lady Gay, Agnes Robertson as Grace and Mary Gannon as Pert. This remarkable aggregation was seen thus on three evenings, and that trio of performances in reality constituted a brief preliminary season.\(^4\)

Although Wallack had leased his theatre to Wm. Stuart, his interest in his theatre's reputation is evidenced in the lease. The conditions are interesting. The lease stated, in part--

\(1\) No alterations or extensions shall be made without the consent of Wallack; \(2\) the prices of admission shall in no respect be changed; \(3\) there shall be no performances except such as are of a respectable character; \(4\) there shall be no exhibitions of minstrels or animals; \(5\) the name of the theatre shall not be changed; \(6\) neither Miss Keene nor Mr. Burton, nor any person having the management of any other theatre in New York shall act at said theatre.\(^5\)

There was some kind of contract or agreement between Boucicault and Stuart, for Dion was to furnish Wallack's new scripts. The first one that he provided was produced on Tuesday, October 28, 1857. The announcement read: "For the first time in America a Drama of extraordinary construction and striking effects adopted from the French Scribe, by Dion Bourcicault, Esq., entitled THE INVISIBLE HUSBAND."\(^6\) This piece met with much favor and ran until

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 19.
November 26. It had a strong cast, including Blake, Lester (later to become known as Lester Wallack), Walcot, Holland, Davenport, Norton and Mrs. Vernon and Mrs. Allen. The Times reported on the opening at length:

Three first-rate advantages are enjoyed by this piece—the original is written by Scribe; the adaptation is made by Mr. Bourcicault, and the work is played by the best company in America. These are the facts of the case.

As an acting piece, the "Invisible Husband" is the best of its kind on the stage. It is a model of prodigious constructive excellence, and every aspiring dramatist should witness and study it, as performed by this company. And this is not a trifling reservation. There is so little waste material in the dialogue that the smallest part is essential to the whole, and none but a company of first-rate excellence can give it with the requisite intellectual spirit, so as to make it compact and sparkling like a diamond. In the present day plots are not built in the way this is; an author pursues the direct road to a denouement, and runs his characters, in pairs, like coach-horses. Scribe, himself, has degenerated in this respect since he invented "Giralda," whence the "Invisible Husband" is derived. Indeed, none but an author who is struggling for reputation could have the patience to take up the threads of his subject with such surgical exactness. With a skill, which unhappily cannot be imitated, Messrs. Scribe and Bourcicault convert every thought into a situation. The play plays itself; the actor merely says what you would say (provided you were a smart fellow) under the circumstances; the plot appears to be perfectly natural and lucid. All that we have to do is to swallow a marriage in the first act (a marriage in which a clumsily-disguised substitute takes part,) and the rest follows easily enough.

7 Ibid.
The play is brilliantly written, and its natural hilarity frequently leads it to the verge of propriety, but, thanks to Mr. BOURCICAULT, it never oversteps it. We shall not attempt to unravel the plot. . . .

The "Invisible Husband" has been put on the stage excellently, and is, as we have before hinted, acted with great spirit. Miss MARY CARMICHAEL, as Giralda, played with a coquettish naturalness too seldom seen on the stage. The lady is good at all times, for the simple reason that at all times she is natural. Mr. WALTHER comes next in order. He played with more juvenility and sprightliness than we have previously seen him exhibit. . . . Indeed, the drama, in every respect, is well played. It has been placed on the stage with care, the scenery is effective, the costumes brilliant. The success which it achieved was hearty and deserved. Every one enjoyed the mystifications of the little village bride, and the merriment was infectious. Mr. BOURCICAULT was called for at the end of the piece, but Mr. LEISTER, in announcing the "Invisible Husband" for repetition, stated that Mr. B. was not at that moment in the house.8

The play rated as a success with all the critics.

The Tribune reported:

A wonderful overwhelming success was achieved last night by the production of a three-act play, "The Invisible Husband," adapted from the French to our stage most skillfully by Mr. Bourcicault. We do not remember any other piece of equal length which, from first to last, so completely keeps the attention of the audience visibly excited. It was capitally acted all through. The curtain fell amid many salvoes of applause, and all agree a prodigious hit was made.9

8 Times, Thursday, October 29, 1857.
Had Boucicault had a copyright on his earlier plays, he would have made a great deal more money than he did. For example, while The Invisible Husband was playing at Wallack's, Miss Charlotte Cushman was playing at Burton's, and on November 2, she appeared in Janet Pride. On November 6, she chose for her benefit London Assurance, and appeared in the role of Lady Gay Spanker.

On Monday evening, November 9, was presented at Wallack's a new "comic piece, written expressly for this theatre, by Dion Boucicault and Charles Seymour, entitled WANTED, A WIDOW, WITH IMMEDIATE POSSESSION." As far as can be ascertained, this was the first time that Boucicault had collaborated in the writing of a play in America. This was produced along with The Invisible Husband. In the cast were Lester, Walcot, J. H. Allen, and Miss Gannon.

The reviews of this latest piece were more than kind. One commented:

\[...\text{the piece is well written, sparkles with jokes, and is produced with an eye to stage effect. The acting was excellent, and the reception flattering.}...\]

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10 Times, Monday, November 2, 1857.
11 Times, Friday, November 6, 1857.
12 Times, Monday, November 9, 1857.
13 Times, November 10, 1857.
The same bill was repeated on Saturday, November 14.\textsuperscript{14}

On Monday, November 16, a benefit for Mr. Boucicault was announced. The announcement stated:

In consideration of the fact that for sixteen years "London Assurance," "Old Heads and Young Hearts," "The Irish Heiress," and many other comedies, written by Mr. DION BOURCICAULT have been played without returning any remuneration whatever to the author, whose new comedy, "The Invisible Husband," is now drawing crowded houses, in a moment of great depression elsewhere, the management beg to announce the performance on Monday, Nov. 16, for his benefit when will be performed the first three acts of LONDON ASSURANCE. To conclude with the ever-attractive new comedy, in three acts, of THE INVISIBLE HUSBAND.\textsuperscript{15}

In almost glowing terms, the theatre column, in announcing his benefit praised Boucicault as a successful playwright.

WALLACK'S THEATRE.--Tonight, Mr. DION BOURCICAULT, the best and most industrious dramatist of the age, receives, at the hands of Mr. STUART, a complimentary benefit. It is nothing but right, for his exertions at this house have restored its fortunes. The best company in the world is helpless without some one to develop its resources. The days when a star, or a number of stars, could draw crowded audiences are at an end. People are so accustomed to good acting that something more is needed. The dramatist becomes daily more and more valuable, and it is to him that the public looks, and will continue to look, for entertainment. . . .

\textsuperscript{14} Times, November, 14, 1857.

\textsuperscript{15} Times, November 16, 1857.
Mr. BOURCICAULT has filled the house for more than three weeks, and, as we before observed, entirely restored its fortunes. It is very wisely continued on the bills for the present, preceded to-night by the comedy of "London Assurance," in which Mr. BOURCICAULT and all the members of Mr. STUART'S company will appear. . . .

In spite of a "storm of rain which deluged the streets," the benefit for Boucicault drew a good audience. At the end of the performance, in reply to the demand for a speech, Boucicault commented:

...the American stage has heretofore been supplied from European sources, the English Theatres had been creamed, and its best works formed our stock drama. But, within the last four years the supply had ceased. The power of invention seemed to have become extinct both in London and in Paris, and the only drama of real merit imported during that period had been "Still Waters Run Deep." This circumstance had aroused a dramatic spirit in the United States, and a number of authors had sprung up who had already exhibited considerable power. But, said Mr. BOURCICAULT, it was not only by these authors and by good actors that a National Drama could be supported. The public should do away with the prejudice it had in favor of works coming here with a great foreign reputation, and go to see the new drama, wherever announced, with a kindly faith in its vitality. Wallack's Theatre would be devoted almost exclusively to the productions of works of American origin, and depicting American society and manners. . . .

In the course of his speech, Mr. BOURCICAULT adverted to the fact that Mr. CHARLES MATHEWS had in his presence expressed himself in high terms of the theatres of New-York, placing them on a level with the best theatres of

London; and this, said Mr. BOURCICAULT, is what I want you to believe.17

It was obvious that in this curtain speech Boucicault was laying the ground-floor for the new "National Drama" which he was about to present. Boucicault was developing a new formula for the writing of drama. He was about to present a play based upon incidents in the city of New York with the city itself as the locale for this presentation.

On December 7, an announcement was made that on that evening there would be produced at Wallack's "a new drama in five acts, 'written to illustrate the period through which we are now passing.'"18 It was called The Poor of New York. Odell calls the play important because of its long run, "and because of its being among the first of those local melodramas of crime, poverty and riches, which so long held the stage and screen."19 This was not quite Boucicault's first attempt in taking local events and making them the central plot of his play. He had done this, to a certain extent, in Apollo in New York. But his central idea in this play revolved about a person. The plot of The Poor of New York was based on the financial crises of 1837 and 1857.

17 Times, Tuesday, November 17, 1857.
18 Times, Monday, December 7, 1857.
19 Odell, op. cit., VII, 22-23
The Poor of New York did not open on the 7th, as announced. "A stupendous announcement presented itself in the lobby, to the effect that, at the request of the authors, the management had consented to give the work an additional rehearsal, and that, in consequence, there would be no performance. An evening rehearsal is one of the most desirable things that can be bestowed on a new production, and 'the authors' in question will doubtless appreciate the boon. . . ."20

One has only to look at the scene schedule to realize what a tremendously big production it was. It was no wonder that there should have to be extra rehearsals to ready the performance. The following scenes were listed: Prologue, (Act I-), Bank in Nassau St.; Act II--Scene 1, The Park; Scene 2, Liberty St. and the Post-Office; Scene 3, The Home of the Poor on Division St.; Act III--The Home of the Rich on Madison Square; Act IV, Scene 1, Union Square and the Academy of Music by Night in the Snow; Scene 2, The Vestibule of the Academy of Music; Scene 3, The Tenement House in Cross St.; Act V--Scene 1, Brooklyn Heights; Scene 2, The Tenement House in Cross St.; Scene the last, The Bridal in Madison Square.21

20 Times, Tuesday, December 8, 1857.
21 Times, Monday, December 7, 1857.
Although the play has become known as a play of Boucicault's, it was originally announced as written by the "* * * * Club." The personnel of the * * * * Club was revealed by Boucicault when he made his curtain speech on the night of the opening. He stated then "that the play was the joint production of Messrs. SEYMOUR, WARDEN, GOODRICH and himself."22

The Poor of New York had a strong cast, consisting of Messrs. Blake, Norton, Lester, Leverne, A. H. Davenport, Sothera, Sloan, T. B. Johnston, Mrs. Blake, Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Hoey and Mrs. J. H. Allen.23

After the special rehearsal on December 7, the play opened on the following day, December 8. A review commented:

A new local drama in five acts (written by the "* * * * Club") with this telling title, was produced at Wallack's Theatre on Tuesday night, and repeated last evening with complete success--the house on both occasions being crowded to it utmost capacity. It is a remarkable drama in many respects, and for powerful local interest has never been surpassed in this city. The origin of the work may be traced to the French drama called Les Pauvres de Paris, but the adaptors have added several new characters, changed the plot, invented at least one half of the play, and rewritten the dialogue so as to suit the individual ties common in our midst. They have done

22 *Times*, Wednesday, December 9, 1857.
23 *Times*, Monday, December 7, 1857.
their work well, and the fidelity of the pictures they present is recognized by the audience, which, in such matters, is worth more than an individual indorsement or opinion can be. . . .

The point wherein this drama excels most local dramas that have preceded it, is to be found in the skill displayed in its construction. It is built on correct art principles, and moves with culminating interest from the prologue to the last scene. The tableaux all come in at the right places, and are contrasted with a due regard to the momentary emotional capacity of the audience. The dialogue is local, and has enough coloring, but displays evidence of hasty composition, and contains some anachronisms which return to the mind after the excitement of the performance has subsided. . . . The local allusions were quickly taken, and well received. . . .

The Poor of New York contained about all the scenic devices that are associated with melodrama. Modern audiences would smile at the "snow scene in Union Square, the fire in the tenement house," but the play was popular in 1857 and ran practically without interruption to January 23, 1858. Boucicault later readapted the play when he returned to England and renamed it for each city in which he played it. It was known as The Poor of Liverpool and The Poor of London. It was also called The Sidewalks of New York.

On December 14, the management at Wallack's announced that a "romantic Christmas Tale of Prairie Life" was in preparation by the ❅ ❅ ❅ Club, but later it announced that since the present play was "so attractive. . . the manager has not thought it prudent to change the

24 Times, Thursday, December 10, 1857.
The Poor of New York was not a great play, but it was well mounted and had good actors. It drew tremendous houses. Boucicault himself had no great opinion of the piece, as he indicated in a letter to Stirling when he brought out the piece in Liverpool:

When the wind blows, then the mill goes; and Fortune's gale is making my mill spin round like blazes. I have developed a new vein in the theatrical mine, and one in which you have an interest beyond that you always feel in my success. I have tried the bold step of producing originally in the provinces—a sensation drama, without aid or assistance of any kind. The experiment has succeeded.

I introduced "The Poor of Liverpool" as a bobtail piece—with local scenery, and Mr. Cowper in the principal part. I share about £ 30 a night and I am making £ 100 a week on the---- thing. I localize it for each town, and hit the public between the eyes; so they see nothing but fire. Et Voila.

I can spin out those rough-and-tumble dramas as a hen lays eggs. It's a degrading occupation, but more money has been made out of guano than out of poetry.26

While The Poor of New York was playing to capacity houses, Boucicault, in partnership with William Stuart, went to Washington on January 6, 1858, where they leased an old dancing saloon called Carusi's Saloon and transformed it into the Washington Theatre.27 Stuart acted as manager


26 Edward Stirling, Old Drury Lane: Fifty Years' Recollections of Author, Actor, and Manager (London: Chatto and Windus, 1881), II, 238 f.

27 New York Daily Tribune, September 19, 1890.
of the theatre and Boucicault became the director. They opened with Signorina Teresa Rolla, the dancer, as the chief attraction until Agnes Robertson came to Washington on January 10. From January 18 until February 6, Miss Robertson was the star of the theatre. Both Agnes and Dion appeared and received, as usual, much favorable criticism by the Washington audiences. They offered no new pieces, but played their old and well-tried favorites, even going back and reviving Boucicault's old role of Haversack, "the Napoleonic veteran, in his capital little drama 'Napoleon's Old Guard,'" with Agnes playing the daughter, Melanie.

An incident that is told by J. B. Howe, who was engaged as leading man for this theatrical enterprise, illustrates one of the reasons why Boucicault's productions were always so well acted:

"On the morning of the rehearsal of 'The Life of an Actress,' Miss Agnes Robertson failed to do a little bit of business of kneeling and falling at the feet of the gentleman who played the heavy part, and Dion asked her to do it again. Agnes did it again, but in the same manner as before. "'No, no; that won't do,' said Dion. 'Can't you rise slowly from your chair, giving the audience the idea that you are still under the influence of the narcotic? Grasp the corner of the table, so, and, as if fearing to fall, you still retain your hold on the table until your

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left knee touches the ground; then is the time to seize Mr. Ralston's right hand with your left, so, and you turn gently round and fall in the centre at his feet.'

"I knew that, Dion dear, but is there any necessity for me to do all that now? I've played the part before.'

"I know that, but not with the present members. I want them to see what you are going to do; go back, please. Please, Mr. Ralston, once more, to oblige Mrs. Boucicault. Now, if you please.'

"But the sweet little creature did not please. She burst into tears, and Dion exclaimed, 'Never mind, ladies and gentlemen; dismiss the rehearsal. That was all; we dispersed, and, need I say, in the most elegant confusion.'

The Washington adventure could not have been too successful, even though it was reported that in "the rage to see the fairy star, as she was called--and she was really like a fairy--that crowds would assemble on Pennsylvania Avenue and present bouquets to her as she passed along from her hotel to the theatre, . . ." for both Dion and Agnes were back in New York in February working on a new production.

Encouraged by his first success at adapting local or current events and making them the central idea of his drama, Boucicault turned to another contemporary subject for his next play. It was to be known as Jessie Brown; or The Belief of Lucknow, which had its initial

31 Ibid., p. 58.
showing on February 22, 1858.  

The Sepoy Rebellion was a thrilling subject to the public mind. The news of the massacre at Cawnpore had filled the world with horror; the heroism of Lucknow had made the newspapers romantic. A pretty Hindoo squireen had contrived to swindle and murder himself into a ghastly notoriety; a small garrison of Europeans were shut up in Lucknow, besieged by an overwhelming force of natives; Jessie Brown, a young Scottish girl, had kept the garrison from surrender by proclaiming, with the fire of Joan of Arc, that the piproch of a Scottish regiment coming to their relief was ringing in her ears.

On Saturday, February 20, Wallack's theatre was closed in order to give a thorough rehearsal to Jessie Brown, and on February 22, at least in the vicinity of Wallack's Theatre, the still night air was given over to tom-toms, khitmutgars, sowars, spleuchans, pipes, tartans, and all the mingled paraphernalia of an East Indian spectacle.

Since Agnes Robertson was a Scottish Girl, the role of Jessie Brown provided her with a part especially suitable to her talents. No one would play the part of the merciless Sepoy. So detested was the name of Nena Sahib that not a member in the company of Wallack's would assume it, and Dion had to step in and take over the part. A similar situation had been experienced with the role of

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32 Times, Monday, February 22, 1858.
33 Walsh, op. cit., p. 55.
the Phantom when it was originally produced in London.

It will be remembered that Boucicault had to take on the wings of the vampire and play this role because no other actor would take on such a hideous part.

With splendid audacity, Boucicault stepped into the breach and himself personated the "Demon of Cawnpore." When he strolled down to the footlights, with his carcanet of brilliants, his rustling tunic, his walnut physiognomy, and a magnificent pair of moustachios, the gallery held its breath in awe and threw nothing at him.34

It is difficult to ascertain just how much Boucicault had to do with the writing of the theatre advertisements that appeared in the local papers, but certainly no one else could have announced with such flourish the opening of this play.

WALLACK'S THEATRE
Engagement of
MISS AGNES ROBERTSON
Who will appear as Jessie Brown in
AN ENTIRELY NEW AND ORIGINAL PLAY,
in three acts founded on the beautiful episode in the present Indian war, and written by Mr.
DION BOUCICAUT
the author of "London Assurance" who will appear in the play in the character of the Nana Sahib.

In pursuing with fidelity the promise made to the public on the production of "The Poor of New York," to maintain a succession of new dramatic works illustrative of concurrent events and affording pictures of the times, the management present "Jessie Brown, or the Relief of Lucknow," as a subject of unusual interest, both in its emotional pathetic character, and from the opportunity it affords of representing pictorially those scenes where

34 Ibid.
this great struggle is going on, and acquainting the audience with details of costume, of manners and of life in Hindustan, which cannot be so readily or so agreeably learned from any source as from the stage. TO-NIGHT. AND EVERY NIGHT DURING THE WEEK, will be performed the new and original drama, in three acts,

JESSIE BROWN:
Or, The Relief of Lucknow,
written by Dion Boucicault, author of "London Assurance"

"Old Heads and Young Hearts."

New scenery by Messrs. Riviere and Isherwood

The Mena Sahib Rajah of Bithoor. D. Bourcicault

Acheet his Valveel . . . . . . . Groevenor

Randal McGregor, Captain in the 78th Highlanders.

Georgie McGregor, his brother, Ensign in the

32 Regiment. . . . . . . . . A. H. Davenport

Rev. David Bloudt, Chaplain to the 32d Regiment .

Blake

Sweeney _______ 32d Regiment . T. B. Johnston

Cassidy, corporal 32d Regiment . Sloan

Highlanders of the 78th Regiment.

Soldiers of the 32d Regiment.

Soubad's, Sepoys, Hindoos, Hookanburdar, Fereshes' and followers of Mena Sahib

Amy Campbell. . . . . . . . . . . Mrs. Hooey

Charlie and Effie her children . . Master and Miss Reeves

Jessie Brown, her servant . . . . Miss Agnes Robertson

Alice . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Mary Gannon
Who has kindly consented to play this part at the request of the author.

Mary . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Orton

Ladies amongst the besieged families

Entirely new music has been composed for this piece, including a Scotch Medley. Overture by Mr. J. P. Cooke, who has been engaged to conduct.

In the course of the play, incidental to its action, Miss AGNES ROBERTSON will sing snatches of the following beautiful Scotch melodies: "Auld Lang Syne," "Charlie is my Darling," "Oh, Why left I my Home," "My Boy Tammie," "Take yer Auld Cloak aboot Ye," "Auld Robin Gray."35

Jessie Brown was a tremendous success. Opening on February 22, it ran until April 3 and always to full houses. It was in reality Agnes' show. Benjamin Ellis Martin says in reminiscence,

I see Agnes Robertson as I write—in my mind's eye—sitting silently in the centre of the beleaguered camp, amid worn women, wailing children, disheartened men; the deep stillness of the scene, after all the foregoing action and turmoil; speaking plainly of something imminent: deadly or delightful, we do not know; only that it is near. The Scotch girl, listless and speechless, seems suddenly to listen; starts slightly, bends her neck, her eye dilating, her hand half held up; listening more and more intently,—to what, we cannot hear, nor those about her. More and more eager she grows; she leaps to her feet, her frame fills and towers, her whole soul is in her eyes, her face flames gladly, madly; with an exultant cry that thrills us, she tells them that safety and life have come at last! Then, the shrill bag-pipes squeak, nearer, and nearer, the musketry rattles all around, the scurrying Sepoys swarm in before the hurrying Highland bayonets flashing all about, all is tumult, triumph, thanksgiving; in the midst, rapt and radiant stands Jessie Brown, fixed forever in our fancy so.

On March 20, 1858, Stuart announced that Boucicault would take his benefit on that evening. Again, only Boucicault would have had the courage to have said:

The works of this, the greatest living dramatist in the English tongue, form the great standard of attraction at this moment, not only in this theatre, which derives the advantage of his special interest, but in almost every theatre in England and America.

36 *Times*, Saturday, April 3, 1858.

The many to whom he has imparted instruction and
delight, will, Mr. Stuart feels assured, be happy
of this opportunity to evince their acknowl-"'

It is difficult not to speculate on what feelings of in-
feriority such playwrights as Bulwer Lytton and Sheridan
Knowles, both alive at this time, must have suffered at
being placed in a mediocre position by such descriptive
adjectives as used by Boucicault in his theatre "ads."

For Boucicault's benefit, Jessie Brown was presented
along with a performance "for the first time in eighteen
months," of The Young Actress.39

With such after-pieces as Bluebell, Milly and The
Young Actress being added from night to night, Jessie
Brown ran until April 3, when Agnes Robertson took her
final "Farewell Benefit" and last night of Jessie Brown.40
The Boucicaults were succeeded by Mr. and Mrs. James
Stark in their first New York appearance.

Leaving New York, the Boucicaults journeyed to
Boston again and played a three-week engagement. They
opened on Tuesday, April 6, with Jessie Brown, which played
for two weeks.41 During the third and final week of their

38 Times, Saturday, March 20, 1858.
39 Ibid.
40 Times, Saturday, April 3, 1858.
41 Eugene Tompkins, The History of the Boston Theatre,
1854-1901 (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company,
1908), pp. 64-65.
appearance that spring at the Boston Theatre, they played The Maid with the Milking Fail, To Parents and Guardians and Andy Blake. 42 Boucicault appeared with Agnes in The Young Actress and in Bob Nettles.

They then left Boston and played at least a three-week engagement at Wheatley's Arch St. Theatre in Philadelphia, for a playbill announced:

Third Week of the popular Comedienne, Miss AGNES ROBERTSON in her Exquisitely Natural and Beautiful Delineation of JESSIE BROWN, in the Greatly Successful Drama of

JESSIE BROWN
Or, The Relief of Lucknow
in which the author,
DION BOURCICAULT,
Appears in his Original Character of the NENA Sahib, and which will be played this TUESDAY EVENING, May 11th, 1858. 43

It was during the summer of 1858 that Agnes Robertson again returned to Canada, the scene of her first success on the American continent, where she toured with a company managed by E. A. Sothern. She played the Canadian provinces, appearing in Halifax in July, "going from there to St. John, where she aroused the usual over-enthusiastic enthusiasm in such roles as Maria (The Young Actress), The

42 "Boucicault's Career in Boston," The Globe, September 19, 1890.

43 In clipping collection of Dion Boucicault in New York Public Library.
Fairy Star, and the like. It is not known whether Dion accompanied her on this tour; no mention is made of his being along. It is highly improbable that he was, else he would have been managing the company rather than letting Sothern act as company manager.

The Boucicaults were back together, however, on September 3, 1858, when an announcement appeared in the Times stating that Agnes and Dion were in rehearsal and would appear for the first time at Niblo's Garden. While they were in rehearsal of their new drama, they opened in Jessie Brown. No performance was scheduled on Monday, September 6, so that an entire night could be devoted to a dress rehearsal of the play. On Tuesday, September 7, 1858, the Boucicaults opened at Niblo's supported by Ada Clifton, George Pauncefort, John Sloan, J. H. Allen, A. H. Davenport, Whiting and Grosvenor.

Jessie Brown was still popular in New York, even after a long run the previous spring at Wallack's, for on September 20, the following announcement appeared:

Notice.—In consequence of the overflowing houses which attended the fifty-ninth and

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45 Times, September 3-September 7, 1858.
sixtieth representations of "Jessie Brown, or the Relief of Lucknow," the Management is induced to postpone the production of "The Life of an Actress" until Wednesday next, to afford the public two more representations of the great Indian drama, the popularity of which seems to be inexhaustible...  

Boucicault was not one to let go of a good thing, and as long as Jessie Brown was filling the house, he would not change the bill. He made the following announcement on the 17th: "The many admirers of Miss AGNES ROBERTSON having requested to see her in these, /The Life of an Actress and The Phantom/ her celebrated personations and Mr. BOURCICAULT as the SPECTRE and as GRIMALDI, it is respectfully intimated that these plays can only be repeated once each, in consequence of the production of a new play by DION BOURCICAULT." Jessie Brown ran until Tuesday, September 21. For the remainder of the week the following plays were scheduled:

- Wednesday---THE LIFE OF AN ACTRESS
- Thursday----THE LIFE OF AN ACTRESS
- Friday------THE PHANTOM
- Saturday----THE PHANTOM

While Boucicault was appearing as Grimaldi at Niblo's on Thursday, September 23, in The Life of An Actress, Laura Keene, in her new theatre at 624 Broadway, between Houston and Bleeker Streets, was presenting

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46 Times, Monday, September 20, 1858.
47 Times, Friday, September 17, 1858.
48 Times, Monday, September 20, 1858.
Boucicault's old comedy *Old Heads and Young Hearts.*

On October 2, Niblo's Garden was closed. The explanation was worded thus:

... in consequence of the stage being required by Mr. BOURCICAULT this evening, for the rehearsal of the scenic and mechanical effects in his new drama, which have been in preparation for the last two months in the ateliers of this establishment, this Garden WILL BE CLOSED TONIGHT, SATURDAY, Oct. 2...

The new piece, *Pauvrette,* was produced under the supervision and direction of Boucicault, "who had devised and contrived scenic effects of surpassing splendor and ingenuity...." Agnes and Dion were both to appear in new characters, supported by Mr. George Jordon, who was to "make his debut ... in New York in a new part," Mrs. Coleman Pope, Mrs. J. H. Allen, Miss Ada Clifton, Mr. Whiting and A. H. Davenport.

*Pauvrette* opened on Monday, October 4, and ran until October 27. As usual, it received good notices. Much excitement was created by the snow and avalanche scene--the sensation scene. The review which appeared in the *Times* reported:

It is another of those happy adaptations from the French, which Mr. BOURCICAULT understands so well how to make effective. As an acting play it is

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49 *Times*, Thursday, September 23, 1858.

50 *Times*, October 2, 1858.

51 Ibid.
somewhat heavy, although, perhaps, not more so than the nature of the plot, which is physically catastrophic, demands the opportunities for scenic display are very great and they are powerfully used, particularly in the avalanche scene. The piece is well acted Mr. by George Jordan (who was received with torrents of applause,) Mr. Davenport, Mr. Bourcicault and Miss Agnes Robertson—the latter being exquisitely good and perfect. The machinery worked much better on the second performance and the waits between the acts were materially abbreviated.  

Boucicault now effected a formula of devices—at least one sensation scene per script! In The Poor of New York he began to write in such scenes as would permit spectacular effects. The fire scene in the last-named play, for instance, caused much excitement. In Fauvrette his avalanche of snow furnished a spectacular moment in the theatre. "In the construction and 'getting up' of this piece Mr. Boucicault...once more displayed those great and peculiar talents in which he stands unsurpassed, and which generally secure popular success to his work. Effective situations and telling mise-en-scene are Mr. B's strong points."  

A detailed description of the sensation scene in Fauvrette illustrates two points of interest. One is the staging of the spectacular scene. The other is the style of writing, which, of necessity, was mandatory to secure

52 Times, Wednesday, October 6, 1858.  
53 The New York Sunday Dispatch, October 18, 1858.
the desired action. There was little dialogue in these scenes; there was little need for any. Pantomime was the all-important element! The long descriptions of stage business and action, instead of dialogue, made the scripts look like scenarios. Since pantomime played such an important part in his plays, the action had to be carefully planned and a great deal of rehearsal was necessary. It was not only necessary to have rehearsals with the actors but with the carpenters as well; hence the often postponed openings. A description of the avalanche scene as used in *Pauvrette* will illustrate.

The summit of the Alps, Rocks and precipices occupy the stage. A rude hut on one side in front. A bridge formed by a felled tree across the chasm at the back. The stone-clad peaks stretch away in the distance. Night...Storm, wind. She [*Pauvrette*] throws her scarf around her, and hastily ascends the rock—utters a long wailing cry—listens...Descends to her hut. Maurice cries for help. Takes her alpenstock and a coil of rope, and re-ascends the rock. The wind increases—the snow begins to fall. She crosses the bridge and disappears off left. Bernard appears below on the rocks, L. He climbs up the path...*Pauvrette* appears on the bridge, leading Maurice...They cross the bridge...They descend and enter the hut...Large blocks of hardened snow and masses of rocks fall, rolling into the abyss. *Pauvrette* falls on her knees.

Then, when they have entered the hut,

The avalanche begins to fall—the bridge is broken and hurled into the abyss—the paths have been filled with snow—and now an immense sheet rushing down from the R. entirely buries the whole scene to the height of twelve or fifteen feet swallowing up the cabin and leaving above a clear level sea of snow—the storm passes away—silence and peace return—
the figure of the Virgin (in window) is unharmed--the light before it still burns. 54

On the forty-fifth night of the Boucicaults' engagement at Niblo's Garden, Wednesday, October 27, 1858, a new drama by Boucicault was produced entitled The Pope of Rome. Agnes played the role of Bianca and Dion appeared in the role of Hugo. 55

If the length of the run of The Pope of Rome is any criterion for judging, it was not much of a success, for it closed on November 2. On Tuesday, November 2, 1858, after the performance of The Pope of Rome, Ethan Allen, the celebrated race-horse was introduced. "This horse was brought to New-York at the wish of the Board of Management of the great National Fair..." which had been held the previous week. "The extraordinary speed and gentle docility displayed by this beautiful creature on Thursday, drew the attention of many of the patrons of the Garden, who wishing their families to have an opportunity of viewing him, have induced the management to gratify

54 A. Nicholas Vardac, Stage to Screen. Theatrical method from Garrick to Griffith (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), pp. 52-53. The two quotations describing this production are from a printed version of Dion Boucicault's Fauvrette published by Samuel French (French's Standard Drama No. CCXXIX), "As performed at the principal theatres."

55 Times, November 1, 1858.
The Boucicaults remained at Niblo's until Thursday, November 18. From the closing of The Pope of Rome until the end of their engagement no new pieces were brought out, but the Boucicaults played almost all of the popular old pieces in their repertoire: Pauvrette on November 4; Life of an Actress on November 5; Jessie Brown on November 6; and The Phantom and Young Actress on November 8.57

On November 9, Boucicault took a benefit. On this occasion were performed Used Up, Bob Nettles and The Young Actress with Boucicault appearing in the first two pieces.58

On Wednesday, November 10, was announced:

At the request of numerous HEADS OF FAMILIES and PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS the management have consented to give, this WEDNESDAY, Nov. 10,
A Grand Afternoon Performance, for the Juveniles, of JESSIE BROWN.
To commence at 2 o'clock. . . .59

Boucicault was never one to overlook any opportunity of filling the house. If he could get students in and pack the house, he would play a performance.

56 Times, November 2, 1858.
57 Times, November 4-8, 1858.
58 Times, November 9, 1858.
59 Times, November 10, 1858.
The last week of the engagement at Niblo's found the Boucicaults still playing old favorites. On Tuesday, November 16, for the benefit of Mr. W. A. Moore, they gave the only current performance of Andy Blake. On the following night, A. H. Davenport took his benefit.

On Friday, November 19, "being the 66th and farewell benefit of Miss AGNES ROBERTSON," the management announced, a "grand Performance...as a parting token to this admirable artist:"

The gentleman members of THE CALEDONIAN CLUB, through a unanimous vote of their Committee, passed on their last session, resolved to tender a mark of their esteem and public approbation to their celebrated country woman, Miss AGNES ROBERTSON, whose performance of the Highland Heroine, Jessie Brown, has warmed so many Scotch hearts, and has awakened so many happy and kindly memories.

Understanding that on FRIDAY NEXT, Nov. 19, her FAREWELL BENEFIT and last appearance will take place at Niblo's Garden, the Caledonian Club, in full uniform, proceeded by their Pipers, will attend on that occasion, when they sincerely trust that "a gathering" will be sounded to all Scotch friends to do a kindly honor to "the Scotch lassie."

It is not difficult to imagine what a gala occasion that farewell benefit must have been that night when the New York Caledonian Club, led into the theatre with their "Pipers," completely filled the entire parquet. It was a great night for the Scots! Agnes lived up to the occasion

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60 Times, November 15, 1858.

61 Ibid.
and presented herself admirably by playing the first act of *Used Up*, *The Young Actress* and the last act of *Jessie Brown*.  

After the conclusion of this engagement at Niblo's Garden, the Boucicaults "...were somewhat 'footloose' for a number of months. They traveled about a bit, apparently producing nothing new." They were at the New Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, during the last of February; on February 28, 1859, they were playing *The Life of an Actress*.

It was during this tour that Boucicault was busy formulating plans for the future. He was to build a new theatre! J. H. Stoddart, the actor, who was in the company at Baltimore when the Boucicaults reached there during this tour, tells of Boucicault's plans with his next venture:

"Our season was nearly over when Mr. Dion Boucicault and his wife, Agnes Robertson, came. I was cast for important parts in all their plays, and, I suppose, must have acquitted myself satisfactorily, as Mr. Boucicault spoke to me towards the end of his engagement, telling me of his intention to build a theatre in New York, and offering to engage Mrs. Stoddart and me in the company. He said that his

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62 *Times*, Thursday, November 18, 1858.


64 Information taken from a handbill found in New York Public Library. This was the "first night of the Engagement of the Fairy Star, Miss Agnes Robertson and the Distinguished Author and Actor, DION BOURCICAULT! . . ."
theatre would be ready in the following autumn, and I told him we should be pleased to accept his offer, provided there was a certainty that the theatre would be completed by the time specified."

On Boucicault's assurance, Mr. Stoddart closed the engagement with him. Then:

"The Baltimore season closed and we returned to New York. The new theatre for Mr. Boucicault, if it had been built, would have stood near the spot where now stands Keith's Theatre, formerly the Union Square. I saw Mr. Boucicault, shortly after we arrived, standing on the ground, and he called my attention to what he termed the great desirability of the location. The theatre was not built, but instead of a new theatre he reconstructed an old,---the Metropolitan,---which he called the Winter Garden. The interior of this house was made much smaller and was wonderfully improved." 65

And so it was that on September 14, 1859, the Winter Garden, "newly constructed and designed from plans and designs furnished by Mr. DION BOUCICLAULT, . . ." 66 was opened to the public.


66 Times, Tuesday, September 13, 1859.
CHAPTER VI

THE BOUCICLAULT SEASON

The New York season of 1859-60 was a season filled with good plays, many of them to become famous in the annals of the American theatre. "I hope the reader is beginning to love this season of 1859-60," says Odell. "How many rare successes, . . . The Romance of a Poor Young Man, Dot, Smike, The Octoroon, Jeanie Deans—to this day those names are fragrant in history. . . ."¹ Of this list of plays, only the first was not from the pen of Dion Boucicault. Only The Colleen Bawn, Chamooni III and Vanity Fair need to be added to have a complete list of the new scripts that were furnished by Dion Boucicault during this season. Seven plays in less than six months! Five of them hits! No wonder the season was called the Boucicault Season.

Three theatres dominated the New York scene during this year. Wallack's, of course, heads the list, if for no other reason than seniority; the Winter Garden, which was under the joint management of William Stuart and Dion Boucicault; and Laura Keene's, which began in a rather feeble way.

but gathered strength when Boucicault shifted his attention to it.

It was a season rich with good acting and good actors. Wallack's roster of actors composing his resident stock company included such well known names as Lester Wallack, Messrs. Brougham, Walcot, Coburn, Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. Hoey, and Miss Gannon; while Boucicault, at his Winter Garden, was fortunate in being able to list Harry Pearson, Joseph Jefferson, A. H. Davenport, Agnes Robertson, Mr. W. R. Blake, Mrs. J. H. Allen, and Mrs. John Wood. Laura Keene was on her way up as a struggling manager. Her success as an actress had long been established, but she did not have as many "names" as the two afore-mentioned theatres. However, when Dion and Agnes added their names to her list, and brought along the Boucicault scripts, nothing more was needed to assure a good house.

Boucicault's plans for a completely new theatre did not materialize, and he had to content himself by making over another theatre to suit his needs. During the summer months of 1859, the old Metropolitan theatre, which had, until recently, been under the management of Burton, was "entirely reconstructed and refurbished" under the direction of Boucicault and was opened to the public on September 14, 1859, under the name of the Winter Garden, A Conservatory of the Arts. It will be remembered how a local critic condemned this old house when Burton opened it. It
had been much too large to enable one to hear a dramatic production. It had been originally built to house opera.

The stage and proscenium had been cut down, and the house seemed "altogether smaller than before." The "dreary vastness" of the old Metropolitan seemed to have been abolished and the actors and audience seemed closer together. The house "was much like Wallack's" in the arrangement of the audience. A spacious entrance and a "grand" stairway to the dress circle was constructed. Part of the parquet was taken over to provide stalls, and on each side of the proscenium were "pretty little fountains, shrubbery and flowers."²

After the opening night, the Times described the theatre by saying:

The ... Winter Garden is no garden at all, but a neat, charming, brilliant and fairy-like theatre, which, in the course of a few weeks, has replaced, as by a sort of Aladdin's enchantment, the doomed and disconsolate old Metropolitan Theatre. Lying just opposite Bond-street, it receives at high-water mark the two great streams which feed our theatres, and is the joint reservoir of our hotels and our homes. It is near enough to the Metropolitan and the St. Nicholas, and not too far from Fifth-avenue and Fourteenth-street. This is an advantage, to be sure, which it shares with Miss KEEN'S [sic] delightful little theatre. But the Winter Garden (we suppose we must so call it) has other and altogether novel merits of its own, numerous and emphatic enough to account for the enthusiasm with which

a new version of that exquisite story, the "Cricket on the Hearth," was last night received by one of the largest, most effective and solidly remunerative audiences which we have ever seen assembled in a New-York theatre. . . . The building fully bears out all our anticipations of its qualities. Vast as the crowd last night was, the atmosphere of the place was constantly and universally agreeable; and the system of ventilation deserves, therefore, special commendation as the first real success, in this most important direction, which has been achieved in a New-York place of amusement. . . . The decorations of the house we have already described. They bear the test of the blazing gas-light bravely. The elevated taste which reigns throughout the whole interior, from the mauve-color and gold of the vestibule to the graceful floral ornaments of the grand circle, is nowhere more conspicuous than in the drop-curtain, which was painted by RUSSELL SMITH of Philadelphia, and is a genuine chef-d'oeuvre of the art. . . .

The company was called together for the first time on September 3, at 12 o'clock by the management, consisting of Bouicault, who acted as stage manager and director as well as house playwright, and William Stuart, who assumed the duties of manager of the theatre. The first call for rehearsals stated: "...for the convenience of the artists engaged they are informed that the following ladies and gentlemen only are required for the rehearsal of the opening entertainment on Saturday next, Sept. 3, at 1 o'clock. Mrs. Wild, Mrs. Blake, Mrs. J. H. Allen,

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Miss Sara Stevens, Miss Affir Germon, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Pearson, Mr. A. H. Davenport and Mr. T. B. Johnston. On Monday, Sept. 5, the Fairy Action will be rehearsed at 11 o'clock, when Madame Denlin, Miss Gimber, Miss Morton, Miss Barnett, Miss Agnes Clinton, Miss Secor, Miss Fielding, and Miss Denham will attend."

With over a week spent in rehearsal for the opening number, the Winter Garden company was readied for its opening on September 14, 1859. The opening was so well attended that the manager felt obliged to make the following statement on the 16th:

The director of this establishment begs to acknowledge the extreme kindness exhibited towards his enterprise by the crowded audience assembled at the Garden on its opening night. He would take occasion to observe that as every seat in every part of the auditorium is equally good, both for sight and hearing, and as there is ample accommodations for seating eighteen hundred persons in seats divided by stuffed arms, there is no need of any rush or violence to secure the best places, all being equally good. The great crowd on the opening night obliged many of his visitors to neglect the rule of the house, which requires the centre alley ways of the parquettes, stalls and dress-circle to be maintained open and free for egress. Although the means of exit are the largest and most numerous in this city, yet, for the sense of safety and comfort of the rest of the audience, and particularly the ladies, the rule must be maintained.

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4 Times, Thursday, September 1, 1859.
5 Times, Friday, September 16, 1859.
It must have been most satisfying to have to publish such a statement. And the fact that there were 1800 seats in the house would indicate that it was a "fair-sized" house and would tend to make the remarks of Stephen Fiske grotesque when he observed that Boucicault "had so diminished its seating capacity that it could not pay expenses if it were crowded." Fiske added, "This is a specimen of the engineering taught him by Dr. Lardner."

The piece which Boucicault chose to use for the opening was his dramatization of Dickens' *Cricket on the Hearth*, which he rechristened *Dot*. Agnes Robertson played the name part of *Dot* and Joseph Jefferson was engaged to play the part of Caleb Plummer.

It was only with insistence that Boucicault finally persuaded Jefferson to undertake the part of Caleb. Jefferson was afraid of the part, for he had never played a part that required pathos, with the exception of the love scene in *Our American Cousin*, and he had never spoken a serious line upon the stage. But let Jefferson tell it in his own words:

> . . . I agreed therefore to open in Caleb, with the understanding that I should finish the performance with a farce, so in the event of my failing in the first piece, I might save my reputation in the last. He assented to the arrangement, but warned me, however, that

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I would regret it; and he was right, for when the curtain fell upon "Dot," I should have much preferred not to have acted in the farce. So the little piece was taken off after the first night, as I was quite satisfied with Caleb alone.

An incident occurred during the first rehearsal of "Dot" that may be worth relating, as it bears upon a theory of acting that I have established for myself ever since it took place. Mr. Bouicault, I think understood me, and felt from what I had said to him on previous occasions that I was not averse to suggestions in the dramatic art, and was in the habit of listening to advice, though I always reserved to myself the right of acting on my own judgment as to whether the proffered counsel was good or bad. During my rehearsal of the first scene, which I went through just as I intended acting it at night, I saw by his manner that he was disappointed with my rendering of the part, and I asked him what was the matter. He replied "If that is the way you intend to act the part I do not wonder you were afraid to undertake it." This was a crushing blow to a young man from one older in years and experience; but feeling that there was something to learn, I asked him to explain what he meant. "Why, you have acted your last scene first; if you begin in that solemn strain you have nothing left for the end of the play." This was his remark, or words to the same effect; and I am certainly indebted to him, through this advice, for whatever success I achieved in the part.

I am not sure whether Mr. Bouicault was aware of what a large field for dramatic thought he opened up, and if I did not clearly understand the importance of it then, I have found it out since, and so far as I have been able applied it as a general rule. These reflections taught me never to anticipate a strong effect; in fact, to lead your audience by your manner, so that they shall scarcely suspect the character capable of such emotion; then, when some sudden blow has fallen, the terrible shock prepares the audience for a new and striking phase in the character; they feel that under these new conditions you would naturally
exhibit the passion which till then was not suspected.7

Agnes Robertson was not to be over-shadowed by the fine acting of Jefferson. Agnes could "hold her own" with the best of them:

... Agnes Robertson was the very Dot that Dickens drew. We can only describe her acting of the part as the Master described the little woman herself in the tale—"fair she was and young, though something of the dumpling shape, but I don't object to that."—a coy Dot was she, a motherly little Dot, a matronly little Dot, watching her Dot of a daughter; the very Dot the fairy and the cricket showed John in his dreams; the Dot who was John's darling and the 'Mother's' best creation, never to be seen so well and so perfectly represented on any stage. Miss Robertson was, in her way, and still is, in her womanly natural, gentle way, the most charming and perfect actress we have ever known; her Jessie Brown was simply inimitable, but her Dot in its homely, home-like setting, was more delicious even than her lowly romantic Scottish heroine of Lucknow.8

The review of the opening night would indicate that the managers of the Winter Garden had a hit on their hands. It was a decided success! The critic of the Times stated:

The "Cricket on the Hearth," the opening piece of last night's performances, was tumultuously received. It is a very clever dramatization, and is cast as it could be cast nowhere else than at this theatre. Mr. JEFFERSON, despite a faint suspicion of Americanism, makes a most

pathetic and pitiful as well as quaint old
flummer. Miss AGNES ROBERTSON is an inca-
rate dot in respect to naivety and touching
archness. She was a little dreary with her
patois in the opening scenes, but this
disappeared as the play went on; and in the
more serious passages of the second and third
acts the audience was visibly reached and moved.
Mrs. JOHN WOOD as Tilly Slowboy, looked a Venus
in Calico, and made herself irresistibly
comical by her positively delicious stupidity.
She sang a song of course, and such a song as
cannot be easily described or conceived of. As
a piece of female natural history, illustrating
the skill with which a pretty woman can make
herself prettier while pretending to make
herself hideous, Mrs. WOOD'S appearance in
this role deserves and will doubtless re-
ceive the attention of all philosophers.
Miss SARA STEVENS acts that part of blind
Bertha in which Mrs. Hoey won so many laurels,
with singular skill and feeling. A little more
care bestowed upon the difficult management
of the features in such a part will make
Miss STEVENS' Bertha the most delicately
truthful character which this promising
actress has yet sustained. Mrs. ALLEN was
young, lovely and unhappy, as it was set
down that she should be. But what shall we
say of Mrs. BLAKE? This thoroughbred actress
was completely in her element as the widow of
a victim of the Indigo crisis; and "looked
back" from beneath her miraculous head-dress
with a dignity and naturalness worthy
the best old days of the stage. Mr. HARRY
PEARSON was a kind of John Brodie in his
part of Perrybingle, and gave great reality
to the best and most touching passages of
the role. Mr. JOHNSTON'S Tackleton, too, was
conceived in a higher vein than this artist
has accustomed us to expect from him. His
power of facial expression proves to be as
varied as it is vigorous, and, save for a
slight suspicion of extravagance in the
demonical glee with which Tackleton disappears
from the presence of John Perrybingle when
his mission of evil is completely fulfilled,
the character could not have been rendered with
more finesse as well as force. Mr. DAVENPORT'S
love-making is altogether appropriate to Mrs. ALLEN'S loveliness; and of the whole cast we have, therefore, really scarcely a word to say save in commendation, which is not our specialty. . . .

After Dot had been on the boards for a little over a month, the Times felt obligated to comment on the quality of the acting and production on the whole. The review began by observing, "the success of 'Dot' . . . is one of the few things about which there can be no doubt." And the reviewer found that "the piece had improved with its career especially . . . with regard to the scenery, which, involving . . . much novel machinery, required a good deal of use before it worked smoothly." However, he felt forced to comment on the quality of the acting, which, according to him, had depreciated to a great extent since the opening night. It is difficult to believe that Boucicault would allow this to happen, for he had always been exacting in his rehearsals and in the quality of his productions. If the criticism which the Times offered was valid, Boucicault had allowed his original production to suffer greatly in the hands of the actors during the run of a month. The critic said:

The dialogue . . . is now rapidly becoming clogged with cheap and worthless emendations and paltry interpolations suggestive more of the actor's imbecility and vanity than of his talent. After a

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9 Times, Thursday, September 15, 1859.
certain period this gagging evil is more or less inevitable. A famous comedy of last season became so changed after three months' career that had it not been for certain situations which stood out like light-houses, it would have been impossible to recognize it. ... In Mr. BOURCIGAUT'S adaptation of the "Cricket on the Hearth," the situations are so secondary to the domestic interest of the story that it seems to us a little impolite to deviate largely from the latter. The dramatist has shown his good taste by confining himself to the original language as closely as possible. Surely, then, the company might do the same without risking their professional reputations.

... the permanent reputation of an artist is not plucked from the ready laugh of an astonished parquette. Among those who have yelled the loudest there are hundreds who in their calm judgment are both offended and annoyed at the very cause of their merriment. There is a limit to every sort of buffoonery, and it is well that the artist should define it rather than the public. Mrs. JOHN WOOD has overlooked this, and assuredly offends by her extraordinary and fatigue efforts to be funny. ...

Miss AGNES ROBERTSON makes the carrier's cheery little wife Dot a bodily reality. A thousand Ferrybingles gaze on her with delight every night from the parquette, but why in the name of common sense does this admirable artist afflicate herself with such a variety of obsolete dialects—dialects that seem to begin in the potteries of Staffordshire and end in the back slums of Glasgow, so infinite and confused are they. This sort of thing is well enough in a Protean farce, but in a serious and sustained effort it is wearisome to the last degree. Mr. DICKENS thought the English tongue good enough for Dot, and Miss AGNES ROBERTSON might, we think, concede something to his judgment in this trifling matter. ... 10

If the quality of the production had degenerated to such a low ebb as the critic of the Times intimated, it was time for the show to be closed. However, business was

10 Times, Monday, October 17, 1859.
good and Dot ran for thirty-one consecutive nights. It closed on Wednesday, October 19, 1859.\(^{11}\)

On Thursday, October 20, 1859, a benefit was announced for Boucicault "in acknowledgment of his successful labors in the design, construction and decoration of the Winter Garden, . . . ."\(^{12}\) For some unknown reason the benefit was postponed until Monday, October 24. The newspapers did not intimate why. However, the new piece, Chamouni III, was scheduled to be given on Thursday night and was given as scheduled along with The Young Actress. In this piece, both Agnes and Jefferson appeared. Agnes assumed the role of Jamaica Gravesend, "from New York, an operator on the sewing machine, a young person of enterprises," while Jefferson played the part of "Yonkers, a kerbstone operator, late of Williams st, N.Y., but now on a speculative trip to Shanghai." In the Young Actress Agnes played her old familiar parts of Maria, Sally Bacon, Hans, Effie, and Corney. The entertainment commenced with "the celebrated comic picture called the CONJUGAL LESSON" in which Mr. Jefferson appeared in his celebrated impersonation.\(^{13}\)

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\(^{11}\) Ibid.

\(^{12}\) Ibid.

\(^{13}\) Times, Thursday, October 20, 1859.
Chamouni III had had a good production and was well acted, but the piece itself was a trivial affair and did not last long. The Times commented on it by saying:

...The latter [Chamouni III] is probably the weakest production that the repertoires can boast. We are at a loss to account for its occupancy of a stage so respectable as that of the Winter Garden, and at a still greater loss to understand why it should be retained on the bills when the public repudiates it by staying away, and the Press unanimously pronounced it the dismal failure of the season. To refer to it critically would be to pay it a compliment of which it is utterly unworthy, and to refer to its French origin would be to perpetuate an outrage on the known skill of M. Scribe. The play bill is a fair sample of the literary merits of the piece. We extract two of the principal jokes, 1. The Arkansas Beraika-Douna; 2. triumph of American Terpsichory. These are jokes. By bringing the mind to a focus on the word Beraika Douna, we perceive that it is nothing but our old friend Breakdown in a gorgeous garb of Oriental humor. Joke No. 2 requires a more painful concentration of the mental faculties. We have not been able to discover whether the laugh comes in after Terps or after hickory. We are persuaded, however, that the joke is a very good one, for the author has printed it in very large letters. There are things equally good in the piece, but in brevity, which is the soul of wit, there are no scintillations more intense than the specimens we have offered to the public. The absurdity derives all its hysterical life from the genuine humor of Mr. Jefferson, who acts with a spirit worthy of a better cause. Miss Agnes Robertson also has a small part, but is unequal to the specific gravity of the text, which in certain lines descends like an avalanche and buries the poor little lady in an eternity of dullness. A beautiful scene has been painted for the piece, and the costumes are all splendid.14

14 Times, Monday, October 24, 1859.
For Boucicault's benefit on Monday, *Used Up* was performed, with Boucicault playing his old part of Sir Charles Coldstream, Mrs. H. Vining (her first appearance in the city) supporting him in the role of Mrs. Clutterbuck. *Chamouni III* was also presented.\(^\text{15}\)

On Tuesday, October 25, "An entirely new piece, never acted in this City, called THE STATE vs. PAWKINS" was added to the bill of *Chamouni III*. It is obvious that everything was done to make the bill attractive enough to enable the production of *Chamouni III* to pay off, at least until Boucicault could get another script ready and into production. In *The State vs. Fawkins*, Mr. Jefferson appeared as Mr. Fawkins, George Holland as Mr. De Windsor and A. H. Davenport as Mr. Whitewash.\(^\text{16}\) But even with this addition, the public could not be enticed to sit through *Chamouni III*. On October 26, the piece was withdrawn and *Dot* was revived and presented along with *The State vs. Fawkins*. This bill remained until November 1, 1859.

Encouraged by the success of his adaptation of Dickens' *Cricket on the Hearth*, Boucicault next adapted *Nicholas Nickleby* and called it *Smike*. The opening on November 1, 1859, was quite a success. Agnes scored another

\(^{15}\) *Times*, Monday, October 24, 1859.

\(^{16}\) *Winter Garden* handbill in New York Public Library, dated October 25, 1859.
hit: "We have had but one 'Smike' and he was Agnes Robertson; . . . and 'Smike' and 'Dot' are still remembered as among the saddest and the brightest, the purest and whitest of all our holiday bills."\(^{17}\) It was a strong cast, with Agnes playing Smike; Jefferson, Newman Noggs; T. B. Johnston, Squeers; Pearson, John Browdie; Boucicault, Mantilini; Holland, Soaley and the Specimen Boy; Stoddard, Ralph; Mrs. Blake, Mrs. Squeers; and Mrs. J. H. Allen as Madame Mantilini.\(^{18}\) Smike was a long play and as a result the announcements carried the information that "In consequence of the length of the Drama there will be no other performance."

The review of the play could be called nothing more than a "rave" review. It described the production as:

...of pure, genuine, histrionic talent. In this respect it stands alone in the current season. Miss ROBERTSON'S Smike is an Andy Blake in tears and tatters—the Incarnation of youth, misery, ignorance and helplessness. Mr. JOHNSTON'S Squeers is a still more consummate piece of acting than his Tackleton, more finely shaded, and less melodramatic in details—a more heinous and possible picture of fiendishness. Mr. JEFFERSON'S Newman Noggs is—what shall we say?—a surprise, such as each new role becomes in the hands of this admirable actor. Mr. JEFFERSON always puts off his individuality with his great-coat in the Green-room. He is an artist in the truest sense of that much-abused word, forgetting every past success when he approaches a new achievement, and absorbing himself

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\(^{17}\) Hutton, op. cit., p. 201.

\(^{18}\) Times, Tuesday, November 1, 1859.
so absolutely in the character which he is charged to represent that you are always tempted to believe he can never emerge again to fill any other part. When he was Caleb Plummer, who believed that he ever played Asa Trenchard? Now that he is Newman Noggs, who will believe that he was ever Caleb Plummer? Yorkshire John Brodie is played, of course, by Mr. Pearson, who began a trifle broadly, but developed into the honest hero designed by Dickens. Mr. Davenport, as Nicholas, shone with unusual vigor. Mrs. Allen makes an admirable Madame Mantilini to the amusing but rather wooden dandy of Mr. Bourcicault. The minor parts are filled in with equable ability. . . .19

But the production was not the only element that was praised. Bourcicault had done a true job of transferring the novel to the stage and again demonstrated his knowledge of dramaturgy.

...the success of "Dot" at the "Winter Garden," emphatic as it was, had hardly prepared us to witness so unequivocal—both in point of construction and of performance—a triumph as was last night achieved at the same place by a new version of the story of "Smike." If Mr. Dickens had been retained by Mr. Stuart he could hardly have fitted the leading actors of the Winter Garden company with parts more delicately adapted to their several excellencies than the manipulator of "Smike" has extracted for them from the mines of his prodigal genius. "Smike" is a melodrama of the same class as "Dot;" full, like that very effective piece, of ingenious and impressive scenic effects and picturesque tableaux, but it is much more vigorously condensed and put together, much more dramatic in point of contrast and coloring, and admits of a much wider range of artistic achievement. We cannot but note and commend the

19 Times, Wednesday, November 2, 1859.
modesty (rather new at this, as at all our theatres,) with which the play is put forth; and we take special pleasure, therefore, in saying that it really is an entirely novel, and by far the best acting version of "Nicholas Nickleby" we have ever seen. For this let the "Converter," be he who he may, have due praise; as also the stage-manager, for his most felicitous and well-realized fancies. But the great merit of this success, and that to which we are particularly bent upon doing homage, is its thoroughly artistic character. . . .

Smike was a tremendous success and ran the whole month of November. November 21 and 22 were devoted to the benefit of Joseph Jefferson. On November 26, the Winter Garden presented the "ANNUAL ENTERTAINMENT In Aid of the CHARITABLE FUND of the St. GEORGE'S SOCIETY." Along with such musical numbers as a duet, "When Morning Light is beaming" by the Misses' Gellie, a Balad, "Adelaide," by Mr. E. Juring and the Parlor Opera of Love's Labor Lost by Mr. and Mrs. Henri Drayton, Agnes Robertson and Tom Jefferson appeared in "the laughable farce" of Solon Shingle.

On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, December 1, 2, and 3, final nights were announced for Dot and Smike. At these performances the program announced the opening of a new play which is to remain as firmly fixed in our minds as representative of Dion Boucicault as London Assurance.

20 Ibid.
21 Times, November 23, 1859.
The announcement stated: "On MONDAY NEXT, DECEMBER 5, will be introduced a new play IN FIVE ACTS DEPICTING AMERICAN LIFE AND AMERICAN CHARACTER of the present day, and entitled THE OCTOROON, A TALE OF LOUISIANA. Illustrative of BORDER ADVENTURE, SLAVE LIFE AND SOUTHERN HOMES."22

But The Octoroon did not come off on the announced night. It was postponed until Tuesday, December 6, because there was need of a special rehearsal of the new machinery and scenery which were to be used for the performance.

It is interesting to note that, as Odell points out, with the listing of the cast as given in the playbill, it was the first time to his knowledge that men and women were "mingled indiscriminately down the column, and not separated by sex, as in a Quaker meeting." Prior to this date, the men had been listed first, and then the woman.

John Brown's raid occurred on October 16th and his execution took place on December 2, 1859. Four days later, Boucicault opened his play which was based on the subject of slavery. However, The Octoroon was not a propaganda play, and that is exactly why this play succeeded. It was another of the plays which fitted into Boucicault's new formula of dramatizing contemporary events.

22 Times, Thursday, December 1, 1859.
Joseph Jefferson carefully explains the secret of Boucicault's technique and how he dealt with so important a question as slavery which was on everyone's mind at that moment.

... A drama told so well had a great effect on the audience, for there was at this time a divided feeling in New York with regard to the coming struggle. Some were in favor of war, others thought it best to delay, and, if possible, avert it; and it was deemed unwise, if not culpable, by many for us to act "The Octoroon" at such a time. Then there were various opinions as to which way the play leaned—whether it was Northern or Southern in its sympathy. The truth of the matter is, it was non-committal. The dialogue and characters of the play made one feel for the South, but the action proclaimed against slavery, and called for its abolition. When the old negro, just before the slave sale, calls his colored "bredrin" around him and tells them they must look their best so as to bring a good price for the "missis," and then falling on his knees asks a blessing on the family who had been so kind to them, the language drew further sympathy for the loving hearts of the South; but when they felt by the action of the play that the old darky who had made them weep was a slave, they became abolitionists to a man.

When Zoe, the loving octoroon, is offered to the highest bidder, and a warm-hearted Southern girl offers all her fortune to buy Zoe and release her from the threatened bondage awaiting her, the audience cheered for the South; but when again the action revealed that she could be bartered for, and was bought and sold, they cheered for the North as plainly as though they had said, "Down with slavery." This reveals at once how the power of dramatic action overpowers the comparative impotency of the dialogue. 23

As usual, the plot is not new with Boucicault.

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Mayne Reid, in 1856, had published a novel entitled *The Quadroon*, which had been produced in a dramatic form at the City of London Theatre. Quinn shows how cleverly Boucicault adapted the material at hand:

In *The Quadroon* an Englishman, Edward Rutherford, saves a beautiful Creole, Eugenie Besancon, from drowning. He falls in love, however, not with her, but with her quadroon slave, Aurore. Yet Eugenia, disguised in male attire, endeavors to save Aurore for Rutherford when she is put up at auction, in consequence of the dishonesty of Eugenie's trustee, Gayaree. After Rutherford has failed to purchase her, through lack of money, he kidnaps Aurore and is about to be lynched when he is saved by the sheriff. It is discovered that Aurore has been freed by her former master and Rutherford marries her.

Boucicault skillfully altered this material and added new characters. Rutherford becomes George Peyton, the young Southern heir to a plantation, which is about to be sold for debt. The Northern contrast is provided by the two New England overseers, Salem Scudder, who has encumbered the estate by his visionary projects, and Jacob McClosky, who has deliberately plotted to obtain possession of it by dishonest means. George loves Zoe, the natural daughter of his uncle, the former owner, and Boucicault's sense of the dramatic is indicated in the very change of title to *The Octoroon*, for the less negro blood runs in the veins of the slave, the more tragic is her situation. Eugenie's place is taken by Dora Sunnyside, a neighbor's daughter, who also loves George. Boucicault added an Indian character, Wahnotee, which he played himself, and which introduces the note of melodrama. McClosky is anxious to intercept the mail which will convey to Mrs. Peyton and her nephew some financial aid. He kills a negro who is carrying the mail and is caught in the act by a self-acting camera. Wahnotee is accused of the murder and disappears. This scene Boucicault took from a contemporary novel, *The Filibuster*, by Albany Fonblanque. The negro characters, headed by Old Pete, were used in a clever fashion. The scene, in which Pete encourages the others to look their
best at the forthcoming auction, in order that their old mistress and young master may have something left to live upon, is fine drama. And the humanity of the characters in general is characteristic of Boucicault...  

Prior to the opening of the play, Boucicault received "threatening letters" in an attempt to keep the play from opening. As was later disclosed, the "publicity" was instigated by Dion himself. During the trial which was later to develop over the copyright of the play, Stuart testified that Boucicault had asked him to aid in getting some of the newspapers to attack the piece on the ground of its anti-Slavery tendencies—"as that would excite the public attention, and so help the play!"  

Failing to get Mr. Stuart's help in the matter, Mr. B. undertook it alone; and the Herald being the most facile instrument for such a purpose, the vehement controversy in that sheet was the result. That virtuous and conservative newspaper entered readily into the plot by which the country was to be rescued from the Abolitionists, and the treasure of the Winter Garden to be replenished.  

However, The Octoroon did open, even though the wildest rumors had been circulated, "rumors tending to impress the public with a sense of something awful and 'irrepressible'." The event passed off with no more excitement than

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25 *Times*, Monday, December 26, 1859.

was usual with the opening of a new dramatic piece.

... Neither the civil nor the military arm was called into operation, except in the pleasant way of assisting in the general applause. Even Mr. JAMIESON, who, it was hinted, had said or done something, at a certain trial, which somebody did not like, and had therefore determined on taking revenge, by appealing to a jury of the gods—even Mr. JAMIESON (a remarkably harmless person, in this play) was welcomed with cordiality, and steadily encouraged, as the piece progressed. The whole rumor of a possible difficulty on the subject of this piece, and the people who were to play in it, was absurd. Any one attempting a demonstration in any New-York theatre would be ignominiously "bonneted," and then handed over to the police as a simple nuisance.

Nothing in the world can be more harmless and noncommittal than Mr. BOUCICAUT'S play. It contains no superfluous appeals—no demonstrations in favor of the "down-trodden"—no silly preachings of pious negroes—no buncombe of Southern patriots—no tedious harangues of Eastern philanthropists. "The Octoroon" is simply and purely what it pretends to be—a "picture of life in Louisiana!" To Northern eyes, there are, of course, many points in the picture which suggest anything but pleasant emotions—the slave sale in the third act, and the lynch trial in the fourth act, are particular instances—but the most exacting Southerner will not, we fancy, deny the truth of the general outline, or the fidelity of the composition as a work of art.

The principal characters in the drama are Zoe—most admirably and touchingly played by Miss AGNES ROBERTSON; Salem Scudder, the new agent to the estate,—played by Mr. JEFFERSON; McCloskey, the old agent—played by Mr. JOHNSTON; George Peyton—played by Mr. DAVENPORT with much easy grace and ability; Pete, an old slave—admirably played by Mr. JAMIESON. To this list we must add the names of Mrs. ALLEN and Mrs. BLAKE—both excellent. Mr. JEFFERSON'S new parts will always bear commendation; no artist, comic or serious has
such a range of individuality, or such a
varied style of interpreting it. The Yankee
is of course his specialty, although, to our
mind, he has displayed rarer talents in Caleb
Plummer and Newman Noggs than were ever
elicited by the Green Mountain slang of the
"American Cousin." The Yankee is of course
his specialty, although, to our mind, he has
displayed rarer talents in Caleb Plummer and
Newman Noggs than were ever elicited by the
Green Mountain slang of the "American Cousin."
The Yankee being nevertheless his specialty,
Mr. BOURCICAULT has, of course, measured him
for it, and the fit was pronounced perfect.
In all the broader phases of the character
Mr. JEFFERSON brought down the house with
abundant laughter, and in the sadder ones
achieved the greater triumph of true and ear-
nest pathos. He has undoubtedly added a new
part to his already extensive catalogue.
Mr. BOURCICAULT has an important part--the
Indian--although a non-speaking one. Mr.
BOURCICAULT'S war paint is beautiful and
vonder to behold. Reduced to a sentence,
the case of "The Octoroon" fits to a nicety
the company now at the Winter Garden.

The drama itself is certainly a model of
ingenious construction, and the writing,
without being the faintest degree superfluous,
is always sufficient and characteristic. It
would be hard to point to a sentence that
might be omitted with advantage, or a
situation that could be dispensed with.
The defect of the play does not lie in this
direction, but rather in the fact that the
serious interest overweighs the comic to
such an extent that there is barely a
moment of relaxation permitted to the spec-
tator. Moreover, a negro in the North is
never comic unless he has banjo in his hands--
and all the comicality comes from the negroes.
It is possible that this defect will be re-
medied when the drama is played with a fair
degree of quickness. On Tuesday night the
first act was decidedly slow and the entra-
acts intolerably long. The favor of the
audience was not thoroughly elicited until
the third act; from that time to the end
the success was unquestionable, although the
fifth act dragged in a way which suggested
very imperfect rehearsals. We have no hesitation in saying "The Octoroon" will enjoy a brilliant run; it merits it.27

Perhaps the play received much higher praise than even Boucicault anticipated. After the opening, with such favorable reviews, Boucicault realized just how much of a success he had. He became dissatisfied with the agreement he had made with the management—especially with the part of the agreement providing that someone else could share in the profits. After barely more than a week of the new play, the Boucicaults withdrew because their demands for more salary were not granted, although, as Ireland says, "their last week's share of profits amounted to $1,363, and for at least twelve weeks of the season they had previously received $700 a week." Boucicault promptly declined to be bound either "legally or morally," by the past agreement any longer and offered a new one. But he found the management inclined to be slightly obstinate on this point. To force the issue,

He advertised the play—and late in the afternoon withdrew himself and his wife from their parts in it, on the plea of personal danger—carried off what he supposed to be the only copy of the piece, and was quite prepared to see the entire establishment in tears and despair at his feet! Unluckily, the fuse which was to explode this fearful bomb had been dampened—the play went on—

27 *Times*, Thursday, December 8, 1859.
and though the Herald's denunciations of it ceased, the public continued to crowd the theatre. 28

To save face, Boucicault could do nothing but withdraw from the piece. He was replaced by Harry Pearson in his part of Wah-no-te and Mrs. J. H. Allen took over the part of Zoe, which Agnes had played so movingly in the opening week. Mrs. Stoddart succeeded to Mrs. Allen's role of Dora Sunnyside and Harrison fell heir to Pearson's original character. 29 The piece, thus supported, ran uninterruptedly until January 21, 1860, 30 with Joseph Jefferson assuming the role of director.

The Octoroon was such a tremendous success that the Winter Garden was forced to carry a statement on standing room:

The management desires to state that, as hundreds are nightly unable to obtain even standing room to witness THE OCTOROON in all cases where any dissatisfaction exists the money will be returned or tickets exchanged for another night by application at the box office. 31

Boucicault found himself "left out in the cold," so to speak. His presence was not needed to make the play a success. No other resort was left than to sue--another

28 Times, Monday, December 26, 1859.
29 Times, Thursday, December 15, 1859.
30 Times, Saturday, January 21, 1860.
31 Times, December 15, 1859.
of his many appearances in the courts of law.

The law-suit was a long and tedious affair and became known as "the war of the 'Octoroon,'" which promised to be "as memorable as the war of the Maroons. . . ."32 On December 29, 1859, the case of Dion Boucicault vs. Thomas C. Fields and William Stuart was instigated in the United States Circuit Court. This was an action brought to restrain the performance of The Octoroon, which was then being performed at the Winter Garden. The defendants of the case were respectively trustee, and lessee and proprietor. The bill was filed on the 17th of December and stated:

... that on Dec. 6, he [Boucicault] had the possession of the manuscript of the play, and as stage-manager, he permitted it to be produced and performed till Dec. 13; that on Dec. 13, he copy-righted the play, that for three weeks before Dec. 14, negotiations were being made by him to make an agreement with the defendants for the services of himself and his wife, and the use of the drama for one-half the excess of the weekly receipts of the theatre, after deducting $1,800 for expenses; that during the first week the arrangement was assented to by the defendants and settlements had in accordance therewith, but plaintiff could not procure any written or distinct arrangement with the defendants, and on the 14th of December the defendants discharged the plaintiff and his wife from their employ, but have continued to represent the drama to his great injury.

That the said drama represents Slavery as a social fact without intending to touch any of its political bearings, but only to use its dramatic element; but on the

32 Times, Monday, December 26, 1859.
first public representation of said play the public and the press insisted, to the chagrin and disappointment of the plaintiff, in ascribing a political significance to the incidents of the play, of which he was unconscious when composing the play, and that representation had produced much censure from the Press of the City and country upon the plaintiff, as its author; a great number of communications have been addressed to the plaintiff and his wife requesting the withdrawal of said play and remonstrating against the same; that its effect has been, and by the acts of the defendants continues to be, greatly injurious to the popularity of the plaintiff as a dramatic author and of him and his wife as actors; and that by reason of recent occurrences and events the play, at the present time, can only be represented to the great damage of the plaintiff.

That the defendants have got a surreptitious copy of the play, and are using it to the plaintiff's injury, and will continue unless restrained by order of the Court.

And therefore he prays for an injunction against them.

A motion for an injunction has been noticed for Wednesday next, founded upon the bill and long affidavits.

Mr. Cram and Mr. Booth appear for Mr. Boucicault.33

Another skirmish of "The war of the Octoroon" took place on Saturday, December 24, when the case came up before Judge Ingersoll. Mr. Boucicault made a demand for an injunction restraining the performance of the play at the Winter Garden, on the ground that such presentation was a violation of his copyright. The copyright law at that time stated that if the play had not been copyrighted prior to presentation, it could not be copyrighted after

33 *Times*, Tuesday, December 20, 1859.
such a public presentation. In this instance the copy-
right had been secured after the play had been presented.
Judge Ingersoll, considering the facts as presented,
declined to issue a preliminary injunction, and postponed
until the following Saturday his decision as "to the
propriety of interfering at all with the production of
the piece."34

The withdrawal of the Boucicaults from the case and
the interest which the law suit created did not hurt the
run that was continuing at the Winter Garden.

... The admirable acting of Mrs. ALLEN in
the character of Zoe, combined with the
attractive effect of the thousand idle
rumors which always spring up out of a
little "difficulty," crowd the house nightly;
and as there is not the remotest prospect
that the law will interfere in the matter,
otherwise than to swell the throng of people
who go to see a "litigated" piece because
it is "litigated," just as old ladies in the
rural districts assemble and gather them-
selves together at funerals, the manager
may be congratulated on the complete success
not only of his piece, but also (if we may be
pardoned so preposterous a pun) of his war.35

Boucicault did not have a "leg to stand on" in his
plea to have the production of The Octoroon stopped. Even
the lawyers who represented him could present little evi-
dence to support his claims.

34 Times, Monday, December 26, 1859.
35 Times, Thursday, December 22, 1859.
The plaintiff, Mr. BOURCICAULT, who was not present, was represented by Mr. Cram; the defendants, Messrs. Fields and Stuart, both of whom were in Court, by Messrs. Jemegan and O’Gorman. Mr. Cram opened for the plaintiff in an able speech, in which he endeavored to show that his client’s affidavit was entitled, from his proverbial character for honesty and fair-dealing, to more credence than those for the defence, however numerous and well supported. He then advanced a number of legal points for the Court’s consideration.

Mr. Jemegan, on the other side, offered the following points on behalf of the defendants:

1. The plaintiff by his own showing is not entitled to a copyright in the exclusive performance of the "Octoroon."

1. The fourth section of the Copyright Act of 1831 provides that no person shall be entitled to the benefit of this act unless he shall before publication, deposit a printed copy of the title, &c., in the Clerk’s office, &c.

The copy of the title of the "Octoroon" was not so deposited until after the public performance of the piece for a succession of nights, and, therefore, so far as the right to the exclusive performance of the play is concerned, not until after publication.

2. Since the act of Congress of Aug. 6, 1856, (11 Stat. at Large, 138,) there are two distinct exclusive rights which the author or proprietor of a dramatic composition may secure: First, the exclusive right to print and publish the piece, and, second, the exclusive right to perform it, and these two rights are to be carefully distinguished. (See Curtin, on Copyrights, 139.)

3. The publication of a dramatic composition by the public performance of it, with the consent of the author or proprietor, bears the same relation to the copyright for the exclusive performance of it, as its publication by printing bears to the copyright of the book.

4. The plaintiff, therefore, having permitted the public performance of the piece before the entry of performance.

5. The cases of Coleman vs. Richardson, Ambler, 694, decided that a representation of a play is not a publication of the "Book," or an
infringement of the copyright of the "Book," under the statute 8 Anne, c. 19, But this act gave no copyright for the exclusive performance of a dramatic composition, such act not having been passed until 2 William IV. Consequently these decisions have no bearing on the present question.

6. If the representation of the play was not a publication under the law of 1856, then it was not an infringement under that law.

II. The permission given by the plaintiff to represent the play, and its representation under that permission, preclude him from acquiring an exclusive copyright to the representation of the piece, on the same ground that an inventor who permitted the public use of his invention prior to the act of 1839, sec. 7, was precluded from obtaining a patentright.

1. This doctrine existed at common law, and was established in this country in the case of Pennock vs. Dialogue, 2 Peters, 16, and Shaw vs. Cooper, 7 Peters, 292.

2. This public use means use in public, and not by the public, and the sale of a single machine, or the permission of its use on a single occasion for profit, was fatal to the claims of the inventor. Carpenter vs. Smith, 9; Pees vs. Welsby, 300; Elliot vs. Aston; Webster's Pat. Cas., 224; Cornish vs. Keene, ibid 519.

3. The public representation of a drama under the act of 1856, is equivalent to the public use of an invention under the patent law as it stood prior to 1839, and as there is no provision in the copyright law analogous to the 7th section of the patent law of 1839; allowing the public use of an invention for two years without prejudice to the application for a patent, the plaintiff must stand on his common law right, and is not entitled to a copyright for the exclusive performance of his dramatic composition.

III. The facts disclosed by the affidavits clearly show that the "Octoroon" was not only written for the Winter Garden, but (see Storace vs. Longman, 2 Campb, 27, where the absolute ownership was claimed by the Opera House) the right to perform it was expressly
purchased by Mr. Fields for a valuable consideration, and that right was to continue as long as it continued to draw houses. Hence,

1. This was at least a license to perform it as long as Fields saw proper, and is irrevocable. McCling vs. Kingeland, 1 Howard 202.

2. It is a right expressly saved by the proviso in the act of Congress, and not extinguished by the author's subsequent copyright.

3. That contract has never been rescinded, and the plaintiff could not by his own unjustifiable and improper conduct in withdrawing the piece, acquire a right to rescind it.

4. Mr. Fields, exercised no more than his legal right in discharging the plaintiff as stage-manager when his conduct had rendered it fatal to the interests of the theatre to retain him.

5. Even had Fields erred in discharging him, it gives the plaintiff no right to enjoin the performance of the play; his retention was not made by the contract a condition precedent to the right to perform the play, and the Court will not interpolate a condition precedent, where the parties have not so agreed. If injured, he has remedy on the contract.

6. But it was a part of the agreement that Fields could at any time put an end to the employment of plaintiff as stage-director.

IV. It is not necessary that the license should be in writing.

4. Under the Patent law, which requires all assignments to be written and recorded, it has never been held that a license must be in writing.

5. Even if this were an assignment, it is only to assignments made after the copyright is obtained that the statute applies. Before he obtains the copyright the author may certainly dedicate his book to the public, or allow it to be published without a written consent.

V. Whatever conflict may exist in the evidence on other points, the plaintiff admits that the play was performed for several successive nights by the defendants with his consent and aid, and it is further undisputed, that, in consequence of this performance the defendants have incurred expenses in bringing out and performing the play, these facts alone are fatal to the application for an injunction.

1. Because, where the conduct of the party
himself has led to the violation of right of which he complains, an injunction will not be granted, even though the legal title is admitted. . . .

VI. It is also a fatal objection to this application for an injunction, that even if there were no doubt about the legal title, the plaintiff's rights depend upon the nature and effect of the agreement between him and Mr. Fields in relation to the performance of the play, for where such is the case the rule is that the plaintiff will be left to this trial at law. . . .

VII. Another fatal objection to this application is, that his title is disputed by the defendants, and it has not been established by judicial decision or uninterrupted possession.

. . .

VIII. Another fatal objection is that a preliminary injunction in this case would be equivalent to a perpetual injunction, in as much as the performance of the play by the defendants will necessarily be temporary, and will cease before the suit can be brought to a hearing. In such case the rule is that a preliminary injunction will not be granted. . . .

IX. It is also a sufficient answer to this application, that the loss of the defendants in case of an injunction, will be irremediable, while a refusal of the injunction would not prejudice the plaintiffs, as the defendant Fields would be compelled to account, and it is not pretended that he is not responsible. . . .

He was followed by Mr. O'Gorman, in an eloquent address on the facts of the case, before the close of which the court adjourned over the case to next Thursday.36

The outcome of the trial is self-evident from the facts presented by Messrs. Field and Stuart. Boucicault lost the case. As has been stated, The Octoroon continued to play uninterruptedly to full houses at the Winter Garden

36 Times, Monday, January 2, 1860.
until January 21, 1860:

*The Octoroon has been played all over the country. It proved most popular. After closing at the Winter Garden it moved "down town" and was played at the New Bowery on January 23. "The Octoroon was played 'in the same excellent manner as at the Winter Garden: . . . Here, too, the old Bowery was in immediate rivalry, having secured the play from the author, who promptly denied the right of Fox and Lingard to bring out the piece. It did not last long at either Bowery abode, though the New Bowery carried it to early February. . . ."*37

Even Belasco came under the spell cast by the *Octoroon when "a revival was effected at the Baldwin of Boucicault's 'The Octoroon,' 're-touched and re-arranged' by Belasco. . . ."*38

It is difficult to ascertain the true reason for the desire of Boucicault to leave the Winter Garden. It probably was merely his desire to make more money out of *The Octoroon* than he was getting. Undoubtedly he had no choice after he had pulled himself and Agnes out of the cast and as a subsequent result was fired from the staff of the Winter Garden. In any case, Dion left the Winter

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Garden and went immediately over to Laura Keene's Theatre, to become the savior of her struggling enterprise. And so it was, with the arrival of the author-actor-director, Dion Boucicault, and his "fairy star," "Laura Keene's troubles were rung out with the dying year."40

Dion lost no time after leaving the Winter Garden. On January 9, 1860, Laura Keene had the privilege of presenting one of Boucicault's better plays. It was a dramatization of Sir Walter Scott's The Heart of Mid-Lothian, called The Trial of Effie Deans.41 The play was produced under the author's own direction. Scenery, painted by Thorne, Minard Lewis, Jeffries and assistants,

... included, on order of showing, St. Leonard's Crags, Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat, David Dean's Cottage, the Cell in the Tolbooth, a Street in old Edinburgh, the Court House in Parliament Close, The Tolbooth, Jeanie Deans's Pilgrimage to London, Gunnery Rise, the Highwayman's Hut, The Duke of Argyle's House in London, the Palace at Sheen, the Condemned Cell, The Canongate, the Court Yard of the Tolbooth and the Attack of the Populace, the Rescue, the Pardon. ...42

The play was a decided success. A Hit! The Times gave the following report of its opening:

LAURA KEENE'S THEATRE.—The Dramatist can scarcely impose on himself a more meritorious task than that of condensing SIR WALTER SCOTT, unless, indeed, he

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40 Odell, op. cit., VII, 220.
41 Times, Monday, January 9, 1860.
undertake at once to reduce that great and immortal author to English, so that he may be understood by people who had the misfortune to be born where there did not happen to be a "wee bit plaidie" on the premises. Mr. BOURCICAULT has performed the first office for the "Heart of Mid Lothian," and his experience and eclecticism have resulted in an effective drama. From the second experience he has more than shrunk. Instead of setting his face against a jargon which is almost unintelligible, (out of the British Isles,) he has crowded the dialogue with the broadest Scoticisms. Some of the best points of the play were as dimly taken by the audience as if they had been uttered in Greek.

A new adaptation of a work so well known as this does not suggest any especial topic for discussion. DXKDXM many years ago made a more effective acting piece than this of Mr. BOURCICAULT'S, but it was deficient in tableaux, and hence the necessity or excuse for a new adaptation. The present stage manager of Laura Keene's Theatre has seized upon the best points of the novel for pictorial effects, and makes the most of them. The trial of Effie Deans is more or less like LAUDER'S celebrated picture, and the attack on the Tolbooth will probably be better when the mob forgets the question of insurance. The play in point of fact—or rather spectacle—is a very hasty affair, and will not, on a first night, bear the hearty commendation which usually attends the productions of Mr. BOURCICAULT. We could detect nothing in the scenery, costumes or stage effects to place it on a level with "Jessie Brown."

All the strong individualities of the novelist are ignored by his dramatic executor. David Deans, (Mr. FISHER,) in particular, receives many slights at his hands, and is demoralized to the extent of cursing his lost daughter, a cheap theatrical operation which every reader of the novel will repudiate as an impossibility. The stern old pietist in other respects sinks into a third-rate position of histrionic drivel. Jeanie Deans and Madge Wildfire are the only characters that are moderately well sustained although the death of the latter (dramatizing effective) will excite comment at the hands of the purists.
The play was well acted by Miss AGNES ROBERTSON, Miss MCCARTHY and Mr. LERSON, (the Laird of Dumbiedikes.) The latter is, we think, a valuable addition to the company. Miss WELLS, as Meg, was frequently powerful, but sometimes excessive. The minor characters were well sustained by Miss LAURA KEENE and the members of her company.

The artists were called out after the speech, and Mr. BOURCICAUTL, in response to a call for a speech, said a few words appropriate to the occasion.43

From the first night, when "Long before the rising of the curtain the theatre was crowded to excess,"44 to the final performance, the play drew good houses. It was seldom that two such artists as Laura Keene and Agnes Robertson would appear on the same boards. By the middle of February, 75,000 people had seen this production,45 and by the forty-first night of its run, 96,000 people had witnessed it.46

Dion Boucicault appeared as the Counsel for the Defence in one of the principal scenes. This trial scene of Effie Deans was patterned after "Lander's celebrated picture, representing with all possible fidelity the forms and formalities Costumes and Incidents of the Court of Justiciary under George the Second."47 Boucicault was

43 Times, Tuesday, January 10, 1860.
45 Times, Monday, February 13, 1860.
46 Times, Friday, February 24, 1860.
47 Laura Keene's Theatre handbill in New York Public Library.
ably supported in this scene by M. C. Wheatleigh as Counsel for the Crown and Mr. Henry as The Lord of Justiciary.

The play ran for fifty-four nights, or until March 10, 1860. Over two hundred thousand people saw the performance. Two nights before the close of the run, Thursday, March 18, Agnes took her benefit.

On March 12, a new piece was announced, entitled *Vanity Fair*. "An entirely New Three Act Comedy by Dion Boucicault, Esq." This was not an adaptation of Thackeray's novel, but was founded on Dumanoir's play, *Les Fanfarons de Vice*. Boucicault played the role of Edgar Lambert, Agnes appeared as Rose, and Laura Keene as Virginia Pate. This was an attempt to recapture the spirit of high comedy, a reversion to the style that Boucicault had so successfully carried out in *London Assurance* and less successfully in *Old Heads and Young Hearts*. The announcements described the play as

"Sparkling with drollery, Full of fun, Dashes at foolery, Well done. Epigrams let off, Squibbling Society, Characters bit off, Every variety, Roars of laughter At what they're after. Mingling, Jingling, Wit, fun, and gaiety. That's the ware Always on hand in Vanity Fair."

In this Comedy, written by the author of "London Assurance," he has struck his old rich vein of

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48 *Times*, Monday, March 12, 1860.

49 *Odell, op. cit., VII*, 221.
humor and glorious spirit, never equaled by any other Dramatist. 50

But the author did not quite strike "his old rich vein of humor and glorious spirit." It was a comparative failure. One review covered the opening by writing:

... Mr. BOURCICAULT, in his "tag" at the end of the play, called it "a poor unpretending comedy." We are disposed to regard it as something more. It is poor, undoubtedly, in plot, but the characterization is frequently forcible, and the language always terse and epigrammatic. In these days, when the attention of the author is directed more to the stage carpenter and the scene painter than to the public, it is refreshing, at least, to have a piece with some pretensions to literary merit. There are passages of quiet humor in the work which would not disgrace an author of greater reputation than Mr. BOURCICAULT; but they are, we fear, too fine and subtle to take deep hold of a miscellaneous audience. A public accustomed to gloat over sensation pieces can scarcely be expected to enjoy the comparatively sterling merit of a play like "Vanity Fair." Whatever its positive success with the public, we have no hesitation in recording our opinion that it is, so far as dialogue and characterization are concerned, one of Mr. BOURCICAULT'S best recent successes.

The plot is so faint that it would be like painting the lily to attempt to describe it. It serves merely as a medium for the natural evolvement of certain characters--and to this extent only can it be classed with comedy. The object is to expose the fallacy of modern fashionable [sic] pretensions, and to prove that the generous impulses of nature overcome them inevitably, sooner or later; that all pretences are in fact miserable impositions on those who practice, as well as those who are doomed to endure them. The types of character selected by Mr. BOURCICAULT for this purpose do belong to this region, although frequently they talk as if they

50 Times, Thursday, March 15, 1860.
were natives and to the manner born. The hero (played by Mr. BOURCICAULT)—a man blaze at 22—is too common in all his stage phases to need comment. In real life there is not probably one of the species from Maine to Georgia. Mr. BOURCICAULT is more happy in the characters of Hector Pate—a man who desires to be regarded as brute, but who in reality is the feeblest of mortals; his wife Virginia his better-half in every point of view, and a nondescript called the Chicken, "half groom and half-prize-fighter," who by the mere repetition of a phrase succeeds in suggesting innumerable equivoces. The dramatic management of this trio is extremely good, and when they are present there is no flagging. But at other times the piece is somewhat talky, and is afflicted with the common defect of insufficient female interest.

We do not anticipate for "Vanity Fair" a prolonged success, but it merits undoubtedly the attention of the cultivated portion of Miss KEENE’S numerous patrons. It is well written, and as we have before remarked, abounds in quiet humor; there is nothing superfluous, and nothing insufficient—except the plot. It was well played by Miss KEENE, Mr. LEESON, (in an insignificant part,) and Mr. FISHER; moderately well by Miss AGNES ROBERTSON, Mr. BOURCICAULT, Mr. VINCENT, Mr. BURNETT and Mr. PETERS, and less moderately by the rest of the company. We could not detect anything of especial merit in the mise en scene. The principal artists were called out, and the piece received the approval of the audience.  

But to the general public the play was not a success. They had too long become accustomed to the spectacle drama to sit by and watch a group of people being witty; and so on Saturday, March 24, 1860, Vanity Fair saw its last night at Laura Keene’s.

Laura Keene’s theatre was closed on Wednesday, March 28, "for a preliminary rehearsal of Ms. [139]"
BOURCICAUlt'S NEW IRISH DRAMA in three acts, which will be produced on THURSDAY, MARCH 29TH, 1860."\(^{52}\)

The new drama to come from the pen of Dion Bourcicault was a piece based on characters from his native land, Ireland. While it was in rehearsal, Jeanie Deans was revived and played on Monday and Tuesday, March 26 and 27. The theatre was dark on Wednesday, as indicated above, and on Thursday the new piece was opened.

It opened to become one of the greatest successes that Dion was ever to experience. It was a new Irish drama in three acts entitled The Colleen Bawn, or The Brides of Garrowen. Dion played the character Myles-na-Coppaleen; Agnes appeared as Eily O'Connor and Laura Keene portrayed the role of Anne Chute. It was an immediate success.

...It obtained a success of the first class, and will, in all probability, keep the stage until the close of the season. The applause was vehement, and of that quick responsive kind which speaks so distinctly of sustained interest and animation. All the artists were called out, and Mr. Bourcicault, at the end, made a nate little speech, with just a touch of the blarney in it to prove that the performance was as satisfactory with the author as with the public. He said--very truly too--that the field of Irish history and romance, whilst singularly rich in dramatic material, is almost untrodden by the modern dramatist. A certain class of piece, remarkable for

\(^{52}\) _Times_, Wednesday, March 28, 1860.
its stupidity, passes muster, to be sure, as the Irish drama, and exhibits rather too liberally the virtues of an agrarian peasantry, the depravity of cultivated classes, and the supreme reformations that are effected on the latter by the free use of the shillelagh. But, like negro minstrelsy, this fashion of fun has gone out of date. Mr. BOURCICAULT, in exploring the romances of GERALD GRIFFIN, has opened new ground, and so successfully that a rich harvest may fairly be anticipated from his initial effort.

Not all of the review was laudatory. The critic would have to find fault with some part of the production.

Prepared in haste, this drama of "Colleen Bawn" does not exhibit the closeness of construction for which Mr. BOURCICAULT is celebrated, and to which, rather than to any especial literary merit, he owes his best American successes. In certain situations of the second and third acts, moving within themselves, and leaving no time for the dull calculations of the audience concerning the approaching catastrophe, the author recovers some of his former power. At other times the dramatic progressions are of somewhat stereotyped fashion. There are, for instance, innumerable changes of scene involving talky episodes, in which the actor has nothing to say except words that will give the carpenter time to arrange an impending tableau. The French school, of which Mr. BOURCICAULT is the representative, dispenses with these aggravating remains of an old system of dramatic engineering. The plot, too—cheap and worn out at the best—is pushed forward in the most primitive ways—namely, by the eavesdropping of all the principal characters, and the wrong delivery of important letters. Contrivances of this antique brand prove the way to almost all the situations, and convince the spectator that haste has impelled Mr. BOURCICAULT to the use of machinery long since abandoned by himself.53

This was the first of a long series of Boucicault's plays based on people and stories from his native land.

53 *Times*, Saturday, March 31, 1860.
Quinn comments that Boucicault had used Irish characters prior to this piece in such plays as West End, or the Irish Heiress (1842), and Andy Blake (1854), "but in the first he had simply inserted an Irish girl into a sophisticated London society, and in the second he had translated a French play, Le Gamin de Paris, by Alfred Bayard, into an Irish situation." Both of the previous plays had been done in the traditional manner. Quinn continues:

It was not the happy ending, however, that carried The Colleen Bawn into its great popularity. For the first time real Irish life was placed upon the stage. Hardress Cregan, Mrs. Cregan, Anne Chute, Kyrie Daly, represented Irish gentlefolk, not of "the garrison" but of the ancient Irish stock, a department of Irish life which made up the backbone of the nation, but which, since it did not lend itself to burlesque, had not been placed upon the stage. Myles and Eily are of a lower social stratum, but are distinctly not peasants. Myles has some property and possesses independence of character. . . .

Boucicault understood the Celtic nature, its depths of tenderness, of loyalty, of devotion to a person or a cause, as well as its gusts of passion and weakness, its illimitable patience and hopefulness under misery, and its fatal sense, even in the midst of happiness, of the fingers of fate at its throat. These contrasts provide great opportunity for drama, and Boucicault was able to translate them into real life, as far from the burlesque of his predecessors as it is from the sugary sentimentality of his successors in the romantic Irish play or of the grotesque satire of The Playboy of the Western World. . . .

55 Ibid., p. 379.
When Boucicault finished the last act of the manuscript, he enclosed a letter which was addressed to Laura Keane:

My DEAR MADAM—Here is another Drama—my last for this season. It was written in five days and the labor has rather over taxed me, as this makes the seventh I have written within the space of twenty-eight weeks—five five act, five three act dramas and a burletta. This piece is called "The Colleen Bawn," and is Irish to the backbone. It is the first time I have taken a subject from my native country, and quickly as the work has been executed, I am not the less satisfied with it. 'Twill be found to be I think the best constructed of any of my works. Whatever demerits it may have, it is my happiest effort in that particular. The public must determine the rest.

Yours, very truly
DION BOUCICAUT. 56

This note would indicate that Boucicault was pleased with his last effort. Also the reader will note that here, for the first time, Boucicault spelled his name without the r.

Boucicault did not make any excuses for having taken his plot from Gerald Griffin, but rather dedicated it "to the memory of GERALD GRIFFIN, whose beautiful tale, the 'Collegians,' prompted the subject of the play." 57

In the writing of this play, Boucicault wrote, probably, his most famous role in the part of Myles-na-Coppaleen, the romantic peasant, "a character instinct with Hibernian drollery, and softened and made sympathetic

56 Laura Keene's Theatre handbill in New York Public Library. Dated April 5, 1860.

57 Ibid.
with subtly-tender imitations of a temperament that is half merry and half forlorn and altogether lovable."

Scenery played an important part in almost all of Boucicault's productions, especially the mechanical effects. For example, the fire on board the boat in the Octocean, the snow scene in The Streets of New York, etc.; and when Dion stumbled on the Griffin novel, it may have been the steel engravings that appealed to him more than the plot. The play must have been written around the pictures, for the scenes were fully commissioned while he was still writing the second act, as is indicated in the note Dion wrote Laura Keene the next morning after he found the novel and received his initial idea. Nicholas Vardae states that the dramatic development of The Colleen Bawn "hinges upon the technique of cutting from stage pictures of episodes in one line of action to those occurring simultaneously in another, or of proceeding directly through a series of stage pictures in a single line, or of combining the two methods into a rudimentary cinematic pattern involving flashbacks, cross-cutting, and simple pictorial continuity, and employing fourteen scenes in three acts. Into the pictures in motion of The Colleen Bawn were woven great spectacular effects." Hopkins


credits The Colleen Bawn as "...being the first of the sensational dramas in which the actor becomes of secondary importance to the machinist and the scene-painter." 60

The big scene of the play was the attempted drowning of Eily O'Connor (Agnes Robertson). Vardae describes the conventional setting for this scene.

...this scene usually consisted of a series of profile cave cut-outs arranged in perspective to give an illusion of depth. In the forestage the sea cloth could be rotated, with the necessary open trap behind it and a rock cut-out appropriately installed. Behind the trap a solid floor facilitated the working of the boat. The drowning scene pictures the intersection of parallel lines of action and, in the fashion of the cinema, suspense is developed through cross-cutting. For instance, just prior to the Water-Cave, a Front Landscape, painted on a drop, is lowered at the forestage, both to conceal the setting-up of the Water-Cave and to provide a quick picture of Myles hurrying to the cave to save Eily from Danny. The Front Landscape is flown and Myles enters the Water-Cave. 61

Hopkins describes the pantomime that went with such a scene.

Music, low storm music...Myles sings without then appears U.E.R. on Rock. Swings across Stage by Rope. Exit U.E. L. H. Music, Boat floats on R. H. with Eily and Danny. Eily steps on to Rock C. [Danny] stepping onto the Rock the boat floats away unseen...Music. Throws her into water L. C. She disappears for an instant then re-appears clinging to Rock C... Thrusts her down. She disappears...Shot heard U. E. L. H. Danny falls into Water behind C. Rock...Myles sings


61 Vardae, op. cit., p. 42.
without... Swings across by Rope to R. H.,
fastens it up, then fishes up Double of Eily--
lets her fall. Strips, then dives after her.
Eily appears for an instant in front. Then
double for Nyles appears at back and Dives over
Drum. Nyles and Eily then appear in front of
Center Rock. Tableau. Curtain.62

How much more excitement could an audience wish?
The train scene which will come into a later discussion
could certainly not arouse more excitement in any audience.
This was the scene which drew laughter later in London,
when real water was used. Even Odell admits that the
scenery played an important part in this play.

... The wild Irish scenery, particularly the
save scene with the rising sea and the rescue of
Eily O'Connor, formed part of the attraction of
the play; but, of course Agnes Robertson's
pathetic Eily, Boucicault's great success in his
first Irish peasant character, and Charles West-
leigh's Danny Man were strong factors.63

As with so many incidents in Boucicault's life,
there are at least two conflicting stories about the
writing of The Colleen Bawn. Boucicault would have us
believe that he wrote the play within five days' time.
Vanity Fair had failed! Little had Boucicault and Laura
Keene dreamed that Vanity Fair would not last out the
season. However, it failed and something new had to be
provided quickly.

63 Odell, op. cit., VII, 222.
"Have you nothing? No subject—no play half-written? Can you think of nothing to replace this unlooked-for collapse?" pleaded Laura Keene, after the failure of Vanity Fair.

"I have nothing," answered Boucicault. "Let us meet to-morrow and talk it out." 64

As Boucicault relates the story, it was bitter cold that night. Sleet and snow dashed against his face as he turned down the alley from the stage door. A few steps from the theatre was a little book shop run by an Italian named Brentano who sold old books. Boucicault went into this little cellar-like shop and purchased a dozen or more paper bound novels. Among those books was a copy of Gerald Griffin's *The Collegians*. He read it that night and in the morning he wrote Laura Keene--

"My dear Laura: I have it! I send you seven steel engravings of scenes around Killarney. Get your scene-painter to work on them at once. I also send a book of Irish Melodies, with those marked I desire Baker to score for the orchestra. I shall read act one of my new Irish play on Friday; we rehearse that while I am writing the second, which will be ready on Monday; and we rehearse the second while I am doing the third. We can get the play out within a fortnight.

"Yours,
"D. B." 65

This is the story that Boucicault would have us believe of the quick creation of *The Colleen Bawn*. It certainly is more colorful than the story that Mrs. Barney

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Williams relates.

. . . We had one transitory grievance against Mr. Bouicault. . . . My husband and he had entered into an agreement in the fall of '59 whereby Mr. Bouicault was to furnish us with a new Irish play, to be ready in the fall of '60. The Bouicault trade mark meant a great deal in those days and carried a star a long way. Well, in January or February we met Mr. Bouicault who read us the first two acts. The play was The Colleen Bawn. My husband was delighted with the character of Myles, and although Eily O'Connor seemed a bit too sentimental for my line of business, we were both very much pleased with the play as a whole. At that time Mr. Bouicault was house dramatist for Laura Keene. Along in March he put on a play called Vanity Fair, which was expected to last through the season. But it failed. Something had to replace it. Imagine our indignation and surprise to find that the Colleen Bawn, which he had written for us according to contract, had been put on at Laura Keenes'. He was profuse in apologies. He had been caught in a corner, he said, and, having nothing else up his sleeve, had to put on The Colleen Bawn. He would write us another piece, he said. But my husband said 'No, Mr. Bouicault had broken faith with us, and we didn't propose to give him another chance.'

Mrs. Barney Williams' story sounds logical and is probably true. The Williamses had been favorite actors of comic Irish characters. And it seems feasible that Bouicault would turn to his own homeland for subject matter in writing a play for them. But Bouicault's story is good as a story, and Bouicault was a good story teller.

The Colleen Bawn proved to be the answer to Dion and Laura's problem—that is, the problem of finding a

suitable replacement for *Vanity Fair*. Night after night it ran with full houses and continued until the end of the season. The season ended in a round of benefits.

On Saturday, May 5, Boucicault took his benefit. On the following Tuesday, May 8, Agnes Robertson took her benefit and on the last night of the season, Saturday, May 12, 1860, Laura Keene took her benefit. The Boucicaults and Laura Keene were replaced in her theatre by Joseph Jefferson, who became Lessee and Manager for the Summer Season, and opened on Wednesday, May 16, with a Comedietta and Burlesque starring Mrs. John Wood and Mr. Jefferson.

Boucicault's plays had not only acted as "savior" for Laura Keene and had made her season an artistic as well as a financial success, but his scripts also turned the tide for Barnum's American Museum. "The Museum was closed during the week of March 26th, re-opening on Saturday, March 31, to a glad excitement unique even in that home of thrills and morals. Barnum on that great Saturday came into his own again, after four years of pinching and scraping. . . . The First great attraction was Jeanie Deans . . . Barnum's, like many theatres, was reaping a second crop from the Winter Garden and Laura Keene's." 69

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67 *Times*, Friday, May 4, 1860.
68 *Times*, Wednesday, May 16, 1860.
And the harvest was large; Jeanie Deans was the nightly bill throughout April and into early May. In the afternoons C. W. Clarke was used in familiar melodramas, though of course the order of procedure might be reversed on any given day, Wednesday or Saturday, particularly. On May 7th another Boucicault play sprang into being at Barnum's--Dot, with Clarke as John Perrybingle, and Emily Nestayer as Dot. . . .

We have called this season of 1859-60 the Boucicault Season. He had redesigned the old Metropolitan theatre and made it into a suitable house, he had acted as director-manager along with William Stuart at the Winter Garden; he had brought out seven plays within a period of six months—all but two of them were successful; with the opening of The Colleen Bawn, he initiated a new type of native Irish play on which he was to capitalize for a number of years to follow. It was a fitting climax to his first seven years in America. He was to return to England, for the American Civil War was about to break. He could do so knowing that he could come back to America at any time and be welcomed by everyone.

Before the Boucicaults left for England, the management of the Winter Garden persuaded them to return for a short engagement. The Winter Garden was the scene of many of his earlier successes of this season and the theatre which he had designed and decorated. He may have been sentimentally drawn to it. It was announced that

70 Ibid.
Agnes Robertson would appear in "each of those characters with which she is so universally and pleasantly identified. Jessie Brown, the heroine of Lucknow, The Colleen Bawn and Jeanie Deans." It was regretted that the few remaining nights were not sufficient to allow her to play her earlier successes, such as The Young Actress, Bob Nettles, Milly, Andy Blake, Violet, Pauvrette, "not forgetting Smike and Dot."^2

On July 2, 1860, the Boucicaults began their farewell engagement of twelve farewell nights, by presenting Jessie Brown, in which Agnes appeared as Jessie and Dion appeared in the role of the Nena Sahib. It was rather ironic that while Agnes was appearing as Jessie Brown at the Winter Garden in her farewell performances, across the way at Wallack's, Mrs. Florence was appearing in The Young Actress, the part in which Agnes had made her debut in America. On Thursday, July 5, 1860, The Colleen Bawn was presented. Playing these favorites in rapid succession, they continued until July 16, when Agnes Robertson gave her "farewell benefit and last appearance." For this performance, Agnes appeared as Violet, with Dion playing Grimaldi in The Life of an Actress, and as Eily O'Connor

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^1 Winter Garden handbill in New York Public Library.

^2 Ibid.
to Dion's Myles-na-Coppaleen in The Colleen Bawn. The Caledonian Club and the Irish Regiment all assembled their forces to "give a parting cheer to the Colleen Bawn." It must have been both a gala as well as a tearful occasion. A document which was signed by sixteen citizens was presented to Agnes on this final night, which expressed a "record of sympathy" from the citizens of New York City. It stated, "we are desirous of marking the esteem and kindly feeling with which she is regarded in this community. In doing so, we feel persuaded that we represent a large number of citizens elsewhere throughout the United States, where, in every city, she has left pleasant associations." On this Monday night, July 16, 1860, Dion Boucicault and Agnes Robertson said "good-bye" to New York and America, to be gone for twelve long years.

A handbill of the Winter Garden which advertised the farewell engagement of the Boucicaults contained a fitting eulogy, probably written by Dion, himself, which stated:

In the departure of Mr. Boucicault from the United States, we lose the most popular of modern dramatists, whose residence has materially affected the character of intellectual entertainment in this city. New York for five years past has not depended on London for Dramatic matter, but has produced originally a drama of her own. Mr. Boucicault mainly effected this by not only the excellence, but the great number of dramatic works that flowed from

73 Times, Monday, July 16, 1860.
his prolific brain. The Life of an Actress; The Phantom; The Fox Hunt; Andy Blake; Bluebelle; Genevieve; Jessie Brown, or the Relief of Lucknow; Dot; Smike; The Octoroon; Jeanie Deans; The Colleen Bawn; Vanity Fair; Pauvrette; The Young Actress; The Chameleon; Apollo in New York; Janet Pride; Love and Money; The Poor of New York; The Invisible Husband, and others, all have been produced in this country. The other States of the Union now look to New York as the great source of dramatic novelty, thus giving to this city another function of a metropolis.\textsuperscript{74}

During the preceding seven years in America, Boucicault had established himself as playwright, actor and stage manager (director). He had arrived in America at a time when New York, the center of theatrical activity, was dependent upon foreign authors for a supply of new scripts. It was mainly through his efforts as a dramatist that America could boast of the beginnings of a drama written in America and on the American scene. To be sure, Boucicault was not American born; but he had lived in America and had observed keenly. His plays could truly be called native. For the first time, producers did not have to turn to foreign authors for new material.

As a playwright, Boucicault began in a rather unobtrusive manner. Agnes Robertson had quickly established herself as a popular actress and a strong drawing card by appearing in the protean farces which were so popular in the early fifties. For a time, all Boucicault

\textsuperscript{74} Winter Garden handbill in New York Public Library.
needed to do was to provide her with adequate playing vehicles. Boucicault knew her limitations and carefully provided her with just the type of role that she needed.

The writing of Apollo in New York, a satire on contemporary local politics, marked Boucicault's first venture at writing with American subject matter. This was the first break from his previous formula of success, vis., the investing of the Eighteenth Century comedy of manners, and of Nineteenth Century melodrama, with contemporary incidents, costumes and settings.

Following the acceptance of his use of contemporary American subjects, Boucicault shortly developed his "sensation drama." In this, he used his previously developed European domestic drama, built with the structure of melodrama, simply giving it the effect of being contemporary. The first successful use of this new formula was in The Poor of New York. He capitalized on the financial panic which had just taken place and dramatized local conditions as affected by the panic. Its locale was the city of New York, and accordingly, he went into great detail in the mounting of this play so that the scenes would be recognizable as sites within the city. He developed two scenic effects which attracted great attention: the fire in the tenement house and the snow scene at night in front of the Academy of Music. The public loved these sensational effects. With the success
of this piece, Boucicault was encouraged to try his formula again.

This time, he dramatized the Sepoy incident in India, which was not American as to locale, but was on every American's mind at the time, and developed it into his 

*Siege of Lucknow.* With great care given to accurate scene and costume detail, with elaborate staging of native Indian scenes, and with the spectacular entrance of the Scottish bag-pipe playing regiment, he created another sensation.

Using the same formula, he wrote a play on the slavery question, *The Octoroon.* The sensation scene this time was the fire on shipboard. As the records show, it, too, was a success.

This was, for a time, the end of his writing of strictly American drama. But it was not the end of his use of his phenomenally successful formula. Still using its basic elements, he wrote his 

*Colleen Bawn.* Actually the only difference between this and his successful native pieces was the fact that his locale was not America, but his native Ireland. In every other respect, he paralleled every element which he had found popular in 

*The Poor of New York* and *The Octoroon,:* melodrama, contemporary people, and a sensation scene. This latter, of course, was the attempted drowning of Eily O'Conner. By this time, Boucicault had developed his sensational
play to such a high degree of perfection that his actors actually became secondary in importance and his scenery became the dominant element.

As an actor, Boucicault had been carefully and slowly introducing himself to the American public. It was not until Agnes had played all the major cities in their first round of tours that he injected a new element into their appearances: himself as an actor. His first role was that of Sir Charles Coldstream in Used Up. Steadily he added new roles to his repertoire until he had established himself as an actor as well as a playwright. Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic element of his acting was his apparent naturalness. Both he and Agnes were praised for their ability to appear as if they were not acting.

As a stage manager (director), he had developed a reputation of paying great attention to the mounting and the costuming of his pieces, and of rehearsing his plays well. As a result, the actors who appeared in his productions were likewise praised for the natural portrayal of their characterizations. Boucicault was a hard taskmaster as a director; he insisted on great accuracy in pantomime and minute detail in the "businessing" of his plays, and his minor parts were as carefully directed as the major roles. By the time of his sensation plays, of necessity, he had to pay great attention to the mise en
scene. The coordination between actor and scenery had become an important part of the formula for success.

In these seven years, Boucicault had become a dominating figure in American drama. He had managed to create a position for himself in which he was regarded as the foremost single dramatic figure in America.
CHAPTER VII

DION BOUCICAUT IN ENGLAND

Dion Boucicault and Agnes Robertson returned to England in July of 1860, seven long years after their first departure from the scenes of their early triumphs at the Princess Theatre. This time they were booked to play at Ben Webster's New Adelphi Theatre.

During their absence, little had happened to the style of dramatic writing. The ever popular "comedy of tears" was still en vogue. Nearly all of the contemporary writers of the '60's intermixed some tears with their laughter; "... the peculiar atmosphere of Boucicault's dramas, ... arose precisely from the skilful juxtaposition of these two elements."¹ The earlier styles of the '40's had remained and proved to be popular in the '60's, "and even in 1900 they still maintained their appeal with certain audiences."²

During the sixties the only real opposition of any strength was Robertson and his "cup and saucer" dramas. Often Boucicault and Tom Robertson are linked together as forerunners

¹ Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1946), I, 104.
² Ibid., p. 109.
of the realistic drama. But Boucicault created realistic effects only in the big sensation scenes of his drama. His contribution to these "comedies of tears" was his sensation scene. Boucicault had developed, by this time, the technique of building a show around one big scenic effect; Robertson made an honest attempt to create a form of realism in his style of writing and insisted on it in the staging of his plays.

Boucicault, in discussing the differences between himself and Robertson, said: "Robertson differs from me, not fundamentally, but scenically; his action takes place in lodgings and drawing-rooms; mine has a more romantic scope." He had developed in America did not suffer from being transplanted to the London stage. Boucicault had to change nothing. The London audience was ready to accept his "comedy of tears" along with the sensational, melodramatic scenes.

3 Marie and Squire Bancroft, Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft On and Off the Stage (2 ed.), (London: Bentley, 1888), P. 118.
4 Op. cit., p. 120.
On September 10, 1860, the Boucicaults began their engagement at the New Adelphi. Just prior to their engagement, Ben Webster, the manager-actor, had been appearing in the character of Richard Pride, in a play, "The Greatest Triumph ever achieved within the walls of a Theatre," which was called Janet Pride.

The Boucicaults opened in The Colleen Bawn, still fresh from their triumphs at Laura Keene's Theatre the preceding spring; Dion played the part of Myles, and Agnes, the role of Eily. Its eminent success is a matter of history, "it ran 360 consecutive nights in London and the provinces--a record up to that time quite unsurpassed, we believe, in English play annals."5

The opening announcements carried the following information:

First Night of the Engagement of Miss AGNES ROBERTSON, (Mrs. D. Boucicault), who will appear in Five Characters; and Mr. DION BOUCICAULT, (Author of "London Assurance," "Janet Pride," "The Willow Copse," "Louis XI.," "Faust and Marguerite," "The Corsican Brothers," &c) The Artists having returned to London after an absence of Seven Years in the United States, will appear in a succession of New Plays from the pen of Mr. BOURCICAULT, who, for Nineteen years past, has contributed largely to the Drama of our Times. When will be produced for the FIRST TIME in London, an Entirely New and Original Drama, in Three Acts, by Dion Boucicault, ESQ., entitled the COLLEEN BAWN; or, The Bride

5 "Death of Dion Boucicault," The New York Clipper, September 27, 1890.
of Garryowen. Founded on GERALD GRIFFIN'S Irish Story, "THE COLLEGIANS."

After which, for the FIRST TIME, a New Extravaganza, in One Act, arranged expressly for Miss AGNES ROBERTSON, entitled SHE WOULD BE AN ACTRESS.
In which Miss AGNES ROBERTSON will sustain FOUR CHARACTERS.6

The Illustrated Times gave the opening performance a most favorable review by calling it "the beginning of a great success," and predicting, "it will form an era in the history of the house." It praised the acting of both Agnes and Dion: "We are much pleased with the simple and judicious acting of Miss Robertson; and surprised with the finish that Mr. Boucicault gave to the representation of low Irish honesty and feeling. . . . The new play was beautifully mounted, and the indubitable success achieved on all accounts is indubitably deserved."7

A business arrangement which Boucicault managed to bring about with Ben Webster when he agreed to appear at his theatre, was eventually to have far reaching effects. At the time, Boucicault's proposal was considered novel at least. He suggested to Webster that instead of receiving a lump sum of money for his play, he be given a

7 The Illustrated Times, London, September 15, 1860.
chance to share the profits of his production. One can not help remembering how Dion "lost out" on the gate of The Octoroon at the Winter Garden during the winter of 1859-60. Dion well knew he had a good show to offer in The Colleen Bawn; he wanted to make his share of the profit. At that time, this business arrangement created quite a stir in the theatrical world of London, but finally Webster agreed, and Dion "found himself eventually the richer by £10,000. At first the full significance of this was not recognized. Some of the astuter authors—such as Burnand who, by making similar arrangements, cleared £2000 for his Ixion (Roy. 1863) and as much for Black-eyed Susan (Roy. 1866)—eagerly followed Bouicault's example, but the practice did not become universal until the eighties."8

It was during the run of The Colleen Bawn in London that Dion conceived of still another way to coin even more money out of this play—the traveling company. The idea eventually caused the dissolution of the old stock company and also brought about a decline in the demand for new scripts. One of the reasons that the play could succeed was that a new audience had developed. Actors had become social personalities and were sought

8 Nicoll, op. cit., p. 68.
after by admiring audiences. The number of potential members of a particular audience seemed to have increased. There were more people in the large cities. Foreign visitors, because of accelerated Channel crossings, more frequently appeared in the auditoriums. For these and many other reasons the long run became an inevitable thing in the London theatre. "The theatres subsisted on plays which ran for hundreds of nights, plays which were becoming increasingly naturalistic and demanded an interpretation of characters, not according to type parts but according to individualities. . . ."

The provincial cities were, like the metropolis, rapidly growing, and there too appeared a vast, untried audience. The fact that faster methods of communications had become available created a desire in the provinces to see the latest "hit." All these facts seemed to indicate that the provinces were ready for Dion's latest scheme—the traveling company!

Previously, the local theatre had supported a stock company, just as many of the theatres in America had done. The great stars from London, when they visited a country theatre, were supported by the local company. Boucicault had maintained for years that the stars would

9 Ibid., p. 56.
not prove so attractive if they had not appeared in the
new plays which had been successful in London and New
York. It was the play, he contended, and not the actor,
that drew the money. He pointed out that the author of
such a play received only twenty shillings a night, while
the star was paid thirty times that amount.

It was during the long London engagement of *The
Colleen Bawn* that he visualized how to make more money
out of the play. He hired a group of actors; headed this
company with the elder John Drew, Mr. and Mrs. John
Sloane and Mrs. Hudson Kirby; and offered the play as the
"star" to the provincial managers. They demurred, at
first, but finally one of them, a Mr. Copeland of Liver­
pool, consented to try the new scheme. The result was
an unqualified success. The public had no prejudices.
For several years Boucicault continued this practice, de­
riving immense revenues from all his pieces. Gradually
other authors fell into his wake, and then began the dis­
integration of local companies, until, at length, the
star system, which had been the prevalent practice during
the days of the stock company, was abolished and no theatre
maintained a resident stock company. This new system, of
course, could not have been put into effect had not better
means of transportation developed.

The traveling company could not have succeeded in
America prior to 1860. In 1849 there were less than 6,000
miles of railroad in the United States. In 1850 it was impossible to go by rail directly from New York to Boston. By 1860, there were 20,635 miles of railroad in the United States, and running out of New York were continuous lines reaching west of the Mississippi. After the Civil War, with travel much improved, the idea of the traveling company, carrying one show, caught on and by the early 70's it was common in the United States as well as in England.

With the advent of the traveling company, which performed the same play in city after city, there was much less demand for new and untried scripts. This lack of demand discouraged much of the local playwriting. Managers of traveling companies would not gamble on plays by unknown writers, and there were no local stock companies to try out the local products. "So while prominent playwrights lined their pockets with gold, obscure ones drifted into other means of livelihood, and the drama suffered." Moses says that "Boucicault, . . . by these traveling companies of his, was instrumental in hastening the decline of the old stock system. In 1866 he preached


his ideas to the French, who greeted them favorably, and by 1872 the United States had accepted them."

"The traveling company was, of course, as old as Hallam's day," adds Quinn, "but the early traveling companies did not limit themselves to one play. They were traveling stock companies with their own repertoire."

As usual, Boucicault could not get along with his associate-manager; disagreements were frequent between him and Webster. A kind of settlement was managed through the publication of advertisements which stated that "while Mr. Boucicault would control the stage, Mr. Webster would direct the front of the house, which was then for the first time dubbed the auditorium." It was incompatibility of temperament which caused Dion to leave the Adelphi during the month of June, 1862, and transfer his interests to Drury Lane.

Winter credits much of the success of The Colleen Bawn to the mechanical effects. He regarded them as "the principal attraction, and he designated the play as the first serious drama in which the actor became of secondary


\[\text{\textsuperscript{13}}\text{ Arthur Hobson Quinn, A History of the American Drama From the Civil War to the Present Day (New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1943), p. 388.}\]
importance to the mechanist and scene-painter. There had been shaking waters and rolling billows and other watery effects before the c الثاني scene of The Colleen Bawn chief among which was the famous rolling wave in Acis and Galatea at Drury Lane in Macready's time; but transparent stage-water had never before been seen, and a few yards of blue gauze did more than all the finest acting in the world could have accomplished, it filled the Adelphi for hundreds of nights, it filled the treasuries of provincial managers, it sent people to the theatre that had never been there before, and it made the fortune of the autor. Yet it said he was not actually the inventor of the wonderful thing, but that the idea first occurred to an old stage carpenter while he was constructing the scene."

Although on June 9, 1861, the News said, "Two hundredth night of the 'Colleen Bawn' is a fact which speaks volumes for the success and popularity of this drama," it could not have been that this was the 200th consecutive night at the Adelphi Theatre, London. For during the month of April, 1861, the Boucicaults appeared

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14 William Winter, Other days; being chronicles and memories of the Stage (New York; Moffat, 1908), p. 130.

15 The London Illustrated News, June 9, 1861.
at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. Even though the opening announcement said "Mr. Harris has the honor to announce the Engagement of MISS AGNES ROBERTSON (Mrs. Dion Boucicault) and Mr. DION BOUCICAULT For a Limited Period Twelve Nights of the Great Sensation Drama the COLLEEN BAWN Commencing at a Quarter to Eight, and concluding at Half-past Ten o'clock," the Boucicaults played more than twelve nights. Actually on Thursday Evening, April 18, 1861, there was announced "the 16th night of the great Sensation Drama The Colleen Bawn." And on the following Friday night, April 19th, Dion Boucicault took his benefit. During this engagement Dion played his usual role of Myles-na-Coppaleen and Agnes the role of Eily O'Conner.

It would seem that there was the customary summer lay-off at the New Adelphi, for it was announced that "during the short recess... Mr. Webster had his elegant new theatre re-embellished and painted, and the appearance presented at the opening, on Monday last, gave additional lustre to the occasion." The Colleen Bawn was still the attraction when Webster reopened his new Adelphi, and it "seemed to have lost none of its powers of pleasing. . . .

16 Handbill of Theatre Royal, Dublin, in New York City Public Library.
17 Handbill of Theatre Royal, Dublin, in New York Public Library.
18 Bell's Life in London, September 29, 1861.
The reception of Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault was most enthusiastic, and they both appeared determined to give the greatest possible prominence to the leading sensation scenes." On the opening night Mr. David Fisher's "pleasant little bagatell, 'Music hath Charms,' preceded the drama, and the concluding piece called 'Love and Hunger,' introduced for the first time to an Adelphi audience that inimitable actress, Mrs. Marston, who . . . had seceded from the corps at Sadler's Wells."\(^{19}\)

The Colleen Bawn ran until November 18, 1861, when Boucicault presented The Octoroon. This was the first London production of this piece. Agnes played her old part of Zoe and Dion assumed the role of Salem Scudder, the part in which Joe Jefferson had originally appeared. "The Octoroon, however, did not rival its predecessor in attraction, and the audience was sent through fire and water after a time, that is to say, the two sensations were given nightly."\(^{20}\) It was during the week of the Cattle Show that Mr. Webster felt obliged to present the two plays. This was done "In order to gratify many country visitors who have written for places to see the 'Colleen Bawn,' Mr. and Mrs. BOUCICAILT have consented to appear in both the OCTOROON

\(^{19}\) Ibid.

and the COLLEEN BAWN ON THE SAME NIGHT!" This week was the 297th, 298th, 299th, 300th, and 301st and 302nd NIGHTS of the Engagement of Mr. and Mrs. DION BOUCICAULT."

One of the reasons why the Octofoon was not as popular with the English audience as with the American audience was that the English audience did not like the ending of the play. For this "CATTLE SHOW WEEK," Mr. Boucicault rewrote the third act. In the revised ending, Boucicault "spares the life of Zoe, the interesting Octofoon... M'Glosky endeavours to escape with the Octofoon, but is followed by George Peyton and his friends, by whom she is rescued, and to whom she is betrothed, and, as they cannot by reason of the law marry in Louisiana, they depart for England, the land of the free, there to live happily. Salem also, though wounded in the skirmish, is consoled for the loss of Zoe by receiving Dora as his bride."22

With such an appeal to British freedom, the play could scarcely do less than succeed. A commentator said, "The Audience testified by loud acclamations to their delight at this change in the denouement, and with this pleasant alteration we hope that Mr. Boucicault's drama may


have a long and profitable run."²³

The engagement at Ben Webster's New Adelphi was a profitable one for Dion. He made a tremendous amount of money. He continued to draw during the winter season when nothing else seemed to go. In a letter to Sol Smith, Charles Kean, who could never forgive Dion for having eloped with Agnes Robertson, stated: "Dion and his play of Colleen Bawn are drawing crowds—Indeed the Adelphi is the only Theatre in London at the present moment doing great business. The Princess's is only just paying its way, & that will fall off by Feb'y. when all Theatres sink after the Xmas holidays-- Even Drury Lane is not holding up its head as usual in the Pantomime. Wigan at the old St. James's is doing very badly, and as from some freak he will not give an order, the Houses there look wretched beyond description— . . . ."²⁴ Kean had been quite embittered at Dion, who had whisked away his protege back in 1853, and in this letter he could not keep from showing his wrath. "As to Boucicault my dear friend, he is a gentleman to whom I can never speak again, and indeed any man would lose caste here by being seen in his company. His character

²³ Ibid.
is so bad, that there is not a crime under the sun of which he is not accused--The most dreadful stories are told of him..."25 Stephen Fiske called Dion "an enigma, 'a gay, semi-fashionable, semi-Bohemian' fellow. He was impulsive, nervous, a quick worker, and as ready to flare into a rage as he was to exhibit his abundant Irish humor."26 But even if Dion was not high in Kean's esteem, he met the "right" people and lived a regal life.27

I knew him, writes Scott, in the "Colleen Bawn" days at the Adelphi, when he had a magnificent mansion and grounds at Old Brompton... I knew him in the days of "The Shaughraun" at the same theatre, and I met him constantly at the tables of Edmund Yates [et al.], and I was also a frequent guest at his own table when he lived, as he ever did, money or no money, credit or no credit, "en prince" at his flat... Dion was a born "viveur," a "Gourmand" and "gourmet," and certainly one of the most brilliant conversationalists it has ever been my happy fortune to meet.28

On February 10, 1862, Boucicault brought out his next play, which he named The Dublin Boy. It was an adaptation of Le Gamin de Paris.29 The Illustrated Times declared the original French production "an immense success

25 Ibid.
26 Moses, op. cit., p. 122.
28 Ibid.
29 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
and celebrity owing to the wonderful acting of the renowned Bouffe, who made the part his own by the marvelous skill of a delineation which at one time commanded tears at another smiles." It added: "Whether in its English dress, and with its graceful and accomplished English impersonator, Mrs. Boucicault, it will achieve a similar popularity remains to be seen. . . . As a whole, the drama, which is in two acts, may be pronounced as another success at this very popular theatre."  

On Saturday evening, March 1, 1862, Boucicault offered to the London public his old and well tried piece entitled The Life of an Actress. The handbill announcing this performance stated: "Mr. & Mrs. DION BOUCICAULT In an Entirely New and Original Drama, as GRIMALDI, the Old Actor, Mr. D. Boucicault, and VIOLET, the Beggar Girl, Mrs. D. BOUCICAULT. . . . Founded on incidents familiar to Theatrical History, and depicting the Romantic Scenes of Theatrical Life. . . ."  

One reviewer certainly did not predict success for The Life of an Actress, for he said:

Mr. Boucicault's good luck seems to have come all at once. He appears to have poured out all his

30 The London Illustrated Times, February 16, 1862.

31 Theatre Royal, New Adelphi handbill, March 1, 1862, in New York Public Library.
store in "The Colleen Bawn," and to have been vainly tilting his flagon ever since. Thus, "The Octoroon" was by no means a great success, although in its finally altered form a very respectable melodrama; "The Dublin Boy," excellently acted though it was by Mrs. Boucicault and Mr. Emery, scarcely made a mark; and the latest production, "The Life of an Actress," will not, I should imagine, have a very long run. This is much to be regretted, for Mr. Boucicault is unquestionably a very able man;—he writes capital dialogue; he is thoroughly unconventional; he has a keen sense of humour and a general knowledge of stage requirements; but—what? Is it that the exceptional success of "The Colleen Bawn," which was by no means a very good piece, has given him a low opinion of the British public's dramatic taste? and does he think that his wares have but to bear his name to sell at a premium? If so, he is thoroughly mistaken. For a series of years the dramatic public of London has been the kindest, the most indulgent, the most un­critical, before whom actors ever played. No matter how dreary the drama, how preposterous the farce, how indecent the burlesque, all was sure to go with rapture and applause. But of late, notably within the last twelve months, we have changed all this, and though no piece has been summarily swept from the stage, yet the audience have so manifested their opinion as to render its speedy withdrawal a matter of certainty. . . . This [Referring to the plot of the play] is bad construction, false sentiment, and utter conventionalism, Mr. Boucicault; and you, who know theatrical matters perfectly must have been fully aware of it, and were only "trying it on" the British public. They guessed this, and retaliated by hissing your fourth act very heartily, and coldly receiving your conclusion—which, by the way, in every sense is dreadful. . . . some of the acting is charming. Mrs. Boucicault is fresh, and sweet, and lovable, never attempting too much, but doing all she attempts with delightful grace and simplicity. Mr. Emery plays a low comedian who admires the debutante, and acts a little love scene, in which he expresses his honest feelings with a natural pathos which must bring the tears into your eyes. . . .

It is to be wondered whether the "Theatrical Lounger"

knew that this was not a new piece. Did he believe the announcements of an "Entirely New and Original Drama?" Did he not know that the piece was written in 1855? His criticism probably was justified, but his basis of criticism seems weak.

The critic was correct in his opinion that the British public would not accept the Life of An Actress, for it did not have a long run. On April 22, 1862, The Phantom was revived but without great success, and on April 28, Dot was added to the bill. However, in The Phantom, only Dion appeared, playing the role of Sir Alan Ruthven, and neither Dion nor Agnes was listed in the cast for Dot.

It is probable that at this time Agnes was expecting a child, Patrice, their fourth, who was born in the year 1862. Darley George had been born in 1861, Eva in 1859 and Dion Wm. in 1855.

Dion was evidently still at the Adelphi on June 2, 1862, for he was announced to appear as Salem Scudder in The Octoroon for that night, with Mrs. Millington in the role of Zoe. The Octoroon was scheduled to begin at "NINE o'clock precisely," with Dot preceding it at seven o'clock precisely.

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33 Theatre Royal, New Adelphi handbill, April 28, 1862, in New York Public Library.
34 Moses, op. cit., p. 114.
35 Theatre Royal, New Adelphi handbill, in New York Public Library.
The same handbill announced, next week will be produced, with New Scenery and, [Sig] the popular Sensation Drama by DION BOUCICLAULT, Esq., of the Colleen Bawn. Myles-na-Goppaleen, Mr. DION BOUCICLAULT."36 But Dion did not open The Colleen Bawn at Webster's New Adelphi. Another disagreement had come about between the two men that evidently could not be solved as simply as the earlier disagreement. Dion took his play over to Drury Lane, and on June 23, 1862, he offered The Colleen Bawn there under his own management. Boucicault himself and Madame Celeste headed the cast for this production.37 The Colleen Bawn ran until September 15, when he offered his earlier play, Jessie Brown, which he now called The Relief of Lucknow. Dion appeared as Corporal Cassidy, with Agnes playing the role of Jessie. The patriotic Londoners were aroused to wild enthusiasm by the production.38

The Illustrated Times reported this production favorably: "Mr. Boucicault's Cassidy, the stout-hearted but droll Irish soldier, and Mrs. Boucicault's Jessie, are admirably acted, and they were on the first night both

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36 Ibid.


38 Brander Mathews and Laurence Hutton (eds.) Edwin Booth and His Contemporaries (Boston: L. C. Page & Company, 1895), "Mr. and Mrs. Dion Boucicault" by Benjamin Ellis Martin, p. 82.
called before the drop at the close of each act. . . Of course, a drama of this kind must depend largely for its success on the scenic arrangements and military spectacular effects, and these do the greatest credit to Mr. Beverly, who is responsible for the former, and Mr. Boucicault, who arranges the latter—in a word, as a stage military spectacle 'The Relief of Lucknow' is a decided success."39

But the Drury Lane did not hold Boucicault's interest and attention long. Later in the Fall of '62, Boucicault rented Astley's old circus amphitheatre and turned it into a theatre. It cost a great deal to turn the old circus ring into a decent pit and it proved to be a ruinous undertaking. After the conversion, Dion opened on December 22, 1862. 40 He was never able to carry out completely all of his plans to provide London with a model place of amusement, however, because the affairs of the theatre became involved in litigation.

Boucicault renamed the theatre, calling it the Theatre Royal, Westminster. He took the name from the Westminster Bridge, which had to be crossed in order to get to the theatre from the city proper. This theatre was located in the part of town that was not frequented by the upper

39 The London Illustrated Times, September 21, 1862.

40 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
class. Moses attributed part of the failure of the venture to the fact that "when a house becomes associated in the public mind with a certain 'genre' of drama, and when it has created its own class of audience, it is difficult to alter the impression by substituting another type of play and attracting a different class. But this is what the Boucicault campaign attempted, and by the time 'Mazeppa' was announced on the bills, the fashionable world was crossing the bridge to see it." 41

Boucicault opened Westminster Theatre on Monday, December 22, 1862, with "the Comic Drama, in One Act, To PARENTS AND GUARDIANS!" and followed it with "the New Scotch Drama and Military Spectacle in Four Acts, entitled the RELIEF OF LUCKNOW Written by Dion Boucicault, the Author of Colleen Bawn." In the first piece Dion and Agnes appeared in their old roles of Monsieur Tourbillon and Bob Nettles; in the latter Dion played the part of Cassidy, and Agnes, the role of Jessie Brown. It is interesting to note that on this handbill, which announced the opening of To Parents and Guardians, the authorship of the piece was credited to Tom Taylor, Esq. 42

It had been the custom for the English theatres, at

41 Moses, op. cit., p. 129.

42 Theatre Royal, Westminster (Astley's) handbill in New York Public Library.
Christmas time, to present Christmas Pantomimes. Boucicault would not be outdone and followed suit. His pantomime was entitled "Lady-bird; or, Harlequin Lord Dundreary." It had a simultaneous opening at Wallack's Theatre in New York City. The News reported: "Mr. Boucicault's pantomime at the late Astley's Amphitheatre merits the lead. . . . the notation on which the action turns is equally neat and novel. . . . The whole concludes with a grand transformation scene, painted by Mr. Roberts. The introduction of the pantomime reverts to the old style, consisting of action only, except in the case of the fairies, who are permitted to explain themselves in dialogue."

Boucicault had attempted to make his new theatre as comfortable as possible. The theatre commanded the admiration of all playgoers, . . . their convenience has been especially consulted in its arrangements. Reserved seats have even been made in the gallery, which (every alternate one of the old seats having been removed) are covered, stuffed, and divided, and in every respect rendered comfortable. The alterations in the boxes are equally judicious, the centre box having been converted into a balcony, which is brought forward to the extent of sixteen feet, thus forming a new dress-circle, most conveniently and luxuriously appointed. Balusters and piers uphold a covering, and in front of each pier is a bracket with a gaslight inclosed in bouquets of flowers, supported by cornucopias, while at each end of the verandah is a bank of flowers and foliage. A new pit substitutes the old ring, which

43 The London Illustrated News, December 27, 1862.
is separated into pit and pit-stalls, and commands everywhere a fair view of the stage. The orchestra is divided from the pit-stalls by ironwork, but in short of the entire width of the stage, leaving a space on each side for two elegant embowered fountains. . . .

The only play of any importance that Boucicault brought out at the Westminster Theatre was an old play which derived its nucleus from the Heart of Mid-Lothian. It was produced on January 26, 1863. The reviews stated that Sir Walter Scott's novels had furnished the stage with many subjects for dramatizations and among them was this very romance. Reviewers covered the opening as if it were a new script. It was new only to the London theatre, for it had been produced in New York in 1860 under the title of Jeanie Deans. One of the reports of the opening commented:

The present version of the story differs widely from its predecessor, and consists in presenting the audience with all the most exciting scenes of the plot, with a mere outline of the different characteristics of the well-known individuals who made so good a figure in the pages of the great Wizard of the North. . . . The trial scene was a remarkably effective one, as was the scene where Meg Murdockson kills her daughter, Madge Wildfire, in mistake for Jeannie Deans, at the time when the latter is on her journey to London. The climax to the drama, with the breaking down of the prison gates, and the grouping of the soldiers and the mob, was also very picturesque, and brought down the curtain to a storm of applause. Mrs. Boucicault, as the devoted sister Jeannie, realised

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44 Ibid.

the character completely, and excited the emotions of the house in all the most pathetic passages. . . . Mr. Boucicault, as the counsel for the defence, only appeared in the scene of the trial, and his imitation of a leading counsel in criminal cases was very humorously done. The drama achieved a success, and will doubtless enjoy a long course of popularity.\(^{46}\)

By the fall of 1863, Boucicault had run through his money. Astley's had been an expensive undertaking and as usual Boucicault could not make a "go" as manager. He stated that although "in one year in England he had with his wife's assistance, made £23,000, and at one period £1,000 a week,"\(^{47}\) it had all disappeared in the following two years, "partly through investments in America, which produced only taxes."\(^{48}\)

On the 19th of October, Boucicault "passed his examination and obtained his discharge," in the Court of Bankruptcy. He stated during the proceeding that "Since coming to England in July, 1860, and down to the time of taking Astley's Theatre, his professional earnings had been very large. He paid income-tax on £10,000 per year. — Mr. Lawrence: Then we may reasonably assume that you earned a little more (a laugh)?\(^{49}\) Upon passing the examination, which granted his immediate discharge, the

\(^{46}\) *Bell's Life in London*, February 1, 1863.

\(^{47}\) *The Record*, Richmond, October 29, 1863, I, 188.

\(^{48}\) Ibid.

\(^{49}\) Unidentified clipping in New York City Public Library, dated 1863.
Commissioner "told him he might congratulate himself upon unanimous agreement among his creditors not to oppose him."\textsuperscript{50}

After having declared bankruptcy, Boucicault found it more comfortable to leave London, although, according to all reports, he made every effort to pay his debts and finally did pay them. "Still the provinces offered a promising field, so to the provinces Boucicault went. At Liverpool he worked over \textit{The Poor of New York}, put in a few local allusions, called the result \textit{The Poor of Liverpool}, and pleased everybody."\textsuperscript{51}

Boucicault had taken to the road prior to the passing of his examination in the Court of Bankruptcy, for he and Agnes had played in Agnes' native city, Edinburgh, during the last part of September and the early part of October. A handbill of the Royal Queen's Theatre, Edinburgh, announced "Last week but one of the Present Season. Last week but one of the Engagement of those Distinguished Artists Mr. and Mrs. Dion Boucicault. First night of the great sensation Drama of the Octoroon or Life in Louisiana. Zoe, the Octoroon. . . Mrs. Dion Boucicault Being her First Representation of the character in her Native City. On Wednesday and Thursday Evenings Sept. 30th and Oct 1st /1867\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Anderson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 93-94.
The performance will commence with the Great Sensation Drama, in Five Acts, entitled the Octoroon... to conclude with the Far-Famed Drama, in Three Parts, of The COLLEEN BAWN!"52

The year 1864 was a busy and full year for Dion Boucicault. He traveled a good deal and brought out one new play. Early in the year he was in Manchester. It was while he was playing at this theatre that he met Henry Irving, who was then an unknown actor. At this time, Boucicault did not seem to see the merit of Irving as an actor. "The hot-headed actor-author spoke harshly of them all—with one exception. Oddly enough, considering that in after years Boucicault was one of the various 'discoverers' of Irving—he averred that the stock company of the Theatre Royal contained only one actor—not Henry Irving—who was worthy of praise. For all that, the Hardress Cregan of Irving was much liked..."53

It was to the Princess Theatre in London that Boucicault returned during the summer of 1864. The Princess, under the management of Mr. Vining, was on its last legs; Boucicault stepped in.

"What are your expenses?" he asked. He was told they were seventy pounds a night. He offered to

52 Handbill in New York Public Library.

53 Baker, op. cit., p. 53.
allow the first hundred pounds taken nightly to be appropriated by the manager, thus giving the theatre thirty pounds a night clear profit, and after that whatever was left should be divided. Mr. Vining hesitated. The other managers exerted all their influence to break down the negotiation. Boucicault then promptly offered to secure Mr. Vining by paying down ten thousand pounds, and taking the receipts, whatever they might be during the first hundred nights. Mr. Vining was so astounded by such a proposal that he closed with the first offer, the opposition of the associated managers was defeated, ... 54

It was The Streets of London which he chose to produce. It was nothing more than his old Streets of New York reworked. He had done this earlier, calling it The Streets of Liverpool and later, in March, 1867, he did the same thing with the script for the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, calling it the Streets of Philadelphia. 55

This was another of Boucicault's attempts to make the play the most significant element of the production, rather than the actor. With the opening of the play, the financial status of the Princess was assured. The theatre took its place among the successful and popular houses.

Kenney states:

This practice of the dramatist sharing profits was maintained for ten years before his fellow-authors adopted it, and by these means the play, instead of the star actor or actress, became the feature of


55 Chestnut Street Theatre handbill in New York Public Library.
the theatres in London. It may be regarded as strange that so manifest an advantage to the dramatist should not have received the universal and prompt adherence of all the dramatic authors, but the jealousy and pride of such people must be taken into consideration. It was painful to acknowledge that for so many years they had failed to understand their better interests. The new authors now coming into public favour have no such prejudices. They are adopting, and will continue to adopt, the system which is not only lucrative, but gives the dramatist the prominent position, to which he is fairly entitled.56

The Streets of London had a long and successful run. Just how long can not be determined, but one handbill announced: "the 195th time, The immensely Successful DRAMA, in Three Acts, preceded by a Prologue, entitled The STREETS OF LONDON. by DION BOUCICAULT, ESQ."57 Dion was not listed in the cast, but that is not unusual, for he seems never to have played in this particular piece.

In the fall of 1864, Boucicault returned to his native city, Dublin, and on November 7, 1864, at the old Theatre Royal on Hawkins Street, he presented his second great Irish play entitled Arrah-na-Pogue: or The Wicklow Wedding. It was peculiarly in keeping that the city of Dion's birth should be the first to see one of the best examples of his Irish plays. It is often forgotten that


57 Handbill of Royal Princess's Theatre in New York Public Library.
the Dublin audience saw a version that no one else saw; the play had been largely rewritten before it reached its London audience. It was well mounted with new scenery by F. Lloyds, and this first cast of the play was a brilliant one. Besides Bouchicault and his wife as Shaun the Post and Arrah Neelish, the play had the advantage of William Rignold as Beamish McCold; Mrs. Buckingham White as Fanny Power, and Sam Emery (the father of Winifred Emery) as the uncanny Granyd. John Brougham, who was the living embodiment of the O'Grady, and who had long been an exile from his native land, played the role of Colonel Bagenal O'Grady. The play ran until the 17th of December, after which Boucicault withdrew it and proceeded to rewrite it. It was later to appear at the Princess's Theatre on March 22, 1865. The patriotic hearts of Erin must have beaten with pride when, in the first act, Dion brought about a revival of the old song, "The Wearing of the Green." He had written new stanzas. But "During the English performances, the song had to be omitted." 58

The play was a popular one. On July 10, 1865, it opened for the first time in the city of New York at Niblo's Garden. 59 Even France fell under its spell when it was

58 Quinn, op. cit., p. 380.
59 Niblo's Garden handbill in New York Public Library.
translated by Eugene Nus under the title of Jean la Poste, or Les Noces Irlandaises. An interesting story is told by an unknown writer in the New York Mirror concerning the French translation. It was related that a part of Arrah-na-Pogue was taken from a play by Eugene Nus, entitled The Alsatian. But Boucicault had so completely changed the scene that on seeing the play, Nus failed to recognize that any of it had been taken from his original work. He was much impressed with the script and contracted to adapt and translate it into the French. Whether or not the narrative is true, Nus did translate the play and it had a run for one hundred and forty nights at the Theatre de la Gaiete in 1866.

Their native son had returned, and the city of Dublin was completely taken over with his play. "The Colleen Bawn was running at both the Queen's and the Prince of Wales' theatres at the same time Arrah-na-Pogue was arousing frenzied delight at the Theatre Royal."

On March 22, 1865, Boucicault opened Arrah-na-Pogue at the Princess' Theatre in its rewritten version. It proved to be a grand success. A month or six weeks earlier

60 "Sources of Many Plays," The New York Mirror, April 23, 1887.
61 Quinn, op. cit., p. 380.
62 Anderson, op. cit., p. 95.
63 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
Boucicault had read the play to the assembled actors in the green room of the Princess. After listening patiently to the revisal, Brougham, who had played in the original production, came over to Boucicault, and resting an arm affectionately on his shoulder, said: "Now I know one of the secrets of your success—you can sit in judgment of yourself. After all, this is a better piece than the other." 64

Among the changes that he made in the second version was the elimination of the character Granyd and the elaboration of "the mechanical effect of Shaun's escape from his cell in the old tower, followed by the climb up the ivied wall and the rescue of Arrah from the clutches of Penney." 65

The escape from the cell and the rescue of Arrah was the big "sensation" scene which had become an all important element in Boucicault's later plays. These sensation scenes played so prominent a part in his dramas of this period that it is necessary to take time to see just how one of them was constructed. Vardac describes in great detail the events of this particular scene:

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64 "The Metamorphosis of 'Arrah na Pogue!'" (Special to the "Saturday Herald"); clipping unidentified and undated in New York City Public Library.

65 Walsh, op. cit., p. 102.
The act opens at the Secretary of State's office, where O'Grady obtains pardon for the hero, Shaun, and rushes out to the prison to stop the execu-
tion. From this branch the action cuts across to a second branch, with a forestage scene of Shaun's sweetheart, Arrah, singing on the Rocky Mountain-
side above Shaun's prison. This is a quick "take" on the apron while the next picture in the main
story line, Shaun in his Cell, Prison Interior, is moved into place and revealed, while Arrah, moving
off stage, continues her song. A stone falls into
Shaun's fireplace, and when he looks up, Arrah's
singing comes in louder. Inspired, he plans to
escape by scaling the prison wall which rises pre-
cipitously out of the sea. He "shoves grating and
stone through," and the stage manager strikes "the
sheet of metal several times, fainter and fainter,
as of stone bounding downwards," as Shaun exclaims,
"Whist! I hear it thunderin' down the wall (splash),
it's in the waves below." Then out the hole he goes.

Up to this point the development has come by
cross-cutting between three simultaneous lines of
action. Beaucuart now drops the two tributary
lines and concentrates upon showing all phases in
the progress of the main line, the escape. As Shaun
leaves the Prison Interior, the setting dissolves
into a fresh angle of the same scene as we catch him
on the outside crawling out of the hole and into the
ivy. "Sink table and close trap. Draw in side sets
L. and R. Discover the frame set and set wall with
Shaun halfway up." Now, to show Shaun scaling the
wall, a vertical "tacking" shot was staged. The wall
was designed to pass down across the proscenium
opening, fresh sections coming in from the flies and
disappearing through the stage floor. Shaun works
his way up the wall and Arrah's voice continues.

"Wall descends. Shaun climbs up as wall descends,
and by the ledge reaches the 2d flat of the wall. Climbs up it as soldier (coming on and going off R)
has his back turned toward him. Shaun goes up to the
cannon, climbs on it and out of the gap. Soldier
comes on, looks off front, down the wall, while
Shaun climbs through the gap. Soldier exits R.
Shaun is seen at back of 4th groove flat, climbing
along wall to exit R. All is worked down. Gas up and
Scene last: Arrah is discovered on set back R.
singing as before." Shaun has gone down just below
the stage level with the last flat while lights were
dimmed, and subsequently comes up through the open
trap into the next scene with Arrah on the bank above
the prison.
But at the moment that Shaun disappears through the floor the whistling is interrupted and, as the prison wall scene fades out, the villain, Fenny, is heard accosting Arrah. The Rocky Mountain side is quickly moved in with the lowering of the lights. When the gas is turned up the new scene "fares in" and Fenny is revealed forcing attentions upon Arrah. It now turns into a "chase" sequence, with suspense arising out of whether Shaun will get there in time to save the girl. Needless to say, he does. Feeny discovers Shaun in the trap climbing the wall. He picks up a stone to hurl at him.

"Arrah struggles with Fenny. He is just overpowering her when Shaun's hands appear; then his head; then Shaun seizes Fenny's ankles, the stone and Fenny fall into the trap-hole. Pause. Music all through struggle; dies away, Shaun climbs up exhausted and falls full length on stage beside Arrah. Drum-beat heard below stage level."

The simultaneous development and culmination of these two lines of action provide suspense and climax. When Fenny is finished, still another line of action is introduced with the drum beat from the prison below as the guards are mustered. O'Grady is still en route as the voices of the guards now on the prisoner's trail, come closer. Will O'Grady get there before the guards do? As offstage orders are issued for closing in on Shaun, O'Grady rushes on with the pardon, consummating the third simultaneous line of action and produces climax and resolution.66

One review of the opening of Arrah-na-Pogue at the Princess Theatre revealed a very ingenious device of advertising. It began:

Boardings in and about the metropolis, as our readers may have remarked, have been covered with a poster inscribed with hieroglyphics, as to the exact character and meaning of which popular opinion has varied considerably. Some said they were

a counterpart of the written language of Timbuctoo, others that they were Mandarin Chinese, while others again asserted that they were the specimens of the Foreign Office caligraphy posted up by seditious persons to draw down contempt on the Government. All were, however, wrong, since it now turns out that the hieroglyphics in question represent Irish, and stand for Arrah-na-Pogue, which is the title of Mr. DION BOUCICLAULT'S new drama at the Princess's Theatre, . . .

The review continued in a favorable notice of the performance by saying:

It is seldom that unqualified praise can be given to any production of Mr. DION BOUCICLAULT, for originality, or there is more than a suspicion as to the intrinsic worth, or some other cause which prevents the cup of laudation from being poured upon the BOUCICLAULTIAN performances. It is, therefore, with feelings of pleasure, not unmingled with astonishment, that we find ourselves speaking favourably of Arrah-na-Pogue, or the Wicklow Wedding, a great improvement, in a literary point of view, on the Colleen Bawn. Excellently mounted and very well acted, the piece deserves success. . . .

The "Theatrical Lounger." who had condemned The Life of an Actress so bitterly in 1862 when it was revived, could offer nothing but praise for this production: "a genuine success, and will run for many weeks to come."

He continues:

The plot is simple in the extreme. The scene is laid in the neighbourhood of Dublin, in that fertile year of trouble '98. . . . everyone is made happy, including the audience, whose glistering eyes, liveral use of handkerchief, opera-glass, and palms bear witness to the pleasure derived from the best drama that has been produced since the famous "Colleen Bawn." The dialogue is

67 "At the Play," Fun, April 1, 1865.
full of those Hibernian gems which I will call, for want of a better nomenclature, pathetic bulls—that is, phrases where the direct absence of logic is more powerful, expressive, and truthful than logic itself. There are many of these Irish Diamonds scattered through the work. "Why shouldn't Shaun hear us" says the rascally process-server: "Sure, Arrah, I'm not ashamed of my love for you!" "No!" replies Arrah, "you're not, but I am! I wouldn't like Shaun to think so meanly of me as that you could love me!" This is charmingly Hibernian and feminine. . . . And, again, upon a question of money, Arrah says, also of the process-server, "The mean thief! I believe he thinks sweethearts pay one another!" The acting of the new drama is all that could be desired. Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault are as happy in their new characters as in Miles-na-Coppaleen and the Colleen; Mr. John Brougham gives a most finished picture of the "real Irish gentleman as he existed, and still exists; and Mr. Dominick Murray advanced himself several degrees in public estimation by his admirable performance of the sneaking process-server; . . . One thing I must mention—the capital acting of the minor characters by native Irishmen brought by Mr. Boucicault from Dublin. "It's themselves that are the real boys;" and by themselves I mean the new arrivals, Messrs. Reynolds, Dowling, Gentley, Andrews, and Burke. I would particularly commend Mr. Reynolds as Olly, who kept his long grieve coat tucked up behind him, ready for a dance, a flight, a fight, or any other Hibernian emergency. I will not do Messrs. Telbin and Lloyd's scenery the injustice to attempt to describe it. Their names are sufficient guarantee of its excellence, fidelity, and effect.

As mentioned earlier, Dion had written new words for the "Wearing of the Green," and introduced it into the first act. It was a tremendous success in Ireland and he kept it in the opening night at the Princess. The night that the play was produced at the Princess, Clerkennell

68 "Theatrical Lounger," London Illustrated Times, April 1, 1865.
Prison was blown up by the Fenians. There was a storm of indignation in London and Dion's English associates and admirers advised him not to sing it, but sing it he would and did, and it almost raised a riot.

"It resulted in the Cabinet Ministers of the late Queen issuing an edict prohibiting singing of the song in the British dominions, and for years, although it thrilled the heart of every Irishman, it was never heard in public."  

In the Summer of 1865, Joseph Jefferson came to England. His wife had died and to ease his loneliness he had taken to wandering; California, Australia, South America, and finally England. Jefferson had arrived in London anxious to act, but all his plays had been presented there before. "The managers would not give him an appearance unless he could offer them a new play. He had once played a piece called Rip Van Winkle," but when it was "submitted to their perusal, they rejected it."  

When Jefferson met Boucicault in London, Boucicault asked him what he intended to do. Jefferson answered that he would like to act if the opportunity offered itself. Boucicault asked him what material he had. Jefferson answered that he "had a great part in an indifferent play, 'Rip Van Winkle.'"

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70 Mathews and Hutton, op. cit., p. 169.

Boucicault relates, "he was so desirous of playing Rip that I took down Washington Irving's story and read it over. The version that Jefferson had was that of Charles Burke, founded on the Washington Irving story. Boucicault ignored this script and went to the original story. It was hopelessly undramatic," continued Boucicault.

"Joe," I said, "this old sot is not a pleasant figure. He lacks romance. I dare say you made a fine sketch of the old beast, but he is not dramatic. I would prefer to start him in a play as a young scamp—thoughtless, gay, just such a curly-headed, good-humored fellow as all the village girls would love, and the children and dogs would run after." Jefferson threw up his hands in despair. It was totally opposed to his artistic preconception. But I insisted, and he reluctantly conceded.

While the play was in process of being written, Jefferson contracted with Benjamin Webster to act the part at his theatre. Jefferson was unaware of the trouble Webster and Boucicault had had at an earlier date. This hatred of the two men all but prevented the performance. "The play was finished in due time, and a day was set for reading it to the company. The time arrived, and I hastened to the theatre with some anxiety, for I am always attacked with a nervous fit when I am to meet a new assemblage of actors and actresses," relates Jefferson. "I of course had expected both Boucicault, the author, and Webster, the manager, to meet and assist at the reading, but when I got

72 Dion Boucicault, The Critic, April 7, 1883.
to the theatre I found letters from both, saying that they could not attend. . . . so I read the play. . . ."73

While Boucicault was writing the play he read some of it to Jefferson. Upon reading the recognition scene between Hip and Meenie, Boucicault turned and asked Jefferson, "'Do you recognize it?'" Wilson records the story as told by Jefferson--

"'Why, no--what do you mean?' I said.
'Why, it is the Lear and Cordelia scene reversed. In 'King Lear' it is Cordelia who longs for recognition; here it is Hip--the man--who seeks to be known.' and sure enough it was true. He had made a very skilful rearrangement of a familiar scene.

'Boucicault had a great memory and a marvelous faculty for adaptation, but he would dabble in stocks, where, it seems to me, every fellow is scrambling for the other fellow's money. My profession does not teach me that. I never invest my money in anything I cannot see.'74

Jefferson relates an amusing incident, amusing at least to us, but almost fatal to the success of Rip.

While the play was in rehearsal I was desirous that Boucicault should see how I had arranged the business of the scene, as I knew that his judgment and opinion upon what I had done would be of value, and would serve to strengthen the effects. So it was arranged that a full rehearsal of the play and the scenery should take place on the Monday preceding the production, and that he was to be present.

With my portion of the work he seemed well pleased, but during the setting of the scenery something went wrong; nothing of very great importance, I fancy, or I think I should remember the

73 Jefferson, op. cit., p. 303.
details of it. It was, however, enough to start him off, and in a rage he roundly abused the theatre and its manager. . . . Mr. Boucicault, now that an opportunity offered of his speaking his mind before Mr. Webster's company, launched forth against the manager, the theater, and its misrule with great energy. He denounced the whole establishment, spoke of his own experience on that stage, and likened the present to the former imbecility of management to which he had been subjected, and so revenged himself on the absent manager by holding him up to scorn before the actors. After the rehearsal was over, and the enraged author had departed, I found that the company were very indignant at Boucicault's abuse of their absent chief. Mr. Phillips, the stage-manager, took me aside and told me that he feared much trouble would arise from the scene that had just taken place; and to my surprise informed me that Webster, knowing that Boucicault would be present was there himself, concealed behind the curtains of a private box, where he had heard the whole affair. Webster was very bitter when transformed into an enemy; and I can imagine the furious glare that must have been in his fierce eyes as he listened to the abuse of Boucicault, who quite innocent of his presence, had been thus denouncing him. . . . I was about leaving the theatre in quest of Mr. Webster when the call boy handed me a note from him. It was short, but entirely to the point; it referred in no very complimentary terms to the scene that had just taken place and to the author of it, and concluded by saying that he could not allow any play of Mr. Boucicault's to be acted in his theatre. . . . Jefferson went to Webster's home to try to dissuade him from his decision. He suggested that we should discard Boucicault's play and substitute the old version. To this I answered nay, explaining to him that not only was Boucicault's play infinitely superior to the old one, but that I had made my agreement with the author, and it must be kept. I insisted that I would not submit to act the Mercutio in the matter, and so fall because of a quarrel between the Montagues and the Capulets, and finished by showing him that it might be disastrous to his season to throw aside a good play ready for production and trust to chance to fill up the vacancy. He began at last to see the matter in the light in which I had placed it, and withdrew his objections, though with much reluctance.

75 Jefferson, op. cit., pp. 303-08.
At last, the curtain was raised on *Rip Van Winkle* on September 4, 1865, and it met with instant success.76

After the conclusion of the engagement at the Adelphi, Jefferson appeared at Manchester in another play during the month of May, 1866, entitled *The Parish Clerk*, which Boucicault wrote especially for him. However it was not much of a success.77 Jefferson described the piece as "a beautiful little drama," but added that it did not succeed "partly because it weakened after the second act, and partly in consequence of my failing to hit the leading character."78

While Boucicault was in England, he was not completely forgotten in America. His pieces were continually being revived. On December 12, 1865, a new Boucicault play was given for the first time at Wallack's Theatre entitled *How She Loves Him*. Lester Wallack, Charles Fisher, and Mary Gannon were in the leading parts.79 It must have been quite a success, for on May 29, 1866, a handbill of Wallack's Theatre announced: "Last night this season of

Mr. Boucicault's New Comedy, with entirely New Scenery, Dresses, Furniture, and Appointments, entitled HOW SHE LOVES HIM. One of the Greatest Successes Ever Achieved in this Theatre." Other plays of Boucicault were being produced in New York too. It was only a short time after Arrah-na-Pogue had opened in London, March 22, 1865, that it had its first production in New York at Niblo's Garden on July 12.

During the summer of 1866, Boucicault was in Manchester, at which time he produced some plays which were to arrive later on the boards in London. Mention has already been made of the fact that Jefferson appeared in The Parish Clerk during the month of May, 1866. It was later brought to London.

The Long Strike, partly founded on Lizzie Leigh, was produced at the Lyceum Theatre in London during September 1866 with Boucicault in the role of Johnny Reilly. Agnes Robertson played the role of Jane Learoyd. "It was a successful specimen of Boucicault's art of the stage, the famous telegraph scene making the play." In

81 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
82 Mathews and Hutton, op. cit., p. 82.
New York, where the play was produced almost as soon as it was in London, J. H. Stoddart won so many plaudits as Moneypenny that he later bought the rights to the play from Boucicault. A review of this play indicated that it was well written and acted.

THE LYCEUM opened on Saturday. The romantic drama, of which "The Duke's Motto," "Bel Demonico," and "The Bride of Lammermoor" were such admirable specimens, is dethroned, and realism reigns in its stead. But it must be understood that it is realism, of a high order—It is photography, but photography of a good sort, coloured and touched by the hand of an artist, and beautifully framed. Mr. Boucicault's new drama of "The Long Strike" is a well-told and compact story, the incidents of which are far from improbable. The time is the present. The scene is laid entirely in and near Manchester, with the exception of one scene on board a vessel in the Mersey. The drama is liberally mounted and admirably acted, the chief honours falling to Mr. Emery. Our London theatres have gained an acquisition in the person, bearing, voice, and artistic intelligence of Mr. Cowper, of whom I am glad to augur good things. Mrs. Boucicault is as charming as she was as Arrah-na-Pogue and the famous Colleen; but this time she speaks in a Lancashire dialect; and Mr. Boucicault plays the small part of the Irish seaman excellently. Too much praise cannot be given to the mounting of "The Long Strike." The delegates, played by Messrs. Howard, Robinson, and Harding, and the operatives, so truthfully reproduced by Messrs. Reynolds and Power, are masterpieces of dramatic photography. Having been so far complimentary, let me object in the strongest terms to the last act of the new drama. The ship is unreal; and the trial scene so violates the well-known customs of a criminal court as to approach the ridiculous. In a drama where details are so highly elaborated the leaders on circuit should not have been young men. The dialogue is well and

83 Anderson, op. cit., p. 100.
nervously written, the best things being reserved for the mouth of the Irish sailor. If Mr. Boucicault will only consent to alter his last act, "The Long Strike" is sure to enjoy a long run.

On October 6 of the same year, 1866, The Flying Scud, or a Four-Legged Fortune was brought out at the opening of the new Holborn Theatre. The New Holborn was a new theatre of which Mr. Sefton Parry was the lessee and manager. It was situated on the great thoroughfare from which it took its name. It was "one of the prettiest and most commodious in town." Could it have been that since the new theatre was "erected on the site of stables, and that the performers enter the stage door from the peculiarly unverdant region which has through centuries retained the name of Jockey’s-fields," that Boucicault chose the subject of horse racing for the first play that the theatre was to present?

...the dramatist has made a sacrifice to what we may not perhaps irreverently term the manes of the departed inhabitants. In his new racing drama, which is entitled "Flying Scud; or a Four-legged Fortune," Mr. Dion Boucicault professedly aims at showing "the ups and downs, crosses, double crosses, events, and vicissitudes of life on the turf." The drama may not be regarded by stern judges as taking very high rank as a literary composition; but it is so ingeniously constructed as to keep up the attention of the audience by rapidity of incident, and

84 "Theatrical Lounger," The London Illustrated Times, September 29, 1866.

85 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
there is one scene in the piece which not only roused the audience of Saturday night to a pitch of enthusiasm never exceeded in any theatre, but which it is safe to predict will for months to come furnish all play-goers with a topic for conversation and fill the theatre with fresh relays of excited spectators. . . .

The racing scene created quite a furore in the London audience; the same was true when it played in America. The London Times of October 8, 1866, gave a vivid picture of the enthusiastic reception.

The last scene of the act represents the course on Derby-day, enlivened with all those minute realities that are combined in Mr. Firth’s celebrated picture. . . . To describe the excitement of the audience during this scene would be impossible. Carried on by the course of events, they had so completely identified their own feelings with those of Nat Gosling that they watched the progress of the mimic race with an anxiety that could scarcely have been surpassed if every one of them had actually put his money on Flying Scud. The shout from pit, boxes, and gallery that greeted the old jockey when he came forward as the victor expressed not only violent approbation, but a strong sense of relief. Thank goodness! the "Legs are defeated and the Derby winner is Flying Scud."

Micoll, in describing the drama, says: "the drama is built in a series of sensational and novel episodes. As Professor Odell says, it was 'one of the first plays to center in a horse race,' and Townsend Walsh calls it 'one of the first of that interminable series of plays called 'racing dramas,' full of direct claptrap appeals which the gallery never fails to answer.' According to the Times,

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86 Unidentified clipping in New York Public Library, dated October 13, 1866.
the actual race was shown to the audience by means of 'Small profile horses in the background and at the end Nat appears in front, seated on a real, live Flying Scud.' The duel scene on Calais sands gave opportunity for another elaborate and beautiful setting as well as a new thrill; and the introduction of a divertissement executed by a chorus of jockeys, all played by women, presented a Terpsichorean intrusion. . . highly relished by the spectators." 37

Nicoll evaluates the play by saying: "The production of Flying Scud cannot be said to have added anything to the reputation of Dion Boucicault as a literary dramatist, but it certainly swelled his popularity with both English and American audiences; . . ." 38 The play ran for two hundred nights in London and forty-one in its New York Premiere.

Hunted Down was the fourth play to be offered by Boucicault during the season of 1866. On November 5, it had its London showing at the St. James Theatre. If for no other reason, the play is significant because it introduced Henry Irving to the theatre-going public of London.


38 Ibid.
Irving had appeared in the original production at Manchester on July 30, in the part of Rawdon Soudamore. Apparently Boucicault had revised his opinion of Irving's acting ability since he last came in contact with him, for he gave the play to the St. James' Theatre on the condition that the management should engage the then unknown comedian, Henry Irving.

Hunted Down, when originally produced at the Prince's Theatre in Manchester had been called The Two Lives of Mary Leigh. It was a society drama based on the French play, Fille a Deux Maris.

The year 1867 was relatively uneventful for the Boucicaults. During the month of January, Boucicault's Streets of London was playing at the Princess's Theatre, which was still under the management of Mr. Vining. A handbill dated Monday, January 28, 1867, stated that during the week the "... COMEDIETTA, by CHAS. DANCE, Esq. entitled DELICATE GROUND. After which 271st, 272nd, 273rd, 274th and 276th Nights of the DRAMA, in Three Acts, preceded by a Prologue, entitled the STREETS OF LONDON. ..."

Later in the year, during the month of October, Mr. Vining had a successful run of Arrah-na-Pogue. The News commented on "the acting of Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault being as

89 Kenney, op. cit., p. 18.
In 1867, during the month of April, another of Boucicault's lesser plays, *A Wild Goose Chase*, was produced. It was based on *Lady Leigh's Widowhood*, which had appeared at an earlier date in Blackwood's Magazine. In spite of a good cast, which included Buckstone and E. A. Sothern, the play added little to the fame or success of Boucicault.

In November Boucicault was again in the law courts. He brought suit against Mr. Egan, the late lessee of the Queen's Theatre at Manchester, "for having brought out a play which he called The Great Strike" which Boucicault claimed had been pirated from his own play entitled *The Long Strike*. Boucicault asked for £2,000 damages, "but the jury thought £446 was sufficient."

During the month of December, 1867, the Bancrofts, who were managing the Prince of Wales Theatre, revived *How She Loves Him*. They managed to keep it on the boards for forty-seven nights beginning December 21, but the play was not a success. Boucicault refused to accept any fees from them because of its failure, and he wrote to them—

"I regret that my comedy was caviare to the public. I doubted its agreement with their taste and

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90 The London Illustrated News, October 19, 1867.
91 Walsh, op. cit., p. 113.
92 Bell's Life in London, November 16, 1867.
stomach, and so told you before it was played.

"If it has profited you little money, lay by its experience. And Boucicault offered here his opinion of what the public taste demanded."

"The public pretend they want comedy; that is not so. What they want is domestic drama, treated with broad comic character. A sentimental, pathetic play, comically rendered, such as Ours, Caste, The Colleen Bawn, Arrah-na-Pogue. . . .

"Be advised, then; refuse dramas which are wholly serious or wholly comic---seek those which blend the two. You have solved this very important question yourself. Comedy, pure and simple, is rejected of 1868."93

It was the play and not the production that had failed with Bancroft's performance of How She Loves Him. Boucicault, of course, chose to blame the audience. But "great preparations" were made for "a fit production." One commentator was pleased to learn "that the services of that rising artiste, Mr. H. J. Montague," were retained specially to represent one of the principal characters. This particular journal stated that it "was the first to note and recognize the histrionic capacities and subsequent increasing theatrical tact, taste, and skill of Mr. Montague. He [was] evidently one of those wise heads in the profession who deem constant study and minute attention to details as requisite for the upholding of an honourable position raised by industry and pluck."94

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93 Bancroft, op. cit., I, 1.

94 Bell's Life in London, December 14, 1867.
Boucicault was releasing his plays for American production as fast as he could so that he could reap returns from both sides of the water. In the spring of 1867, Wallack played both *Hunted Down* and *The Flying Scud.*

During the week of March 23, 1868, the Boucicaults were again at the Princess's Theatre, for a handbill announced their appearance in *Jeanie Deans; or, The Heart of Mid-Lothian.* Boucicault played the Counsel for the Defense and Agnes played Jeanie Deans.

On May 28, 1868, under the management of Fanny Josephs, *Foul Play* was produced for the first time at the Holborn Theatre. Charles Reade, the novelist, began the dramatization of *Foul Play* under the title of "It's Never Too Late to Mend." He allowed Boucicault to have the manuscript. A short while passed. Then a letter arrived from Boucicault from Dublin:

MY DEAR READE: I have read your drama "N.T.L.T.M." There is in it a very effective piece, but, like the

95 Handbills of Wallack's theatre dated April 6, 1867 announced "Third Night in America of... Hunted Down" and April 27, 1867 announced "Mr. Wallack begs to announce that he has made arrangements with Dion Boucicault, Esq., for the production of his last and most triumphant success a Drama, in 4 acts, entitled FLYING SCUD: Or a Four-Legged Fortune."

96 Handbill of Princess's Theatre dated March 23, 1868, in New York Public Library.

nut within both husk and shell, it wants freedom.
1st. It will not act five hours as it stands.
2nd. There are scenes which injure dramatically
others which follow.
3rd. There are two characters you are fond of (I
suppose), but can never be played. I mean
Jacky and the Jew.
4th. The dialogue wants weeding. It is more in
weight than actors—as they breed them now—
can carry.

Total. If you want to make a success with this
drama, you must consent to depleting process to
which Shylock's single pound of flesh must be a
mild transaction. Have you the courage to undergo
the operation? I am afraid you have not.

Ever yours,

DION BOUCICHAULT.98

Apparently Reade "had the courage to undergo the
operation," for the play opened with credits of authorship
going to both Reade and Boucicault. One review of the
play stated:

The long promised dramatic version, by Messrs.
Boucicault and Charles Reade, of their popular
novel "Foul Play," has been successfully produced
at this now elegantly appointed theatre. It is
most effectively adapted to the stage. . . . and
nothing has been seen for some time on the stage
more effective than the biaca-merol arrangement,
by which the interiors of two garrets, seen at the
same time, reveal the course taken by the detective
to entrap the mate of the Prosperine, who has con-
celed the boxes of gold in the vaults below. . .

But it was not a success and only brought about another ac-
cusation of plagiarism. One critic brought to light a

98 Moses, op. cit., pp. 131-32.
99 Unidentified clipping in New York Public Library
dated June 6, 1869, P.O.P.
French play, *Le Forte-Feuille Rogue*, by Mme. Fournier and Meyer, which he accused Boucicault of having used more than just as a model. Reade was enraged; he declared he knew nothing of the French play, and so Boucicault got the blame. The play was later produced in America at the New York Theatre on August 3, 1868, and in Boston by September it was playing in two different theatres concurrently "while still another theatre presented a burlesque of this drama, entitled 'Chicken Hazard.'"

In the fall of 1868, Boucicault's melodrama *After Dark, a Tale of London Life* was produced at the Princess's Theatre on August 12, under the management of G. Vining. It was not highly regarded by the critics of the time.

One reviewer said:

"Though Mr. Dion Boucicault's new play, "After Dark" is scarcely worthy of his reputation as the leading dramatist of the day, it is inferior to one of his previous works as an example of consummate stage tact and of a keen perception of the taste prevalent among the present generation of playgoers. That taste consists in a strong desire to witness on the boards of a theatre an accurate representation, not so much of human nature as of the details of actual life amid which, at this particular period, human nature is developed..."

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100 John Coleman, *Players and Playwrights I Have Known* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1883), II, 73.


"After Dark" belongs to precisely the same school of drama as "The Streets of London," which, likewise from the pen of Mr. Boucicault, was the great "sensational" piece some three seasons ago. Both works had a French origin, and Mr. Boucicault honestly states in his programme that the subject of his most recent work is "derived from a melodrama by Messrs. D'Ennery and Orange, with their permission." The best conflagration ever witnessed on any stage, and a wonderfully close representation of Trafalgar-square, with all its animate and inanimate appurtenances, constituted the main attractions of the earlier piece, and the dawning popularity of the new one is ensured by similar means.

The gallant Captain is rendered insensible by means of hooch'd liquor administered by the villains, and in this condition he is laid across the rails of the Metropolitan line to be crushed by the coming train. The whistle of the locomotive is heard, and the destruction of the prostrate man seems inevitable; but he is perceived and snatched up at the right moment by the ever-ready Old Tom, and then the train sweeps across the stage, raising the audience to a perfect fever of excitement. This scene, which is the grand "sensation" of the whole, is taken from an American piece entitled "Under the Gaslight," which, produced about a year ago at the so-called New York Theatre, was the subject of much talk in the Empire City.

As we have already observed, the attraction of "After Dark" depends greatly on the very real realities with which it abounds, and which made an imposing show both on the stage and in the programme. There is the Victoria Station, so closely copied that, as far as his eyes are concerned, the spectator is transported from Oxford-street to Pimlico. There is a wonderful representation of that wonderful object which Mr. Boucicault not inaptly terms "Blackfriars Bridge on crutches." There is the Underground Railway above described; and, that the Music-hall may be sufficiently real, a real music-hall vocalist has been engaged to sing a popular song called "Tommy Dodd," in the course of which the mimic audience resolutely and vigorously join.
It was this railroad scene that put Boucicault's name in the Courts of law again when *After Dark* was produced at Niblo's Garden, for this scene bore a striking resemblance to the principal incident of Augustin Daly's *Under the Gaslight*. The Courts gave Daly the American rights to use the scene and Jarrett and Palmer had to pay Daly royalties for each of their performances at Niblo's.  

During the fall of 1868, the Boucicaults were playing in Dublin at the Theatre Royal. It was there, while appearing in *Arrah-na-Pogue*, that both Agnes and Dion took their leave from the professional stage as actors. Kenney attributes Boucicault's retirement to the fact that during the production of *After Dark* at the Princess's Theatre he was "attacked with nervous prostration, which obliged him to leave the stage..."  

On Saturday evening, November 28, 1868, before "an overflowing and enthusiastic audience," Dion bade farewell to the stage as an actor. But let the *Times* relate this final scene:

... At the termination of the play Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault came before the curtain, in compliance with a vociferous demand from all parts of the house, and received an ovation which lasted several minutes. On their retirement, a second call was

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made for a speech from Mr. Boucicault, when he came forward and, labouring under great emotion, said:—"Ladies and Gentlemen,—I would very much rather you had not called upon me to say 'Farewell!' but you have done so in such a spirit and in such a way that I must come to bid you good-bye, though totally unprepared to make any observations. I have not so announced it, but this is our last appearance on any stage; and there are peculiar reasons why I should come to play in this drama and bid you farewell. This is my native city ('We are proud of you,' and applause,.) My earliest associations are all connected with this place ('More power!' and loud cheers); and perhaps a greater reason—I don't know whether it be really so—I like to think that you have received me more warmly than any others (Tumultuous cheering, and a cry of 'You are not appreciated anywhere else'). My better self ('Bring her out!') has been in the public service ever since she was a child—twenty years—sixteen of which she has passed by my side ('Let her stand beside you now!' and great cheers); and I think, now that she has helped me to gain an honourable independence, it is time she should (loud applause, during which the rest of the sentence was lost)—and when she retires from public life the stage will no longer have any charms for me ('You must come back!' and cheers.) I intend to devote myself entirely to literary pursuits, and I shall endeavour to send you, from time to time, pictures of Irish life and Irish character better even than those of the 'Colleen Bawn' and 'Arrah-na-Pogue;' and, I shall be with you in spirit, any way. I do not know what literary value may be attached to these works; but they contain the true Irish spirit. I come, therefore, to bid you farewell ('no, no'.), and hoping you may retain some pleasant memories of us, I can assure you that we shall never forget your unbounded kindness (Roars of applause, during which Mr. Boucicault retired)." 106

Since Dion and Agnes had taken their farewell from the stage as actors, Dion devoted his full time to writing.

106 The London Illustrated Times, December 5, 1863, pp. 356-57.
He began to turn out plays with much speed and, as a result of little consequence. Probably one of the most exciting results of Boucicault's writings was head-lined in a local paper as "FLYING SCUD IN THE STREET." To those who were "up" on their theatre, this would probably indicate that the production of the Flying Scud had been tossed out of its theatre; but such was not the case. Let the reporter tell it in his own words:

FLYING SCUD IN THE STREET.—Great excitement was created in Edgware Road the other evening by the appearance of a horse and jockey in full racing costume galloping madly towards the Marble Arch. A hue and cry was at once raised at such a novel sight, but all attempts to stop the horse were unavailing until the park was reached, when, the horse getting exhausted, the jockey managed to pull him up. On inquiry, it seems that the jockey and horse were to have taken part in Mr. Boucicault's drama of "Flying Scud," now being performed at the Alfred Theatre; but just before going on the stage the horse trod on a bag of torpedoes, used to imitate the cracking of whips, and the loud bang of these torpedoes so alarmed the animal that he bolted out of a side door, leaving, for the first time of his many performances, the race to be won by a dummy, and the curtain to fall on an inglorious tableau. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Boucicault brought out five different scripts during the year of 1869. The first was produced at the Queen's Theatre on May 1, 1869. It was called Seraphine; or, A Devotee. It proved to be an insignificant little drama based on a version of Victorian Sardou's drama,

107 Unidentified clipping in New York Public Library dated April 24, 1869.
Seraphine. It was not a success and Boucicault was the first to "disclaim all connections with the piece," on the ground that alterations had been made "without his sanction." A review of the performance would indicate that it was a poor piece, for it said:

There is little to admire in Mr. Boucicault's version of Victorien Sardou's drama, "Seraphine." The piece is poorly constructed as he presents it; the story is obscure in many parts, and where it is not obscure it is either improbable or impossible. The dialogue is so extremely feeble that it is difficult to suppose Mr. Boucicault had any hand in it. There is no trace whatever of that sharp caustic interchange of conversation that characterises even the weakest of Mr. Boucicault's dramas. "Seraphine" has all the air of a very clumsy translation, and the clumsiness of the translation is not redeemed by any trace of the excellent stage management for which Mr. Boucicault is so famous. When there are more than three people on the stage at a time, the "business" of the scene is allowed to work itself out. Now, in a piece for which Mr. Boucicault is responsible this should not be. With all his showman faults, Mr. Boucicault is a very skilful playwright, and a very excellent stage manager; and, if a play of his is deficient in dialogue, and stage management, we look naturally to some outside cause for an explanation of this phenomenon.

On the opening night a handbill was circulated in which Boucicault disclaimed all connection with the piece, on the ground that alterations had been made without his sanction. But the reviewer placed all the blame on Boucicault himself by adding:

...I happen to know that the facts of the case were as follows: Mr. Boucicault did not come to the rehearsal of his production, but delegated its superintendence to his secretary. Now, in the course of the rehearsals of every new piece, it is found necessary to make certain alterations; this speech has to be cut down, that speech has to be lengthened,
and so on; and, of course, these alterations are always made by the author. But as on this occasion the author of the play was not present at all, the duty of making these indispensable alterations devolved on the manager or stage manager of the theatre; and, of course, in Mr. Boucicault's absence, they exercised their prerogative whenever they thought it necessary to do so. How far their alterations have conduced to the success (such as it is) of the drama I am not in a position to say; but it is difficult to imagine that any dialogue inserted by the management could materially affect the success of so clumsily-written a piece. "Seraphine" has all the advantages that good scenery and careful acting can give it.

It could be that the reason why Dion did not attend rehearsals of Seraphine was that he was busy with readying the script and the production of a play called Presumptive Evidence at the Princess's Theatre that opened on May 10, 1869. It was produced, following the completion of the run of After Dark. There has always been some confusion about this play, because of the fact that Buckstone had written a play with the same title. When the play was moved to America and produced in Philadelphia in 1874, it was renamed Mercy Dodd. Nicoll comments:

The play did not enjoy a great measure of success, but it is interesting to us for its introduction of another Boucicault sensation scene—an exterior-interior setting showing Sir Bertie Buckthorne's library, a balcony overlooking the adjacent garden, and a large tree, a limb of which overhangs the balcony and thus gives access to the room; by some device the balcony collapses when Sir Birtie and Bobby Saker struggle over the possession of an important document, and men and timbers crash to the

earth. Of interest also, is the character of Brassey, one of those flinty-souled detectives who never forgets a ticket-of-leave-man's face. Judging from the review in the Illustrated London News for May 15, the final curtain "was rather too sentimental for a certain portion of the audience," and certainly we feel a similar reaction when reading the denouement seventy years after the first performance. 109

On Thursday, August 5, 1869, Boucicault brought out his third play of this series of five at Drury Lane Theatre, which was under the management of P. B. Chatterton at this time. The play was entitled Formosa; or, The Railroad to Ruin. "It was a thriller," adds Anderson, "Londoners flocked to see it." Among those who saw it was James Anderson, who wrote of his visit:

"Edward Moore and I dined at the Garrick on August 23rd, and went to see Dion Boucicault's new drama, Formosa, and were surprised to see so great a house to so poor a play. It was furiously assailed by the gentlemen of the press; but Dion defended his pet courtesan, the heroine, so manfully in his letters to the newspapers that the public filled the theatre nightly. The public is a spoiled child, and will have what it likes, no matter how unwholesome."110

Henry Irving and Katherine Rogers appeared in the leading parts, but the biggest drawing card seemed to be the spectacular scene of the boat race, in the fifth scene of the fourth act. Yardac says:

The climax of the play, a boat race, contains a few lines of dialogue but a carefully developed

109 America's Lost Plays, op. cit., I, 131.
plan of stage action. One wonders where, in this staged motion picture, real actors could have mixed with the two-dimensional profile rowers and cheering spectators which were all operated mechanically in the fashion of puppets on the ends of strings.¹¹¹

But even if the press did find fault with the play, the public favored the boat-race and Chatterton and Boucicault made £12,000 from the play.¹¹²

In October there was a presentation of Formosa at the Boston Theatre, which caused considerable comment on account of the boldness of its theme, but which failed to draw."¹¹³

On Monday, September 6, 1869, a "New Romantic Comedy, in 5 Acts, by T. W. Robertson Esq., and Dion Boucicault, Esq.," was presented at the Fifth Avenue Theatre under the management of Augustin Daly. It was entitled Dreams.¹¹⁴ It was a short-lived work and soon forgotten.

In the fall of 1869, Boucicault collaborated again, this time with Henry J. Byron, in a play entitled Lost at Sea, which had its premier on the night that the Adelphi opened its doors for the season on October 2, 1869. It was similar to his other melodramas like The Poor of New York, After Dark, and The Long Strike. The reviewers predicted

¹¹¹ Vardac, op. cit., pp. 51-52.
¹¹³ Tompkins, op. cit., p. 158-59.
¹¹⁴ Fifth Avenue Theatre handbill in New York Public Library.
a "prosperous career." Its spectacular scene was not as "colossal" as some of Boucicault's previous ones, but it was worthy of mention.

The play, which is not, we believe, derived from any foreign source, has evidently been written under the influence of Adelphi traditions. The romance of crime which forms its staple is somewhat rudely interwoven with low-comedy scenes, in the old-fashioned way, and altogether the writing is not much above that of a Coburg drama of the better sort. Nevertheless, thanks in some measure to the never-failing devices of a house terribly on fire and a realistic representation of the Thames Embankment, with illuminated coaches and omnibuses crossing a bridge in the distance... 115

The Illustrated Times quoted an extract from the critique from the Morning Post which included:

"'Lost at Sea,' which has for its main interest, the monetary crisis of three years ago, may be scarcely denominated sensational in the strictest sense of the term... It is, however, eminently realistic, as we have a real banking-house, with real clerks shovelling souverigns and posting books, so true to nature that they forget not to say to a customer, 'How'll you have it?'..." 116

As in the previous year, Boucicault brought out five scripts in 1870. None was very important.

On March 7, 1870, a new Boucicault play was produced at the Princess's Theatre entitled Paul Legaré; or, Self-Made! A handbill of the Princess stated that the drama had been derived from an old French Piece. Also on the 21st of

115 The Penny Illustrated Paper, October 9, 1869, p. 234.
116 The London Illustrated Times, November 6, 1869.
the month, on the same bill with Paul Lagarge, a handbill stated that *A Dark Night's Work* would be presented. It added that this work was "From a Drama by Eugene Scribe by Dion Boucicault." 117

Although Anderson states that the next play, *The Rapparee, or The Treaty of Limerick*, opened on September 8, 1870, a handbill of the Princess's Theatre announced that *The Rapparee* opened on Monday, September 5. 118 It would seem that Boucicault took his ideas for this play from several sources; namely, Brougham's *Emerald Ring*, Victor LeJour's *Madame des Roses*, and Watts Phillips's *Camilla's Husbands*. 119 It was a "period" piece with the setting in the year 1691, "and the action takes place on the western shores of Ireland at the time the Irish-French army of James II surrendered to the Anglo-Dutch troops of William of Orange. . . ." 120


118 Handbill of Princess's Theatre, September 6, 1870. The handbill stated: "On Monday, September 5th, 1870, and during the week the Performances will commence at SEVEN with STIRLING COYNE'S FARCE, in One act, WANTED, 1,000 Milliners. After which, a New Romantic Drama, in Three acts, Entitled The Rapparee, or, The Treaty of Limerick, written by Dion Boucicault. . . ."

119 "Sources of Many Plays," The New York Mirror, April 23, 1887.

120 "'The Rapparee' At the Princess's Theatre," The London Illustrated Times, October 22, 1870.
On December 5, 1870, Sefton Parry, manager of the Helborn Theatre, brought out Boucicault's last play of the year entitled Jezebel; or, The Dead Reckoning. Henry Nevill and Katherine Rogers played the leading roles.

Elfie; or, The Cherry-tree Inn made its first appearance at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, under the management of E. Saker, on Monday, May 1, 1871. It was "only slightly more worthy than Jezebel." The play appeared in New York at Wallack's Theatre on Wednesday, July 26, 1871. Tompkins states: "Elfie, the Maid of the Cherry Tree Inn," a drama which Dion Boucicault had contracted to write for Lotta but had been unable to finish on time and had therefore returned the money advanced by her, to continue the work at his leisure, was produced on September 11 in Boston for two weeks with members of Wallack's Theatre Company in the cast. A handbill of the Boston Theatre announced for this Boston showing:

"Boucicault's $10,000 play with Miss Effie Germon, Mr.

121 The New York Daily Times, September 19, 1890.
122 Dion Boucicault, Elfie; or, The Cherry-tree Inn, American Acting Drama (Chicago: The Dramatic Publishing Company), preface.
124 Handbill for Wallack's Theatre, in New York Public Library.
125 Tompkins, op. cit., p. 179.
Chas. Wheatleigh, Mr. Charles Fisher and Mr. Teesdale All of whom will sustain their original roles, as played by them at Wallack's (N.Y.) and the Walnut Street (Philadelphia) Theatres, supported by a well-selected Company. . ..

Boucicault returned to the professional stage as an actor on November 29, 1871, at the Gaiety Theatre, London, in a new piece which he had written entitled Night and Morning. The role that he performed was the old Irish servant Kerry. Under the play's original title it was often confused with Bulwer's novel, Night and Morning, which was later dramatized by John Brougham with the same title. But the Boucicault piece had no resemblance to these. His drama was in reality a translation of Madame Emile de Girardin's La Joie fait Peur into an Irish setting. The play later became known by the part which Boucicault made famous by his acting of the role of Kerry. The Birmingham Gazette reported this reappearance saying:

The return of Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault to the stage has somewhat surprised the metropolitan theatrical world. . . .after renewing his old associations with the drama in the provinces, he has returned to London, and on Wednesday evening he was cordially greeted at the Gaiety, when he reappeared

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126 Handbill of Boston Theatre, September 15, 1871, in New York Public Library.

127 Dion Boucicault, Kerry, or Night and Morning (Sergel's Acting Drama, no. 370), preface.
in'the metropolis after an absence of four years.

There can be no question of the singular excellence of his performance, and all the best histrionic qualifications of the performer are conspicuously displayed in the course of the piece. Mrs. Boucicault is announced to appear in Mr. Boucicault's three-act drama of "Elifie," on Saturday next. Sixteen nights are to form the limit of the present engagement; but eighty-four nights more are announced, to commence from the first week in May next year. At the expiration of this "farewell engagement" of one hundred nights, Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault depart for America. 128

And as the Birmingham Gazette had announced, the Boucicaults returned for a spring engagement at the Gaiety in May 1872. Dion and Agnes appeared in some of their old successes, such as The Colleen Bawn and Arrah-na-Pogue. In July, also at the Gaiety, Boucicault produced his own version of Colman's John Bull, in which he played the part of Dennis Blugrundy. 129

During the month of May Boucicault let it be known what his tentative schedule for the coming year was to be. A local paper carried the information, indicating that Dion anticipated a busy season.

Some idea of his appetite for work may be formed by considering his present announced engagements. He is the lessee and manager of Covent Garden Theatre for the winter season, beginning in the middle of August next, when he produces a great spectacular play. Until then he is engaged to perform every

128 The Birmingham Gazette, December 1, 1871.

129 "Death of Dion Boucicault," The New York Clipper, September 27, 1890.
night at the Gaiety Theatre, where he produces four or five pieces during this summer. On the 9th of September he is announced to appear in New York, in November in Boston, in December in Philadelphia, and in January in California. Meanwhile, he will manage Covent Garden Theatre by the submarine wire, having left that enterprise organized and in working order. Those who regard a theatrical life as one of idleness and ease may find some difficulty in reconciling their prejudice with such a programme. No life is more methodical. 130

The fall of 1872 was notable for Boucicault's enormous spectacle entitled Babil and Bijou. Boucicault had gone into partnership with the Earl of Londesborough, the Earl providing the money, Boucicault the ideas, and they leased Covent Garden Theatre. 131 It was an expensive production. Boucicault knew how to spend other people's money. Nearly $30,000 was poured into the production of the piece. 132 It was the greatest undertaking, in every sense, recorded in the history of the stage up to that date.

On August 29, 1872, the curtain went up on "a New Fantastic Musical Drama in Eighteen Spectacular Scenes, divided into Five Acts, the Drama by Mr. Boucicault, the Lyrical Part by Mr. Flanché entitled Babil and Bijou or, The Lost Regalia." 133 The opening of this spectacle created

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130 "Dion Boucicault," Once a Week, May 11, 1872, p. 431.
131 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
133 Theatre Royal, Covent Garden Programme. In New York Public Library.
so much excitement that the New York Times carried a review of its opening which stated:

RECORD OF AMUSEMENTS
Foreign News
Mr. Boucicault's New Play

Our London Correspondent writes as follows concerning "Babil and Bijou," Mr. Boucicault's new play: "Some months ago," he says, "Mr. Dion Boucicault put out placards assuring the public that he had made arrangements to restore the national theatre, and to regenerate the drama. On Thursday night there was a rush to Covent Garden Theatre to see what was the practical upshot of Mr. Boucicault's magniloquent promises. Covent Garden has not for some years been used for regular dramatic performances. During the fashionable season it is given up to Italian opera. In the Autumn there are concerts, and from Christmas until the opera comes round again, pantomime has possession of the stage. It may be assumed, therefore, that what Mr. Boucicault meant, when he talked of restoring the national theatre, was that he would restore it to strictly dramatic purposes. The play called 'Babil and Bijou' is certainly a dramatic work, but it is no more a drama, in the ordinary sense of the term, than an opera or a pantomime. It is, in fact, a kind of cross between an opera and a pantomime. Covent Garden is too large a house for spoken dialogue to be heard in it, except from the stalls close to the stage. There is very little dialogue in 'Babil and Bijou.' It takes five hours to go through, and all the dialogue, if spoken off at once, would not occupy half an hour. Practically, what little there is of it might almost as well be dumb show. Except for the singing the piece might be called literally a pantomime; and it also resembles a pantomime in its gorgeous fairy scenery, fairy characters and grotesque masks, and other decorations, only there is no harlequinade, no clown and pantaloon. The music aspires to operatic effects, and is of a decidedly superior character. It has been composed by M. Heree, Mr. Clay and M. Riviere, and is bright, lively and impassioned. There is a large orchestra, good chorus, and several singers of considerable merit. Then there is a ballet such as has not been seen in this country since the old days of Her Majesty's Theatre, when Taglioni and Cerito were the stars. There is not one but several corps de
ballet, the principal dancers are real artists, and the other dancers surpass those usually seen, both in numbers and grace. "Babil and Bijou" is made up, in fact, of opera, pantomime and ballet, but its most attractive feature is the magnificent scenery and decorations. In this respect it outdoes the most gorgeous fetes produced in Paris during the most extravagant days of the Second Empire. There can be no doubt that, whatever else may be said of it, it is a dazzling spectacle. One scene of brilliancy and splendor follows another. The stage is constantly crowded with legions of people in rich, fantastic costumes, and after a time the eyes almost ache with the intensity of variety of color. There are five acts and a proloquial scene /sic/. Mr. Boucicault, it is well known, despises the use of the common words. He scorns to call the pit anything but the auditorium, and what other people would call a prologue or introduction, he calls a proloquial scene. The performance of the piece lasts from 7 o'clock till midnight, and it constitutes in itself the whole entertainment of the evening. It would be idle to attempt to describe the plot in detail. Indeed, it can hardly be said that there is a plot /a detailed outline of the plot was given here/. . . . 'Babil and Bijou' is a magnificent raree-show, but it is nothing else. There is very little fun in it, or dramatic interest, but people who can sit a whole night looking at dazzling scenery, would enjoy themselves very much. It may at least be said that it is the finest thing of its kind.

The production might have been considered an artistic success, but it was certainly anything but a financial success. From a technical standpoint it was novel, exciting, and full of thrills. Beautiful scenery, costumes, and effects were the primary elements of interest. One interesting story is related about the use of electricity for one effect by Alfred Thompson:

The first attempt at electric light effects that I can remember was in the spectacular production of Babel and Bijou, at Covent Garden, in 1873, under my direction for Dion Boucicault. It was in the shape of cymbals charged with electricity from a battery underneath the stage. These were supposed to emit sparks. At the time of the rehearsals in Paris I was absent in Spain for the purpose of securing a celebrated dancer. The girls were not informed that the cymbals, which they handled quite carelessly, were charged with electricity, and as a consequence, when they struck them together, quite a number of them fell down on the stage, and when they recovered from the shock, refused absolutely to attempt the act again. So the electric light effect had to be left out of the spectacle altogether, to our great disappointment. The first time that electric swords were introduced into stage representation was in the duel scene in Faust.  

The comment above would indicate that a production of Babel and Bijou was presented in Paris in 1873.

Boucicault departed for America shortly after the opening of Babel and Bijou. The play opened on August 29, 1872. On September 23, 1872, Agnes and Dion opened at Booth's Theatre in Arrah-na-Pogue. They had come back after twelve long years. But they had not been forgotten and their tour was to be a great success.

During this twelve year period, Boucicault made a fortune and lost a fortune. His two ventures in theatrical managership ended in utter financial failure. The first, the renting and conversion of Astley's amphitheatre into

135 Unidentified clipping in New York Public Library.
the Westminster brought about Boucicault's appearance in the Bankruptcy Court. The second, in August, 1872, when he took over Covent Garden for the spectacular production of Babil and Bijou, was disastrous for those who backed the production. The production proved to be more costly than the receipts from the door could ever pay back to those who had backed the extravaganza. Boucicault escaped this experience almost unharmed.

With the writing of such pieces as Arrah-na-Pogue, Hunted Down, The Flying Scud, After Dark, et cetera, Boucicault further developed his sensational drama. He ran the gauntlet of devices, from revolving towers and horse races to sham locomotives. It was these realistic effects which placed Boucicault's name alongside that of Tom Robertson as a forerunner of the realistic movement. But Boucicault created these realistic scenes for the sake of the excitement they would cause rather than for their true representation of realism. Boucicault was romantic while Robertson made an honest attempt to develop a realistic form of staging and writing.

At the time Boucicault was engaged at the New Adelphi, he managed to bring about a business arrangement with Webster that was to have far-reaching financial effects upon all authors, when it was finally accepted by other managers and authors. It was at this time that he persuaded Webster
to give him a per-cent of the "gate" throughout the run of the play. This was met with strong opposition by other theatrical managers. It had been their custom to purchase the script outright. If the play were a success, the author lost a great deal of money.

Also Boucicault envisioned another method of coining more money from his scripts. He finally persuaded the managers in the provinces that the script was the most important item of a production and that the provinces wished to see the current play that was popular in London. This brought about the development of the traveling company, which, in turn, brought about the abolishing of the old stock company.

It must be remembered it was during this period that Boucicault wrote Arrah-na-Pogue. This was his second great Irish drama. He played it with great success in London and New York.

On November 28, 1868, Boucicault and Agnes Robertson retired from the professional stage. But he could not remain away from acting, and on November 29, 1871, he made his reappearance as an actor in his third great Irish Play, which was called Kerry, or Night and Morning. This old Irish servant, Kerry, proved to be a popular and long lasting role for Boucicault.
CHAPTER VIII

RETURN TO AMERICA

In September, 1872, after an absence of twelve years from America, the Boucicaults appeared at Booth's Theatre, New York. The war was long over, and the country was rebuilding its normal life. In September, 1872, the theatrical horoscope predicted a promising and rich season. Mr. Fletcher was soon to throw open his doors in Fourteenth Street. Mr. and Mrs. Dion Boucicault were to open shortly at Booth's. Mr. Daly's two theatres were already in full and prosperous swing, and Miss Agnes Ethel, backed by a powerful supporting drama written expressly for her by Victorien Sardou, was announced to open at the renovated house in Union-Square. Later, the Times announced a rebornNiblo's, "... a new Niblo's, which is fast rising from the ashes of the old, will open--making another notable dramatic event of the season, while the various theatrical attractions at the Olympic and Wood's Museum will, we may be sure, remain undiminished."1 Other theatrical events in the offing were the Shakespearian readings of Mr. Edwin Forrest at Steinway Hall, and the appearance of Miss Charlotte

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Gushaan, who had been trying the experiment of readings at Newport, and was to appear in readings in New York. Mr. Edmund Yeats, the Irish author, was scheduled for some interesting lectures during the season. It was a promising season!

Mr. Booth announced the beginning of the engagement of Mr. and Mrs. Dion Boucicault for Monday evening, September 16, in "their world-renowned personations of SHAUN and ARRAH, in the original Irish drama, in three acts, by Mr. BOUCICault, of ARRAH NA FOGUE, which will be produced in a very complete and elaborate manner, from the original models furnished by Mr. Boucicault." 2 However, the Boucicaults did not open as scheduled. Their arrival in America was postponed for one week because their departure was delayed "in consequence of Mr. BOUCICault's inability to leave Liverpool before September 7, per steamer Scotia." 3

When finally the Boucicaults did arrive in America, they made their appearance at Booth's on September 23, in Arrah-na-Pogue. They brought with them three English actors for a first American appearance, Mr. Shiel Barry, Miss Geraldine Stuart and Mr. C. Alexander.

2 Times, Sunday, September 8, 1872.
3 Times, Sunday, September 15, 1872.
The critics had two major events to cover in their reviews on September 24: (1) the reappearance of the Boucicaults and (2) the appearance of a new script. The Times covered the Booth Theatre opening by saying:

Booth's Theatre

Reappearance of Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault.

Twelve years have rolled by since Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault last acted here, and the years have brought some changes. In an artistic sense, and so far as these performers are concerned, it is satisfactory to say that those changes have been for the better. . . . The gentleman, in fact, at that date, was a very young actor, if a tolerably mature dramatist. . . . He is now a very closely studied and elaborate artist, whose finesse had not been lost by the experience which has brought him more force and more breadth of style. Mrs. Boucicault, in certain characters, has had no superior. The delicacy and extreme finish that were her characteristics before she still retains; and, as might be expected, she adds to these not too common attributes a mellowness and power not manifested before.

Aside from the merits of the drama itself, the representation of "Arrah-na-Pogue" last night was one of the most complete and satisfactory seen in New-York for many a day. Mr. Boucicault's Shaun really comes so near being a perfect piece of acting that we confess our inability to find any fault with it. The personation is simple, even unexaggerated, thoroughly free from trisk or the other vices that come under the head of staginess, exceedingly natural and genuine in its humor, and very touching in its unaffected pathos. Mr. Boucicault honestly deserved all the applause he got last night, and that is saying a great deal. We find Mrs. Boucicault much improved. She has not, however, entirely conquered a certain automatic peculiarity she formerly had, nor has she become—as far as we can as yet judge—as empathetic as we hoped. Her Arrah is nevertheless a remarkably pretty and telling picture, full of nicety and truth of detail, and it resembles Mr. Boucicault's in the uncommon and most refreshing fact that it is actually like what it pretends to be.
This it is that made the performance of last night as emphatically successful. It was the acting and not the clothes or the scenes, excellent as both these were, that wrought the impression; but the feeling that here was something like real artistic work, something like brains, the attainment of intellectual ends by intellectual means; and thus the effect was sound, healthy and completely harmonious. Efficient help was given to the play by an excellent actor, Mr. Shiel Barry, whose Michael Fenny was a decided hit. It is quaint, vigorous and consistent, and, on the whole, the best Irish villain of low life we remember to have seen... Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault were welcomed with enthusiasm and applauded with extreme cordiality throughout the evening. The stage was well set, although superiority was not so conspicuous in that respect as, at this theatre, we are used to look for. Altogether, the entertainment was one of singular success, and we do not doubt that it heralds a highly profitable engagement. "Arrah-na-Pogue" will be repeated nightly until further notice."

Dion had returned to America at the prime of his life. He was fifty years old. He had had twelve years of acting experience; he had developed his talent and was sure in his style of acting, as the review indicated. He was the dominant figure in theatrical circles both in America and in England; his influence was felt in all the phases of playwriting and theatrical production. He was dramatist, actor, manager and director, he was writer and lecturer on things dramatic. He knew he had been ruling the theatrical world for the past ten or eleven years. He was so sure of himself that he could boast: "I am emperor... and take what I think best for Art, whether it be a story from a book, a

4 Times, Tuesday, September 24, 1872.
play from the French, an actor from a rival company."5

Lawrence Hutton was more flattering in commenting about Agnes' appearance at the Booth than the Times reporter, for he related:

... Agnes Robertson, when we saw her at Booth's as Jessie Brown in the fall of 1872, fourteen years after her first appearance in the part, came trip- pingly on the stage in her Scotch plaid and her blue stockings, driving her lovers and her bairns before her, as bright and fresh, and pretty, and young as ever; the same 'spring of heather from the Highland moor', singing the same old Scottish ballads in the same sweet voice that 'Nature has put into the prettiest throat that ever had an arm around it'. She was a little stouter, but in no other respect altered. ... She has still the prettiest Scotch accent we have heard on or off the stage.6

During the first week's run of Arrah-na-Pogue, the announcements informed the public that Night and Morning was in rehearsal and would be produced on Monday evening, September 30.7 However, Arrah-na-Pogue was so popular and successful that it would have been ill advised to take it off the boards. On Friday, September 27, this announcement was made: "The management respectfully announces that the new drama, NIGHT AND MORNING, will not be produced on Monday next, as hitherto advertised, but the present bill will remain unchanged during the next week."8

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5 Dion Boucicault, London Assurance, (The Acting Version of the Yale University Dramatic Association) p. x.
6 Laurence Hutton, Plays and Players (New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1875), pp. 204-05.
7 Times, Sunday, September 22, 1872.
8 Times, Friday, September 27, 1872.
Arrah-na-Pogue ran for four solid weeks. Kerry, or Night and Morning and Jessie Brown had been in rehearsal and were ready for production. It was necessary to repeat Jessie Brown in order to keep Agnes before the public. She did not play in Kerry and so a sort of double bill was announced for the week of October 21. But still so many people wanted to see Arrah-na-Pogue that a split schedule was finally hit upon. The announcement stated:

Mr. and Mrs. BOUCICAULT will appear in two new characters, KERRY and JESSIE BROWN. The continuous attraction of Arrah-na-Pogue obliges the management to retain this drama in the programme. It will be performed next week on MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, and FRIDAY NIGHTS, to enable Mr. Boucicault to appear in his newest and greatest Irish impersonation, and Mrs. Boucicault to revive her celebrated character, JESSIE BROWN, on Tuesday, Oct. 22, Thursday, Oct. 24, Saturday, Oct. 26, and SATURDAY MATINEE at 2 o'clock. The performance will commence with the new drama, KERRY: OR NIGHT AND MORNING. Kerry.

... Mr. DION BOUCICAULT Originally played by him over 100 nights in London. Mrs. DESMOND. ... Miss KATE NEWTON. To conclude with JESSIE BROWN, Jessie. ... (her original character). ... Miss AGNES ROBERTSON, (Mrs. Boucicault) Cassidy. ... ... Mr. SHEIL Barry.9

And, as announced, Kerry and Jessie Brown opened on Tuesday, October 22, 1872 at Booth's. A review of the presentation stated in part:

... It [Kerry] is a mere sketch of a piece—a "comedy drama," the bills call it, and it fills hardly more than an hour. The plot is quite threadbare. ...
With so slender a story, it hardly need be said that characteristic stage-skill is shown by the author, whose success must lie in making the best of his material, and in giving a certain air of freshness and novelty to the commonplace. Mr. Boucicault is clever, and his cleverness is apparent in "Kerry" as in more pretentious efforts. His acting in the "Old Servant" is also clever—very; but it has one serious deficiency, and that is heart. Intellectually appreciative to the point of subtlety, artistically finished to the point of elaboration, the lack of genuine feeling just prevents the performance from being great. It is yet a striking and highly interesting piece of acting, and it certainly was much liked last night by the audience... .

The drama of "Jessie Brown" is familiar to most New-York play-goers, and is as popular as well known. Mrs. Boucicault, who was heartily greeted, plays the heroine with all her old neatness and spirit, and more than her old feeling and variety. To the regret of those who recall Mr. Boucicault's success of Nana Sahib, he resigned the part on this occasion to another. . . . Mr. Shiel Barry distinguished himself, as Cassidy, and the drama was in general favorably welcomed. . . .

On November 1, 1872, the final performance of Arrah-na-Pogue was announced. On Sunday, November 3, the last twelve nights of the Boucicaults were announced. They were to play only Kerry and Jessie Brown. However Arrah-na-Pogue was still so popular that the Boucicaults could not leave New York without playing it again. During the eighth week and last six nights of their appearance at Booth's, they resorted to the split week schedule again. On Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, Kerry and Jessie Brown were

10 Times, Wednesday, October 23, 1872.

11 Times, November 3, 1872.
presented on Saturday Matines. 12

Saturday, November 16, 1872, was the last night of the engagement of the Boucicaults at Booth's. "It has out-stripped expectation in every way and leaves Mr. Boucicault with his repertory scarcely touched, and thus in good trim for his next Metropolitan engagement." The Boucicaults were scheduled to appear at the Globe Theatre in Boston the following week.

Even before they arrived in Boston, the Boston theatre-goers were having the opportunity to see a play by Boucicault, for on November 15 and 16, 1872, the Willow Copse was playing there. The Boucicaults were scheduled to play at the Globe for only three weeks, after which they were scheduled to play in Philadelphia. 14

On Monday, November 18, 1872, the Boucicaults, accompanied by Shiel Barry, arrived. They were announced to open with Arrah-na-Pogue, and they played this piece through the 29th of the month. A special Thanksgiving afternoon was presented on November 28, for which they presented Colleen Bawn, with Agnes and Dion in their old parts of Myles and Eily. On Friday evening, November 29,

12 Times, Wednesday, November 13, 1872.
13 Times, Sunday, November 17, 1872.
14 Globe Programme for November 15, 1872, in New York Public Library.
1872, Kerry and Colleen Bawn were presented.

It would seem, however, that the Boucicaults did not open on the announced Monday night, for the Times carried a full report of another feud of Boucicault and the press. It began with his final curtain speech at the Globe when he stated:

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: This is the last time I shall appear before you, as I am not concerned in the plays that form the entertainment for the rest of this week; therefore I take occasion to say a few parting words. For the cordial reception we have met with from you, we tender you our sincere acknowledgments. I wish that nothing had occurred to require I should say more than this—lend me your kind attention for a moment, for I am about to disclose a matter that concerns every one of you as nearly as it affects me. A fortnight ago I arrived in Boston after an absence of fifteen years. I was greeted by an article in one of your daily newspapers, as scurrilous in its language as it was grossly false in its facts. I had not appeared before you. I was not a subject for any criticism whatever. This article was simply a malicious, wanton, and unprovoked assault upon a gentleman whose life has been passed in honorable public service. I speak not now in defense of that character and reputation which are far above the reach of any newspaper to injure. I speak in my public capacity as a citizen of the great Anglo-American community. I speak in defense of every honest man and decent woman who are hourly liable to similar reckless assaults of newspaper rowdyism. I hear a great deal about the liberty of the press. I hear very little about the liberty of the readers—your liberty—my liberty. That is what I defend now, and every honest journal throughout the land will not only sympathize with these words, but will thank me for uttering them. The newspaper that contained the scurrilous attack I have alluded to is the Boston DAILY GLOBE. I am informed that its editors are two gentlemen named Ballou and Parker. I begged them to disclaim any participation in the outrage, and this out of
respect for themselves. These gentlemen did not see they owed any such respect; they preferred to accept a share in this piece of—what shall I call it?—well, blackguardism is the English word. I leave the Boston DAILY GLOBE to find one more appropriate. Some years ago the London public were terrified by a new kind of highway robbery. The thieves (there were always two of them) approached their victim in the dark, throttled him from behind, and after effecting a robbery they escaped. This was called garroting. The law failed to put down the outrage, until one of the Judges bethought him of the cat-o'-nine-tails. He ordered the garroter to be publicly flogged, and the lash proved effective. There has been no more garroting. Now the law fails to put down the moral garroting practiced by such men as Messrs. Bailou and Parker, and therefore I take the law into my own hands. If any of you had been the victim of such an attack you would have been defenseless. The newspaper knows that; it could offer you its column to reply—you have no platform from whence to address your assailant on equal terms. But I have one! Here it is. (as Mr. Boucicault pointed significantly to the stage he was saluted with great applause,) and I mean to use it, as I have done to-night. I seize the culprits as I do now and here. I bring them before you. I tear the assassins' masks from their faces, and expose them to the lash of your just contempt. I have spoken, and I hope I have done so manfully, and with no more than honest indignation. If I have been led further than your sympathy can follow me, I ask your pardon. I should not forfeit your esteem in the smallest matter. Ladies and gentlemen, I have the honor to bid you, very respectfully, Farewell." 

To this lively and graceful attack, the Globe replies as follows:

"Mr. Dion Boucicault took occasion last night to make one of the most extraordinary speeches before the curtain of the Globe Theatre that was ever heard from that place, if we may credit general report. It appears that Mr. Boucicault has been made a martyr; that he has been misrepresented; and, unable to obtain that particular satisfaction for which his soul hungered, told his piteous and pitiful story to the handful of spectators who were present to witness his
performance. Mr. Boucicault did not approve of the article which appeared in the Globe the day after he had acted so peremptorily and so peculiarly—we will not say dishonorably in refusing to play according to the terms of his contract. Mr. Boucicault stated many silly things last night; but we shall only pay attention to that which most concerns us. He affirmed that what we said in the article that has so ruffled the calm of his innocent soul, was untrue. Now, not only does Mr. Boucicault know it to be true, but he knows, moreover, that it was not all of the truth. If we may take the words of those most interested in the matter, and, as their name is not Boucicault, we presume we may, every word of that article was true. Mr. Boucicault did try to break his engagement. Mr. Boucicault did cause posters to be placarded on the walls in contradiction of the announcements put forth by the management. Mr. Boucicault did insert advertisements in the papers at variance with the advertisements of the Globe Theatre. Mr. Boucicault did try to act the autocrat, to bully the management into canceling his engagement, to discourage and brow-beat them, but only succeeded in disgusting them at the outset. Mr. Boucicault did refuse to play on the Monday night, giving first as a reason that he could get no sleeping car from New-York, then that he was fatigued; then said he would not play under any circumstances, and after going through a number of moral contortions, at length sheltered himself behind his wife, and said that she was too ill to play. We are somewhat surprised at the unblushing impudence of Mr. Boucicault in so flatly denying the truth of what we, in our duty to the public, stated. He knows very well that every word of it is true. There is as much reliance to be placed on Mr. Boucicault's word here, as when he affixes his name to a French play and claims it as his own. Whenever Mr. Boucicault insults the public as he did on that Monday night, we shall take him to task for it. Does Mr. Boucicault think he can always insult the American public with impunity? Does he think he can always treat them with the contempt that marked his conduct in London during our late war, when he hoisted the rebel flag on his theatre, and kept it there, against the remonstrance and entreaty of every Union man in London, a standing insult to the people who fostered and fed him when he came here poor in purse and popularity? Mr. Boucicault is very fortunate that he has not been hissed from our stage for his outrageous
ingratitude and his gratuitous insults. But we are wasting words upon him. We again affirm that every word of what we have said was true, and if he is anxious for the proof—if he wishes the story of his actions in full—he can have it. Of the coarse tone of his remarks we have nothing to say. Some of them called forth a deserved hissing. This unhappy and silly man has made a mistake.

This clash between Boucicault and the press has a familiar ring. It is reminiscent of his first clash over the Fox Hunt with the New York Times. If one studies the speech of Boucicault, one can do nothing but feel that he makes no attempt to refute the facts as presented by the Globe; he is attacking only their "rights" to state the facts. One would be led to believe that the Globe did have the facts and that they were correct. Again Boucicault had met his match in the press!

When the Boucicaults left Boston in December they did not stay at any one place for very long. They went on tour, playing one and two week stands, primarily. They were constantly on the move until they came back to Booth's in the spring of 1873. Their schedule of performances was much the same in all the cities that they visited. During this tour they went as far south as Washington, D.C., and as far west as St. Louis.

Immediately after their Boston engagement, they moved down to Philadelphia, where they appeared at the old

15 Times, Sunday, December 8, 1872. Times quoted the letters from the Boston Daily Advertiser.
Walnut Street Theatre. On their opening night in Philadelphia, they appeared in Kerry and The Colleen Bawn; this was December 9, 1872.\(^{16}\) They also played in Arrah-na-Pogue. Their engagement lasted through the holidays and closed on the 29th of December, 1872.\(^{17}\)

Just prior to their opening at the Walnut, one of the other theatres of the city "hoped to forestall Boucicault's engagement at the Walnut by producing his piece before he came—in spite of 'moral right', if not legal. The manager was rewarded by 'doing' the piece to empty benches. They wished to see the Simon pure, so waited till the author produced it at the Walnut. . . ."\(^{18}\) The Boucicaults filled the Walnut with his dramas. Arrah-na-Pogue was most popular and "received new lustre by being handled by the author. The drama has always been a favorite in this country, and is now doubly so by Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault and Sheil Barry appearing in the three principal characters."\(^{19}\)

Leaving Philadelphia, the Boucicaults went south to Washington where they played a one-week stand at the National

\(^{16}\) The Philadelphia Public Ledger, December 9, 1872.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., December 9-28, 1872.

\(^{18}\) McVicker's Theatre Program, January 17, 1872.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
The following week they spent at Ford's Grand Opera-house in Baltimore. In anticipation of their engagement at McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, there appeared an article in this theatre's playbill about the anticipated arrival of the Boucicaults in Baltimore. It stated:

A great literary and theatrical celebrity is about to visit Baltimore. We... have read the stories written by Mr. Dion Boucicault, and have laughed and wept over the presentation of his plays by favorite actors, but we shall have the pleasure of seeing the famous author himself for the first time on Monday evening... An author and actor so distinguished might make the circuit of the continent, relying entirely on the prestige which his delightful plays have given him, and be everywhere greeted by admiring multitudes; but Mr. Boucicault has chosen to visit America in company with Artists who have something more to commend them than their associations with the famous writer. His beautiful wife, Agnes Robertson Boucicault, is a theatrical star whose lustre has not all been borrowed from the name which the marriage vow has appended to her own, and Mr. Shiel Barry has long figured upon the playbills as one of the most popular and successful of English actors.

The appearance of the Boucicaults at McVicker's Theatre in Chicago on January 13, 1873, marked the first time that they had been in the Windy City since the fall of 1854, when Agnes had played at Rice's Theatre. They opened with Arrah-na-Pogue. Staying at McVicker's until

20 Times, Sunday, January 5, 1873.
21 McVicker's Theatre Program, January 17, 1873. In New York City Public Library.
22 McVicker's Theatre publication. In New York City Public Library.
February 1, 1873, they played the usual pieces which they had with them on this tour and ended with a revival of *Nilly; The Maid with the Milking Pail* and *Kerry; or, Night and Morning.* "This drama (though in one act only, occupying one hour in performance) is held to be one of the most Brilliant Gems of the Modern Stage. The New York Press and Public have cordially joined the London Journals in placing this exquisite Cabinet Picture among the CHEF D'OEUVRES of our histrionic time."  

Leaving Chicago, the Boucicaults went south and west to play a two-week stand at DeBar's Opera-House in St. Louis; ending their engagement there on February 8, 1873. Moving east again they played at Wood's Theatre until Saturday, February 22, 1873. They they moved north and appeared during the first week of March at Harrington's Opera House in Providence, R. I., on March 3 and 4, playing their usual *Kerry, Colleen Bawn* and *Arrah-na-Pogue.*

The Boucicaults came back to New York City in March. On St. Patrick's night, March 17, Mr. Boucicault presented

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23 McVicker's Theatre program, no date given.
25 *Times*, Sunday, February 23, 1873.
26 The Providence *Journal*, March 1-5, 1873.
his fourth and latest Irish character Daddy O'Dowd. Agnes did not appear in this production.

In the early announcements of the play, Daddy O'Dowd; or, "Turn About is Fair Play," Boucicault said:

A FOURTH picture of Irish character is on my dramatic easel. I know you will award heartily the fullest measure of success it may deserve; but I have another and a higher aim. When I wrote the COLLEEN RAWN I simply desired to make an effective play; but the London and Dublin Press pointed out a merit in that work I confess I never contemplated. They regarded it as the first truthful stage portraiture of Irish life, manner, and character, and warmly encouraged me to proceed until I obliterated the gross caricature the public had received from the stage—a caricature that had been mainly instrumental in forming a popular and very false impression of Irish nature. Accepting the mission, I wrote ARRAH NA FOGUE, and subsequently the dramatic portrait KERRY. Now, I offer you my latest effort in the same series, and ere I draw the curtain I beg you all, and my own countrymen in particular to bring your sympathies along with you. Give me what every man yearns for more than fortune—the conviction that he has done little good in his time.28

This "first performance on any stage" of Daddy O'Dowd had a good cast comprised of Boucicault as Mike O'Dowd of the Claddagh, a Galway Fishsalesman, and assisted by Shiel Barry, Robert Pateman, Jos. Wheelock, George Becks, Bella Pateman, Mary Wells, Mary Young, "and others."

The play will be beautifully and elaborately presented, with new scenery by Witham; upholstery and

28 Times, Sunday, March 9, 1873.
appointments by Deul; furniture by Charles Feilitz; machinery by Dunne; calcium effects by Scollion; music by Mollenhauer, under the personal supervision of the author.29

It was not the success that Boucicault had thought it would be. It ran until April 19, when he resorted to better material in Arrah-na-Pogue and Kerry. A review of the opening night expressed some opinions as to why it was not the success it might have been.

If the second and third acts of "Daddy O'Dowd," ... had been equal to the first in symmetry, contrast, and animation, Mr. Boucicault might be credited with having written, at the close of a lengthened career as a dramatist one of his best plays. As it is, he leads his hearers into a maze of novel aspect at the outset but soon conducts them into familiar paths, and finally resorts to well-worn expedients to get them out again.30

It had a good production. "The scenery, . . . was worthy of any play. . . ." and Boucicault's acting of the O'Dowd was praised. "Mr. Boucicault displayed, alternately, genial humor, pathos, and force which elicited applause, rather boisterous, perhaps, but no less earnest and flattering. Mr. Wheelock acted the younger O'Dowd quietly, but with sufficient warmth to escape censure for marring the performance. . . ."31

"Daddy O'Dowd, later known as just The O'Dowd, was

29 Times, Sunday, March 16, 1873.
30 Times, Wednesday, March 19, 1873.
31 Ibid.
based on *Les Crochets du Père Martin*, a domestic drama by Germain and Grange, which had been produced at the Théâtre de la Gaîté in August, 1858.

"... Boucicault took the provincial bourgeois of Havre and glorified him in the change to the Celtic chieftain of Galway, ..."32

The *O'Dowd* played for five weeks, and was replaced on Monday, April 21, 1873, with *Arrah-na-Pogue* and *Kerry*. Agnes was still not playing. This is the beginning of the break between Agnes and Dion. Bella Pateman played Agnes' role of Arrah.33

*Kerry* and *Arrah-na-Pogue* played until Saturday, May 3, 1873. This was the "last week but one of the celebrated Irish Comedian" at Booth's. For this final week, Mr. Boucicault presented "By special desire, DADDY O'DOWD."34

Boucicault next shifted his interests from Booth's to Wallack's. During the summer of 1873, he dominated the theatre scene. On May 31, Mr. Sothern brought a "long and brilliant engagement" to an end. Monday, June 2, Wallack's was closed "in order to permit a full-dress rehearsal of Mr. Boucicault's new drama called 'Mora, or the Golden Fetters.'"35

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33 *Times*, Tuesday, April 22, 1873.

34 *Times*, Saturday, May 3, 1873.

35 *Times*, Sunday, June 1, 1873.
Mora, or the Golden Fetters was described as "a new picture of life in New-York in 1873, and . . . promised to reveal the author's 'best delineation of American scenes and American characters.'" It had a strong cast, including Katherine Rogers, Mrs. Allerton, Mary Wells, (of Booth's), Wheelock (of Booth's), Effie Germon, Bradley, Levick, Fawcett (by permission of Augustin Daly Esq.), Griffiths (by permission of Augustin Daly Esq.) and many others. Boucicault had the pick of the actors that summer and he took advantage of it.

The review of the opening performance did not find the script up to the standard of some of Boucicault's earlier works, but justified it by saying:

. . . if his later works do not always compare favorably with his earlier ones, it is in a measure the fault of the public whom he writes to please. To succeed is apparently his main design; and, if so, none can deny that he has handsomely carried it out. Nor has the wreath of fame been denied him to intertwine with the more sordid chaplet of gold beneath. Has not a well-known humorist lately compared Mr. Boucicault with Shakespeare, Moliere, Sheridan, and Napoleon—turning the scale rather to their disadvantage? Surely to be able to live in a brown stone house, to be arrayed in purple and fine linen, and to fare sumptuously every day, and then to superadd to such joys the bliss of paens like these should be enough for one mortal, and we doubt not that, with characteristic modesty, the clever playwright is of that opinion. As regards "Mora," it is not "London Assurance" nor yet "Old Heads and Young Hearts," but it a rather ingenious drama of the half local, half romantic school which Mr. Boucicault has rapped off to fill the moments of his leisure, and which,
faute de mieux, will do very well by way of send-off to Mr. Moss' Summer season . . .

From so highly complicated and sensational, if not particularly original a plot, it is obviously possible to evolve plenty of dramatic situation, and this Mr. Boucicault has done with his usual facile dexterity . . . The piece is a trifle dull and talky in the beginning, but it improves in briskness and interest as it goes on, which is as it should be, and the two last acts are lively enough, in their way, to suit the most exacting . . . and "Mora" was carefully placed upon the stage. There was a great deal of laughter during the evening, and—toward the close, more especially—a great deal of applause. The house was capital in point of numbers, and the Summer season of Wallack's has certainly opened with spirit and promise . . . 37

Mora ran until Saturday, June 28. The house was dark on Monday, and on Tuesday, July 1, it reopened with a new play in five acts, by Dion Boucicault, entitled Mimi. 38

Many critics have stated that the play was an adaptation from the French La Vie de Boheme, by Henrie Mauger and Theodore Barriere. 39 But the theatre ads said: "written by Dion Boucicault and M. Mauger." 40

Boucicault played the part of Maurice Durosel, a young poet; he was ably supported by W. D. Bradley as Durosel (the father of Maurice), and W. H. Crisp as Max Paslesou, a painter. 41 Agnes was not listed in the cast,
but Katharine Rogers played the part of Mimi.

The review indicated that it was not much of a play.

... If Mr. Boucicault’s name had not appeared on the bill, in connection with the tidings that the gentleman is "the master-spirit of the English stage," we should have credited the play to a young dramatist at the outset of his career. "Mimi" is right in felicitous dialogue and in capital "business," but it is, after all, a thing of shreds and patches, and incidents of the most improbable kind, and conversations of the most surprising character, jostle situations and sound dissonant after words revealing clearly the hand of the practiced playwright. ...

Mr. Boucicault, who figured in the representation as Maurice, a young poet, whose love for Mimi is the principal theme of the drama, won as an actor honors quite equal to those bestowed on him as an author by the very large and demonstrative assemblage gathered to enjoy the entertainment. Miss Katharine Rogers, who personated Mimi, shared the applause lavished upon Mr. Boucicault’s acting, and the calls before the curtain were responded to by both artists.42

On the 53rd night of Boucicault’s engagement for this summer season, the last night of Mimi was announced. On Thursday, August 28, Boucicault returned to two old favorites, Used Up and Kerry.43 These "Affairs at Wallack’s were reviewed in a most pleasing manner, which must have given Dion a great deal of satisfaction. He was termed a "consummate comedian," who "represented Sir Charles Coldstream... with great ease and naturalness." But Sir Charles was not as effective as Kerry, "which proves a

42 Times, Wednesday, July 2, 1873.

43 Times, Wednesday, August 27, 1873.
richer field for Mr. Boucicault's labors; his sketch of
the trusty old servant is impressive in no common degree,
and a very elaborate and finished performance." It was
announced that he would fill the same roles until further
notice, and the reviewer speculated, it is "quite likely
that their attractiveness will postpone a change of bill
for a long while, . . ." 44

Wallack's was the only theatre playing during the
summer, and so the company had things pretty much to them-

selves. As long as they did an adequate production, they
were assured of a good house.

On August 31, an announcement was made that The Col-
leen Bawn was in rehearsal. Dion became ill, and it was
feared that neither The Colleen Bawn would get on the boards
nor that Wallack's would be able to stay open. It was
finally decided, however, to produce The Colleen Bawn, sans
Boucicault. Shiel Barry took over Boucicault's part of
Myles, and the play opened on September 8, 1873.

The Colleen Bawn opened as announced and although
the play was quite familiar to the audience who crowded into
Wallack's that night, their applause proved that the piece
still had "attractions." It was quite a challenge to Mr.
Barry to try to fill the shoes of Boucicault in the part of
Miles, and the reviewer felt obliged to observe, "Mr.

44 * Times, Friday, August 29, 1873. *
Barry's performance lacks the vigor of Mr. Boucicault; but the actor has plenty of earnestness and experience, and a capital 'brogue,' which latter gift in a role of this kind cannot well be overestimated. Another substitution in the cast was made at the last minute. Katharine Rogers, who had been playing the female leads in Boucicault's plays during the summer, was scheduled to appear in the role of Eily O'Connor. However, "Circumstances . . . prevented this lady from assuming the character, and it was sustained last night by Miss Kate Frazer Fox, a very prepossessing young person, whose talent as an actress is, unluckily, in inverse proportion to her good looks. . . ."46

Until the regular fall season opened on September 30, Mr. Shiel Barry continued to appear as Danny Man and Miles in Arrah-na-Pogue and Colleen Bawn, respectively. He also appeared in a local drama by Chas. Gaylor, entitled Dust and Diamonds, in which he assumed the role of Monney Mick.

It was announced on September 14 that Mr. Boucicault was much improved in health.47 After this illness, he wrote his next script, which was announced for Wallack's for December 20. It was called "a legitimate comedy, in five acts,

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45 Times, September 9, 1873.
46 Ibid.
47 Times, Sunday, September 14, 1873.
entitled A MAN OF HONOR, imitated from a French subject by
Mr. DION BOUCICAULT, . . . "48 However, the play did not
open on that night; the house was given over to a rehearsal.
It was felt that "a final rehearsal of the comedy by night.
. . . was necessary."49 However, the play did open on
December 22, with Lester Wallack and most of the members of
the company appearing in it. The review of the play indi­
cated that the piece was a success:

The first performance of "The Man of Honor" at Wallack's Theatre attracted an overflowing
audience, and was attended by every indication of
success. The acting and stage attire bestowed
upon the new piece would have made, it is true, a
much less interesting work acceptable, but it must
be said that "The Man of Honor" has considerable
claims to attention. Mr. Boucicault declares the
comedy to have been "imitated from a French sub­ject;" in plain English, it has been adapted from
a play called "Le Fils Naturel," and is as clearly
French as it can be. . . . "The Man of Honor is a
comédie de moeurs of the purest Parisian type. We
have already intimated that it is amusing and in­
teresting. Mr. Boucicault's productions are not
often tiresome, and when ennui is kept out of the
"auditorium," the spectator does not trouble him­
s'elf greatly about the truth of nature. . . . To
these notes we have only to add that "The Man of
Honor" is sumptuously "set." The five scenes are
as many masterpieces of beauty and elaborateness,
and the "interior" in the fourth set, disclosing the
library in the Villa Rosay, is the most exquisitely
artistic thing of the kind ever presented in this
City. After the third act, Mr. Wallack and Mr.
Boucicault were summoned before the footlights.50

48 Times, Saturday, December 20, 1873.
49 Times, Sunday, December 21, 1873.
50 Times, Wednesday, December 24, 1873.
A Man of Honor remained on the boards throughout the holiday season and lasted until January 17. It was not a very long run for a play that had received so good a review. This was the last of Boucicault's scripts to be furnished to the house of Wallack for quite some time.

Boucicault had contracted to furnish a play to Palmer, who was joint manager at the Union Square Theatre. And on Monday, December 1, 1873, a new emotional comedy in four acts and six tableaux, entitled Astray "was announced at the Union Square Theatre, which was under the managership of Palmer and Shook."51 But a continuous demand for seats to witness The Wicked World, which was currently on the boards at the Union Square, compelled the management to "deter the production of Mr. Dion Boucicault's new play, ASTRAY, until SATURDAY EVENING, Dec. 6. . . ."52

So it was, on Saturday, December 6, 1873, that Led Astray was finally presented at the Union Square Theatre. A review of the piece did not appear on the seventh, since the ring-down was late. However, the reviewer did comment that the play was an adaptation from the French play called "Tentation," written by M. Octave Feuillet. "Its theme is the slight deviation of a wife from the path of rectitude

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51 Times, Sunday, November 23, 1873.
52 Times, Monday, December 1, 1873.
in consequence of the neglect of a husband, who afterward
forgets, and promises a reformation of the habits which
suggested the woman's penchant for a third party."53

The review that followed on the eighth stated that
the piece proved to be an excellent acting piece and "it
was performed with so much spirit and smoothness, and
illustrated by a stage attire so elegant and tasteful,
that it afforded a great deal of pleasure." The reviewer
predicted for Led Astray "a long run." However, the major
part of the review, besides giving the plot to the reader,
consisted of a rather chiding statement concerning the
true authorship of the play.

The programme of the Union Square Theatre on Satur­
day contained these lines: "This and every evening
until further notice, a new emotional comedy in
five acts and six tableaux, entitled 'Led Astray,'
written by Dion Boucicault, Esq., author of 'London
Assurance,' 'Old Heads and Young Hearts,' &c. This
work has been composed by this eminent dramatist
for the Union Square Theatre, to embody the leading
features of the company." Many of the spectators,
in spite of this announcement, recognized in the
earliest portion of "Led Astray" the hand of M.
Feuillot. After the second act some indiscreet
people called for the author. M. Boucicault stepped
before the footlights and bowed his acknowledgments.
This proceeding was certainly not calculated to en­
lighten those listeners whose memory forced upon
them a recollection of M. Feuillot. Yet Mr. Bouci­
cault allowed the audience to linger in doubt until
the end of the play. Then he again came forth, and
this time quietly asked that for at least two-thirds
of the pleasure given them gratitude should be shown
to M. Feuillot. Mr. Boucicault, we fancy, could
never have seen "Led Astray" until it was done last

53 Times, Sunday, December 7, 1873.
night. A dramatic author of his experience ought never to attach his name to a work without reading it before representation.

The play was a hit. On December 22, the third week of the run, the Union Square Theatre announced "The Theatre was crowded to the doors every night. Seats could be secured FOUR WEEKS in advance. EXTRA MATINEE ON CHRISTMAS DAY." The advertisement also quoted parts of reviews from many of the local papers. "A decided and electric success"—said the Playgoer in the Herald; "The most entertaining, and will doubtless prove the most popular comedy presented to us since Mr. Robertson ceased writing."--Evening Post; "Of all the plays produced in New-York for years, not one equals in interest and morality that upon the boards of the UNION SQUARE THEATRE."--Evening Mail; "Seldom, indeed, have we seen a French comedy whose tone is so pure, whose philosophy is so acceptable, whose sentiment is so wholesome, and whose dramatic interest is so well sustained."--The World.

Led Astray ran for 160 performances at the Union Square Theatre. It was popular, too, in London, where it ran for 498 performances at various theatres.

54 Times, Monday, December 8, 1873.
55 Times, Monday, December 22, 1873.
56 Quinn, op. cit., p. 382.
It is difficult to imagine the excitement that this piece created in the Empire City. It is interesting to follow the record of its run by reports included in the Times.

January 4:

Last week the receipts exceed by $1,000 the first week of the famous Vokes excitement, and by $1,500 the first week of "Agnes." Nor has there been a single night when hundreds of persons have not been turned away from the doors. And the advance sale of seats is so great that the run must continue.

January 11:

The excitement over "Led Astray" was so great last week that even the torrents of rain that descended had no influence whatsoever upon the numbers of the audience. In spite of all that the manager has done in the way of adding seats, wherever such a thing is practicable, there are at every presentation scores of people standing, and hundreds are turned away. At the matinees many ladies, rather than forego seeing the piece, are satisfied to take their places in the top gallery, a circumstance that has not occurred since the excitement over Ristori. Yesterday, at the matinee, the enormous sum of $1,351.50 was taken in, and over $1,400 in the evening, giving to the playwright an honorarium exceeding $300 for one single day. All the best seats in the theatre have been sold out for weeks ahead and of the tickets at the various hotels, not one can be had after 11 o'clock.

February 3:

"Led Astray" has attained the seventieth night of its existence at the Union Square Theatre, and bids fair to be a very Methusaleh among plays. . . . "Led Astray" is certainly not a flawless work, but its story is just of the kind which no one would be content to lay down half read, and several of its incidents are, theatrically, most imperative. . . .
March 8:

It might be a pertinent question to ask whether the playgoers of the City are ever likely to tire of "Led Astray," and a negative response would hardly be too extravagant an affirmation of its deserved success. The bills night after night, and the advertisements day after day, contain the truthful information (which cannot always be said of these partial mediums) that "there is no diminution of the interest of the public in this most charming play." Were centennial celebrations to have days instead of years for their basis, that of "Led Astray" might be commemorated on next Friday evening. During the week it will run from its ninety-sixth to its hundred and third performance.

March 22:

"Led Astray" has passed its "centennial" celebration and possibly, if it were not for the prospects of an intervening Summer season, it might get so far as a second commemoration. This attractive play will have reached its one hundred and sixteenth performance by the end of the week, and yet there is no perceptible diminution in the audiences attending the theatre. It would not be surprising to find "Led Astray" running next season with unabated success.

March 29:

"Led Astray" is still supreme at the Union Square Theatre, and in the absence of any startling attraction, bids fair to run for another season.

April 12:

"Led Astray," which shows no signs of languishing at the Union Square Theatre, will receive some additional embellishments during the week, in the shape of new scenery for the first act. Apparently the play had been performed so much that the scenery was falling apart.

May 3:

Although "Led Astray" will, by the end of the week, have reached its one hundred and fifty-eight performance, there is no reason to suppose that there exists any necessity for its withdrawal. "Led Astray" did not spring into notoriety by
any fictitious aids. Its claims were not of the meritricious order, but were solidly supported.

... After such evidences of exceptional success, it will not be deemed a matter of doubt that the play might be run to the end of the season, not merely without the slightest difficulty, but without any abatement of its popularity. Dramatic exigencies have however, decreed otherwise; but there is some compensation to be found in the fact that the withdrawal of "Led Astray" will be followed by the appearance of Miss Clara Morris in "Camille."

May 9:

Last evening "Led Astray" was presented at the Union Square Theatre for the 155th time. Miss Kate Claxton benefited by the performance, and the house was filled to overflowing... Today's afternoon performance of "Led Astray" is also announced as the last matinee representation of Mr. Boucicaut's comedy.

May 10:

"Led Astray" will have run its course by next Wednesday [May 13], when it will have reached its 160th performance. The "run" is one of the best known in the theatrical records of this country, and yet "Led Astray" has by no means arrived at the stale condition which suggests a long withdrawal from the stage... The Union Square comedy is by no means crippled by old age. Its endurance has been of an exceptionally brilliant kind, and now that there is a positive affirmation as to its withdrawal, there will be some lingering regrets associated with the announcement...

Had Clara Morris not been booked into Union Square during the month of May, "Led Astray" certainly could have played out the regular season.

Boucicaut had had a great deal to do with the preparation of the production; not only in getting the script ready, but in the actual direction of the acting, and with the general production. Nat Goodwin relates a story which
indicates just how much of a hand Boucicault had in the production. Charles Thorne was one of the actors hired to play in this piece. It would seem that Thorne was not taking full advantage of his potential abilities as an actor. Boucicault saw in him certain qualities which, he felt, it would be worth his while to help bring out. Goodwin says that in anticipation of Thorne's taking over the leading role in Led Astray, Boucicault took him under his wing for a few months and succeeded in transforming the man. Under Boucicault's tutelage Thorne found himself famous at the end of the engagement of Led Astray. Later he became the founder of a modern school of suppressed, natural acting and the most convincing actor of the American stage.56

But while Boucicault was having such a decided hit at the Union Square Theatre, he was not completely forgotten at other theatres in New York. On Monday, December 8, Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre was offering "Dion Boucicault's clever comedy, 'Old Heads and Young Hearts.'"57 Boucicault was active in helping establish the New Park Theatre during the year 1873.58 Some kind of business arrangement had been

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56 Anderson, op. cit., pp. 120-121. Her source was indicated as Nat Goodwin's Book, Boston, 1914, pp. 56 f.

57 Times, Tuesday, December 9, 1873.

made between Boucicault, Charles Fechter and William Stuart. The "house was erected for Dion Boucicault, but much litigation tied up the early days of the venture, and Boucicault never had any share in it."

And Wallack's Theatre had revived *A Man of Honor* and was having a successful "comedy series," in which Mr. Lester Wallack was using this play as one of his starring vehicles.

Shortly after the successful opening of *Led Astray,* Boucicault turned to new fields to conquer. He could never be idle. He seemed possessed with a driving urge to be ever on the go. He went to California this time. Winter states that he arrived in California from Canada. However, Anderson is of the belief that he traveled straight across the continent on the Union Pacific. Anderson cites an article which appeared in *The Daily Alta California.*

Boucicault is employed on a special correspondence for one of the London daily journals, and also for one of the New York dailies to 'do' the overland route and San Francisco. He is earnestly and busily taking measures and notes for a comic diary of his trip across the continent. From what we gather he is pretty severely down on the Union Pacific Railroad. The diary will be published in London and New York.

59 Odell, *op. cit.*, IX, 427.
60 *Times*, Monday, January 1-12, 1874.
If the diary was ever published, it created no stir and was soon forgotten.

Boucicault expressed his opinions about the San Francisco theatre. It pleased him as little as did the Union Pacific Railway:

"In speaking of San Francisco he said that the impression in New York amongst the theatrical people is that our audience is the most intelligent and fastidious on the continent, but since his arrival here he has been informed that such is not the case, that we love burlesque and the caricature, and are incapable of appreciating the more delicate and refined works of art. 'I am very sorry if this be true', he said, 'for if I cannot be truthful, simple, and natural, I am nothing'."

Whether Dion arrived in California via Union Pacific or Canada, he did arrive and opened at the California Theatre in San Francisco on Monday, January 19. He opened with Kerry, playing the lead role as usual. A report of the opening stated:

Notwithstanding the inclemency of the night, an immense audience assembled and were treated to a most exquisite bit of acting, in which the old servant was portrayed with such life-like fidelity as to elicit the warmest applause from the vast audience. The entertainment commenced with the farce of "Jones' Baby," and was followed by an original sketch, entitled "Boucicault in California," which served simply to introduce the author.

The Chronicle praised his performance in Kerry as "a masterly piece of character-acting" but criticized Boucicault in California as in "Questionable good taste."


63 The New York Spirit of the Times, February 7, 1874.

After opening Monday in Kerry, Boucicaut followed with the Colleen Bawn on Thursday night. "Myles, as played by Mr. Boucicaut, and the other characters, under his supervision, were considerably modified and subdued, as compared with previous representations in this city. The last night (Saturday) brought such an audience that there was not standing-room. On Monday evening, Jan. 26. 'Arrah-na-pogue will be presented."65

On Friday evening, January 30, 1874, Dion took his benefit. On this occasion, he appeared in Daddy O'Dowd and Kerry. On the last Saturday of his engagement at the California Theatre he presented Arrah-na-Pogue for the matinee performance, and for the evening's performance, he presented Kerry and Daddy O'Dowd. For his final last night and farewell appearance he presented Kerry and The Colleen Bawn on February 2nd.66

After Boucicaut finished his engagement at the California Theatre, he headed back east, stopping along the way and playing when he found a theatre and an adequate company to support him. The first stop known to this writer, was at Salt Lake City, where he starred with the stock company of that city. Playing on February 16, 17, 18, he presented

65 The Spirit of the Times, February 7, 1874.
66 California Theatre Ad, dated January 29, 1874, in New York City Public Library.
the repertoire that he took with him to California; namely, The Colleen Bawn, Kerry, Arrah-na-Pogue, The O'Dowd, to which he added his old piece, Used Up.67

It is more likely that Belasco met and came under the influence of Boucieault at this time, rather than during the previous year of 1873, as Belasco has stated. For it seems only logical that Boucieault would have stopped on this trip, on his way east, at Piper's Opera House in Virginia City, Nevada. However, the date of their meeting is confused; Belasco insists that it was in 1873 that he met Boucieault in Virginia City. Belasco tells the following story about the meeting:

"When Boucieault reached Virginia City, he was under contract to deliver a play to A. M. Palmer, of New York. 'Led Astray' was its title. But his writing hand was too knotted with gout that he could scarcely hold a pen. Boucieault was noted for being a very secretive man. He would never have a secretary because he feared such a man might learn too much of his methods of work. He was in the habit of saying: 'I can't write a line when I dictate. I think better when I have a pen in my hand.'

'But now he had to have assistance to finish 'Led Astray.' At this time I had some slight reputation as a stage manager and author. In those days everything was out and dried, and the actor's positions were determined as those of the pawns on a chess-board. But whenever an opportunity offered itself, I would introduce something less rigorous in the way of action, much to the disgust of the older players. Boucieault must have heard of my revolutionary methods, for he sent me a message to come and see him and have a chat with him. With

67 The Deseret Evening News, Salt Lake City, February 16-19, 1874.
much perturbation, I went to his hotel and
knocked on his door.

"They tell me you write plays," he began.
Then followed question after question. He
tested my handwriting, he commented on certain
stage business he had heard me suggest the day
before; then he said abruptly:

"I want you to take dictation for me,—I'm
writing a play for the Union Square Theatre,—
you have probably heard of the manager, A. M.
Palmer,—at one time a librarian, but now giving
Lester Wallack and Augustin Daly a race for their
lives. I hope, young man, you can keep a secret;
you strike me as being "still water." Whatever
you see, I want you to forget."

"So I sat at a table, took my coat off and
began Act One of 'Led Astray.' Boucicault lay
propped up with pillows, before a blazing fire, a
glass of hot whisky beside him. It was not long
before I found out that he was the terror of the
whole house. If there was the slightest noise
below stairs or in the street, he would raise such
a hubbub until it stopped that I had never heard
the like of before.

"Whenever he came to a part of the dialogue re-
quiring Irish, I noticed how easily his dictation
flowed. When he reached a dramatic situation, he
acted it out as well as his crippled condition would
allow. One thing I noticed particularly: he always
held a newspaper in his hand and gave furtive glan-
ces at something behind it I was not supposed to
see. I was determined, however, to know just what
he was concealing from me.

"The opportunity came one morning when he was
called out of the room. Before he went, I noted
how careful he was to place a newspaper so that it
completely hid the thing under it. I went quickly
to the table, and, turning over the pages, I found
a French book, 'La Tentation,' from which the entire
plot of 'Led Astray' was taken. In those days,
authors did not acknowledge the original source from
which they adapted. But Boucicault was more than an
adapter—he was a brilliant and indefatigable slave,
resting neither night nor day. There is no doubt
that even though he adapted,—in accordance with the
custom of the time,—he added to the original source,
making everything he touched distinctly his own. He
left everything better than he found it; his pen
was often inspired, and in spite of his many
traducers, he was the greatest genius of our Theatre
at that time, Boucieault was a master craftsman. . . ."68

It is hardly feasible that Boucieault could have come as far west as Virginia City during his first tour of the Mid-West in 1873. As far as can be ascertained, he was no farther west than St. Louis during the tour of 1873.

And the records show that Boucieault would not have had time to go west at any other time during that year. As for his writing Led Astray at that time, 1873, it opened during December at the Union Square theatre and a meeting would have had to be very early to allow Boucieault time to get back east and get the production for a December opening. It would seem that Belasco mis-remembered the date and play.

Whether it was the year 1873 or 1874, Belasco and Boucieault did meet in Virginia City, Nevada. And it is apparent that Belasco did feel some influence from Boucieault. Winter states, "Dion Boucieault was the originator and the denominator of 'the sensation drama,' and David Belasco has been, from the first, and is now, a conspicuously representative exponent of it."69 Winter also credits Boucieault with having a great deal of effect on Belasco's

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69 Winter, op. cit., p. 276.
style of writing. He says that Belasco fell under "the example and influence of Dion Boucicault, whose expertness in construction, felicity in fashioning crisp dialogue, and exceptional skill in creating vivid dramatic effect he has always much and rightly admired."70

John Anderson indicates that Belasco got a great deal of his showmanship from Boucicault. He says: "There is not much doubt that Belasco's most imaginative production was himself, and I would not for a moment minimize Belasco's genius as a showman. In a subtler fashion, keyed to the special need of his time, he was as great as Barnum and for the same reason. He never lost the Boucicault influence and though a doting and solvent public accepted him for years as a pious esthete, the notion must have made him smile."71

This writer feels that perhaps Boucicault's greatest influence on Belasco lies in the fields of staging and acting. The "sensation scene" of Boucicault was created basically out of his attempts to make the scene as true to life as he could. Although his "effects" could never be attempted on the modern stage, in his day they were accepted as being realistically revealed. The horse race

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70 Ibid., p. 160.

of the flying soul, the snow scenes, the avalanches, the water-effects, the divided stages, etc. all were spectacular and sensational due to the fact that they were so realistic. Belasco followed suit. He not only attempted realism, but went so far as to transplant the real object to the stage.

If it were a Child's Restaurant that he needed on his stage, he went out and bought one and transplanted it to his stage.

If it were diamonds that an actress wore—they were real diamonds, not paste ones. Boucicault had a definite effect on Belasco in this respect. In terms of acting, Boucicault always had tried to create business that would delineate true character; Belasco always tried to act in a style that was true and natural. Comment was made in the papers of California about Boucicault's effect on the company:

"...the other characters, under his supervision, were considerably modified and subdued, as compared with previous representations in this city." Belasco followed in his direction this style of acting and directing.

Boucicault returned east, to New York City, during the early spring. Led Astray was still playing to overflowing houses and Dion was undoubtedly reaping his share of the gate, whether he was present or not. On Monday evening, March 16, 1874, Boucicault began two week-only engagement at Booth's Theatre. No new plays were offered. He opened this return engagement with his playing of Myles
in The Colleen Bawn. It had been fourteen years previously that he had appeared in this role in the city of New York. The reviews were full of Dion's rendition of the role of Myles. The Times stated:

"... of Mr. Boucicault's performance of Myles na Coppaleen it would be difficult to speak in terms of too great praise. It is a creation as far removed from the typical stage Irishman as the drama itself is superior to all previous effects of the kind. It is difficult to conceive anything more spontaneously humorous and more unaffectedly pathetic than this performance. It bubbles over with quiet fun, and the oft recurring bursts of real, honest sentiment are spoken with an earnest simplicity as welcome as it is rare. ..."  

After this two week engagement at Booth's, Dion returned to England for a short visit. Apparently he went to England to supervise and stage the London production of Led Astray. Certainly Boucicault would not allow anyone else to stage a play which had been so successful in America. He would want to be assured that the London production matched the Union Square production. Led Astray was produced under Dion's supervision at the Gaiety Theatre in London during the month of June, 1874. 

It would seem that this was the main purpose of Boucicault's return to London during this summer. No

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72 Times, Tuesday, March 17, 1874.

73 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
record of other activity has been found during the summer. However, Dion could have been busy writing, for he brought out two new scripts in the early fall of '74; the first being called Belle Lamar, which was written especially for John McCullough, the second, an Irish piece entitled, The Shaughraun. This latter became one of the most famous of his plays; the next chapter is devoted to it.
CHAPTER IX

THE SHAUGHRAUN

The winter season of 1874-75 was an important one in the life of Dion Boucicault. It was during this season that he brought out a play that was probably his most successful work. He produced three plays in all during the season. His first script and an adaptation had little effect on the "bill of fare" when presented at Booth's Theatre, but the second script provided Wallack's Theatre with a "hit" that played from November 15, 1874, through March 31, 1875. That was a tremendous run. It broke all records—attendance, box office, and length of engagement—of activity in the history of the theatre in the city of New York. The character of Conn, which Dion created for this play, The Shaughraun, in his writing and especially in his acting, was long to be remembered. Any student of the theatre should associate it with the name of Boucicault.

By the fall of 1874, Booth's Theatre had passed forever from the possession of the Booth family. The Times felt obligated to express its sentiments with regard to this event by stating that affairs of the theatre had "taken a desirable turn" when the management of the theatre was placed in the hands of Messrs. Jarrett and Palmer. Booth's
Theatre had always held a warm spot in the hearts of New York theatre patrons. It was a symbol of legitimate representations.

It were a pity that the stage which the genius of Booth has adorned, . . . should be used for ignoble purposes. The trivialities of burlesque would be indeed a falling off for Booth's--even the spicy pleasantries of opera bouffe would be alien to its dignified tradition, and the gaudy emotional drama would strut but awkwardly on a stage where tragedy was wont to find its home. We are glad, therefore, that the theatre has fallen into the hands of gentlemen who will revive what is best of its past, and whose aim appears to be to cater so in the future as to deserve the public approbation and support.1

Under the management of Jarrett and Palmer, Booth's was the first of the principal theatres to open its doors for the fall and winter season of 1874-75. The dramatic piece which was used to open the new season was a script by Boucicault. At some earlier date, Boucicault had entered into a contract to provide a new play for manager Palmer. The leading role in the new play, Colonel Philip Bligh, was written for John McCullough, a member of the company at Booth's. This new play, entitled Belle Lamar, was based on an episode in the Shenandoah Valley in the "Late American conflict" during the spring of 1862. In the advance notices of this production, Boucicault took the credit of having taken a step "towards the establishment

of a purely American drama."\(^2\)

The play was produced "under the immediate personal supervision of the author," with a cast headed by John McCullough and K. Rogers Randolph, better known as Katherine Rogers. An announcement of a new play by the dramatist Dion Boucicault was enough to assure any manager that for the opening night the house would be full. Such was the case at Booth's Theatre on this opening night. Excitement ran high, for no play had ever been more "studiously announced." Heralds and pursuivants had proclaimed its coming; there had been "a figurative flare of trumpets in its behalf, and outside the good offices of those excellent arant courriers, popularly known as advertisements, apt service [had] ... been rendered by that tangible commodity (much sought after by dramatic authors) called the puff preliminary."\(^3\) On August 10, 1874, Belle Lamar opened the fall season of Booth's Theatre.

In regard to Boucicault's having taken a step toward the establishment of a national drama, the Times, in the review of the opening, had the following to say:

...The prime reliance of the new play appears to rest on the fact that it is the first attempt in the direction of establishing a national American drama. For the purpose of establishing a national

\(^2\) Times, Sunday, August 9, 1874.

\(^3\) Times, Tuesday, August 11, 1874.
American drama. For the purpose of establishing a national drama, we cannot think of any author whom we would mention beside Mr. Boucicault, and this applies to any nationality he might favor with his attention. He has given us Irish drama beyond number, the French school has been reproduced by him, a Scandinavian drama would probably be within his range, and so strong a belief have we in the versatility that we think he could, with equal ease, hunt up the romantic episodes in the history of Japan or Tartary, and furnish the Orientals with a very excellent national drama, in which, possibly, there might be a flavoring admixture of the Irish element. He is the man for emergencies, and as a purely American drama is desirable, who so apt a pioneer?

As to an explanation of just how well Boucicault established an American drama, the Times continued:

Mr. Boucicault has chosen the period of the civil war for his story, and in doing this he believes that there is no danger of reviving old animosities. The task is doubtless one of some difficulty, but certainly he is of all modern dramatic authors the especial one whose skill is equal to an emergency of this kind. The particular period of the war selected by him is the episode of the Shenandoah Valley, in the spring of 1862, but he draws his plot from another source, namely, the betrayal of McClellan's plans to the enemy by women who were acting as spies. With these inspirations he weaves a pretty story, having a mingled texture of romance and melo-dramatic elements. . . . Mr. Boucicault has treated the matter with great tact and delicacy. He would be but a blind partisan who could take offense on either side, for all their antagonisms the dramatist keeps up an interchange of fair courtesies and stately heroics. In the matter of incident "Belle Lamar" can certainly claim an abundance, and its incidents are rapid and pretty effective. . . . The dialogue, too, is written with the author's usual success, while the mounting is elaborate, and the

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
stage arrangements of that exact kind which Mr. Boucicault knows how to secure for the representation of all his plays.

On account of the very fact that it was an "American national drama," the Times predicted that the play would not have "a permanent and abiding interest. If it were tested by representation—say in London, or in any other place where the theme is not so immediately interesting as here—we do not think it would be deemed a success." In other words, the play did not have either the universal appeal or the subject matter that would give it long life.

For some reason the play did not live up to the anticipation of the audiences. Perhaps Boucicault's "puffing" had been too effective. People were expecting too much. The play ran only until September 14, 1874.

Boucicault's Belle Lamar was, of course, not the first play that had been based on the activities of the Civil War. Quinn lists some of the earlier attempts:

John F. Poole's Grant's Campaign, or Incidents of the Rebellion at the New Bowery in 1865; Niles Levick's The Union Prisoner at Barnum's Museum in 1867; T. B. de Walden's British Neutrality at the Olympic in 1869; Ulysses, or the Return of U. S. Grant at the Union Square in 1871; and The

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5 Ibid.
6 Times, Sunday, September 13, 1874.
Returned Volunteer at the Academy of Music in 1871. However, he comments that "Boucicault's Belle Lamar . . . . was probably the first Civil War play that can be considered seriously."7

Probably one of the reasons that the play was not a success was the fact that it dealt with a subject that was still too real in the minds of the public. Drama, of necessity, must be a reflection of a period; being usually at least twenty years behind the historical events. If a play deals with facts of the present, it becomes very difficult to avoid making it a propaganda piece. Boucicault succeeded in doing this in his Octoroon, and apparently was relatively successful with Belle Lamar. But it was not until in the eighties, when William Gillette's Held by the Enemy was produced, that any of the plays based on the Civil War received popular approval and a prolonged engagement.

On September 5, 1874, Booth's Theatre announced "Positively last night of Dion Boucicault's new play BELLE LAMAR," but on Sunday, September 6, a different announcement was published which stated that the continued favor "extended to Mr. BOUCICAULT'S new American play induces Jarrett & Palmer to prolong its run for another week.

BELLE LAMAR will therefore be performed for the 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32d, 33d, and 34th times. 8

On September 14, Belle Lamar was replaced by Otway's "celebrated tragedy, VENICE PRESERVED," which had undergone revisions by Boucicault which had "restored much of the original text omitted in the acting editions." 9 Boucicault's main contribution was the addition of Byron's terribly thunderous curse scene in Marino Faliero to the already thunderous play of Otway. It is rather difficult to understand just why Otway's Venice Preserved was revived at this particular time. It had, of course, in its day been quite popular and was "once second in reputation as an acting play only to Shakespeare's best tragedies;..." 10 The Times speculated that perhaps the piece was revived "owing to a freak of Mr. Boucicault's." It continued:

...it has been reported that the play was performed, if not at his suggestion, at least with his connivance and even assistance, and with restorations by him of the original text. If this is true, we might easily imagine that his motive was to show to the public, and perhaps to carping critics, what an "old standard play," such as there is much talk about, a tragedy written by a man who has a name in literature, might be, and how it compares with one of his own, such, for instance, as that which it has just replaced upon the stage of Booth's Theatre, and how serious drama of the old school is suited to the taste

8 Times, September 6, 1874.
9 Times, Sunday, August 30, 1874.
10 Times, Tuesday, September 15, 1874.
of American audiences at the present day. And perhaps after the curtain fell last evening he smiled a cold, grim smile and said to himself: "Well, a week of this will give them enough of the grand style for awhile at least."11

The revival was not a successful one and Venice Preserved had its farewell performance on September 19.

Let us turn now to a period in Boucicault's life which was one of the most lucrative and successful that he was ever to experience. Boucicault shifted his attention from Booth's to Wallack's. During the month of October Boucicault produced his Shaughraun, the "best of all Boucicault Irish plays."12

Boucicault had entered into a contract with Lester Wallack to provide his house with a new drama. The drama that Boucicault wrote was entitled Boyne Water. When he showed the still unfinished script to Wallack, the latter objected to the historical background of the piece. Boucicault took the manuscript home, changed the period, discarded some scenes, added others, and the net result was The Shaughraun.13

It is reported that Wallack objected to the name

11 Ibid.


The Shaughraun. But Boucicault stuck to the Gaelic title and it proved to be a great drawing card in itself. Everyone wanted to find out what a Shaughraun "or what ever you call it" was.

Great preparations were made for this opening. The matinee for Saturday, November 14, was cancelled "In order to present Mr. Dion Boucicault's NEW PLAY THE SHAUGHRAUN...with due effect and perfection of detail...". Even, the press looked forward to this new production "with agreeable anticipation." The Times stated that

The presentation of Mr. Boucicault's new Irish drama, entitled "The Shaughraun"--which word, by the way, is to be pronounced as if written "Shockrawn"--at Wallack's Theatre, to-morrow evening, will surely be one of the events of the season. A fresh play at Wallack's is at any time a pleasurable sensation, and when it is taken into account the work is from the pen of one of the most successful writers of the day; that it has been written expressly by Mr. Boucicault himself, for Mr. H. J. Montague, and for an exceptionally strong company of artists; and that it will be brought forth with all the liberality and taste for which Wallackian productions are distinguished, it will be conceded that Saturday's performance can justly be awaited with agreeable anticipation. Two powerful scenes are included in the second and third acts which, in accordance with Mr. Wallack's suggestion, have been cast into one; that special care has been bestowed upon the picture of an Irish wake; and finally, that Mr. Boucicault regards his own role as the finest Irish role he has ever composed.15

14 Times, Saturday, November 14, 1874.

15 Times, Friday, November 13, 1874.
The play had a strong cast including Mr. J. H. Montague as Captain Molineux, Mr. J. B. Polk as Robert Pfellott, Mr. John Gilbert as Father Dolan, Mr. Arnott as Corry Klochela, Mr. H. Beckett as Harvey Duff, and Mr. Boucicault as Conn, the Shaughraun. Among the women in the cast were Miss Ada Dyas, who played the role of Claire Pfellott and Madame Ponisi who portrayed Mrs. O'Kelly, Conn's mother.

For the opening night the theatre was crowded "from parquet to roof with an eager crowd of spectators. . . everybody in town who could possibly obtain a ticket for the performance went to see Mr. Boucicault's new play." The press was most laudatory about the type of play. The preceding year had indicated that there was "a probability of the public being drawn off to the disgusting obscenities which [In those days were] put upon the stage under the name of "French plays." But a love of honest and innocent amusement [Ed] . . . beaten down the demand of French filth, and the people of New-York once more flock[Ed] to the 'old stand' in Broadway."16

This play, The Shaughraun, was such an important event in the life of Dion Boucicault, both as an author and actor, that a detailed account of the opening should be

16 *Times*, Sunday, November 16, 1874.
considered. The reviewer began by praising Boucicault and continued to do so for quite some length. He commented:

Last night Mr. Boucicault was the lion, both as author and actor, and his pride in both of these callings must have been amply satisfied by the cordiality of his reception. The audience cheered him again and again when he made his appearance in the second scene of the first act, and treated him, as it was only just that they should, as an old friend.

The writer of the review even attempted to justify and cover up many of Dion's disagreements with the press. The play must have put him in a favorable frame of mind:

For however much Mr. Boucicault may be abused by critics whom he has happened to offend -- and he is always offending the critics, perhaps from no fault of his own -- most of us cannot help remembering that we owe to him many an evening of great and harmless pleasure. He deserves something better than to be pelted with the sticks and stones of small criticism. He is a man of extraordinary accomplishments, of vast knowledge of the stage and its accessories, and of great and varied abilities. To be sure, he has had his failures, but what living dramatist has gained more successes? He has created an Irish drama, and almost driven the old-fashioned rough-and-tumble Irishman from the stage. The caricature has gone. The portrait from nature has been submitted in its stead. Mr. Boucicault has caught the spirit of the wild romance of Ireland, and made us see almost the picturesque beauty of its landscapes, as well as the warm-hearted but fitful and uncertain character of its people.

The part of the Shaughraun, was a type of character known only in Ireland.

All Irishmen are not like the Shaughraun, but we hope some of them are, although we do not happen to meet with them in New-York. Here we chiefly know the Irish through the medium of very bad domestic servants and political followers of "Boss Kelly." From neither point of view are they attractive. But it is the Irish of Ireland whom Mr.
Boucicault puts upon the stage— not the ward politician, which is the final result of the labors of a reign of "bosses." . . .

He is a part of every scene, and presents a model of fidelity for his old playmate and master Robert Efolliett such as we have only met with in works which place before Irish life and character under their most attractive phases. Whenever he is off the stage the audience cannot help wishing him back again. His appearance— where did Mr. Boucicault pick up that wonderful coat? -- his good humor, his merry talk, his kind heart, his pluck and ready wit, all combine to make him a worthy companion picture to the famous Myles na Coppaleen and in many respects the Shaughraun is a more striking and attractive creation than Myles himself . . . He is killed, as the audience is allowed to suppose, and a wake is held over him which alone would be the making of an ordinary play. No one but Mr. Boucicault could have imagined this part, and no one but he could have played it with so much skill and feeling. It is a true touch of genius, both in design and execution.

Of the general merits of the play, the reviewer continued:

It is of the general merits of the play alone that we can speak at present. And of these it would be impossible to speak too highly. In every scene and every part of a scene Mr. Boucicault has put his very work, and the result is that even in slight conversations between subordinate characters, the audience is kept in roars of laughter. A wittier play, a drama more replete with brilliant dialogue, as well as absorbing interest, has not been produced during the past fifteen years. The author has scattered wit enough throughout this work to make the fortune of a dozen plays.

The production was beautifully mounted.

As for the scenery throughout, it is simply beyond all praise, and fully justifies the warm terms in which Mr. Boucicault spoke of it last night in bidding the audience farewell at the close of the last act. The prison scene is not only beautiful in itself, but is a wonderful triumph of stage mechanism. "The ruins of St. Bridget's Abbey," painted by Matt Morgan, is one of the liveliest
pictures ever placed upon the stage. The scene
of the wake is likely to prove the talk of the
town.

As to the success of the night's play, the reviewer con-
cluded:

Of all the successes which he has achieved, we
venture to say that none will prove more popular
or more enduring than this latest production of
his pen. . . . To predict a long run for such a
work is superfluous, for it is sure to have it.
We can only say that if any of our readers miss
seeing it, they will deprive themselves of one of
the greatest pleasures which has been offered to
them at any theatre for many seasons past.17

A character which was never seen all but stole the
show. The character was so "ingeniously sketched in" that
the audience visualized him as resembling the Shaughraun
himself. This was "Tatters," a dog! "One can imagine him
with unkempt appearance and good-for-nothing air, following
at the Shaughraun's heels, and showing him the same sort
of fidelity which the Shaughraun shows toward his own
master."18

There had been some speculation by members of the
dramatic circles that Boucicault had written himself out.
This tremendous success could certainly stand in evidence
that he had not. Boucicault himself was tremendously
pleased with the success. In writing to his eldest son in

17 Times, Sunday, November 16, 1874.
18 Ibid.
1874, he could not hide his pleasure, for he said:

My dear Willie—Another great success—perhaps the greatest of all—It seems to be so at present—and as 2000 people left the Theatre last night the universal opinion expressed was that "Souciault has beaten himself. The Colleen Bawn will be forgotten—it overwhelms Arrah-na-Pogue—"

So you can say with Lady Macbeth "Who'd have thought the old man had so much blood in him?"19

The play drew tremendous crowds, was an "enormous success and broke the record up to that time as theatrical moneymaker."20 Odell reports that The Shaughraun "enjoyed the longest run of the '70s at Wallack's; the hundred and eighteen evening performances brought in $185,289.50, a nightly average of over $1,500; twenty-five matinees aggregated $34,787, an average of $1,391.50."21 Mr. Scullion, who was treasurer for Wallack's for 22 years as well as at the time of The Shaughraun, reported that this play made more money than any other ever produced in this country. "The Senator ranked next, but the scale of prices was not as high. The receipts for Thanksgiving matinee during the first year of the Shaughraun were exactly $2,550.50."22

The fact that the play was such a success and that


21 Odell, op. cit., p. 522.

22 The New York Dramatic Mirror, February 1, 1896.
Boucicault's acting in the character of Conn had received such plaudits immediately placed both the play and Dion in a position for criticism.

The Spirit of the Times commented:

Mr. Dion Boucicault may now be said to have reached the topmost round of his ambition. He has written another successful Irish drama. The reception of The Shaughraun is favorable, and the feud which has existed for so long between the house of Wallack and the house of Boucicault has warmed to cordial fellowship under the cheering sum of success. The merits of The Shaughraun are numerous, the interest fairly sustained, and the central figure (personated by Mr. Boucicault, of course) is drawn in lively tints. The other characters, with the exception of Harvey Duff, are mere sketches, and totally lacking in individuality; they come on and go off with but one motive—to make situations and points for the author. . . . There is, however, a lack of originality in every figure and every striking incident of the play. This defect is a chronic one with its author, whose talent is stronger test in the arrangement than the creation of incident. . . .

Boucicault was attacked by many on the ground that all his Irish characters and Irish dramas were alike. Some said that he had merely rewritten The Colleen Bawn and Arrah-na-Pogue in writing The Shaughraun. Boucicault's answer to their charges is interesting:

It has been said that my Irish dramas are like each other. There is not the remotest resemblance between them either in character, plot -- that is, neither in features nor shape. It is easy fatuity of criticism to talk in this off-hand way. The leading characteristics of the Irish people are their unselfishness, their self-sacrifice, their unconscious

23 New-York Spirit of the Times, November 21, 1874.
heroism, and the absence of sensuality in all their passions. When I wrote The Colleen Bawn I invented the Irish drama. It was original in form, in material, in treatment, and in dialogue. Arrah-na-Pogue and The Shaughraun were as much like The Colleen Bawn as one picture of lanseer is like another.

Those who would say I took either the characters or the action of this play from Gerald Griffin's "Collegians" had better read that novel before they commit themselves to mis-representation—that is, if they care whether they speak truth or not. Self-sacrifice is the leading feature in this play. Mrs. Cregan is willing to sell herself for her son's sake; Anne will marry a man she does not love to bestow her fortune upon him and save him from ruin; Danny Mann, a weak, hectic boy, a spaniel that follows at his master's heels, commits a murder out of love for him; Eily makes the supreme sacrifice of all.

Now, Arrah-na-Pogue is a romantic, not a domestic drama, intended to show the extreme purity and the absence of sensuality in the most passionate love. The Colleen Bawn is a wild flower, Arrah is an emerald—and the plays are like one another as a violet and a jewel. The dialogue in The Colleen Bawn is soft, pathetic, or humorous. The dialogue in Arrah is keen, brilliant, and witty.

Shaun is a sentimental character, he is rarely consciously funny. Not so is Myles. Norah and Eily are diametrically opposite natures. O'Grady is a type belonging to the highest form of comedy. More truthful to nature than Sir Lucas O'Trigger—he is an Irish gentleman in the grandest sense of the word, simple minded, noble hearted, with a detestation of meanness, which God has sculptured on the hearts of the noblemen of that race. He is the Sir Roger de Coverly of Ireland. As a portrait he is worth all the sketches of character to be found in either The Colleen Bawn or The Shaughraun. It is such heads of families that produce such devoted servants as Kerry.

The Shaughraun was intended to illustrate the "Unconscious heroism" of the Irish character. When Conn disguises himself in Robert Ffolliott's clothes, and attracts the shots intended for his playfellow, while Robert escapes, the vagabond perceives only the fun of the position, and triumphs in the success of the trick, never heeding or caring for the risk or the wounds, unconscious of any heroism.

The action of Arrah-na-Pogue is singularly bald of incident. Indeed, the plot ends at the termination of the first act. The remainder is not a
progression, but an attitude. The characters discuss what is to be done, in an emergency, and that is all. But in The Shaughraun the action is a chain of incidents, following one another with the rapidity of file firing. All is action. There is no discussion. Conn, unlike Myles and Shaun, has no sentiment, but is an overflow of animal spirits; he means fun, and enjoys it.

The character of Harvey Duff was drawn from life, being in action and in word the counter part of an Irish detective, who had precisely the same experience, and fell a victim to popular execration and revenge.

Those who, misled by the school of drama I have invented, and hearing the brogues generally spoken by the characters, declare the plays exhibit sameness are skin-deep critics, or, perhaps, they may be the same who are in the habit of stating that I take all my plays from the French, and not being able to say so about these works, gratify their feelings by saying that now I am stealing from myself.

So it was from the first. When I wrote London Assurance and invented modern comedy, I was told it was trash, and would not live out the year. In my next play, Old Heads and Young Hearts, I was accused of imitating London Assurance, a comedy immeasurably superior (as they had then found out) to the second attempt.

I had the temerity to attempt to succeed with the public without the aid of the critics. I had no business to do so until they had made up their minds—or I had made up their minds for them by paying tribute. Well, I don't care a straw for all the critics that ever dipped their pens into ink. The rock of Gibraltar might be overthrown by a squirt as easily as I can be moved by all the ink ever shed in my abuse. London Assurance has stood its ground for 38 years, and my Irish drama will stand its ground in the next century, not because of its merit, which is not great, but because of its originality.

William Winter accuses Dion of having devised for himself "an Irish Rip Van Winkle, under the name of Conn, the

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Shaughraun, which he admirably acted, as nearly as he could, in Jefferson's spirit and manner.\textsuperscript{25} Quinn was of the same opinion and stated: "Conn, the Shaughraun, 'the soul of every fair, the life of every funeral, the first fiddle at all weddings and parties,' as the program indicated, is one of those creations that belong with Rip Van Winkle, whom indeed he somewhat resembles. Boucicaut played the part, and he interpreted to the life the generous, hearty, irresponsible, and none too sober wanderer, ever ready to help others but with little of an eye to his own concerns."\textsuperscript{26}

Two things seem to stand out in all mentions made of this production: the acting of Dion, and the scenery. "For Mr. Boucicaut, both as author and actor, it \textit{was} a great triumph—especially as actor. His skill and shrewdness in knocking together effective situations and spinning lively dialogue \textit{were} certainly commendable; but his acting \textit{was} simply exquisite. One is hard cleverness, polished and flexible with use; the other is very like genius."\textsuperscript{27}

During the fifth scene of the second act one of the big scenic effects was demonstrated. This particular scene

\begin{footnotes}
\item[26] Quinn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 384.
\end{footnotes}
was "The interior of a prison; large window R., old fire- 
place, R.C., small window, C., door L. Through window R. 
is seen exterior and courtyard." This certainly indicates 
the use of a box set of some sort. During the course of 
the scene Robert tries to escape from within while Conn 
assists him from without. Part of the wall is broken 
when

The Scene moves—pivots on a point at the back. 
The prison moves off and shows the exterior of a 
tower, with CONN clinging to the walls, and ROBERT 
creeping through the orifice. The walls of the 
yard appear to occupy three-fourths of the stage. 28

This moving scenery was accomplished by hiding men 
inside the units and having them roll the units around at 
the appointed cue. Nicoll comments on the staging of the 
last scene, The Ruins of St. Bridget's Abbey: "as an 
example of the way in which the stage of the seventies was 
breaking with earlier principles hardly anything better 
could be found. . . . It will be noted in this that, while 
built-up scenery is freely employed, flat side-wings are 
still preserved. The set is midway between those of 1800 
and those of 1900 and thus harmonises with the spirit and 
technique of the play for which it was designed. One may 
add that the five full-stage scenes in The Shaughraun

28 Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Late Nineteenth 
Century Drama 1850-1900 (Cambridge: At the University 
Press, 1946), I, 44.
are divided by others set in the familiar 'groves.' Bouicauft, who was one of the greatest experimenters in this direction was also an active experimenter in the manipulation of light effects—and these light effects proved possibly the most serviceable instrument in the realisation of those fresh aims which were animating the age. . . ."^{29}

It was obvious that Wallack's had become the abiding place of Conn, the Shaughraun for an indefinite period. Advanced sale of seats was great. On December 13 the Times made this announcement: "the latest information conveys the fact that seats cannot be obtained to witness this newest and best of Irish romantic dramas, for at least two weeks hence. Then the crowds that have seen Mr. Bouicault's 'Shaughraun' are so unstinting in their praises of his work and wit, that the desire of others to be sharers in this pleasure will scarcely permit them to bear with the delay necessary in order to enjoy a seated hearing of the work."

During the Christmas holidays all the theatres were interested in getting their share of the money that holiday spectators had to spend. They put on special Christmas matinees, all save Wallack's, for it was booked solid and did not have to make any special attempt to secure a house. On the 27th, the Times coined the epigram:

^{29} Ibid., p. 46.
"Everybody goes to Wallack's, but everybody cannot obtain admission." By the first of the year, manager Wallack was so sure that he had a long run on his hands that "instead of the ordinary bills outside the theatre, two large 'posters' have been handsomely painted in oil, this measure deferring all ideas of a change of programme to the Greek kalenda."  

The S.R.C. sign, or as it was stated in those days "no more money taken," was nightly displayed in the lobby of Wallack's.

On February 20, the one hundredth performance was celebrated. The house was "packed from parquet to dome" as usual and the management handed out "Magnificent satin programmes... among the audience, with scented sachets and vials of perfume." Boucicault was called before the curtain and he was "enthusiastically hailed." The Times stated that Boucicault "was called before the curtain during the performance, and, of course, compelled to speak. Mr. Boucicault delivered a good humoured address, thanking the audience for its appreciation of his efforts, and the members of the company for the very efficient support rendered during the long run of the drama. Mr. Boucicault said he believed that in the 'Shaughraun' he had

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30 Times, Saturday, January 2, 1875.
discovered his 'Big Bonanza;' it had, he believed, the three essential requisites of a good play--a good author, a good company, and a good audience. 31

On Saturday, March 6, the Irishmen in the City of New York and "gentlemen of Irish descent," gathered at Wallack's to give the author and the leading actor in the Irish drama an ovation for his part in making the native folk Irishman understood, in introducing an "Irish drama which should fairly portray the national character, not merely in the finer and better qualities, but its extravagances and weaknesses, and those other peculiarities of wit and humor, fun and frolic, which are supposed to distinguish it." Among the prominent Irish people present were the Hon. John A. Brady, Judge of the Supreme Court, Gen. Sweeny, Richard O'Gorman, Algernon S. Sullivan, Major Haverty, Theodore Moss, Mr. Stuart, of the Park Theatre, and many others. At the end of the second act, the committee entrusted with the management of the affair ascended the stage "amid loud cheers." Mr. Boucicault was loudly called for and finally made his appearance. On behalf of the committee Judge Grady then said:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: The incidents of the evening are to be varied by a plot in which the

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31 *Times*, Sunday, February 21, 1875.
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modest gentlemen you see here and yourself are
the representative figures. We have a short en-
gagement to play. I have, indeed, a piece to
speak, and on its delivery, I shall follow the
glorious example of distinguished actors and
actresses, and see to it that I tear it not in
tatters. (Applause.) You will doubtless well
understand me when I say that in this establi-
shment, at least for the present, "tatters" does
all the tearing! (Applause.) Mr. Bouicault,
to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature as
an actor is an intellectual achievement of which
the artist may well be proud. We who are not of
the profession know little of its inner life, its
trials, vicissitudes, and rugged paths, yet we
cannot but feel its triumphs when, after a fin-
ished performance, moved by exalted sentiment
and noble deeds, we turn back to real scenes with
higher aims and holier purposes. To hold, as
'twere, the mirror up to nature, not only as an
actor, but as a successful author, is to combine
two brilliant elements of strength, and to command
the attention and admiration not only of those who
enjoy a "home, sweet home," the treasures of in-
tellect which dramatic literature reveals, but of
those who seek the play to see them illustrated by
the mimic art. This is to win double laurels—to
pluck from fame two garlands, either of which might
shed sufficient glory for one man. (Applause.)
It is not designed to-night, however, to signalise
the general excellence of your varied compositions,
but to express a thankful consciousness that you
have elevated the Irish drama by a just appreciation
and portraiture of the attributes and peculiarities
to which it relates. In the character of the
Shaughraun, for example, you have given us a true
type of a class of the Irish peasantry. In disposition
cheerful, buoyant, generous, enthusiastic, sym-
pathetic, and compassionate, and who, though in rage,
possesses a nature at once patriotic, chivalrous and
loving, (applause,) eager to battle for the right,
and ready to wit and strategy for fun or for emer-
gency, with his heart full of faith, yet open to joy
or sorrow as the sunshine or shadow may fall, on his
own path or that of his friends—one who illustrates
the aphorism contained in the poet's lines:
"The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gov'd for a' that." (Applause.)

Judge Brady here advanced toward the centre of the
stage and unveiled a statuette of Conn and his dog
Tatters, by Rogers. The presentation was chaste in design and execution, and was surmounted by Irish flags and national emblems, appropriately intertwined with flowers.

Continuing, the Judge said:

We ask your acceptance of this testimonial, slight though it be, as an acknowledgment of our obligations to you. It is one in which people of this land, from Boston to Savannah, and from New-York to San Francisco, have, by letter and by telegram, begged to unite.

We note that you may live long to enjoy the honors you have so deservedly won.

Mr. Boucicault, who was received with loud cheers, said: "Standing before you, Sir, I feel very like Conn in the presence of the priest, when he is asked, 'Well, haven't you a word to say for yourself?' and he replies, 'Divil a one, your reverence!' (Laughter) I had prepared some small speech to return my thanks to you, Judge Brady, and these gentlemen you so eloquently represent, and to you, ladies and gentlemen, who have come so kindly to adorn this occasion with your presence, (applause) but I confess I did not expect to feel called upon to extend my gratitude from Boston to Savannah, and to cover with my acknowledgments all the ground between New-York and San Francisco. (Laughter.) This occasion, Sir, is the greatest honor of my life except one, and that was conferred upon me once, fifty years ago when, upon entering the world, I found myself to be an Irishman. (Cheers) But as I had done nothing to deserve that compliment, I cannot claim credit for a work of which I was not the author. You offer me the most honorable distinction to which any artist can aspire and that is the assurance of his fellow-citizens that they perceive in his works, together with something that is sweet, something also that is useful and good. When the mere pleasure of witnessing a performance has passed away--has evaporated, as I may say, if there be a sweet residuum left in the mind, believe me, you will find it to be composed of pure, imperishable truth; for truth is the life of art, the soul of art I would say, and it is the only part of it that is imperishable and immortal. I have endeavored to tell the truth about my country. I mean about what is beautiful and good and innocent in that land; I have drawn a portrait of one you love, and ah! I know right well how much of the feeling you exhibit here tonight is due to the artist who stands before you, and how very much more is due
to the tender interest you take in the subject he has chosen to illustrate. For among the various European nations that so largely contribute to form the American family there are Swedes, Germans, French, Spaniards, Scotch, Italians, all are represented; but there is one more favored here than all the rest— one endeared to you by a hundred ingratiating faults, a thousand redeeming weaknesses, (laughter,) one who lying on the breast of this land looks back fondly to the old country, and her adopted mother is not jealous of that love. On the contrary, her great, sympathizing heart beats in unison with the same emotions, for the American heart is strung with chords torn from the Irish harp, (cheers,) and when I touched these cords your feelings flowed out to me; not so much to the skill of the poet, but to the instrument on which he played and to the song he sung. Oh! let me disclaim any pretension as an actor to excel others in the delineation of the Irish character. It is the Irish character as misrepresented by the English dramatist that I wish to convict as a libel. (Cheers.) If others have only had this libel as material wherewith to win your approbation as comedian, so much out of so little. I accept your generous encouragement of my efforts to do good rather than the good I have done, and I wish I could find better language in which to clothe my thanks. But when I try my voice sounds false in my own ears, because it fails to express what is in my heart. I thank you for myself. I thank you for those who are dearer than myself—the sharers of my pride and my happiness. Don't measure my gratitude by these few words. Let each of you think what he would have said in my place, and give me credit for saying that. (Applause.) Believe me that I will keep the memory of this night in my heart as green as the emblem of my only country, God bless her. (Cheers.)

After the performance Mr. Bouicault entertained the committee at supper at Delmonico's. During the festive proceedings a rhyme by Miss Ada Dyas, entitled, "Tatterian Doggerel," was read.32

What a night March 6 must have been for the Irish! The blarney was thick and clever. Even those with only a

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32 Times, Sunday, March 7, 1875.
drop of Irish blood must have had a proud heart and a moist eye after such speeches as those. Delmonico's must have been a gay and noisy restaurant with such a celebration as that on the night of March 6, 1875.

On Tuesday, March 21, Mr. Wallack was forced to announce that due to engagements "entered into by Mr. Boucicault to perform in Boston and Philadelphia" the Shaughraun could not be performed beyond the month of March. So during the sixteenth week of Boucicault's engagement at Wallack's, he took his present farewell in The Shaughraun.

The play had lost none of its freshness nor its appeal in these sixteen weeks of playing, for the Times said, "This withdrawal comes not at a period when the success attending earlier representations has become attenuated into the respectful toleration which usually cleaves to a good play after it has lost its freshness, but rather at a time when its prosperity is fully matured, and when everything is in favor of its long duration in the esteem of the public."33

But Boucicault had long since put the wheels into motion to take The Shaughraun on tour and the engagements could not be canceled out at this date. "Mr. Boucicault is obliged to withdraw 'The Shaughraun' and take that notable drama and himself from the Atlantic to the Pacific

33 Times, Sunday, March 21, 1875.
Coast. The Metropolis has of course, a prime claim on the attention of the dramatist, but the provinces may not be neglected either. Therefore, Mr. Boucicault is about to launch his play among new audiences, and seek fresh confirmation of its merits and wider plaudits. " The Times anticipated a successful tour for The Shaughraun, not only because of its "exhilarating wit, sparkling dialogue, admirably-woven plot, and fertile invention," but because "the author is so good a stage manager, and has so wide an experience in dealing with actors that whatever material may be placed at his disposal will be, so to speak more or less plastic in his hands."

During the twentieth and last week of the engagement of Mr. Boucicault at Wallack's, Dion was persuaded to give six extra performances. On Easter Monday, March 29, Easter Tuesday, March 30, and Easter Wednesday, March 31, matinees were given at one-thirty, followed by evening performances at eight o'clock. These extra performances caused Boucicault to run so short of time that a special train had to "be provided at the Grand Central Depot to convey Mr. Boucicault to Boston to fulfill his engagement in that city on Thursday, April 1." 35

34 Ibid.
35 Times, Saturday, March 27, 1875.
So on Wednesday, March 31, 1875, Dion gave his 142d and 143d representations of *The Shaughraun*, and his final performances, during this engagement, at Wallack's Theatre.

Although Boucicault had endeared himself to the theatre-going populace and the Irish, especially, he had had just the reverse effect on the members of his company. For it is reported that on his final night at Wallack's that

... during the evening the great plagiarist so far unbent as to send bottles of champagne, with his compliments, to the dressing-rooms of different members of the company. These offerings were returned with the wires uncut, and Mr. Boucicault consequently dispensed with the farewell oration to the company in the green-room, which was intended to signalize his departure. Word had been passed by the mysterious Moss that it would be very grateful to Mr. Boucicault's feelings to find the attaches of the theatre assembled at the stage-door when he entered his carriage to drive to the depot. He did find them thus assembled; but, instead of the cheering which he evidently expected, a volley of hisses greeted his appearance, and followed his re-treating carriage—actors, carpenters, musicians, door-keepers, and all classes concerned in the theatre joining in the demonstration. Such a good-bye, however, is no novelty to Mr. Boucicault, in this or his own country. He carries about with him, like an imitation Atlas, the contempt of two hemispheres.36

A fitting eulogy was given Boucicault and his play, *The Shaughraun*, by George William Curtin in *Harper's*

36 *The New York Spirit of the Times*, April 11, 1875.
There has been no play since "Rip Van Winkle" which has excited so much interest as this, and no character which is a more distinct figure in the mind than the Shaughraun. He is an Irish good-for-nothing, a young vagabond who is as idle as Rip Van Winkle, and who loves the bottle—not to nip six times—but who by his nimble wit and laughing, careless courage serves to good purpose a fair of every amiable lovers. There are knaves and wretches in the play, and ladies and lovers, and soldiers and a priest and old crones. There is some kind of story, as there is in an opera, but you don't remember very well what it is. It is only a background for the Shaughraun to sparkle on. Some grave critic remarked that as a play it had faults; it violated canons and laws, and wanted unity, and did many things which it seems plays ought not to do. There are two plots, or threads, or catastrophes, and the mind, it appears, is distracted, and the whole thing could have been much better. Ah! had the painter only taken more pains! But, on the other hand, Mr. Critic, there is not a dull word or a dragging scene in it. It moves from the beginning to end, and it is pure picture and romance all the way. There are, indeed, those dreadful moral difficulties which we have been called upon to consider in "Rip Van Winkle." Here is a lazy good-for-nothing, who has no trade or profession, or even employment, who has been in jail for his tricks more than once, who carries a bottle in his pocket, and poaches and fishes at his will, and he carries with him our admiration and sympathy, and puts our minds into any mood but that of severity and reproof. He is simple and generous and sincere, and brave and faithful and affectionate, indeed, but he is a mere Shaughraun after all.

Perhaps the only plea that can be urged in the defence is that the play leaves us more kindly and gentle. But if you return to the charge, and ask whether this might not have been done had the hero been a respectable and virtuous young man, keeping regular hours and reputable society, avoiding strong liquors and vagabondage, and devoted to an honest trade or a learned profession, the Easy Chair can only ask in return whether Hamlet might not have been a green-grocer. The charm and the defence of the "Shaughraun" are those of "Rip Van Winkle"—they are
its humanizing character and influence. Here is
the spectacle of knavery brought to naught, of
faithful love rewarded, and all by means of sim-
licity, generosity, good-nature, and courage.
Things are very perplexing if that is immoral.
It is, in fact, a poem, a romance. The little
drama is wrought, indeed, with all the consummate
skill of the most experienced and accomplished of
play-writers. The resources of the stage, machinery,
surprises, whatever belongs to effect, are all
brought most adroitly into play, and the spectator
is compelled to admire the result of tact and ex-
perience in the construction of a drama. But it
all deepens the romantic impression. The scene is
Ireland, the story is one of love, the chief actor
is an Irishman seen by the imagination; and it is
one of the felicitous touches of the skill with
which the work is done that from time to time, when
the spectator is most intent and his imagination is
all aglow, there is a faint breath from the orches-
stra, a waft of wild, pathetic Irish melody, which
fills the mind with vague sadness and sympathy, and
the scene with a nameless pensive charm. This is
the stroke of true humor—the mingled smile and tear.

But you sit and watch and listen, you become more
and more aware that the key-note of the whole play is
very familiar, and even what the Easy Chair has al-
ready said may suggest the essential resemblance,
which gradually becomes fixed and absolute. Under
a wholly different form, under circumstances entirely
changed, in another time and country, and with a
myriad divergences, the "Shaughraun" is our old friend
"Rip Van Winkle." It is recognized as readers of
Browning recognize "In a Spanish Cloister" in the
dialect poetry. The motive of the two dramas is the
same—the winning vagabond. In the earlier play he
is more indolent and dreamy, and the human story
naturally fades into a ghostly tale; in the latter
he is heroic and defined, and acts only within
familiar and human conditions. As a study of the
fine art of play writing, you can easily fancy, as
the performance proceeds that an accomplished play-
wright, pondering the great and true and permanent
success of "Rip Van Winkle," may have set himself to
pluck out the heart of its mystery, and to win the
same victory upon another field. You can fancy him
sitting unsuspected in the parquet on Jefferson's
nights, intently pouring upon that actor's person-
ation of the character that he has "created," studying
it with a talent of infinite resource and foreign
form, the fascination of a spell that is peculiar to no country or clime, but inheres in human nature. It is doubtless a fancy only, but it holds with singular persistence. What is the Shaughraun but a jocund Irish Rip, or Rip but a Shaughraun of the Catskill? 37

During the engagement of The Shaughraun another of Boucicault's appearances in the Courts of Law came about, but this time Boucicault was the one who brought the suit, something new for him. On Saturday, February 6, the case was called up before Judge Blatchford, who informed counsel that it had been assigned to Judge Woodruff, who "it was expected, would sit next Tuesday morning at 11 o'clock at No. 27 Chambers street, for that purpose. The cases were then adjourned to the time mentioned." 38 The object of the case was an attempt of Boucicault to prevent John F. Poole, the manager of the Olympic Theatre, from presenting the burlesque of "Shockraun," and Josh Hart, manager of the Theatre Comique, from continuing the performance of the play "Skibeeah," on the ground that the burlesque and play are infringements of Mr. Boucicault's copyright of the Shaughraun. The main points on which the defendants defended their case was that the Shaughraun was plagiarized and not entitled to copyright protection, and that, if it


38 Times, Sunday, February 7, 1875.
were entitled to copyright, that protection had not been legally obtained, as only the title-page of the play had been filed in the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington, whereas the law required that a full copy of a play or other publication must be thus filed before a copyright can lawfully be issued.

Two points of interest came out of the records of the proceedings at the court: (1), that Boucicault declared himself a citizen of the United States; and (2) a suggestion of the source of the plot for the Shaughraun. However, the latter was never actually proved. During the trial, Hart admitted that his stage manager, Mr. G. L. Stout, had taken the play entitled Pyke O'Callaghan, and after making some changes and adaptations, had presented it under the title of Skibbeah. "Mr. Purdy, on behalf of Mr. Hart, read some twenty pages of parallel columns taken from the plays of 'Pyke O'Callaghan' and 'Skibbeah,' showing that they were almost word for word identical, being exact transcripts in most instances, and of substantially the same purport in others."39 The argument ran: that if Mr. Boucicault accused Mr. Stout of using his play, The Shaughraun, as a model for his play, and his play was almost, word for word, taken from Pyke O'Callaghan,

39 Times, Sunday, February 15, 1875.
then Mr. Boucicault must have taken his play from the same source and was not entitled to the protection of the copyright law because the play was not his either.

Nothing of importance resulted from the trial. An injunction was issued against Hart preventing him from producing the play until a decision was made. Mr. Poole had already withdrawn his burlesque. The case went on for many months. A record of the decision was not found by this writer. Probably nothing of importance happened. Perhaps by the time a decision was reached, Mr. Hart had lost interest in his Irish play and had no desire to continue it anyway. After all, Hart admitted that he had his stage manager produce such a play only because there was a fad on Irish plays at that time.

Hart tried to turn the tables by filing a libel suit against Boucicault. However, Judge Lawrence refused an application for an order of arrest against Mr. Boucicault on the ground that the affidavit on which the application was founded was insufficient. 40

This is the history of The Shaughraun, its trials and successes, as it appeared in the City of New York during the winter season of 1874-75.

After closing the play at Wallack's, Boucicault took the play on tour. Our records of the tour are not complete,

40 Times, Wednesday, February 26, 1875.
but if the truth were known, it was probably played in every theatre in the country that had a company large enough to support Dion. He played the piece all the way from New York to San Francisco and then took it to England. It was a good drawing card everywhere he went and he made much money from it. It was a success!

After having played a matinee and evening performance on Wednesday night, March 31, Boucicault left New York for Boston by special train to begin a tour that took him over the major part of the United States. With the success of _The Shaughraun_, Boucicault attained the peak of his professional career. As the success of this role began to wane, in direct proportion, his position in the theatre began to decline. Never again was he to enjoy such a success. The remainder of his life consisted of one struggle after another to maintain a place at all in the professional theatre of America.

Dion began his Boston engagement on April 5, 1875, at the Boston Theatre. The engagement lasted for four weeks. He was supported by a good company, drawn from the house stock company of the Boston Theatre. Perhaps the best known member of that stock company was M. H. Barrymore, who appeared in the role of Captain Molyneux.

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Upon the completion of the Boston engagement, Boucicault traveled south to Philadelphia, where he appeared at the Walnut Street Theatre. As usual The Shaughraun "drew overflowing audiences" and during "the fortnight . . . the author and actor's net share is said to have been $8,000." 42

During the Philadelphia engagement, Boucicault returned for one afternoon to New York City, Thursday, May 27, to appear in a special benefit for Mr. Montague which was given at Booth's Theatre. Montague was one of the most popular actors of the day—"His popularity [had] . . . two sides—one professional, and the other personal—and it is not surprising therefore, that the announcement of his benefit should evoke the warmest recognition both on the part of the public and on that of his professional brethren." 43 Only an actor who demanded the respect of his fellow actors could expect a "star" such as Dion to make a special trip from Philadelphia to play a special matinee and then return in time to play a performance that same night in Philadelphia. However there was a warm bond of friendship between the two men. Actors assembled from all the main theatres in the city to make the benefit a success. Montague felt obligated to acknowledge the generous action of the various

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42 Times, Monday, May 24, 1875.
43 Times, Sunday, May 23, 1875.
theatre managers who allowed actors to come from their respective theatres to appear in his benefit. Augustin Daly, manager of the Fifth Avenue Theatre, Messrs. Shook and Palmer, of the Union Square Theatre, Lester Wallack, and Messrs. Jarrett and Palmer all received Montague's thanks for their cooperation and support of his benefit. 

It was a gala occasion. The bill included: First, "One Act of The SHAUGHRAUN, with its great original cast, including Mr. DION BOUCICAULT, Mr. JOHN GILBERT, Mr. HARRY BECKETT, Mr. EDWARD ARNOTT, Mr. J. LEONARD, Mr. H. J. MONTAGUE. Also Miss JEFFERY-LEWIS, Miss DORA TOLDTHWAITH, Mme. PONISI, &c."; Second, "For the first time in America, Clement Scott's capital one act drama, TEARS, IDLE TEARS, in which Mr. Montague appeared beyond 200 times in England. The cast is to include Mrs. ROUSBY, (who kindly left Baltimore for the special purpose of aiding on this occasion.""); Third, London Assurance, (1st 2d, and 3d acts) in which Miss Fanny Davenport, Miss Kitty Blanchard, Mr. Charles Fisher, Mr. McKee Rankin, Mr. W. R. Floyd, Mr. Montague &c appeared. 

Boucicault returned to the Walnut that night, May 27, to play out his engagement. The engagement ran through the remainder of the week, when he played his farewell

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44 Times, Tuesday, May 25, 1875.
45 Ibid.
matinee and evening performances on Saturday, May 29. It is highly probable that Boucicault played The Shaughraun in as many cities as time and circumstances would allow. However, information is not available to the writer and mention is made only of those places concerning which actual dates and places are known.

It would seem that after the Philadelphia engagement, Boucicault headed west. It is possible that he played in some of the cities near Philadelphia first. He reached the west coast in the early part of July, 1875. His engagement at the California Theatre opened on July 5, with Mr. H. J. Montague playing his original character of the English Captain Molineux and Miss Bella Pateman as Claire Ffolliott. On August 7, the Times carried the information that "Mr. Boucicault and Mr. Montague... both had benefits in the chief city of the Golden State," and it would be assumed that they probably had left California by the time this information was carried in the theatrical column of the Times.

Boucicault was back in New York during the early part of August, for on the 12th he was scheduled to sail for Liverpool on the Cunard steamer Bothnia. It was on

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46 Walnut St. Theatre Program in New York Public Library.

47 California Theatre handbill in New York Public library.
this departure that he was again involved with the law. The story unfolds itself thus: Upon Boucicault's return from California, a Mr. McWade procured an order for his arrest from one of the Judges of the Supreme Court, with an order to hold the defendant to bail in the sum of $1,000. McWade had brought suit for libel, the damages being laid in the sum of $10,000. The libelous matter appeared in a card, emanating from Boucicault, during the "Boucicault-Hart imbroglio" of the previous winter, which had been published in a morning journal. A part of the card read:

I have resolved to pursue and exterminate those impudent pirates and audacious thieves who prowl around the purlieus of the drama to seize on every success. They infested the career of Mr. Joseph Jefferson, and I am sorry to add that their manifest imposture in his case (I allude particularly to the case of one Robert McWade) was rather encouraged and supported by some of the press, instead of being held up to just reprobation.

Yours truly,

48 DION BOUCICault
New-York, Feb. 17, 1875.

The order of arrest was placed in the hands of a deputy sheriff on Tuesday, August 10, with instructions to serve it. Upon proceeding to Boucicault's residence, No. 20 East Fifteenth Street, the sheriff could not find him, although the house was watched until a late hour at night. It was reported that Dion had got wind of the

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48 Quoted in Times, Thursday, August 12, 1875.
coming trouble, and upon advice went to Jersey City, where he remained until the steamer sailed. On Wednesday, the deputy sheriff took a tug at the foot of Jay street, and when the steamer Bothnia left her dock in Jersey City the tug sailed by its side until the steamer was in New York Waters, and the deputy then boarded her. The deputy did not know Boucicault and upon boarding the steamer asked of Henry J. Montague, whether Boucicault was aboard. They obtained no satisfaction from Montague and sought out the head steward and inquired of him where Boucicault's state-room was. Boucicault heard the inquiry and came out. When he inquired of the nature of his visitor's business, he was served with the order of arrest. Boucicault requested that no scene be made, saying that the business could be settled immediately and quietly. Boucicault was told by the deputy-sheriff that he would be simply required to give bail in the sum of $1,000, and that a bail-bond was in readiness; whereupon the latter offered John McCullough and John A. Pinard to go bond for him—the former the manager of the California Theatre, San Francisco, California, and the latter a keeper of a restaurant in Mr. Boucicault's residence and Boucicault was allowed to continue on his journey. McWade's claim to injury was based on the claim that he was the sole author of his dramatization of Washington Irving's sketch, that it was copyrighted by him,
and that it varied materially from that acted by Mr. Jefferson. In his complaint, he stated that Boucicault intended, and caused it to be believed by the publication of the card, that the plaintiff had been guilty of plagiarism. McWade claimed that the publication of the card had greatly injured him as a dramatic author, and impaired the value of his play, and, in consideration thereof he demanded $10,000 in damages.

Dion continued to England and on September 4, 1875, The Shaughraun was first seen in London at the Drury Lane. During the rehearsals of The Shaughraun, Rose Cullin, who was engaged to appear in the role of Moya, "dried up," and at the last moment, Mrs. Boucicault undertook the part with only twenty-four hours' notice.

Dion and Agnes had not been living together for quite some time. They had quarreled over his relations with Katharine Rogers, a young actress, who had been appearing in many of his pieces and Agnes had returned to England.

It was during the final weeks of The Shaughraun's engagement at Drury Lane that Boucicault wrote a letter that was to cause repercussions on both sides of the Atlantic.

49 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.

There were many speculative reasons offered as to just why Boucicault did this. Many felt that the production of the Shaughraun had run its course and this was just another way to receive free advertising, while others felt that it was due to the disagreement that had grown up between Dion and F. B. Chatterton, the lessee of the theatre. It was stated that much earlier a disagreement had arisen over some trifle with some temper lost on both sides. It was reported that both men were proud, and both at that time were unwilling to shake hands; and Boucicault had announced the withdrawal of his play at the end of three weeks. Boucicault intended to close the play--unless, and the unless was big--the free advertisement would draw such tremendous crowds to the theatre that it would be better to patch up the quarrel than to withdraw the play.

The letter which created all this excitement was one that Boucicault wrote to Mr. Disraeli, the Prime Minister of the Conservative Cabinet, in which he urged the immediate release of the Fenian prisoners. "And why? You will never guess the reason, except that Dion Boucicault is an Irishman, and naturally loves his countrymen and his country's cause."

... the reason for Mr. Disraeli's clemency, according to the Boucicaultian theory, is the complete success of The Shaughraun. This is Irish logic with a vengeance, and I will tell you how the great Dion reasons. He maintains that he wrote the Shaughraun with the deliberate intention of testing this question of the Fenian prisoners. He was determined to see if
there was or was not any feeling in the matter. Well, the drama succeeded in America. It succeeded also in England. Everyone cheered when the Fenian prisoner escaped. Nobody hissed when the dramatist allowed him to escape. In fact, so far, no dissentient opinion has been recorded. Therefore, says Dion Boucicault, the great continent of America and the great city of London have pronounced absolutely in favor of the release of the Fenian prisoners, and their release Mr. Boucicault emphatically demands at the hands of the English Government.51

However, the correspondent that was recording this story was quick to find Boucicault's argument fallacious. He continued:

To tell you the truth, this is the queerest reasoning I ever heard in my life. I don't myself believe that any one audience that has assembled to see The Shaughraun ever troubled itself about the great political question involved in the play. They went to see the drama for curiosity, and cheered it because it was interesting. I don't believe that American people or English people either wish to discuss grave political questions in the playhouse, and I hope that you will agree with me that any such discussion would be destructive alike of all law and order. Supposing anyone had imagined that the play was not written with the object of making money, but merely from a patriotic and unselfish motive. Supposing that those who, from religious scruples, dislike the "wake scene," and those who, from political principles, are averse to the escape of the Fenian hero, had put up their backs and hissed, well, the theatre would have been turned into a beer garden, and the play would have been stopped by the police, not because it was offensive, but because it threatened a deliberate breach of the peace. Mr. Boucicault's virtue is delicious. He declares that he has gained his political point, and now, at considerable sacrifice, withdraws the play. He might have taken it into the country and to Ireland. The Shaughraun might have become another gold mine like Rip Van Winkle. But no! oh, dear, no! Such a sordid consideration as gold is scorned by the magnanimous Dion, and now

51 "The Drama in London," The Spirit of the Times, February 5, 1876.
having withdrawn *The Shaughraun*, and sacrificed the incoming harvest, he will return to his beloved America and shake the dust of accursed Albion from off his feet. Mr. Boucicault has dragged his coat on the ground, and no one will trample on it. He has brandished his shillalah, and no one will consent to have his head cracked. . . .52

Boucicault's advice to the Prime Minister had little effect, but the free advertisement did cause *The Shaughraun* to "draw marvellous houses," and every seat was booked until the end of the career of the play.

Boucicault and Montague quickly returned to America after the closing of *The Shaughraun* in February; for on March 30, Boucicault was scheduled to begin a new American tour at Pittsburg. He was playing in Philadelphia again at the Walnut Street Theatre during the centennial of 1876, and on September 25 it was announced that that was the last week of his engagement for that particular time.53 During the month of October, Boucicault filled the old Boston Theatre for the second time, in the role of Conn.54

In a program of the Boston Theatre for Saturday, October 28, 1876, the following information was included. First: "Last week of the engagement of Dion Boucicault," and secondly, "Mr. Dion Boucicault takes his farewell of our public with

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53 *Handbill of Walnut Street Theatre, in New York City Public Library.*

54 *Tompkins, *op. cit.*, p. 234.*
tonight's performance, as his engagements are so extended and complete that he never expects to make another professional visit to this city. . . .”

During the late summer months of 1876, Wallack was busy readying his house for the fall and winter season. He had made arrangements with both Montague and Boucicault to play at his house. He had engaged Montague to appear in *The Great Divorce Case* and Boucicault was to revive his piece, *The Shaughraun*, for seven weeks. The announcement stated, "during this run Boucicault will assume the stage management in person. He is very particular as to the fine points of 'stage business' on the part of the actors, which he prescribes at rehearsals, and of stage management in regard to their surroundings and the general working of the scenes and effects of his plays. A master of the little arts of the mimic scene himself, he is very exacting, and never finds a stage manager who is up to his standard in any theatre; so this time he is to be wisely allowed a chance to show how the thing should be done. . . .”

But Montague and Boucicault had a serious dispute. Boucicault had taken Montague under his wing, so to speak,


56 *Times*, Sunday, August 6, 1876.
and had coached him and used him in his productions for the past two seasons, taking him on tour to California and to England the preceding year. They had seemed inseparable, living in the same house, and it seemed that they could not live apart. But after this disagreement they separated and each lived under a different roof. Their dispute caused the house of Wallack much consternation. Montague had refused to play his original role of the young officer in the Shaughraun when it was revived. He felt that he "had appreciated vastly in his own estimation during one season of artistic labor, and had concluded that in the future he would be nothing less than a 'star'!"

The Times reported the following version of the disagreement:

With this view of being a star, he purchased in London the farcical play entitled, "The Great Divorce Case," an adaptation of the French comedy, "Le Proces Veauradieux," in which he found a showy leading light comedy part just suited to him. This he urged Lester Wallack to play at the opening of the season, and Mr. Wallack agreed. Mr. Montague intending to "star" with it after its "run" in New York. Mr. Boucicault, on becoming aware of this arrangement, was indignant, and after trying various forms of protest in vain, has finally, it is said, set his foot down in an alarming manner on the daring rebel Montague. Boucicault, so green-room gossip has it, insists that the season at Wallack's shall open either with "The Shaughrom" or with the new piece he (Boucicault) has contracted to bring out at that theatre this season. He will not tolerate "The Great Divorce" as a play to take precedence of his works at the theatre, and in case the policy of giving Montague the first chance in his "starring" part is adhered to, the shrewd dramatist threatens to withdraw himself and all his
pieces from the establishment. Such a course is out of the question for the management, and if Boucicault holds out stubbornly Montague and his play will have to take a back seat until the latter part of the season. This will quite effec­tually settle the new star's aspirations, unless he surrender and make a compromise with his former patron, who is too old a stager to be outwitted. . . . The dispute is making much talk in theatrical circles, but the general impression is that Montague will save himself at last by agreeing to play in "The Shaughraun." 57

Montague finally, of course, surrendered to Boucicault, and The Great Divorce Case was shelved at Wallack's. It was to be the new piece of Boucicault which was to open the season, and on September 10, it was announced that it was in re­hearsal, although "what is its title has not yet transpired." 58

On Tuesday, October 3, 1876, a new comedy in three acts by Dion Boucicault was presented entitled Forbidden Fruit. Boucicault did not appear in this production, but it had a strong cast, consisting of Beckett as Sergeant Buster; H. J. Montague as Cato Dove; Arnott as Captain Derringer; Miss German as Zulu; Miss Dyas as Mrs. Dove; and Mme. Ponisi as Mrs. Buster. 59 Its London premiere was to be held July 3, 1880, at the Adelphi.

Forbidden Fruit was another of Boucicault's witty farces that kept appearing now and again, all through the

57 Times, Sunday, September 3, 1876.
58 Times, Sunday, September 10, 1876.
59 clark, op. cit., I, 4.
remainder of his life. It was not much different in style from those he had written in his earlier years as a dramatist, but it showed the results of 25 years in the theatre in its polish and cleverness. It was an adaptation from three French pieces: *Le Proces Vauradieux*, *Les Dominos Roses*, and Borgeois and Brisebarre's *Un Coup de Canif*.  

The review of the opening was kind to this little piece. It stated that "The characters and their adventures, . . . can scarcely be called novel, but certain human weaknesses will always amuse, and so clever a dramatist as Mr. Dion Boucicault is too thoroughly au fait of his art not to know how to present them in their most entertaining shape. Regardless of all questions of probability or improbability, the eye-witnesses of the events in 'Forbidden Fruit' enjoyed them immensely, and the action of the piece progressed in an impressive denouement amid loud laughter and hearty applause."  

When *Forbidden Fruit* was produced in London, it was described as a realistic picture of London life in 1880. Mr. G. A. Sala, in the *Illustrated London News* for July 10, carefully denied this. To him "the most amusing feature in

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61 *Times*, Wednesday, October 4, 1876.
this undeniably successful piece was its utter unreality
as a picture of contemporary English manners." He illus-
trated his point by mentioning the "cabinet particulier"
as a direct importation from Paris; the fact that English
sergeants-at-law do not share the same chambers; that
English female cartridges "are not ambitious to be put
into the witness-box," and are the most retiring of quasi-
dramatic womankind, and he adds that he liked Forbidden
Fruit "all the better for these anomalies. Were it a
realistic piece, the fundamental frivolity of the piece
would make it not funny, but objectionable."\textsuperscript{62}

There are two items of interest in regard to the
staging of the piece: first, the introduction of a real
horse drawing a four-wheeled cab at the end of act II;
and second, the partitioning off of the stage into com-
partments in Act I, and into two rooms with the intervening
corridor in Act III. All these multiple stages were devised
in order to speed the action of the play. Vardac describes
the staging:

Boucicault employed an old device which, in this
case, enabled him to give his technique of cross-
cutting between parallel lines of action a more
realistic scenic treatment. The first act shows
the chambers of lawyer Dove in the Temple repre-
sented by two compartments, the outer office on
stage right connected by a door in the separating

\textsuperscript{62} Clark, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 3.
partition to the inner office, stage left. Similarly, in the third act at the Cremorne Hotel, two adjoining rooms as well as the intervening corridor are put upon the stage. Boucicault, recognizing the growing taste for realism, yet not wishing to sacrifice the scenic speed necessary to the play nor its pictorial variety, used box settings of a dual or even triple nature. Discredited and clumsy conventional scene changes were thus eliminated, and cross-cutting between parallel lines of action could be managed without scene waits.63

After two weeks of playing at Wallack's, Forbidden Fruit was still attracting a full house. It was stated: "The piece is now acted with wonderful briskness and ensemble, and the fun of the principal scenes, and the numerous 'points' of the dialogue—some of the latter, by the way, being more suggestive than could be desired—became nightly more vivid and effective through a performance of ever-increasing spirit and symmetry."64

On October 22, it was announced that Forbidden Fruit would give way to The Shaughraun on November 9. Forbidden Fruit had appeared so "fruitful" that the theater column of the Times felt that the piece would "indeed be reproduced later in the season." But in pursuance of advance arrangements, The Shaughraun took over. It was felt that the new assignment of roles for this production was


64 Times, Sunday, October 15, 1876.
"stronger, even, than that which marked the first production of the work." Of course, Dion was to appear in his original role and it was announced: "Mr. Gilbert's re-entree is in itself an event, and Mr. C. A. Stephenson's reappearance will no doubt be welcomed as calculated to add materially to the geniality of the performance. Miss Rose Wood will effect her debut at Wallack's" in this production.

The record of the reproduction of *The Shaughraun* at Wallack's as given in the *Times* was most favorable. The house was filled for this event and the reviewer felt that "The old time familiarity of the playgoer with the drama has not, however, rendered its scenes less interesting or amusing, and a record of this fact is the single remark suggested by the revival of the work." He continued to praise the production and gave for his reason:

...no one is more thoroughly au fait of the actor's art than Mr. Boucicault and, while he is uncommonly skillful in the construction of his pieces, he is particularly happy in enriching his dramatic stories with ad captandum situations and stage business which may not be exactly new, but which are always effective. "The Shaughraun" is a model play in respect of these qualities, and dullness does not prevail during one minute of its progress. That its occasional pathos and its unflagging vivacity and humor lose nothing at the hands of the artists now engaged in its representation at Wallack's need scarcely be reaffirmed. Mr. Boucicault, as Conn, still co-mingles mischief and

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*Times*, Sunday, November 5, 1876.
earnestness in such nice proportions as to make
known a wonderfully amusing, if not an absolutely
realistic, Irish peasant, and he bears off the
largest share of the honors of the performance with
as easy a grace as he does the laurels of author­ship.66

After the final curtain, the artists were called for and in
deference to a long and continued applause, Boucicault made
a few brief remarks. He stated:

I wish I could tell you how thankful I am to
find myself once more among you, and for this kind
reception you have favored me with, this evening.
If I could easily express what I feel I should be
ungrateful. Yet if I were silent, it might seem
ungenerous on my part. You have heard so many long
speeches, lately, that you must be glad to hear a
brief one now. You know there are three things
necessary to constitute a good theatrical enter­tainment. First, there must be an author to write
a piece; secondly, there must be a good company to
act it, and thirdly, there must be—and this is the
most important—an audience capable of appreciating
it. I have never had the good fortune to have my
piece played by a more admirable company than that
of Wallack’s Theatre, nor enjoyed the advantage of
so generous a public as that of New York, and, if
permitted, I shall only be too happy to pass in your
midst the rest of my artistic life.67

The Daily Tribune felt obligated to cover the revival
of the Shaughraun. It reported the reception of the drama
"was exceedingly hearty," and analyzed the basic structure
of the drama by saying: "Its First act is one of the best--
in domestic drama--ever written by Mr. Boucicault, or by
anybody else. Its second act cunningly turns into melodrama;

66 Times, Friday, November 10, 1876.
67 Ibid.
its third into farce..."68

While Dion was appearing in the "last weeks" of the Shaughraun in New York, he was being attacked, slightly, by a M. Henri Bellenger who had given his opinion of the English stage in London. His remarks were summed up by the Tribune. M. Bellenger had said:

...the English stage... no longer exists; as English that is,... The stage in all these countries is invaded, according to Mr. Bellenger, by a crowd of adapters, absolutely devoid of talent, and lacking even taste and tact. He cites an example: the Gaiety, at the moment he was writing, filled its auditorium every evening with a "new" piece by Mr. Dion Boucicault, entitled "Led Astray." This "new" piece, which had just achieved a great success in America, whence the "author" brought it to London, is simply a literal translation of the "Tentation" of Octave Feuillet, played some ten years before at the Vaudeville in Paris. Nothing has been changed; neither the scene nor the names of the characters; the author's work was limited to a verbatim rendering. He had not in this instance, "adapted" the piece; "which may, perhaps, account for its success."... He had, ... continued to vulgarize it by a placard drawn up in a style which, in France, is confined to exhibitions of two-headed calves..."69

But this kind of attack never bothered Boucicault. It was free publicity, in his way of thinking, and he did not even bother to answer it.

The Shaughraun ran until January 8, when it was replaced by Forbidden Fruit which was scheduled to play until Monday, January 22. It was replaced by a new drama in three


69 Ibid., December 28, 1876.
acts by Messrs. P. Simpson and H. Merivale, entitled All for her.\textsuperscript{70}

Again, during the month of December, 1876, Boucicault was brought into the Courts of Law. This time he was sued for $25,000 by George Roberta, and an executor of Sophia Munson, deceased.

The plaintiff allege\textsuperscript{71} that on Dec. 30, 1859, Boucicault, for the consideration of $1,000, transferred to him the exclusive right for one year to play "The Octoroon, or Life in Louisiana," in all the cities of the United States and Canada, excepting Boston, New-York, Philadelphia, Charleston, Mobile, and New-Orleans. Roberts sold his right, thus acquired, to Sophia Munson, who \textsuperscript{had} since died. The plaintiff claims that Boucicault, in spite of the transfer, permitted other persons, and especially Charles Wheatleight, to put the play on the stage in San Francisco and elsewhere.

Boucicault denied these allegations and set up further a defense based on "the statute of limitations, because more than six years \textsuperscript{had} escaped since the cause of action occurred."\textsuperscript{71} As far as can be determined, Boucicault did not pay the $25,000.

The Brooklyn Theatre fire with its calamitous effect had created a great deal of excitement that fall and winter of '76. Boucicault, ever on the alert to capitalize on any given situation, was the first in America to advocate the fire-proofing of scenery. On December 20, 1876, Boucicault invited a large number of people to attend a demonstration

\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Ibid.}, December 92, 1876.
\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Times}, Wednesday, December 13, 1876.
of fire-proofing at Wallack's Theatre. Great interest was demonstrated in the proceedings and among those present were A. M. Palmer, of the Union Square Theatre; Messrs. H. C. Jarrett, Harry Palmer, and Joseph H. Tooker, of Booth's Theatre; J. H. McVicker, of the Lyceum Theatre; Messrs. Birch and Wambold, of the San Francisco Minstrels; Fire Commissioners Perley, King, and Hatch; W. W. Adams, Superintendent of Building; Major Gen. Alexander Shaler, Arthur Wallack, Theodore Moss, and Rev. Dr. Bellows. The Times reported the event thus:

Two drop-scenes were used for the purpose of illustrating the experiment. One of them was painted in imitation of foliage, the other was in its original stage. At 1 o'clock Mr. Bouicault addressed the audience, saying that the scenes shown had been simply washed with a mixture comprising tungstate of soda, silicate of soda, and water. The addition of silicate of soda had been suggested by Dr. Fallen, to prevent even the presence of sparks. It was no "new Invention," but had been in use for fifty years, although not in general use. Mr. Bouicault next took a section of ordinary garden hose to which was attached a brass nozzle, and which was connected with the gas meter. Having ignited the gas, he held the flame directly on the hanging scenes. There was no ignition of the canvas, and when the flame had been held steadily in one place for fully half a minute the only result was a hole two inches in diameter, while for the radius of about six inches was charred, and crumbled upon being handled. A piece of wood, dipped in the solution, was held in the flame for nearly a minute with the simple result of crisping the part touched by the flame, while a coil of rope which had been saturated with the mixture, was held in the full force of the flame without impairing its usefulness. Mr. Bouicault stated that it was his intention to proceed at once to apply the mixture to the drop-scenes and scenery overhanging the stage, including the "gridiron"—an open-work floor over the scenes—and three or four scenes used in the
"Shaughraun" would daily be washed with the solution until the entire set was rendered fire-proof. The painters discovered that in using this mixture the use of glue as sizing would be rendered unnecessary, and as it is much less expensive, the managers will benefit by the economy, while rendering their theatres fire-proof. The expense of applying the solution to a set of scenery and surroundings will only amount to from $100 to $200, and the reduction in the rate of insurance will cover that amount. The idea of Mr. Boucicault has been followed for several years in England and Scotland. Mr. Bayliss, the manager of the Cowedden's Theatre, in Glasgow, Scotland, made use of a similar mixture twenty years ago.72

When Forbidden Fruit replaced The Shaughraun at Wallack's on January 8, Boucicault was free again to take The Shaughraun on tour "once more through the principal cities of the United States..."73 Forbidden Fruit was scheduled to appear only until January 22, when it was replaced with All for Her.

Again Boucicault took to the road. He carried with him both of his latest successes, Forbidden Fruit and The Shaughraun. Records of his complete tour are not available, but a sampling of the cities in which he appeared will give some idea of the extent of this tour.

Beginning on Monday, January 29, 1877, Boucicault presented the Boucicault Comedy Company at Ford's National Theatre, in Washington, D. C., in Forbidden Fruit. Boucicault did not appear in this piece, but he played his role

72 Times, Thursday, December 21, 1876.

73 The New York Daily Tribune, January 1, 1877.
of Conn to the Washington public when he presented the Shaughraun on February 5. Following the Washington engagement, Boucicault and company journeyed to Pittsburg where they appeared at the Pittsburg Opera House on February 12 for a two weeks' engagement. Lowrie reports that "Boucicault delighted the public with his portrayal of the eighteen-year-old Conn in The Shaughraun. The attendance recalled the flush times of 1864 and 1865. The Chronicle complimented him for giving a more accurate picture of Irish life than a three-hundred page novel could possibly de." And the Pittsburg Gazette of February 14 stated:

It is a true picture of Irish life in Ireland, and while it retains all that was good in all former representations of the subject it is free from that which was objectionable in consequence of being stereotyped into all Irish dramas produced.

It can be safely assumed that Dion toured until early spring, when he returned to New York. On April 16, 1877, he played a week's engagement at the Academy of Music, Brooklyn. At the time of the announcement of this engagement, the Times stated: "Mr. Dion Boucicault is to perform at the Brooklyn Academy of Music next week. It will

74 The Pastime, Playbill of Ford's National Theatre in New York Public Library.
76 Handbill of Academy of Music (Brooklyn).
be many months, if not years, before the author and the dramatist appears again in the vicinity of New-York or in this City."77

Whether Dion was on tour during the summer is not known, but it is rather doubtful, since very few theatres remained open during the summer months. However, he could have been playing in the Mid-west and West, for early in the fall, he was reported to have been in San Francisco. While there in the Golden Gate City, he brought out a new play entitled Phryne, September 19, 1877. "When Boucicault revises it and entrusts it to a good company, it may succeed. Phryne is a very strong character, suited to a first-rate leading lady, and, therefore, too large for Miss Thorndyke. Boucicault fitted himself with the congenial part of Jack O'Beirne, a good-natured Irish artist, who is Phryne's true friend and assists in bringing about the reconciliation in the last Act." The report continued by adding that "Evidently, the play did not have a fair chance in San Francisco. It ran only one week and was preceded by Kerry."78

The report of the play Phryne is of particular interest for three reasons. First, that here was another play to add to the long list of scripts by Boucicault; second, that Boucicault was in San Francisco during the late summer.

77 Times, Sunday, April 8, 1877.
78 New York Spirit of the Times, October 1, 1877.
and early fall of 1877; and third, and perhaps the most important, it gives a date to the first meeting of Boucicault and Miss Thorndyke, who was later to become his third wife.

Even though Dion was on the west coast during the month of September, he was not completely forgotten in the city of New York. Booth's was playing The Flying Scud with Mr. George Belmore in the role of Nat Gosling "as played by him nearly 1,000 times in England," and the Union Square Theatre was presenting Led Astray during the month of October. 79

The big, long successful tours of The Shaughraun were over. Never again was Boucicault to taste the flavor of great success. He wrote, still, many plays, but none were ever to have more than a few weeks of popularity. The remainder of his life was made up of thrusts and counter-thrusts--sometimes with the press, often with his fellow-theatre-workers. Boucicault was on the offensive; attack was his mode of protection. Until the very day of his death, his name was constantly in the papers, but, more often than not, it was in connection with some disagreement with a critic, a manager, or an actor, or in conjunction with a disagreement he was having with the laws of his adopted country.

79 Times, September 19, 26, 1877.
CHAPTER X

THE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE --1877-1880

After Boucicault had closed his San Francisco en-
gagement with the playing of his new script entitled Phryne,
he made a hurried trip back across the continent in order
to aid in the preparation and to be present at the opening
of his new play entitled Marriage. This piece had been selec-
ted by Wallack to open his regular season, his twenty-sixth,
on Monday night, October 1. Wallack had always managed to
have a good stock of actors and for this particular season
he had managed to retain many of those who had played for
him during the previous season. Listed in the cast of
Marriage were John Gilbert, E. M. Holland, H. J. Montague,
H. Beckett, Rose Coghlan, Stella Boniface and Effie Germon.¹

The Times, in its review of the opening, criticized
Marriage for its length. Final ring-down was not until
after midnight.

We should say that the piece suffered from an
embarras de richesses, if everything it con-
tained were worth prizing as the ground for such
a cheerful perplexity. The fact is all the
dramatists' material is by no means of equal
value, and, even if it were, it may be doubted

¹ The New York Times, Monday, October 1, 1877.
Hereafter designated as Times.
whether "legitimate" works of any kind ought to be overloaded with detail to the extent of wearying attention. In spite of the playwright's cleverness in disentangling the skeins he has purposely thrown together, there is such a thing as making use of too many skeins. The first act of the piece promises a great deal by its briskness and cleanness, and the second is nearly as intelligible and amusing. Thenceforward, however, the story becomes more complicated than the necessities of dramas in general, and of "legitimate" dramas in particular, demand. By its "situations" and many of its "scenes" the work savors sometimes of farce as much as it does of comedy, but its language lifts it almost throughout into the regions whether Mr. Boucicault proposes, hereafter, to soar. The piece, as to scenery and dresses, is magnificently placed upon the boards, and merri­ment and applause, as we have said already, were frequent while it progressed. After the curtain had fallen upon the fourth act, Mr. Boucicault came before the footlights and said that the encouragement shown him was an incentive to seize afresh the pen which wrote "London Assurance" and labor once more in behalf of "legitimate comedy." Mr. Lester Wallack followed Mr. Boucicault, and bound himself, in a brief speech, to renewed and earnest efforts in his managerial capacity. "Marriage" will be acted at Wallack's until further notice.  

It would seem that all the reviewers were of the same mind about the length of the play and its construction, for the Spirit of the Times said:  

. . .it is rather a series of comic situations than a true comedy. . . . What the play wants is plot; not having one, it drags, and though often funny, it becomes at last tedious and uninteresting. On a thin thread of narrative, Mr. Boucicault has set what he intends for the pearls and diamonds of rhetoric, but as they evidently only serve to hide bare threads, and much poverty of invention, their brilliancy is lost.

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2 Times, October 2, 1877.
This reviewer also felt that the play was much too long:

A farce—and Marriage is a mere farce—should never be stretched beyond two acts; blown out to five, it seems inflated, and that which, when concentrated, might have been funny, is so no longer, because, like good brandy, when mixed with too much water, it loses strength and flavor. . . . Tricks, whether melodramatic or comical, are amongst this author’s chief stock in trade. He cannot do without them. In The Colleen Bawn we had a drowning scene, in Arrah-na-Pogue a rope-climbing scene, in The Streets of London a fire, and in the Shaughraun an Irish wake, and, odd to say, what held these pieces have on the memory is due to mechanism rather than to any aesthetic value they possess. . . . Comedy must be somewhat sick, at any rate when laboring under the treatment of Mr. B., when, instead of intelligible plots, character, and lively dialogues, she has to depend on a series of trifling incidents, however merry and ingenious they may be. Let it not be imagined that we deny this new work merit. Perhaps there is no living playwright who could have made so much out of so little material.

Marriage had its last performance at Wallack’s Theatre on November 10, 1877.4

As soon as Dion got Marriage on the boards he left New York once more to go on tour with The Shaughraun. On October 8, 1877, he opened for a one-week stand at McVicker’s in Chicago.5

3 "Wallack’s," New York Spirit of the Times, October 6, 1877.

4 Times, Sunday, November 11, 1877.

5 Handbill of McVicker’s in New York Public Library. It stated: "For one Week only, Commencing Monday, October 8th, 1877, the great Irish comedian Dion Bouiccault who will appear as (Conn) in his inimitable play entitled the Shaughraun. . . ."
Back in New York again, Boucicault appeared at the Academy of Music in Brooklyn on November 26, 1877.6

Probably during this time in the Empire City, Boucicault organized his "Comedy Company" of Marriage which he sent out on the road. When this company appeared in Pittsburg on December 10, 1877, to play the entire week, the local critic was not as harsh with the play as the New York critics had been, for the local paper said:

Boucicault knows well how to construct a play, and the one under consideration is a fine illustration of his ability as a master dramatic workman. As the performance proceeded last night the unlocked for surprises that were constantly unfolding told how skillfully the author had concealed many of the interesting points until the very moment of springing them upon the audience. The dialogue never drags nor becomes monotonous.7

During the months of December and January, Boucicault "master-minded" three events that certainly do not reflect favorably on him as a man. There is perhaps a reason for such events. Boucicault was losing out. He must have known it. And he resorted to domineering tactics in order to keep his name before the public and make his power felt among the people of the New York theatres.

6 Handbill of Academy of Music in New York Public Library.
Boucicault had entered into some kind of contract with Daly at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, to present a new piece during the month of January. He had drawn up an agreement like the one he had initiated in London several years before whereby he would take a certain per cent of the net receipts. He wanted to be sure to get every penny that was coming to him. The first of the unsavory events occurred when he wrote a letter to Stephen Fiske who was lessee and manager of the theatre, in which he condemned Fiske's methods of advertising. His condemnation and suggestions for handling the advertising of the Fifth Avenue Theatre are so interesting that the entire letter is presented here:

MR. DION BOUCICAULT TO MR. STEPHEN FISKE.
No. 6 East Fifteenth-street, Dec. 29, 1877.

Dear Mr. Fiske:

I perceive that you advertise largely in the newspapers, and as my terms with you oblige me to share profits after all expenses, I think it right at this early moment to write you on this subject.

I have no faith in the value of such advertising. No one believes in the self-praise theatres bestow on themselves in this manner, and very few people seek the advertisements to ascertain what the theatres are doing.

In Wallack's Theatre during the season of 1874-75 I stipulated with Mr. Wallack that there should be no large posters on walls and boards—no mural literature. I wiped out all the advertising except in the five principal morning papers—and, I think, two weekly journals—thereby reducing the printing and advertising expenses of the theatre to one-quarter of what they had been.

I have no wish to partake in paying advertisements beyond 20 lines a day—and these 50 lines given to the Herald, TIMES, World, Sun.
I object to advertising in the Tribune at all, and decline to share the expense of it. I would prefer to take no notice of the Tribune in exchange for the Tribune taking no notice of me or my works. I cannot make this a stipulation with you, because, of course, if you attach any value whatever to press favor, I have no right to embroil you with any newspaper. For my own part, I am indifferent to any praise or censure, except that coming from the public, and I regard the influence of the newspapers as now wielded as mischievous.

It may be proper to say that when I reduced the printing and advertising of Wallack's Theatre, in November, 1874, we played for the ensuing three months to an average of $11,000 a week, and a new profit of more than $7,000 a week, being the greatest ever known in any theatre.

The only advertisement requisite, proper or worthy of a theatre is a good entertainment. But box-office managers, desiring to attribute some of the success to their business tact, to their scheming, pride themselves on "making" such a piece or such an actress. The expression "making" simply means employing the press and big type to impose on the public.

These windbags collapse and both artist and manager collapse with them. They may float for a brief time, but I have never known any real good come of such schemes; no permanent success has ever attended them.

Eight or ten lines in a prominent morning paper is amply sufficient to inform those who choose to look into the press for information as to the play and the company employed in it. All antics beyond that are useless, trivial, valueless contortion.

At least these are my convictions, and, being so, I am sure you will forgive me if I decline to pay any share of what is not only, in my opinion, a useless expense, but an offensive one.

I carry this feeling so far that I stipulate with Mr. Wallack to omit from his bills, and advertisements, when I am concerned either as author or actor, all adjectives. He gladly does so. The applause of the public is the only adjective I want—and that in a superlative degree—and an overflowing house is better than a column in each of the newspapers.

No amount of press support can bring either one or the other. "Good wine needs no bush."
I do not entertain any disrespect for the newspapers when their valuable powers are employed by us or by them in a legitimate way. But there is a kind of advertisement that is Jackpuddingism, I object to that. It deceives no one but the manager who pays for it, and who beats the drum up and down the column of a journal. While the public laugh at his performance the journal pockets the profits, and, of course, applauds and encores it. Yours faithfully,

DION BOUCICAULT

P.S.--Pardon the earnestness of these remarks, and pray do not apply them personally. I intend them generally. But as there is a move toward lowering prices—and expenses—let us begin the process upon the advertisements.

MEM.—you are at liberty to make any use of the inclosed you please.

D.B.

Mr. Fiske answered this remarkable letter thus:

MR. STEPHEN FISKE TO MR. DION BOUCICAULT
FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE, Dec. 29, 1877.

Dear Mr. Boucicault,

Since you cannot certainly intend all of it for me, I think the best use for your letter is to publish it—with my reply, which I inclose.

Your letter contains: First, a formal notice to me that, in sharing with you after the expenses of your plays, you will only recognize as legitimate 50 lines of advertising per day, to be divided among five papers. Second, an essay upon advertising in general, from the text that good plays, like good wines, need no bush.

Now, I regret to say that I differ from you as much in theory as in practice, believing that, in these times, all vine needs a bush and all plays require liberal advertising. This need not be "self-praise" nor "Jackpuddingism" nor "wind-bagism," but it ought to tell the public plainly and conspicuously what is being done and who are doing it.

My theory is that a theatre should be advertised in all the papers and on all the walls—in some papers and on some walls more largely than others, of course, according to difference in position; but that the theatre should not be entirely
unrepresented anywhere; and that not even the smallest organ of publicity (which is the life of the theatre) should be neglected.

With this theory my practice corresponds. Here is one of my daily advertising lists, taken at random from the December file, which will show you how diametrically opposite are our ideas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herald</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>$24.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribune</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegram</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>93.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To this must be added the papers which do not appear in this list, because they are paid weekly in advance, such as the Sunday Mercury, the News, Express, Mail, Commercial, Dispatch, Sunday Times, Courier, Jewish Messenger, Home Journal, Jewish Times, Spirit of the Times, Hebrew Leader, Sunday Democrat, the Arcadian, and the New-York Clipper, besides my regular list of out-of-town papers, like the Brooklyn Eagle, which build up my Matinees. Add to these the expenses of printing, posting, and distributing the regular streamers, three-sheet posters, lithographs, quarter-sheet bills, and circulars, and you will see how my advertising costs me $700 a week. I don't believe it can be done as well any more cheaply, nor that any live theatre can afford to do without it.

Like yourself I disclaim all personality; but you will forgive me for saying that the theatre which you formerly converted to your ideas of advertising has since woefully backslidden to posters, picture, bills, lithographs, bill-boards, and all the ordinary paraphernalia, with this simple difference, that its managers beat their drums hardest while openly professing to despise drumming. Nor, I hope, is it personal to add that if your converted theatre had expended $600 a week more in advertising in 1874 it might have been $600 a week richer during some of these trying periods which supervened while you were absent.

In a word, I had rather be a box-office manager than a manager without a box-office. I also intend
these remarks generally.

No, dear Mr. Boucicault; I cannot consent to cut down my advertising because you don't like the newspapers. If I believed as you do, I should not advertise at all. Look at your meagre list, and see how closely it approaches nothing when compared with the advertisements of an ordinary theatre:

Herald, 10 lines........ $4
Times, 10 lines........ 4
World, 10 lines........ 4
Sun, 10 lines.......... 4
Total......... 12

Anything beyond this you call "beating Drums." Well, beating drums was a very good advertising in its day. Even now, if I were managing a menagerie, instead of a Modjeska, I should try to get the largest drum and beat it loudest. But as the happy days of Richardson's shows are past, I now believe in printing, big type, big newspapers, big posters, big advertisements, and big adjectives, too, when justified by big successes. You have never known an artist or manager to collapse because of too much advertising—I am not anxious to increase the long list of you who have collapsed through too little.

The plain English of your letter really is that you prefer your own mode of advertising to mine. All right; but, then, you ought to take a theatre and carry out your own ideas. It certainly is not fair to attempt to carry them out in my theatre at my expense unless you are prepared to guarantee all losses, even if I were willing to have you try such experiments with the property.

The matter is very simple. If you now wish to come to this theatre that must be because you like the position I have given it and the capabilities you perceive in it. Therefore, if I should change my style of management the position would be lost and the capabilities sacrificed, and you would no longer care about coming here.

Q.E.D—and I stick to my newspapers. Whether I can afford to pay you $694 (the difference between your $12 list and my $700 list) per week in advertising, besides your share of the profits for your plays, is a business matter which I will consider if you suggest no other modus vivendi before
It would appear that Dion lost out on this argument.

The second of these events occurred when it was announced that Boucicault had stolen the plot of a play which Mr. Palmer was to produce at his Union Square Theatre and Boucicault was about to produce it at Wallack's under his own name. On January 8, the *Times* contained an announcement about a new play that Wallack's Theatre was in the process of preparing for early presentation. It carried the information that "A new sensation drama by Dion Boucicault is in preparation at Wallack's Theatre. Its novelty consists in contemporaneous interest, and the fact that its period lies in the adjacent future instead of in the past. The scene is laid in London and its vicinity." The announcement added just enough about the plot to make Messrs. Shook & Palmer sure that it was basically the same play that they were about to produce. Shook & Palmer had been making preparations for some time for their new piece entitled *A Celebrated Case*. They had purchased the exclusive rights from a Mr. Henry French, to whom it had been previously sold by the authors. Mr. Palmer stated in the *Times* on January 20th that "He was not positively assured that it was the intention of a neighbor

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*Times*, Monday, December 31, 1877.
manager to put the play on his stage before it had been produced at the Union-Square Theatre, but a number of circumstances had led him to think that there was reason to believe that Mr. Boucicault had prepared a play for Mr. Wallack that would seriously encroach upon their rights. Money had been sent to Paris some time ago for the purchase of 'A Celebrated Case,' and more would be paid hereafter. The manuscript, having arrived, was translated by Mr. Cazauran, the scene painters put at work, and costumes were ordered."

Circumstances seemed to point to the fact that something of an underhanded nature was about to take place. Palmer described the situation at length:

While Mr. Cazauran was at work he was approached by a man who offered him $200 for the use of the last three acts over night. He did not get the manuscript, of course, but the request seemed a strange one, and about that time the rumors began to be circulated that Wallack intended to produce the play. . . .

Some time ago a manager who had leased the Union-Square Theatre announced his intention of producing "Caste." Mr. Wallack had sent word to Shook & Palmer that he intended to produce it. For this reason the lessee threw up the lease, at a loss to Shook & Palmer. When Mr. Palmer spoke to Mr. Wallack about "A Celebrated Case," he made evasive replies, and while he admitted that a new play was about to be produced, he really knew nothing as to its nature, and the author had exacted a pledge of secrecy that he felt bound to keep. Mr. Wallack had also suggested that the purchase right to plays had never been definitely settled by the Supreme Court. Finally, he had said that he would consult Mr. Boucicault and send Mr. Palmer word. He did not keep his promise, when Mr. Palmer sent him a note, offering to show the contract, if Mr. Wallack desired it, and Mr. Wallack sent
Mr. Moss, the same evening, with a note declining to look at the contract, as the play he designed to produce would not infringe upon Shook & Palmer's play. Mr. Moss several times sent to the Union-Square Theatre to have the contract sent to him, but the request was not complied with. Mr. Moss told Mr. Palmer that he had bought "A Celebrated Case," but that now he didn't care for it. The supposition was that it was purchased from a man named Gershon, who had offered it to Mr. Palmer before it was produced in Paris, but while the money of Shook & Palmer was in Paris waiting for the play. Mr. Palmer said he did not think that Mr. Wallack would do anything of his own volition that was in any way dishonorable. He believed, however, that Mr. Wallack had been overruled by Mr. Boucicault, who was only repeating his well-known practice of appropriating the work of other people's brains and claiming the credit as his own. He had made a great boast about his greatness, and had alluded to him in insolent terms, but Mr. Palmer said he did not forget that it was only a few years ago that Mr. Boucicault had come to the Union-Square Theatre, when he was very low down in a pecuniary way, and the managers had accepted his "Led Astray," and given him a new financial start. There would come a time, probably, when his unbounded assurance would fail him, and he would be compelled to withdraw his pretensions of "greatness." All the "greatness" he had ever gained he had maintained by ingeniously obtaining gratuitous advertising, which kept him constantly in the minds of the newspaper-reading public, and it was hardly becoming for a man who had been elevated by the press, to kick down the ladder by which he had mounted so high, before he was sure of a footing on the temple of fame.

When Mr. Boucicault, who it was reported became angry at the mere mention of "A Celebrated Case," was called upon by a

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9 *Times*, Sunday, January 20, 1878.
reporter, Boucicault sent word that he was much too
"enraged to be seen."

The Handy Andy who came to the door, when
asked to carry a message to his master,
turned to look at a retreating figure seen
at the end of the hall, and then blurted
out, in a perfunctory and clumsy manner,
"Mr. Boucicault can't see nobody under no
circumstances."

Either Mr. Wallack felt that something was wrong
and that his "honor" was at stake, or Mr. Palmer's statement
of the facts were so correct, and Mr. Wallack feared a
law suit, that he did not attempt to produce the play which
was in preparation at his theatre. The Union Square
Theatre opened as scheduled its production of A Celebrated
Case on January 26, 1878.\textsuperscript{10}

The third event had to do with the hiring of actors
for Boucicault's forthcoming production at Daly's. Bouci-
cault was always one to want the best actors possible for
his pieces and always insisted on good mountings. He was
desirous of obtaining the services of Charles R. Thorne,
who was under contract with Palmer, but who for the time
being was on the west coast playing in several pieces
that had been successful at the Union Square Theatre at an
earlier date. Rumors were circulated in San Francisco
that Thorne had been approached by someone who attempted

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
to induce him to break his contract with the Union Square Theatre. Palmer somehow obtained a letter that Bouicault had written to Thorne which ran as follows:

No. 6 East Fifteenth-street

DEAR THORNE: I wired you last night respecting an engagement at the Fifth-Avenue Theatre. My reasons for doing so are these: I understand you were engaged at the Union-Square for the entire season to take the part of "the lead."

A few days ago, I heard on good authority that Mr. Coghlan had been engaged for the remainder of the season, and that Mr. Palmer stated openly his intention to combine you and Coghlan in the same play, if he could get one. As this is a breach of your engagement—a fact which Mr. Palmer, in his ignorance of theatrical law, may not be aware, as Mr. Palmer is rather a showman than a manager—you are morally and legally released. Mr. Palmer has forfeited all courtesy and consideration by his unprofessional (not to say worse) conduct; therefore I have no hesitation whatever in suggesting to Mr. Fiske that he offer you an engagement. I am trying to combine a first-class company for emotional and sensational drama at the Fifth-Avenue, and the present opportunity has been embraced to get a good but not an overweening company, not a galaxy of names without regard to distinct lines of business, but a manager's company, not a showman's troupe. Palmer and Shook have been to Wallack to form an association to cut down salaries. I stopped that right there; then they went to Fiske. There again I met them by offering to support Fiske with my sentimental dramas, and he joined with me. Now you know the posture of affairs. "Montjoie" is in rehearsal at the Union Square for Coghlan. After that there is chaos—they don't know what to do. If you conclude to join us, I should advise you to send some New-York friend, (a lawyer if possible,) to Palmer, with a written demand from you, stating your engagement, and observing that, in violation of that agreement, a distinguished actor has been engaged to occupy the same place. Then ask if his engagement is only to replace you in your absence or to endure after your return.
Your friend should require a clear answer, yes or no, and in writing, and to be given then and there. This will save legal proceedings, if indeed the Union-Square should go so far as to try conclusions. There are many reasons why I should prefer that they should fight. The season at the Fifth-Avenue will commence on the 22d of January. I think the Union-Square is played out, and if new blood be infused into the Fifth-Avenue we shall do business there. Miss Rogers resigned her engagement last week, and will leave at the end of "The Mother's Secret," ...11

Palmer, of course, wired Thorne that this was not the case, that he was waiting his termination of his contract on the west coast, and that he was willing to star him as agreed. The termination of this episode was that Thorne did not break contract with Palmer but was willing to return to the Union Square Theatre and to "retain the position accorded to him by the terms of his engagement, which was made for three years." All these events show that Boucicault felt he could dictate to all the theatres in New York City according to his whim. Boucicault was fighting a losing battle.

On January 26 there was a follow-up story on the
A Celebrated Case and the attempted enticement of actor Thorne. The article opened thus:

Mr. Boucicault is beginning to make himself unenviably conspicuous. Some folks actually seem inclined to doubt his sanity. During the past week his over-active mind has been very busy at a

11 Times, Tuesday, January 22, 1878.
patty intrigue of the most feminine kind. Had Mr. Boucicault been a woman, and an adventuress at that, his recent performances would have been quite in keeping with the character. Fortunately, men are usually free from feline vices.

The article gave a review of how Boucicault had attempted to bring out the same play that Palmer was about to produce at the Union Square. It made the point that Wallack had always been on friendly terms with Palmer and that he had had no intention of infringing on his rights in A Celebrated Case. Palmer's interpretation of Boucicault's actions were stated: "The fact is that Mr. Boucicault is a marplot, a malicious mischief-maker, who wants to control the entire theatrical business in this city. His object in this last act has been to cause trouble between Wallack and us. His attempt to get Thorne to cancel his engagement was a bit of womanish intrigue. . . ." When Boucicault was confronted with the facts as presented he admitted that no play, similar to the one produced at Union Square was ever in active preparation at Wallack's. Boucicault declared that the whole affair was simply a huge joke played by Wallack on Palmer. And with that admission he managed to wriggle out of his part of his latest scrape, but not out of the attempted stealing of Thorne. Boucicault frankly admitted that he had made the attempt, but he attempted to defend his actions by saying: "There is really nothing that, for my sake, I desire to say about
that letter, . . . I wanted Mr. Thorne, and I sent where he was to get him. Did the Union Square managers hesitate about taking Miss Clara Morris from the Fifth Avenue Theatre when they wanted her, or Miss Sara Jewett? Recently they took Mrs. Gilbert from Mr. Daly's traveling company. . . ." The article made a final thrust at Boucicault's actions by declaring:

It is clear that Mr. Boucicault has behaved in a very shabby manner. We rejoice to see that Mr. Fiske would have nothing to do with the matter, and pointedly refused to lend himself to any engagement of Mr. Thorne, without first obtaining the full consent of his present employers. If there be one thing on earth more objectionable than another, it is the spectacle of a male intriguer busy at his tricks. Intrigue is all very well for women, but really we thought Mr. Boucicault was the father of a family. Some folks seem to think all this business has been an advertising dodge. We do not. If it is, it is simply shameful, and calculated to do more harm than good to the profession.12

On February 2, a follow-up story came out on the case of Wallack and Palmer:

Mr. Boucicault is said, by those who know him best, never to do anything, however apparently foolish, without an ulterior motive of vital importance to himself. We may, . . . conclude that his recent performances in connection with A Celebrated Case were the result of somewhat crafty calculation. He hopes to prove that the attempt to copyright foreign plays is all nonsense and waste of money.

The article stated that it was practically impossible to

protect a foreign play by copyright. It pointed out that
the copyright law protected only published plays and that
it had been proven in court that the new performance of a
play did not make it eligible for copyrighting, since per-
forming was not the same as publishing. The article then
took up a cry that Boucicault had uttered back in the
'50's.

It is a notorious fact that American dramatic
authors receive very little encouragement for
the writing of original pieces. This system
of favoring Parisian plays is disastrous to
native talent. A writer has no chance. Managers
actually refuse to read American plays, because
they are in the habit of producing French works,
after their success has been established in Paris.

It concluded by saying:

A little more encouragement to native talent
might possibly obviate this waste of money
and energy, and prove to the world that we
can supply our own theatre without depending
on Paris or London. . . . We are tired of
hearing the out-cry "Wanted an American
Dramatist." Give him a chance, and he will
soon put in an appearance. They say, 'out of
evil cometh good,' so, perhaps, out of Mr.
Boucicault's recent very bad behaviour may come
something of advantage to native talent. Any-
way, when once it is thoroughly understood that
only plays of American production can be protected,
perhaps there will be less anxiety displayed
to pay large sums out of the country. The day
for paying gold to foreign dramatic writers
is, perforce, gone by, owing to the piratical
tendency of American plagiarists.13

13 "Music and the Drama," New York Spirit of the
Times, February 2, 1878
During this exchange of letters, Dion was playing at the Grand Opera House. He had managed to entice Miss Katharine Rogers away from Palmer's Union Square, and the two of them opened on December 31, 1877, in The Shaughraun. Odell says that Boucicault had assembled as good a cast for this production as one could expect to find outside of Wallack's.\(^1\) It ran for four weeks, closing on January 26.

Daly had been having quite a prosperous season. On November 12, Mary Anderson had made a successful debut at the Fifth Avenue Theatre as Pauline in the Lady of Lyons, and following her was an appearance of Modjeska on December 22, in Scribe's artificial Adrienne Lecouvreur. But when Boucicault opened his new play, The Dead Secret, at Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre, he realized that the success of this new piece would be short lived and he must needs scurry around and find a new piece with which to replace it. Boucicault had brought Katherine Rogers with him from the Grand Opera House to play in this piece. Along with Miss Rogers, were George Clarke, James Lewis, Russels Bassett, J. B. Studley, C. W. Couldock and others.\(^2\)

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\(^{15}\) *Times*, Friday, January 25, 1878.
January 29, 1878. It ran till Friday, February 8, 1878, when it was replaced on the 9th by Alphonse Daudet's play *Sidonie.*

The *Times* reported that although the piece was entitled *The Dead Secret* it "was known here and in London, some years ago, as 'Jezebel,' and the story it then unfolded is, in all its essentials, the same as when then narrated..." The reviewer stated that the principal defect of the play was want of variety. "It is a particularly sombre piece, too, but there are people who would not only sup, but breakfast, lunch, and dine on horrors, and to these, at all events, Mr. Boucicault's last acted achievement will address itself for three successive hours with steady eloquence."

On Thursday, February 14, a "Grand Matinee Benefit to Mr. John Brougham" was held at Wallack's Theatre. The performance commenced at 1:30 with Mr. Tom Taylor's domestic drama called *A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing,* which had a cast including, Montague, Shannon, Leonard, Ponisi, Ayling, Coghlun, Holland, and Edwin. It was followed by the third act of Robertson's "delightful romance of real life, entitled SCHOOL." The benefit was concluded with Dion Boucicault's "exquisite dramatic gem, entitled KERRY."

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16 *Times,* Friday, February 8, 1878.
17 *Times,* Tuesday, January 29, 1878.
The cast included Dion Boucicault, George Clarke and Miss Katherine Rogers (by courtesy of Mr. Stephen Fiske along with Henry Crisp, J. W. Shannon, and Miss Stella Boniface. 18

Boucicault had not only sent out a "Comedy Company" with his play, Marriage, but he had evidently organized another company which was designated as the "Boucicault Shaughraun Company." For a playbill from New Orleans, dated Sunday February 17, 1878, announced: "Engagement for Eight Nights only! and Two Matinees! of the BOUCICAULT SHAUGHRAUN COMPANY! Consisting of a Company of Artists selected by Mr. Boucicault himself for the production of the entirely New Play, illustrative of Irish life, entitled THE SHAUGHRAUN! . . ." Members of the cast included W. H. Thompson as Conn; Cyril Searle as Captain Molineux, Hart Conway as Robert Ffolliot; Charles Loveday as Father Delan; and Miss Cassie Troy as Moya.

After his appearance in the benefit for John Brougham, Boucicault retired to his country home for a few short months to write a new script which was to be brought out at Wallack's in the fall of '78. On Friday, July 19, Boucicault made a trip back into the city to plan for the opening of his new play. During this visit he predicted "brilliant things for the opening night of his play."

During the early fall of '78, "preliminary seasons"--

18 Times, Sunday, February 10, 1878.
an expression that had been recently invented by the Union Square managers-- were announced by three of the New York houses; namely, Wallack's, the Union Square, and Booth's, which Jarrett and Palmer had just recently leased for four months. This "preliminary season" was to take place during the month of September. The regular fall and winter season did not begin until sometime in October.

It was announced at Wallack's, that the season would open with a new play from the pen of Dion Boucicault. Boucicault had gone again to the French for a theme, and had "brought back an old play founded on 'Clarissa Harlowe,' which was seized with avidity by the Gauls before the Britons had made up their minds whether to praise or blame it, . . ." Clarissa Harlowe was based upon Richardson's novel, which "is as innocent of plot as the Vicar of Wakefield." It was announced that Charles Coghlan would play the principal male role of Lovelace, and that his sister Rose would play the heroine. With the announcement that Boucicault would superintend the mounting and production of the play, the Times felt that "the former will be as elaborate as the large stage resources of Wallack's Theatre permit, and the latter like well-tested clock-work in its precision of movement and detail."19

19 Times, Sunday, July 28, 1878.
On September 10, 1878, Wallack's opened its doors for the beginning of its 28th season. The opening piece, as had been previously announced, was Boucicault's

*Clarissa Harlowe, or, The History of a Young Lady.* An apology to Richardson for deviations from the original novel was published in the announcement of the play in the *Times* and the same appeared in the program and handbills which were posted around the town. This apology was addressed:

TO THE PUBLIC:

The dust of the library had gathered on the four volumes of *Clarissa Harlowe*, when in 1844, the distinguished Parisian journalist, Jules Janin, discovered so much beauty in the story that he withdrew this romantic narrative from obscurity to present it to the French people. He found it necessary, however, not only to reduce its extreme length, but to modify its language, reshape and introduce many incidents and characters. Let this precedent serve as the playwright's excuse for the alterations and additions which will be found in the dramatic work now presented to the American people. The second and third acts are departures from Richardson's design, but in them his spirit has been followed, and his tenderness of sentiment imitated as far as I am capable. His theme is full of tears, a subject composed as it were in a minor key; it is one into which the lights of comedy could not be introduced without extreme care. It is hoped that nothing in this dramatic cabinet-picture will be found unworthy of the original narrative.

DION BOUCICAUT

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20 *Times*, Sunday, September 8, 1878, also on handbill in New York Public Library.
The programs also announced that a series of plays already in the process of preparation would follow this piece. Those already in preparation were Sheridan's School for Scandal, Boucicault's How She Loves Him, a new comedy by the author of "London Assurance."

Also, a new popular drama by the author of The Streets of London. The Times could not help but wonder "Who can these two distinguished, yet withal modest, authors be?" 21

Clarissa Harlowe opened on the 10th and faded out on the 20th. It was not a success. Reviews of the play tell the story of its failure. One stated:

... In the subject of "Clarissa Harlowe," Mr. Boucicault sets out to present a picture of suffering virtue in the toils of vice. If his entire motive were no more complex than this, it would be at once harmless and conventional. But it is pitched in a far different key... The audience do not see a suffering heroine ennobling her base surrounding; they see merely a presentation of the most repulsive side of humanity, painted in the boldest relief, heightened with glaring colors, full of the breath of sin, and void of sympathy and heroism. The sentimentalism of such a poor creature as Clarissa is not sufficient to draw our attention from this single and startling motive of the play; it does not close our eyes to the hideousness of the tempter and to the reality of his degradation. On the contrary, it is everywhere apparent, and the assumed moral of the play becomes, in comparison with it, but a shadow of the genuine substance. If the moral were, indeed, the motive, 21

Times, Thursday, September 12, 1878.
then our logic would be at fault. But such
is not necessarily the case, and it is not
in the present instance. The motive of Mr.
Boucicault's work is, therefore, a repulsive
and immoral one. Furthermore, it is not
dramatic; it is essentially poetic and
idyllic... A play built of such material
could not be a success in a community that
respects itself; and "Clarissa Harlowe" is
such a play.

So much for the motive and moral of Mr.
Boucicault's drama. What, then, shall be said
of the drama itself? Not much that is favorable,
we fear. The play presented last night is more
objectionable than any so-called adulterous
drama. The subject of adultery is a legitimate
one, all homilies to the contrary; but it is
only such when it is the spring of great and
generous passions that accomplish high dramatic
purposes. But in this "idyllic" play we behold
sin in its most realistic trappings, and such a
spectacle has no place upon the stage. The
immorality of the play is still more insidious,
because the playwright seeks in every manner
known to him to justify it. He never allows us
to forget that, although we gaze on that which
should be veiled from the common eyes of men
and women his object is a worthy one. Un-
fortunately, Mr. Boucicault's skill as a
playwright has not worked in a profitable
vein; the first two acts of his "cabinet
picture" are void of dramatic action, human
sympathy, concentrated interest. The third
and last act, although in a great measure
tender and touching, is merely a gloss of
varnish laid over a picture that cannot be
hidden... In brief, "Clarissa Harlowe"
is a play that does not deserve our respect,
that does not win our sympathy, and that will
not survive its production.

Although the reviewer "panned" the script, he felt that the
production was relatively well done, for he added:

The strictures that apply to the drama,
however do not apply to the actors; the
latter, as a whole, played with that combined
force and intelligence which are nearly always
found at Wallack's.

The drama "by the author of 'The Streets of London'" did not appear until February, 1879. It was called Spell-Bound. In reality it was not actually a new play, but a new version of an old one which Boucicault had called Pauline, founded upon a novel by the elder Dumas. It ran only until Saturday, March 8, 1879, thus indicating that it was not much of a success. A reviewer complained bitterly because Wallack had allowed this play to be presented. He continued:

It was a German critic, if we are not mistaken, who first rebelled against the use of the word "romantic" as applied to certain degraded forms of theatrical representation. The same authority, had he witnessed Mr. Boucicault's play, "Spell-Bound," last evening would certainly have taken this versatile Irish playwright to task for the same reason. Mr. Boucicault has, if we may believe him, written a romantic drama, in defiance, however, of the laws laid down in the preface to "Cromwell," and in defiance, also we may add, of good taste and common sense. . . . "Spell-Bound" is but another volume in the library of its Wallack's failures, and one which cannot even be accounted honorable. . . . Mr. Boucicault's "romantic" production is a work in which thunder and lightning form a background to the machinations of an impossible fiend; in which dungeons, robbers, and mysteries of a kind which, it was confidently hoped, had been forever swept away with the transparent illusions of a by-gone age, mingled in dark perplexity; in which villainy and destiny balance each other in the playwright's scale; in which, finally, as that is not absurd is

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22 Times, Wednesday, September 11, 1878.
abominable, and all that is not abominable is absurd. . . .23

The scenery was elaborate, "with a Mountain Pass at Night, in Northern Hindustan, a Drawing Room, an Interior of an Inn at Caen, a Rocky Wood, a Library and Bed-chamber of Gabrielle, a Forest, a Vault under the Chateau, etc. But neither scenery nor cast saved it; . . ."24

Boucicault admitted that Spell-Bound was "verbatim the play Pauline, as produced by Charles Kean at the Princess' London, in 1852. The prologue was written by him for Kean, who preferred to omit it, but Wallack was handed Kean's prompt copy, and preferred to retain the prologue this time. The play, said Boucicault, was a sensational success in London and afterwards in New York. 'I dare say it don't do now,' he quaintly continued, 'but no more would The Miller and his Men or Titus Andronicus—both successes in their time.'"25

Between the time of the closing of Clarissa Harlowe and the February opening, several events were added to the crowded life of Dion Boucicault.

First there was an announcement on November 24:

23 Times, Tuesday, February 25, 1879.
24 Odell, op. cit., X, 565.
"Mr. DION BOUCICAULT will shortly begin a tour under the management of Mr. W. R. Deutsch, visiting Philadelphia, Boston, and the principal Western cities, including probably San Francisco." But this was not in the immediate offing, for during the week of November 25-30 Boucicault appeared again at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in the role of Conn with Kate Neek as Claire, Kate Girard as Arte, Miss Merrion as Moya, Mrs. Sol Smith Kennedy as Robert, Wilkes as Harvey Duff, Montgomery as Corry, and Arthur Dacre as Captain Molineux.

Next, Dion shifted his attention to the Grand Opera House, where, on January 4, 1879, he appeared in The Shaughraun, supported by Ada Dyas in her original part of Claire Ffolliot. On Monday, January 20, Boucicault appeared as Myles in The Colleen Bawn. Dion, of course, played Kerry and Ada Dyas appeared as Blanche.

Upon the completion of the engagement at the Grand Opera House on the 8th, Boucicault moved over to Booth's for a one-week engagement, the occasion being the farewell appearance of Mrs. Dion Boucicault (Agnes Robertson). As

26 *Times*, Sunday, November 24, 1878.
27 Odell, *op. cit.*, X, 728.
28 Handbill of Grand Opera House in New York Public Library.
will be disclosed later, this appearance of Agnes Robertson was a sort of a gesture of appeasement to prevent Agnes' appearance in another piece by another author. The schedule for the one week was announced as:

- Monday, February 10: The Colleen Bawn
- Tuesday, February 11: Arrah na Pogue
- Wednesday, Matinee: Kerry and Shaughraun
- Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday Nights: Arrah na Pogue
- Friday Evening: The Colleen Bawn

For this occasion Boucicault had managed to surround himself and his wife with a fine cast. Ada Dyas appeared in each play. Dominick Murray appeared in his original role of Penny in Arrah and also as Danny Mann. John Brougham appeared in his original part in Arrah as The O'Grady. John Gilbert appeared as Father Dolan in The Shaughraun, which was his original part, and Harry Beckett appeared in his original role in The Shaughraun as Harvey Duff.30

The press felt that here was a splendid opportunity to see Boucicault at his best. They were prone to compare the differences in the acting of the Irish parts of Conn and Myles. The review continued:

Mr. Boucicault makes no very perceptible distinction between the two characters; he repeats himself, and is delightful in both. A genuine Irish hero is a slouch fellow in rags and tatters, who dotes on some tender heroine

30 Times, Tuesday, February 4, 1879.
and who, therefore, is not without his strong vein of sentiment; but his chief characteristic is an inordinate love of the bottle. He is moreover, a humorist in a fashion, and in his own independent way a philosopher. Mr. Boucicault makes the most of this singular type, which he invests with a charm and a significance wholly original.31

It was also felt that the character of Shaun the Post was a "far more attractive character than either Conn or Myles, . . . But Shaun rises above his vagabond circumstances, and asserts his humanity with honest manliness and nobility of soul. In the hands of Mr. Boucicault, the character is exceedingly touching, and the delicate and intelligent methods of this actor are here seen to the best advantage. Alternately pathetic and witty, imaginative and shrewd, he produced, by means of apparently unconscious contrasts and keen transitions, the most delightful effects."32

The years had had their effect on the "Fairy Star," but the reviews were kind to her. One stated: "Mrs. Boucicault, it is needless to add, is no longer the pretty ingenue of the olden time, and her reappearance at this late day must be regarded as revival of pleasant memories, rather than a serious undertaking." It had been 19 years since she first appeared as Eily O'Connor in The Colleen Bawn.

31 Times, Tuesday, February 11, 1879.
32 Times, Wednesday, February 12, 1879.
It was announced that this week's engagement was Agnes' last series of appearances in America. And she was received warmly.

The spontaneous burst of applause that welcomed Mrs. Boucicault when she first appeared was a noble tribute to the actress, a certain testimony that she was still held in affectionate remembrance. Despite the melancholy fact that her career upon the stage was thus being brought to a close, she acted her part with natural ease and lightness, and with agreeable suggestions of a grace which still lingered about her like a gentle reminiscence. There was evidently a strong current of sympathy between herself and her audience. . . .

In the second night's performance of Arrah-na-Pogue, Agnes "acted with greater ease than on the previous evening; the utter absence of all artifice from her manner, the quiet and modest grace of her gestures, and the tender modulations of her voice were equally enjoyed by her audience."

The Tribune covered the opening night of the Boucicaults at Booth's with a touch of nostalgia by saying:

Memories of the past--pleasant, gentle, and perhaps a little said--were awakened last night, by the sight of Agnes Robertson (Mrs. Boucicault), again upon our stage. She came forward at Booth's Theatre, and she was greeted there, with a glad welcome, by a great crowd of delighted friends. It was soon seen--but more, perhaps, in her vocalism than in any other attribute--that she is not altogether the gleesome rose-bud woman of long ago; but then--the world has changed with many

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Times, Tuesday, February 11, 1879.
of us, as well as, to some slight extent, with her. She had been but a little while upon the stage, however, before she made it evident that the old fire has not died down in her heart, nor the old, artless grace faded off from her manner. Little by little the piquant face came back, and the silver voice grew bell-like and warm with the music of other days. . . .34

This farewell engagement for Agnes ended on Saturday night, February 15, 1879. She returned to England shortly after this last performance. Boucicault immediately left for Boston to begin a tour that took him all the way to the west coast again. On February 17, 1879, Boucicault began a three-week engagement at the Boston Theatre. For the first two weeks of this engagement, he appeared in The Shaughraun and for the third week he played in Arrah-na-Pogue. John Brougham had been especially engaged for the part of Major Bagenal O'Grady in the latter piece.35 This was the third time that The Shaughraun had been presented in Boston. It was announced at the time that "This was Boucicault's last regular engagement at the Boston Theatre."

The Shaughraun was Boucicault's most successful play in Boston, from a financial standpoint, and Arrah-na-Pogue and The Colleen Bawn were next in popularity.36

34 The New-York Daily Tribune, Tuesday, February 11, 1879.


36 "Boucicault's Career in Boston," The Globe, September 19, 1890.
The weather in Boston during these three weeks was horrid. Blinding storms of snow and sleet were experienced and the street-cars were hardly able to move, "but the public didn't seem to mind it, and the Saturday matinee was nearly $2,000." It appears that the weather did not drive people from the theatre but rather into the theatre.

Boucicault had, originally, been booked into Ford's Broad Street Theatre in Philadelphia for what became the third week in Boston. But business was so good that Boucicault wanted to remain and reap what harvest he could while the crop was ripe. By a mutual agreement with Manager Ford, Boucicault cancelled his engagement at Philadelphia and remained for the third week at Boston, because the third week in Boston would pay better than the week in Philadelphia and Manager Ford seemed anxious to return to Pinafore anyway.

Boucicault then traveled from Boston to Washington to appear to an overcrowded house at the National Theatre the following Monday (March 10, 1879). It is not known where he played next. But he could not have played in many cities before he appeared in San Francisco, for he opened on Easter Monday, April 14, 1879, at the California Theatre.

37 The Spirit of the Times, March 15, 1879.
38 Ibid.
39 California Theatre handbill, Saturday, April 19, 1879.
Here he was supported by Miss Jeffrys-Lewis, who had been especially engaged, and Miss Ada Gilman, who made her first California appearance at this time.

The first week, as well as the remaining weeks, were financial successes. Boucicault reported that during the first week the California Theatre experienced the best week's business ever done to regular prices. "Edwin Booth, with $2 for reserved seats, headed me; but the average of his engagement was $1,640 a night, while last week averaged nearly $1,800 ($12,542). If Saturday night had not been extinguished by a delugious rainstorm that swept over the city, like a skyquake, we should have had over $2,200 in. Last night I expected a drop--but it did not come."  

Boucicault opened in the role of Conn. It was a decided success. On Monday Evening, April 28, Arrah-na-Pogue was announced for production. But Boucicault reported that the management withdrew the announcement "as I find that Conn is good for three weeks."  

An interesting digression was reported in a letter written to the Spirit of the Times in which Boucicault reported having seen the Passion Play at the Grand Opera house.

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40 The Spirit of the Times, May 10, 1879.  
41 California Theatre handbill, Saturday, May 3, 1879, in New York Public Library.  
42 Spirit of the Times, May 10, 1879.
He commented:

It was beautifully costumed. The house was very poor. I doubt if the play would be permitted in the East. It creates a peculiar feeling. The City Fathers of San Francisco passed an ordinance expressly to squelch this performance. It is contended that they exceed their constitutional powers in doing so, and O'Neil is now before the Pilate of the "Slope," who has not yet passed judgment on the matter. Meanwhile the management has withdrawn the play.

As there has been no objection to Moses in Egypt, and The Prodigal Son, and The Witch of Endor; as there is no objection to Elijah, Saul, Paradise Lost, all Biblical plays, oratorios, etc., the question arises, "Where are we to draw the line?" "What Biblical subjects are tolerable?" "What are tabooed?" If admissible into music and painting (two elements of the drama), how much further into the art may they go? Where is the line to be drawn?

The principal objection (to me) in the representation is the vulgarity of some of the performers. No doubt Simon Peter and John, and all the disciples, were what we call "vulgar" men; but we have put a halo around them, and the actors wear a halo like a billicook. . . .

After the final performance at the California Theatre, Boucicault returned quickly to New York City. He could never be idle. His days and weeks were full as is illustrated by a passage in The Spirit of The Times:

Dion Boucicault, the wonder of the last generation, the delight of the present and the master of the future, played at San Francisco on Saturday week, arrived here on Sunday, rehearsed Arrah-na-Pogue the same day, and began his engagement at the Grand Opera-house

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43 Ibid.
before a crowded house on Monday evening.
Yesterday morning he steamed 67 miles up the
Hudson, in the Sylvan Belle, to witness the
launching of his new steam yacht, The Shaugh-
raun, at Newburgh, and returned in time to give
a christening dinner at 6 P.M., and appear as
Shaun, at 8... 44

The following week was the last of Dion's appearan-
ces at the Grand Opera House, for on June 2, Mrs. Agnes
Booth and the Park Theatre Company took over the house
with a performance of Engaged. Dion was too busy him-
self with arrangements and active preparations for his
announced management of Booth's Theatre.

It is difficult to understand many of the sudden
outbursts to which Boucicault gave vent. Many of his
attacks in his earlier life were to defend either himself
or his manuscript. In his latter years, he seemed to
burst into print with opinions, ideas, and criticism at
the least provocation. Perhaps, this latest out-burst
was a result of fearful premonitions that were going
through his mind about the advisability of his announced
intentions of taking over the management of Booth's Thea-
tre for the fall. He wrote the following letter as repor-
ted by the Spirit of the Times, with their accompanying
comments:

When Mr. Boucicault, in his letter to the

44 The Spirit of the Times, May 2, 1879.
Spirit last week, began to strip himself of all superfluities—throwing his railroad paragraph over to the editorial page, and casting his yachting information to the World—we regarded him with mingled astonishment at his audacity, and admiration of the handsome figure he made of himself, but we little thought that he was only preparing to run a-muck, like a mad Malay, slashing away at everything that came handy—the managers, the companies, the drama, the critics, and even his own Irish plays, winding up by committing suicide with the two-edged remark, "I am not great, but I am original"—whereupon Nym Crinkle, quick as a cable operator to seize a point, instantly and maliciously exclaimed, "I forgive you," and there was a scene.

Mark the ingenious Malayan manner in which the great Master of the Revels glides, like a cobra di capello, from compliment to massacre: "Dear SPIRIT," he says, archly, "The condition of the theatrical world was never so confused as it is at present." Very true: "Its system has undergone a revolution, in the midst of which it is now suffering."

Yes, we know that is so!

"Twenty-five years ago, the leading New York theatres were in the hands of Mr. James Wallack, Mr. Burton, Mr. Mitchell, and men of great experience, of good judgment, actors of great merit."

Frequenleys—we agree.

But, then, without another word of warning, comes the envenomed blow: "Now our theatres are, for the most part, rented by speculators, persons of little capacity, or judgment; who buy pieces, as they would buy liquor—by the brand—and choose actors in like manner, having neither read the one nor seen the other. The result of this process has been to disorganize the stage, and throw it into disorder."

A prompt douche of ice-cold water is the best preventative in case of one of these a-muck outbreaks, say the Malayan authorities; and we have a bucket-full of cold facts ready for Mr. Boucicault.

We have never seen, and we never expect to see,
any actor, of whatever experience, judgment, and merit who could conduct a theatre profitably without the cooperation and assistance of those very "box-office managers" whom Mr. Boucicault attacks with such fanatical ferocity. We do not behold any such actor, even in Mr. Boucicault himself, with which everybody is familiar. [Remember Boucicault had never been able to make a go of any of his attempts at managership.] What would he have done—what would he do now—without Mr. Theodore Moss, one of the "box-office managers," whom you affect to deride? Mr. Moss has made Wallack's Theatre what it has been and what it is to-day—and you praise it, in your letter, as the best in the country.

And that reminds us that you are about to manage a theatre yourself, next season. Are you going to attempt it without the aid of a "box-office manager," sir, who will buy pieces and actors that the public want? You may direct the Academy of Art, behind the scenes; but who is to direct the counting-house in front?45

As intimated in the above, Mr. Theodore Moss, who had been treasurer at Wallack's Theatre for many years, had joined with Boucicault as a partner in the leasing of Booth's Theatre. It had also been announced that during the summer the house would be repainted and decorated, the stage brought forward and it was predicted that the public would "hardly know the theatre again in its new suit of white and gold. The improvements which Mr. Boucicault introduced at the Winter Garden were to be repeated at Booth's. Boucicault also wanted to change the name of Booth's, but when Jarrett and Palmer were the

45 The Spirit of the Times, June 7, 1879.
lessees, they too had tried to change the name and a lawsuit had followed with the result that the name remained Booth's. Boucicault, of course, wanted to change the name to Boucicault's Theatre. The name was not changed.

With the announcement that Boucicault and Moss had taken over Booth's old theatre, with the announcement that Boucicault had come forward to rescue this theatre from wreck and ruin, with the knowledge that Boucicault would spare neither money nor energy nor effort of any kind to make this a successful enterprise, and with the assembling of a well-balanced group of actors to appear in his pieces, the prospects of the ensuing season were considerably brighter than they had been for some years past. By the middle of August, Boucicault had already managed to engage such prominent actors as John Clayton, John Brougham, Dominick Murray, Harry Edwards, Rose Coghlan, Marie Prescott, Ada Colman and others. And the opening piece was announced to be a melodrama of the Two Orphans type which Boucicault had entitled Rescued. "It is a poor thing," said Boucicault, alias Touchstone, "but it is mine own." To which one critic added-- "Well, we shall see. . . ."46

The re-opening of Booth's on the 4th of September was but one of three openings that first week in September.

46 Times, Sunday, August 17, 1879.
In the eyes of the critics, the Booth opening was the most important. Niblo's opened with a gorgeous, spectacular piece, which, it was anticipated would excite "an equal degree of popular interest"; and The San Francisco Minstrels, "the tuneful band of minstrels led by Messrs. Birch, Wambold, and Bakus," were to reappear at "the pleasant little theatre on Broadway, near Twenty-eight-street."47

It was with such competition that on September 4, Boucicault opened Booth's Theatre in the two-fold capacity of manager and author. The complete title of the piece was *Rescued; or a Girl's Romance*, "presented for the first time on any stage, a drama in four acts."48

The opening was a gala occasion. The house was brilliantly "fitted up," and it was reported that it was now without exception "the most cheerful and most beautiful theatre" in the city. The old Booth's Theatre had indeed departed and a new one seemed "like an ancient friend rejuvenated." It was thought that Mr. Boucicault deserved the thanks of the theatre-going populace for what he had done towards "rebuilding the fortunes of a famous house, that seemed but lately to have lost its prestige."

The reviewer in the Times felt that *Rescued* would prove "exceedingly popular" and quickly added that from this

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47 *Times*, August 31, 1879.

48 *Times*, Thursday, September 4, 1879.
comment it must "not be too quickly inferred that the play is a good one." The reviewer felt that Bouiccault had written the play "for the edification of the masses," and felt that it would be surprising "if the masses do not turn out in his honor, and troop to see the industrious playwright's latest production."

Little did the reviewer realize at the time the full significance of one line of his criticism for he uttered the very reason for the downfall of Dion Bouiccault when he said: "'Rescued' is, indeed, a melodrama constructed on old-time principles, a work which meant to astonish, to thrill, to arouse all sorts and degrees of sympathy, whether healthful or unhealthful, and also, we may add, to put a stop to reflection. It is representative throughout of its author, who, instead of being a man of genius, is simply a man of extraordinary cleverness; whose fame is built, not upon strength of imagination or strength of conception, but wholly upon a highly ingenious and polished perception of the mechanical relation of things."49 It was for this very fact that Bouiccault continued to write "melodrama constructed on old-time principles" to the very end of his life, that his last ten years of theatrical existence were a down-hill struggle. But let the critic develop his idea:

49 Times, Friday, September 5, 1879.
Mr. Boucicault has never invented, though he has always contrived to obtain useful ideas from well supplied sources; he has been a pillager of other men's brains, and as such we do not profess to hold him high in our esteem but his rare capacity for making practical use of all kinds of material has been demonstrated over and over again, and this capacity is a talent which must be freely and fully acknowledged, before we can hope to take a fair measure of his worth. When Mr. Boucicault has not "cribbed" his plots, so to speak, from others, he has constructed them, not out of imagination or keen insight into human motives, but mechanically and in a purely business-like spirit. Thus it happens that his so-called original plots are perfectly commonplace at bottom, and the plot of "Rescued" is no exception to the rule.50

This reviewer, however, did give Boucicault credit for knowing how to build upon a "slight foundation, and the poorest theme may become interesting under his treatment." He felt that in this latest play, Boucicault had found his story between the covers of "a certain class of unsanctified novels, or in the columns of some esteemed contemporary which panders to the wild longings and aspirations of the traditional shop-girl, . . ." He concluded saying:

Certainly, we shall not be easily convinced that Mr. Boucicault worked either his brain or his imagination very hard over such a tissue of unhealthy nonsense. But, given his subject, our dramatist has certainly worked up a play which will melt the heart of the sternest critic, which will keep a miscellaneous audience in a delightful state of suspense and interest, and which in certain respects even commands positive admiration.

50 Ibid.
The review ended by complimenting Boucicault to a certain extent:

It is Mr. Boucicault's peculiar merit that he has been able to make even so much out of so little; that his treatment of a ridiculous subject is not entirely ridiculous; that, on the contrary, it is in the end effective.

A very large part of the pleasure that was derived from the performance was due to the actors, who were, taken altogether, competent to a rare degree...and Mr. Boucicault may congratulate himself on having secured a valuable company of players.51

Rescued; or A Girl's Romance did not have a long run. It had its final performance on Friday, October 10, 1879, when it was replaced by Boucicault's adaptation of Casimir Delavigne's Louis XI.52

It was felt that Boucicault was rather doubtful that he, a comedian, should play Louis XI, "for Mr. Boucicault makes it a rule to attack the press whenever he undertakes whatever in his own mind he believes will be a failure."53 The week previous to his appearance as Louis XI, Boucicault had made a series of diatribes against the critics "that have been, to say the least, in bad taste." It was felt among most of the reviewers that the part of Louis XI was beyond his powers as an actor--"not beyond

51 Ibid.
52 Times, Friday, October 10, 1879.
53 "Booth's Theatre," Express, October 16, 1879.
his power of comprehension, for he gave abundant proof that he fully grasps the littleness, cowardice, viciousness and mercilessness of the contemptible monarch, and abundant evidences of study by his acting, make-up and reading; but beyond his powers of expression. . . ."54

The Times commented: "Mr. Boucicault's blank verse, . . . is more prosaic and commonplace than Delavigne's Alexandrines, which is saying a great deal." A reference to brogue was made by the Times: "There were three persons in the cast last night whose speech was flavored with a very decided brogue, namely Mr. Brougham, Mr. Murray, and Mr. Boucicault himself." This misplaced Irish accent apparently had struck the opening night audience as being extremely funny. Townsend Walsh, in The Career of Dion Boucicault, relates an anecdote about the Irish dialect in the French play. "It was weird without words. At first the audience sat in dumb amazement; then came titters and giggles, and finally roars. Never did monarch receive less grave and reverent treatment. Boucicault's brogue came out thick and strong. If he had been impersonating Brian Bour instead of Louis XI, he would have been funny enough, but a French king with a Dublin brogue was too excruciating an anachronism for the audience."

54 The New-York World, October 12, 1879.
A waggish critic reported that after the performance the following dialogue was heard behind the scenes:

Mr. Boucicault (to Mr. John Brougham), "Phat d'ye mane be playin' Cootier wid a brogue? Mr. Brougham (astonished), "Sure, 'tis an Irish drayma, yer honor. Ax Dominick Murray!" Mr. Dominick Murray (with a Michael Fenny bow), "The divil doubt yes, Brougham. 'Twas in ould Ireland I fust learned how to play ould Louey, and it is meseelf has acted the King moiny's the night--bad cess to the omadhaun that tuck it from me." Miss Rose Coghlan (smiling), "Arrah, it's jokin' us, yez are, Mister Boucicault. Sure, don't ve know it's Irish when yez wrote it yerself, more power to yez!" Mr. Boucicault (with royal dignity), "Be the toe of St. Patrick, is the hull of yez daft? 'Tis Louey the 'livinth of France I'm playin', ye spalpeens.'" Omnes (bowing), "An' its' yerself is the only actor, yer honor, that kin play it—that-a-way." Mr. Boucicault (mollified), "true for yez! But, tare and ages, phat Frenchman spake wid the brogue in 1483? Yer spilin' me play, beded, an' violatin' ancient history." Clayton (with dignity), "Av hobserved the Hirish accent, guv'ner, in-av-several of my-aw-finevst sevens." Mr. Boucicault (cocking his eye keenly) "Well, well! May the divil fly away wid me if the Irish brogue be not as historically correct as the English accent, anyhow! Gi along wid yez all! (Solus) 'Tis not in France we're playin', an' Louey an' his gang--Heaven rest their souls!—would feel aisier at bein' turned into Paddies than Cockneys, ony day! (Musing) 'Twas a nate compliment to me, from the byes and gurls! Robert! (Enter Robert.) Ax the ladies and gentlemen of the company to be kind enough to take supper wid me, this night!"

Perhaps the most important event of the evening was the debut of young Dion, Jr., in the role of the part of the

55 The Theatre, December 1, 1879.
Dauphin. The part had been in the past entrusted to a female. When Charles Kean played Louis XI on the London Stage, his celebrated wife, Ellen Tree, played the part of the Dauphin. The Times reported that "Mr. Boucicault's son made a favorable impression. . . . The young debutant has a pleasing, though very boyish presence, a sweet voice, a clear enunciation, and an unaffected manner. He has been well trained, and he may become a good actor." 56

The Times did not carry any announcement of the play or any further announcements of Booth's theatre on the 13th. Boucicault must have realized that this play was a failure and that his existence as manager of Booth's was to be short lived. On October 23, the Times commented that "Booth's Theatre will shortly pass out of the hands of the present management, and Mr. Grau's opera bouffe company will be installed there. . . ." And thus on Monday evening, November 24, Mr. Maurice Grau and his French opera company took over Booth's for a three weeks "Return and Farewell Appearance." The story of Boucicault's managership of Booth's Theatre was over!

On Saturday, October 4, 1879, Wallack's Theatre opened its doors for the Regular Season of 1879-80. The piece which was presented on that night was a "New Comedy in

56 Times, Sunday, October 12, 1879.
Three Acts, entitled "Contempt of Court" constructed from two French Comedies by DION BOUCICAULT.\textsuperscript{57} It ran until Wednesday, November 5, when it was "happily" withdrawn.

A review of the performance stated:

\textit{Its title was "Contempt of Court," its author Mr. Dion Boucicault—that is to say, with restrictions. . . . If the aim of a farce or a comedy is simply to amuse, on the principle that the means justifies the end, then Mr. Boucicault's success in this instance is beyond cavil. . . . On the other hand, if amusement which is obtained at the expense of one's sense of refinement, (provided one has such a sense, for many people undoubtedly lack it,) is only worthy of censure, then "Contempt of Court" must come in for its share—and a very large share it will be. The play in fact, is a mixture of very good farce and the most denuded vulgarity; the impartial spectator has a right to regard either element with pleasure and to forget the other, or to reject both.}

Reverting to the question of Mr. Boucicault's authorship, we may remark that "Contempt of Court" is identical in many respects with a play by Mr. Gilbert entitled "On Bail". . . many of the situations being similar, and the climaxes absolutely alike. . . . Mr. Boucicault, however, has preserved the French surroundings of his play; while Mr. Gilbert's piece, both in the matter of characters and humor, is thoroughly English. "On Bail" was a free adaptation of "\textit{Le Reveillon}," by Mlleac and Halevy; it is scarcely necessary to add that Mr. Boucicault has gone to the same source for his subjects, though he has woven in a few situations taken from other pieces.\textsuperscript{58}

Perhaps the most enjoyable evening at Wallack's for

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Times}, October 4, 1879.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Times}, Sunday, October 5, 1879.
the entire fall was Wednesday evening, December 24, when Boucicault's "standard comedy" *Old Heads and Young Hearts* was presented. It had a strong cast which included Charles Rockwell, H. Gilmour, John Gilbert (first appearance since his recent severe illness), Maurice Barrymore, Madame Fonisi and Ada Dyas. 

The *Times* commented: "'Old Heads and Young Hearts' has kept its place in popular esteem for nearly two score years, and we believe that it is one of Mr. Boucicault's few works which will help to save his name in the future from oblivion." The reviewer continued:

"Old Heads and Young Hearts" belongs to that small group of comedies which includes "London Assurance," "The Irish Heiress," "Alma Mater," "How She Loves Him," and two or three others--most of them bright, amusing well-written plays. All of these comedies however they may differ individually in merit, are marked by two characteristics--a total absence of literary originality, and, on the other hand, by a certain degree of inventiveness. . . . "Old Heads and Young Hearts" is, strictly speaking, an artificial comedy, and should not be regarded, therefore, from the broad and elevated standard of human nature. The play has a genealogy which can be traced back to the later Stuart drama. It is nothing more or less than a nineteenth century dilution of Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Mrs. Centlivre. . . .

After the failure of Boucicault's attempts to manage

59 Wallack's Theatre handbill, dated December 25, 1879, in New York Public Library.

60 *Times*, Thursday, December 25, 1879.
Booth's Theatre and the relatively unsuccessful presentations of two new scripts at Wallack's Theatre, little is known about his activities until the following February. There is one report that he was in Boston on January 5, 1880, and gave a lecture entitled "My Literary Life."

The next major event in his professional career was his return to Wallack's Theatre as actor. Wallack had been having a most unsatisfactory year. He had produced a series of poor plays. He had not had a run of any length since the opening of his twenty-sixth season. Boucicault had added to his distress by providing him with two scripts which were condemned by the critics and which did not add to the prestige previously established by Wallack. Many critics had raised the question as to just why Wallack had allowed such scripts as Contempt of Court. Had he slipped in his judgment? However, on February 2, 1880, Boucicault returned to the house of Wallack, and this time a happy engagement resulted.

On February 2, "and EVERY EVENING DURING THE WEEK," Boucicault appeared in a revival of The Shaughraun. He was supported by a good cast, which included John Gilbert as

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61 Unidentified clipping in New York City Public Library.
Father Dolan; Harry Beckett as Harvey Duff; Maurice Barrymore as Capt. Molineux; Gerald Eyne as Corry Kinchell; Ada Dyas as Claire Pfolliott; Rose Wood as Aret O’Neal
Mme. Ponisi as Mrs. O’Kelley and Stella Boniface as Moya.62

This series of appearances was announced as the "Farewell engagement" of Dion Boucicault at Wallack's. He was shortly to return to England. It was reported that he was received enthusiastically. The audience was "large, but not fashionable; and in a moment the great Irish actor had them under the magic influence of his genius, so long as they could see him and applaud him, they were perfectly delighted."63

However, Wallack's Theatre was not the well run playhouse that it had been reputed to be for so many years. For the Spirit condemned the production in general, saying:

Any of the minor theatres would have been ashamed of the misplaced scenery, the stage-waits, the missing cues, and the general disorganization which characterized the performance. We have told Mr. Wallack, time after time, that he is allowing his theatre to degenerate into a third-rate house; but he sticks to the tradition that whatever is Wallackian is right, and although Manager Palmer, Manager Daly, Manager Mackaye, and Manager Abbey have surpassed him he obstinately refuses to open his eyes to facts, and persists in believing that anybody who criticises the

62 *Times*, Sunday, February 1, 1880.
63 *New York Spirit of the Times*, February 7, 1880.
theatre must be unfriendly. . . . The carpenters did not take the trouble to shift the scenes. A forest intruded into Father Dolan's cottage; the actors pointed to an old hat hanging on the wall when they referred to the ruins of St. Bridget's Abbey, and the Blaskets were as blue as the spectators at the door. The support was as shaky as the scenery. Mr. Harry Beckett, Mr. John Gilbert, Miss Rose Wood, and Madame Ponisi were, of course, excellent; but Mr. Gerald Gyre, although he acted capitally as Kinchela, kept the stage waiting; Mr. Maurice Barrymore, the original of Capt. Molineux in Boston, and quite as good in his way as poor Montague, forgot his lines, and had to be prompted on the stage—where was the prompter, by the way?—Mr. Boucicault and Miss Dyas; Miss Stella Boniface was not even a pretty Moya; Miss Minnie Vinal was a burlesque keener; Miss Ada Dyas screeched the lines she once spoke so naturally, as Claire, and altogether, we have seen The Shaughraun better acted and better put upon the stage in a little provincial theatre to which Mr. Wallack would disdain to have his house compared. Will Mr. Wallack take a friend's advice and investigate these matters? We doubt it. But a week of Mr. Boucicault will pull things into tolerable order, and The Shaughraun is so delicious a play that we hope it will draw crowded houses.64

Even though the latest production of The Shaughr
raun was not deemed as perfect as previous productions of the show, it continued to draw quite well. The Spirit of the Times commented on the 21st of February that "BOUCI-
CAULT continues to crowd Wallack's with The Shaughraun, which is as delightful as ever, although its 350th per-
formance in New York will be celebrated (with Conn's thimble) on Friday, and it is now in the sixth year of its popularity."

64 Ibid.
The *Spirit* also gave some indication of "things to come" by adding "The Colleen Bawn and Daddy O'Dowd (which is as good as a new play here) are ready to follow The Shaughraun; but from present appearances there need be no change in the bill during Mr. Boucicault's engagement."65

However, the management did not feel that The *Shaughraun* would run throughout Boucicault's engagement, and on Tuesday, February 24, it was announced that Boucicault would appear in his "original character of MYLES NA GOPPALEEN" in *The Colleen Bawn*.66 It was announced that there were only 10 more nights of Mr. Boucicault's engagement. And so on February 24, the "Fourth and last week but one of Mr. DION BOUCICAULT" began with the performance of *The Colleen Bawn*. Dion was ably supported by John Gilbert, Harry Beckett, Miss Stella Boniface, Miss Ada Dyas and Mme. Ponisi in her original character of Mrs. Cregan.67 The *Times* stated that the "performance was remarkable for dramatic strength and artistic finish. Mr. Boucicault's Myles is one of his most characteristic and enjoyable impersonations, . . ."68 The *Spirit of the Times*

67 Wallack's Theatre Program, Tuesday, February 24, 1880, in New York Public Library.
68 *Times*, Wednesday, February 25, 1880.
commented: "...after duly celebrating the 250th New York performance of the Shaughraun. The veteran was in his best mood and played Myles as only he can play it. Mr. Harry Beckett made an unexpected melodramatic success as Danny Man. The better the acting around him, the better Mr. Beckett plays, and it is noticeable that he is doubly himself with Mr. Boucicault. . . ."69 The Spirit further added some comments which indicated Boucicault's remaining schedule in America before departing for England. "... Mr. Boucicault's engagement will positively terminate in another fortnight; that these are his farewell appearances, and that Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and Baltimore are eagerly waiting to bid him goodbye. His stay in England will depend somewhat upon the success of his new plays, but London loves him too well to part with him in less than a year, and if we can induce him to open a new world to conquer by adding the London Standard Theatre to his provincial tour, he will be absent much longer."70

For the last two nights of Boucicault's engagement at Wallack's, Friday and Saturday, March 5 and 6, Kerry and The Shaughraun were presented. Boucicault, of course, appeared as Kerry in the first piece and as Conn in the

69 The Spirit of the Times, February 28, 1880.
70 The Spirit of the Times, February 28, 1880.
latter. Maurice Barrymore had recovered from scarlet fever and was back in the cast in the role of Captain Molineux.\footnote{Wallack's Theatre Program, dated March 5 and 6, 1880, in New York Public Library.}

The \textit{Spirit of the Times} gave a fairly detailed outline of Boucicault's expected activities for the next few months by saying:

Although a passage has been engaged for Mr. Boucicault for March 16th, the veteran will not start for London until April. He is engaged to play a week at Brooklyn after he closes his season at Wallack's, and will then play the first star engagement at the Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, coming here, on St. Patrick's Day, to perform at a matinee for the Irish Relief benefit, and donating all his share of the night's receipts at Philadelphia besides. He has been offered $3,000 certainly for a week at Baltimore to follow Philadelphia, but his acceptance depends upon advices from the Messrs. Gatti, of the London Adelphi, where The Shaughraun is being prepared in magnificent style, with entirely new scenery by Lloyd, and a cast which includes Lydia Foote as Moya, Mr. Fernandez as Father Dolan, Mr. Pateman as Kinchela, and Bella Pateman as Claire. Mr. Boucicault's reception in London will be worth a trip across the Atlantic to witness. He will appear as the representative not only of Irish genius, but of American generosity. The Messrs. Gunn have offered him an engagement at the Dublin Theatre Royal, which will probably be transferred to the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, which they also own. Mr. John Clayton is arranging the details of the London engagement, and has himself accepted a position to join the new company at the Prince of Wales', under the management of Edgar Bruce. Mr. Boucicault will return to New York next November, after the Presidential election, and will bring with him his new Irish play, Faugh-a-Ballagh (to be first produced in London) and two other plays, not yet named, which will first see the footlights in New York. He finds that acting is the best remedy for the illness which nearly overmastered him last year, and it is not probable that he will ever withdraw from active work again, although he may continue.
to supervise the leasing of Booth's Theatre, at the request of his friend Mr. Ames. Nothing could be more gratifying to Mr. Boucicault than the present public and professional recognition of his grand services to art, to dramatic literature, and to humanity; and at an age when most men begin their second childhood, he was developed a second vigorous, fecund, and prosperous youth. 72

But Boucicault's "final nights" were not as final as had been announced. For he was to renew his engagement on Monday, March 15, for "TWELVE NIGHTS AND THREE MATINEES" at Wallack's during which time he was to appear with Lester Wallack for the first time in his comedy entitled How She Loves Him. 73

The Stage said the appearance of Wallack and Boucicault, acting together in the same play, "is an event of no little importance to theatre-goers. These two names have not been coupled in a play-bill since the production of 'Jessie Brown.'" 74

The Times announced that the appearance of these two actors was "the important theatrical" event of the evening. But the Times did not find the script itself worthy.

... as to the play, that had evidently not been revised on its merits, but simply as a medium for the display of Mr. Wallack's careless elegance set

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72 *Spirit of the Times*, February 21, 1880.
73 *Times*, Sunday, March 14, 1880.
74 "Wallack's," *The Stage*, March 20, 1880.
off against the graceful slouchiness of the member from Ireland.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to write favorably of Mr. Boucicault's play. "How She Loves Him" is a wretched mess of false sentiment, weak comedy, and broad farce. It is slow, obscure, and inartistic. . . . It is safe to say that Mr. Boucicault is seen at his worst, as an original writer, in "How She Loves Him," which also illustrates his decline as a purely English comic playwright. Its place among his other comedies is between "A School for Scheme," and "Marriage," and the date of its production is, if we mistake not, 1867—just 10 years before the disastrous birth of his later offspring. It is doubtful, however, if the dullness of "Marriage" was more profound than that of "How She Loves Him." It should be added that the version hitherto known to the public, as now represented, the comedy is divided into four acts, much of its dialogue is new, several of its scenes have been rearranged, its climaxes altered, the part of Diogenes amplified, and a few names of characters changed. The Sanitarium scene—probably suggested by "Le Malade Imaginaire"—supplies, at present, the closing climax.75

But the Times' opinion of the play and the acting was not universally shared, for the Spirit of the Times gave expression to an entirely different feeling about the occasion.

That astonishing spectacle of Dion Boucicault and Lester Wallack together in one piece, which the Telegram says has never been seen before—but the Telegram is mistaken, as usual—occurred at Wallack's on Monday night, and so paralyzed the large but unfashionable audience that they forgot to call the twin stars before the curtain, although the piece went immensely, the house rippling with laughter. How She Loves Him is a capital point-lace comedy. Every sentence is an epigram; every part is a character; the four acts are crammed with

75 Times, Tuesday, March 16, 1880.
shrewd situations, broad humor, and keen satire. Mr. Boucicaut has wisely cut out all the pantomime business in the last Act, which killed the comedy at the Prince of Wales', London, where the electrical machine of Dr. Sparks was shown in actual operation upon Mr. Bancroft's Tom Vaclil; and the piece is now played with the original business, and with three of the originals in the cast. Mr. Wallack was inimitable as Vaclil, although he shook in his lines and was too emphatic in his stammer during the first Act. Mr. John Gilbert was himself as Sir Richard Hotspur; but he should have had an afghan over his knees in the invalid's chair. Mr. J. H. Gilmour over-did the fop. Madame Fonisi looked so much like Fanny Davenport, as Lady Selina, that we are convinced she has turned about and is now growing younger every week, so that we may reasonably expect to see her play Juliet again next season—and she will be sure to play it excellently. ... Mr. Barrymore is improving, but is still uncertain of his lines. ... The Diogenes of Mr. Boucicaut was a study for actors, and we were glad to see so many of them in the front of the house. It is a small part; but he makes it a gem. Every line tells, and when he has nothing to say his face, his attitude, his attention to what is going on makes Messonnier dramatic pictures. Note, for example, the manner in which he opens a newspaper in the second Act, and effaces himself without leaving the scene until the time comes for him to take up his cue. We doubt the policy of his playing such a part in America, where an actor is appreciated according to the size of his name on the bill, but his performance in How She Loves Him is an artistic treat which no lover of the stage should miss seeing. Will this capital comedy, with its double stars—which the management offer as a set-off to MacKay's double stage—draw large audience? ... No! no! ...

But again the Spirit felt obligated to point out the poor mounting that had become so characteristic of the past season at Wallack's. The Spirit had been and was still disturbed about the poor quality of the mountings and staging to which Wallack's Theatre had fallen, for it
continued:

Take for instance, the scenery, which the daily papers call "superb," and the stage-management, which the Tribune declares to be unrivalled, Mr. J. Clare has painted a pretty marine view for the first Act of How She Loves Him; but unfortunately it is painted on the same old cloth, and the sky over the cliffs is cracked. In the second Act this scene becomes the backing for the villa door, and it is necessary to suppose that the villa has been moved between the Acts in order to account for the position of the boat on Mr. Clare's drop. The stage-manager did not think it worth while to have the drop pulled over so as to shut out the view of the boat; but these little details make up the differences between a good and bad scene. In the fourth Act the proscenium wings of crimson are put in to patch out a green and yellow scene. Now, if such scenery was displayed at the Union Square, at Daly's, at MacKaye's, how the critics would rail at it; but at Wallack's it is superb. Why? Because it has been the rule, for years, to carry on this system of press-deception and self-deception about Wallack's, which has resulted in building up three superior establishments upon the ruins of what was once, and ought to be now, the best theatre in the country.

On March 22, 1880, "Farewell Nights" were announced. Beginning on Monday, March 22, "and every evening during the week," How She Loves Him was presented. On Monday, March 29, 1880, Old Heads and Young Hearts replaced How She Loves Him. However, Boucicault was not in the cast, or even in the City of New York.

An event which had its beginning on the final night of Boucicault's appearance at Wallack's Theatre in How She Loves Him not only provided a subject for much gossip and

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76 *Spirit of the Times*, March 20, 1880.
77 *Times*, Monday, March 29, 1880.
much speculation, but also explained a great many events which, up to this time, have not been presented. This event was the arrest of Dion, upon the complaint of his wife, Mrs. Agnes Robertson Boucicault. The order of arrest was procured at the instance of Agnes, who was making plans to secure an absolute divorce, on the ground of adultery. She had asked that he be arrested on the grounds that "he is about to give up his residence here and leave this State, and that if he should be permitted to depart without restriction the judgment against him, when obtained, would be rendered ineffectual." The order of Judge Donohue directed the Sheriff to arrest Mr. Boucicault, and to hold him to bail in the sum of $9,000 to respect any judgment obtained in the suit of his wife for a divorce. 78

The opening act of this case came about just as Dion was sitting down to dinner on Saturday evening, March 27, 1880, in his "sumptuously furnished and elegantly frescoed apartments, No. 6, East Fifteenth-street, . . ."

The event was recorded thus:

The sheriff's officers gained admittance to Mr. Boucicault's rooms, by stating that they were reporters and desired to interview the distinguished actor and playwright previous to his departure. Mr. Boucicault was completely surprised when served with the papers. That evening he was to close his engagement at Wallack's Theatre in How She Loves Him. The bitter irony of the title

78 Times, Sunday, March 28, 1880.
doubtless suggested itself to his mind. The hour of arrest, too, was perilously near the time of the commencement of the play. It seems the officers, to make sure of their man, waited until his accustomed hour for dining. Bail had been set at $9,000. Mr. Lester Wallack and Mr. Theodore Moss were immediately summoned. These two gentlemen became the prisoner's bondsmen. The formalities were gone through with there and then, and Diogenes (Mr. Boucicault) reached the Theatre just in time to go on the stage. . . .

The first fact of interest disclosed by these proceedings is that Agnes stated as the reason that she wanted to secure a divorce in the state of New York was that "she was married in this State." This established the place of their marriage, and indicated that they were married in America after they had arrived from England in 1853, and not in England itself, as many reports had indicated.

The second fact of interest is the revelation of who the "woman in the case" was. It also explains the reason for the frequent shifting of a certain actress from one theatre to another. Her name was Katharine Rogers, otherwise Mrs. Davis. It will be remembered that during the years 1877-78, when Dion was jumping from Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre to Palmer's Union Square and The Grand Opera House, Katharine Rogers accompanied him and appeared in each of his productions. She was described by Odell, in his

79 "The Drama in America," (From our own Correspondent.) Date line: New York, April 3, The Era, 1880.
80 Ibid.
discussion of that particular season, as that actress "who
seemed this year to be wandering aimlessly from theatre to
theatre. . . ." 81 Agnes charged infidelity. That her
husband, "in violation of his duty to deponent, has at various
times during nine years past, been unfaithful to his vows
in the city of New York, in London Eng., and elsewhere, with
one Katharine Rogers, . . . that he has lived with said
Katharine Rogers during said period, and has so lived in
this city at various times within a year past, and that he
is the father of her child, a boy, who is now living, and
that they yet live together; that the said defendant has
admitted to deponent that he has lived, and was living,
with said Katharine Rogers, and that it is a matter of
notoriety well-known to his friends and associates, and not
concealed or attempted to be. . . five years have elapsed
since her discovery of his infidelity; that she has not
lived with him since, and that his alleged offences were
committed without her consent, connivance or procurement." 82

The last statement would explain why Agnes suddenly
disappeared from the New York stage and did not either tour
or play in any of Boucicault's productions, with the two
exceptions—that of the Booth's engagement and the London
engagement which have been mentioned.

81 Odell, op. cit., p. 377.
82 "Dion Boucicault Arrested. His Wife Charges In-
fidelity, and Sues for Alimony," The New-York Herald, March
27, 1880.
Boucicault felt that he had adequately taken care of Agnes, that he had supported her and she had had no reason for complaint. His explanation and illustration of this also explains the reason for the rather sudden appearance of Agnes at Booth's for that one final farewell week. He said:

More than eleven years ago I put the lady away for good and sufficient cause, and have not lived with her since. Nevertheless, she has been supplied at all times with ample means of support. I left England in August, 1876, since then she has dissipated $36,000. I left her in possession of my house in London, the home where she and her children had lived for thirteen years. She deserted it in 1877, and bought and furnished another, to which she removed her children in defiance of my urgent objection. She visited New York every year to obtain large sums of money from me, and on each occasion she succeeded. Last spring she secured over $8,000, of which amount she lent over $5000 to a friend, with whom she returned to London. But on arriving there she circulated the report that she was penniless and destitute. . . . The lady owns an estate in New York City and another in Chicago, settled on her by me in 1860. She has during the last three years raised $12,500 on this property. I was, of course, a party to the deed and responsible as bondsman for these loans. . . .

Now as to the appearance of Agnes at Booth's:

The only circumstances in Mrs. Boucicault's career, since the separation from her husband, that gives the colour of truth to his assertion that she was continually coercing money from him, was her conduct with reference to the play entitled Norah's Vow, by Miss Emma Schiff. This piece, it will be remembered, was produced by Mrs. Boucicault, at Brighton, some two years ago. It was brought out anonymously, but was generally attributed to the pen of Mr. Dion Boucicault. The play was a great success, and Mrs. Boucicault made a contract with the author to take it to

83 The Era, op. cit.
America and star with it through the country, opening at New York. With this object in view, both ladies came to New York. Here Mrs. Boucicault opened negotiations with her husband, threatening to perform in New York (where he was then playing) in her new piece, Norah's Vow, if he did not accede to her demands. The thought that his wife was going to appear in a new play, not by him-- for the name of the real author was to have been announced-- was gall and wormwood to Mr. Boucicault. He yielded to her demands on condition that his wife should not appear in Norah's Vow. Instead of playing Norah's Vow, according to her contract, she appeared at Booth's Theatre, with her husband, and then returned to England without one word of explanation to the author of Norah's Vow, and refusing to make any compensation to Miss Schiff. This lady immediately brought suit for damages against Mr. Dion Boucicault, on the ground that he was responsible for his wife's breach of contract, she having purchased Norah's Vow, in order, as she stated, to earn a livelihood by playing it. Miss Schiff's suit never came to trial, and was finally terminated, the play being returned to her.

The case of Boucicault vs. Boucicault went on for several years not to be actually settled until 1888.

Boucicault played his final night at Wallack's in How She Loves Him and then went on to Baltimore to appear there. He left America in the middle of April. He was booked to open at the Adelphi Theatre, London, on April 24. The Spirit of the Times announced that at the end of the London engagement, Dion was scheduled to "go to Ober Ammergeau to report the Passion Play for the Herald, and no doubt he will shine as brilliantly as a critic as he

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Ibid.
does as a star-actor."

Thus, with this announcement, Boucicault ended another period in his activities in America.
And so, Dion Boucicault returned to England in the early spring of 1880 to appear at the Adelphi Theatre in The Shaughraun. Although he was received warmly, it was not the usual type of "rave" reception to which he was accustomed. It was reported that in the character of Conn, Boucicault surprised and "astonished the audience probably quite as much by his youthful appearance as by his activity of movement," and it was, indeed, "difficult for many to believe that the vagrant Irish peasant lad was acted by one who was in his sixtieth year. But Boucicault did not receive, either from the critics or the general public, the acclaim which he had met on previous appearances.

Here in England, as in New York, it was not the "carriage-trade" that was filling the theatre and finding the Shaughraun the success that it had been in former years. Either Boucicault did not recognize this change or he closed his eyes to it. The fact that he did not, or could not, any longer write the type of play that the "carriage-trade" wanted to see was the beginning of his decline in popularity. A review of the English performance stated:

Mr. Boucicault has probably by this time realised the fact that public taste in England is not now in
the same condition as when stalls, boxes, and gallery applauded his Irish dramas to the echo. He may consider that our judgment, vitiated by a long course of drawing-room plays, has become emasculated; but, whatever his opinion, it must be patent to him that, whereas formerly he could command the homage of every part of the house, for the moment the stalls and boxes smile at what they look on as his high-flown platitudes, and only the gallery continue loyal to his well-worn sentiments of abstract virtue.

The fact was that the audiences were outgrowing his sentimental drama. The theatre-going populace were growing-up. They were demanding a different type of play. Boucicault would not realize or admit that a change was coming about. It was not that his acting had failed; it seemed to be as good as it ever was, for the review continued:

He acts as well as ever he did. No, Cleopatra-like, age cannot wither him nor custom steal his infinite variety. Made up in his ragged red coat, with his "Kit" slung across his broad back, with his brown scratch wig, his rouged cheeks, and badly-worn "tops," he looks still young. His voice has lost none of its cheeriness, his smile none of its brightness, his art none of her thousand cunning tricks of the stage. He can, as of old, produce effects, and even gain applause— from the gallery. But Conn no longer satisfies an intellectual audience.

It is interesting to note the perspective with which the critics now looked at his scripts and characters. Previously, at the time that the Shaughraun was first conceived and presented, Boucicault had been praised for his life-like characters, his presentation of the true Irish nature. But the critics now regarded them differently: "The knowing public have learned to look upon them as dummies, stage counters in the game of melodrama. It may be conceded to
Mr. Boucicault that when he built 'The Shaughran' he knew very well how to move his people about upon the board, how to manage their entrances and exits, and to arrange telling groups at suitable intervals of time. He is acknowledged a past-master of stage-craft, and there is an end of the matter. For the rest of his figures are theatrical types, not human beings of flesh and blood; and the clever sort of audiences having become educated to observe this fact for themselves, not even Mr. Boucicault's sympathetic acting can save 'The Shaughran' from the damning fate of good-humoured indifference."

Little did the writer of this review of the London presentation at the time realise the overpowering truth that his final words indicated. How true they proved to be in the final years of Boucicault's life! He summarized his opinions of Boucicault, Conn, and The Shaughran by saying:

The older order changeth and giveth place to new, and "The Shaughran" and all that therein is belongs as much to the past as armour and love-locks, sedan-chairs and chignons. Mr. Boucicault, with all his ingenuity, may have outlived his age. He is not to be blamed, nor are we. Conn's escape from prison, in the revolving scene, adapted from the French, has been imitated by later playwrights to satiety. These are facts, and not, it is hoped, put forward here in a rude or unbecoming manner, or with any appearance of disrespect for clever and ingenious Mr. Boucicault. The London public of the better sort, grow exigent with much playgoing and the analyses of hard but

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1 "Mr. Boucicault at the Adelphi," Our Play-Box, July 1, 1880.
competent criticism, rejects Mr. Boucicault's offerings of plot and language as strained and stagy. The gallery, however, still applaud—a sign that this sort of play has a life yet to be lived at the minor theatres. Our author is an old and tried public favourite; and if his promised new play, soon, it is said, to be produced in London, should prove satisfactory to our later cannons of art, we shall be delighted. To one who has preserved the graces of a youthful style of acting through so long a period of time and so many vicissitudes of fortune, it may also be given to keep pace with the requirements, particularly of nature, of the modern stage. It is within the bounds of probability that Mr. Boucicault himself may later on learn to smile at the more serious episodes of "The Shaughraun."—

David Anderson. 2

But even with such strong criticism, Boucicault had enough in the gallery to make it a paying proposition, for he wrote that he felt that he would play through the summer because "the business is so good and the weather so cool." 3

It was announced that during the summer months, Boucicault would bring out a new Irish drama. It was the play which he had called Daddy O'Dowd when it was first produced in America. He had first intimated that he was to call it Inchavogue. 4 It was not the success that his other Irish plays had been. One of the reasons offered for its lack of success was that his sensation scene—the piloting of a ship into port through a tempest by the old hero's spacegrace son—was told to the audience, instead of being exhibited to them in a tableau. It was speculated at

2 Ibid.

3 The Spirit of the Times, June 19, 1880.
the time of its reconstruction for the Adelphi that if Bou-
cicault reworked this particular scene and designed a storm
picture for the Adelphi stage, the play would be as good as
his best; "for the acting in it is as wonderful as his
Kerry." 5 Also, during the summer Boucicault's Marriage
was produced by Mr. J. S. Clark and all of the Bancroft's
company at the Haymarket. 6

The play of Daddy O'Dowd was finally renamed The
O'Dowd for the Adelphi production. It was not the drawing
card that was anticipated. Part of its failure was due to
the "discovery that the prominent character is only an
Hibernian version of Mr. Robson's Sampson Burr in The
Porter's Knot. . . ." And the fact that there seemed to
be missing "that new presentation of Irish life so obtru-
sively promised in the preliminary placards," undoubtedly
produced a general disappointment among the auditors. But
again Boucicault the actor saved Boucicault the playwright
from utter failure, "and if the author has done nothing
else he has certainly added a memorable portrait to the
gallery of stage pictures." 7

The O'Dowd was often referred to as the play of
manifestoes. Boucicault had reworked the script that had

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Birmingham Gazette, October 29, 1880.
been presented in America and had written in much Irish
love of the countryside, Irish patriotism, etc. The elec-
tion speech caused much unrest in England. Pressure was
placed upon him to delete the speech entirely. The Spirit
of the Times reported:

Boucicault's dressing-room at the London Adelphi
was recently invaded first by a noble lord, and soon
afterwards by a well-known Irish member of the House
of Commons who sits in opposition. With these illus-
trious visitors Mr. Boucicault had a hard battle
to fight. They both protested against the election
speech in the O'Dowd, declaring it to be a mistake
and calculated only to provoke political excitement.
In deference to this advice the great Dion agreed to
"cut it down." We knew Boucicault would yield to no
government suggestion, whatever he might do by the
advice of friends.

In defense of his revised and altered script, Bouci-
cault heralded the production with the following proclama-
tion:

TO THE PUBLIC,— In my dramatic pictures of Irish
life you have perceived a desire extending beyond
the object of theatrical success, either as a drama-
tist or an actor. The "Colleen Bawn," "Arrah-na-
Pogue," and "The Shaughran," were designed to afford
you a better and closer acquaintance with the true
nature and character of the Irish people, and to en-
courage a kinder international feeling. Let me hope
they have done gentle service in placing the Cinder-
ella of the British family before her two more
favoured sisters in such a light that they have
recognised how much purity, tenderness, and pithos
lie under her rags, and how a certain native deli-
cacy and wild courtesy make the Celtic peasant
appear to be a gentleman in the rough.

The dramatic picture now presented to you, under
the title of "The O'Dowd," tends to remove the pre-
judice that we are a thriftless race of good-humoured
paupers—vagrants to whom Home, in its holiest sense,
is unknown. The love of home is the strongest passion in the Celt; the place where he was born—has lived—where his parents, relatives, friends, his children lie buried—the horizon of his heart—wretched as it may seem, is the frame of his life. Many lie down to die by the homestead when expelled from its shelter; others, exiled to America, turn back their faces daily, lovingly, towards their homes in Ireland, with more devotion than the Arab, at his prayers, turns his face to Mecca.

In the question now agitating my country, is this sentimental part of it taken into fair consideration?

Adelphi Theatre

DION BOUCICAULT. 9

But even such an impassioned defense of his play as this could not induce the English audiences to like the play. The play on the whole was cautiously but coldly received. Dion's acting was reported as being as good as ever and some even went so far as to say it was the best of his Irish personations, "making the house ripple and glow with laughter whenever this excellent comedian was on the stage, whilst the finished art shown in the last act, when the old dazed Irish farmer recognises his prodigal son, certainly equals Mr. Boucicault's acting in 'Kerry,' of which we have all the most pleasant recollections." 10 But he had done what he had so nicely avoided when he wrote The Octoroon, he had made The O'Dowd a propaganda piece. He had his characters make long, agitated political speeches when men's minds in England were directed towards the Irish

9 "Our Play Box. 'The O'Dowd,'" The Theatre, December 1, 1880.
10 Ibid.
question. The English received these speeches in "solemn silence. They seemed to stir no one, and went off like a damp squib." [11]

Even Forbidden Fruit would not draw and Boucicault had expressed himself as displeased with the tone of the criticisms of the London press. One cryptic reviewer commented that "it would certainly be to his interest to promote a Bill in Parliament to abolish criticism altogether."

Boucicault's sojourn in England was not the success that he had experienced in the past and he did not remain for long. He was there until December and then hurriedly came back to America. It was announced in January that Dion Boucicault would begin an engagement in Boston in the following month [12] and would then come to New York to play at Hilde's Garden during April, beginning his engagement on Easter Monday. [13]

Dion began his Boston engagement on February 28 at the Boston Museum in The Shaughraun. This ran until Monday, March 21, when he revived The Colleen Bawn for one week only. It was announced that on Monday, March 28, Suil a Nor would close Mr. Boucicault's engagement, but a special notice appeared in the Museum program which stated: "The appearance of Mr. Boucicault in the part of 'Myles-na-Coppaleen' [11]

has been received with so much interest by the public that the production of SUIL A MOR has been deferred until Thursday next, to afford room to those who were unable to obtain seats last week. He will play in The Colleen Bawn on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (March 28, 29, 30) and in Suil a Mor on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and Saturday afternoon next, being the last performance of his present brilliant engagement." On Monday, April 4, Boucicault revived Jeannie Deans, which was the first production of that play in Boston in twenty years. He had had a most successful engagement. Boucicault could always be assured of a warm reception in Boston and it probably did his old heart good to be so warmly received after his cold reception the preceding summer and Fall in London. Undoubtedly he felt that Bostonians knew good drama when they saw it and that Londoners did not.

Boucicault came to New York and announced a "Limited Engagement, Two weeks only of the greatest living Dramatist and Actor, DION BOUCICAUTL As Conn in the Shaughraun, . . ." He opened on Monday, April 18, 1881, at Haverly's Niblo's Garden Theatre. Boucicault was up against stiff competition, for Bernhardt was at Booth's in Camille, and Hazel Kirke was in its second year at the Madison Square Theatre. Booth's

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14 Boston Museum Program in New York Public Library.
15 Times, Monday, April 18, 1881.
Theatre also announced the appearance of Robert G. Ingersoll on Sunday, Evening, April 24, in a "New Radical Lecture." The subject: SOME REASONS WHY. Boucicault's engagement lasted until Saturday, April 30, 1881. He then moved over to Brooklyn, where he appeared for one week in the Shaughraun under the direction of Mr. Haverly.

During the month of May, Boucicault was drawn again into the law courts. This time he was being sued by an actress for three weeks' salary. Her name was Amy Lee. Henry J. Sargent had engaged her for five weeks at $40 a week to support Mr. Boucicault as Moys in the Shaughraun. She presented her case as follows:

...she had met Mr. Sargent one Sunday evening at Koster & Bail's, who asked if she would like to play with Mr. Boucicault. She replied that she would be delighted. She subsequently received a letter from Mr. Sargent making an appointment for her to meet Mr. Boucicault at the Clarendon Hotel. Here she passed in review under the critical eye of Conn, who gave his judgment that she "would do." She next received a telegram requesting her to come on to Boston, which she did, and after playing two weeks her suspicions were aroused as to the duration of her engagement for a requisition for the return of her part book. She went to Mr. Sargent at once, and in the interview which ensued, the misunderstanding arose which resulted in the present suit. Her memory of the conversation was that she merely said she was sorry she had not known earlier that her services were not satisfactory, as she had just refused an engagement with Simmons & Brown.

However, Sargent and his wife testified---

that on this very occasion Miss Lee came into the

17 Times, Sunday, May 1, 1881.
room and asked to be released from her engagement, as she had a better offer from Simmons & Brown. Mr. Sargent then said that he would not stand in the way of her benefiting herself and release her. On the Monday following the arrival of the company at New-York, Miss Lee reported for rehearsal at Hibble's Garden. Mr. Sargent immediately told her that Miss McCaul had been engaged to play the part she had voluntarily resigned.

Boucicault felt that he was not obligated in any way, for he stated that—

... he had never employed Miss Lee or authorized any one to employ her for him, that he was under salary to Mr. Haverly, that Miss Lee was employed by him through Mr. Sargent, as Mr. Haverly's agent, and that while all persons employed to play in his pieces, especially when they would be brought into personal contact with him, were submitted to him for approval, he had never become responsible for their pay.

The decision was reserved and Judge Gedney said that the question hinged upon the alleged voluntary resignation of Miss Lee during her unexpired contract.18

During the early winter season of 1881, Mimi and Dust were presented at the Court Theatre, London. Mimi which had been produced earlier in America was an adaptation from "La Vie de Boheme" by MM. Henri Murger and Theodore Barriere. Boucicault had also borrowed the concluding incident from Alfred de Musset's three-act play On ne Badine pas avec l'Amour. This piece was reported to have been a complete failure. Dust was taken from MM. Labiche and Delacour's Le Point de Mire. It seemed that

18 Times, Saturday, May 7, 1881.
what little fun there was in the original was lost in the English adaptation and it played for only seven nights to such universal criticism from the English reviewers that Boucicault complained bitterly. The Times commented:

Mr. Boucicault has arisen in his wrath—as on previous and similar occasions—to denounce his critics, whom he accused of blundering and indifference. He asserts that the parts of his play which have been most cruelly treated are those which belong to the original French work, and which have stood the test of criticism and public opinion in France during the last 30 years. It does not appear to strike Mr. Boucicault's peculiarly critical sense that, while "La Vie de Bohème" may be, after its fashion, a very interesting play for Frenchmen, his rearrangement of it may be a very poor affair—especially for Englishmen.

An English journalist was a bit more kind to Boucicault's criticism of the critics. He stated:

Now take the case of "Mimi," to be produced at the Court. The name will at once suggest Henri Murger and the life of the Parisian griset, the ideal artistic Bohemia. At once Dion Boucicault, who acknowledges an inspiration, will be classed amongst the adapters; and yet I doubt not that there will be much more Boucicault than Murger in the new play, and much of the hallmark and style of a very charming writer. They call Dion Boucicault old-fashioned, then bravo, old-fasioned, say I! At any rate, he has never given us plotless, prosy work, and called it natural; he has not substituted puns for epigrams, or smart snappish rudeness for dramatic dialogue, and he has been true to an orthodox dramatic faith.

But these two pieces closed after very short runs. Boucicault was being called "old-fashioned." He failed to

19 Times, Sunday, December 11, 1881.
20 The Theatre, November 1, 1881.
see the newer trend in dramatic writing. Instead of changing his style of writing, or admitting that he could not write in the newer vein, he blamed the critics. Attack was his best defense. Drink, another piece of Boucicault's which failed, was brought out at the Standard Theatre, New York, on January 31, 1882, with Rose Eytinge and Cyril Searle as stars.21

As has been repeatedly pointed out, Boucicault had always been a success in the city of Boston and it was to this city that he again went to open his "Winter Season." On December 24, 1881, he opened at the Boston Museum in The Colleen Bawn. Shiel Barry accompanied him. The program for this opening night announced that The Shaughraun, Arrah-na-Pogue, Sull a Mor and a new play by Boucicault were in preparation.22 The Colleen Bawn played for two weeks, when it was replaced on Monday, January 9, 1882, by The Shaughraun. Boucicault appeared as Conn and Shiel Barry played the role of Harvey Duff.23 On Monday, January 23, 1882, the fifth week of this engagement, Arrah-na-Pogue was presented "Every Evening at 7 3-4; also, Wednesday and Saturday Afternoons at 2."24 The handbill also carried the

22 Boston Museum Program in New York City Library.
23 Ibid., dated Monday, January 9, 1882.
24 Ibid., dated January 23, 1882.
following information:

Monday, Feb. 6th, Mr. Boucicault's New Play, SUIL-A-MOR!

For its first Performance in America. With Mr. Boucicault in his famous character of "The O'Dowd," supported by a Boston Museum Cast, and presented with Elegant New Scenery, Novel and Elaborate Mechanical Effects, Rich Appointments, etc. . . .

It is to be remembered that SUIL-a-MOR had been produced unsuccessfully in London as The O'Dowd and had earlier been produced in America as Daddy O'Dowd. On Monday, February 6, 1882, SUIL-a-MOR was presented at the Museum.

Prior to its opening, Boucicault gave an opinion of the new play. He stated:

...When "The O'Dowd" was written, ten years ago, I perceived that the character belonged rather to high comedy drama than to melodrama. It occurred to me, also, that the Irish character had been associated with plays of a low sensational class, and that an effort to raise the whole edifice of our national drama might be made. In this spirit "SUIL-a-MOR" was written as a pure sentimental comedy, with a strong emotion for a spinal column. As a literary work it, therefore, may rank more highly than the "Shaughraun" or the "Colleen Bawn," because it does not depend on scenery or on sensational, or we may say physical effects, but rather invites the attention and engages the emotions of the audience by its human suffering and its development of character and passion. Well, no; I think so far as dialogue goes, the best writing to be found in these plays is in "Arrah-na-Pogue," but there is this faulty quality in brilliancy--it is essentially hard. Wit is not a soft, genial quality; it is more admirable than endearing; in excess it is heartless.

...Of all the Irish characters I have drawn, I think the O'Grady is perhaps the best as a true type--he is the most unconscious. John Brougham

25 Ibid.
agreed with me in this opinion, adding with true O'Grady unconsciousness: "He is a great part, but where are you going to get a man to play him?" He forgot the part was written to fit himself!"26

The reviews of this opening were generally good. It was Dion's acting that really created the sensation. The Boston Post commented that "the most radical reconstruction is seen in the title. There are changes in the play itself, but they do not effect the story to any great extent, and 'Suil-a-Mór' is practically 'Daddy O'Dowd' under a new name."27 But Mr. Boucicault's appearance as an old man was a "genuine novelty." He had been seen in juvenile characters only for so long a time that he created quite a sensation as an old man. The Herald stated: "...his appearance in the role of an aged man was a genuine novelty, but a surprise. For his impersonation of The O'Dowd is a distinct creation, bold in its outline and exquisite in its finish, and bears no resemblance to any he has previously given us, except, perhaps, the old man in 'Kerry.'"28

The Daily Advertiser was full of praise of the acting of Boucicault in this part of The O'Dowd.

Mr. Boucicault plays the part of The O'Dowd beautifully, and like a real histrionic artist. To our idea his pathos is always less moving than his

27 Tuesday, February 7, 1882.
28 Boston Herald, Tuesday, February 7, 1882.
humor, and it seems to us that, carefully as it is studied from life, and exquisitely as it is imitated after life, his anguish in this drama much oftener excites the tribute of admiration than that of tears. Through all the studious naturalness of many of these scenes, we find ourselves stirred far more frequently by the actor's method than by any emotion which it excites. Yet from the art itself we cannot withhold our hearty praise. It is large in its conception, clear and true in its methods, and ever fine in its details. It is really an intellectual experience to witness Mr. Boucicault's three outbursts of tears in this play,—that in the first act, the hysteria of lively joy; that in the second, the utterance of horror and sore distress, culminating in the tremor of palsy; that in the third, the cry of the heart almost overborne by a flood of unexpected bliss,—yet all of these are just the weeping of an old man with a strong but sensitive nature. In presenting all the lighter aspects of the character, Mr. Boucicault is, as usual, almost perfect. He makes a picture of the character which would have delighted Wilkie, and the spectacle of the kind, sunny, old face, with its healthy, warm color, won from many contests with storm and heat, the shock of light hair, the neat dress of the thrifty Irishman, with its chocolate dress coat, its green waistcoat and its drab velveteen small clothes and leggings, set with bright buttons, is well worth putting into the photograph gallery of one's memory. Everything that is bright and tender and droll in the part is exquisitely interpreted, and one is divided in recollection between the charm of many scenes. . .

The Boston Journal also felt that the acting of Boucicault was more than merely good, for it said: "In this commingling humor and pathos with which Mr. Boucicault invests 'The O'Dowd,' the impersonation takes rank as one of the most artistic that he has furnished. The

29 The Boston Daily Advertiser, Tuesday Morning, February 7, 1882.
rich and mellow brogue and the oddities of the fond old father are happily merged in the tenderness and depth of natural feeling disclosed beneath them."30

The feeling was unanimous that the acting of Boucicault was superb. Had the piece been in the hands of another actor, it probably would not have lasted out the week. In Boston, the piece was a success. On February 10, one of the morning papers announced that the play was "receiving the plaudits of audiences that literally pack the Boston Museum. 'Standing room only' has been posted at the box-office every evening this week."31

On Saturday, February 18, 1882, at the close of the eighth week, Dion Boucicault brought to a close a very successful engagement.32 The audience for the final performance was one of the largest ever crowded into the four walls of the Museum. It was stated that the receipts of the eight weeks exceeded $60,000.33

At the close of the Boston engagement, Boucicault announced a tour of the New England states. His schedule was as follows:

30 The Boston Journal, Tuesday evening, February 7, 1882.
31 Boston Daily Advertiser, Friday Morning, February 10, 1882.
32 The Boston Journal, Saturday, February 11, 1882.
33 The Boston Sunday Herald, Sunday, February 19, 1882.
Monday Evening, Feb. 20, Huntington Hall, Lowell.
Tuesday Evening, Feb. 21, City Hall, Newburyport.
Wednesday Evening, Feb. 22, Academy of Music, Chelsea.
Thursday Evening, Feb. 23, Mechanics' Hall, Salem.
Friday Evening, Feb. 24, New Opera House, Lawrence.
Saturday Evening, Feb. 25, Music Hall, Waltham.
Monday Evening, Feb. 27, Low's Opera House, Providence.
Tuesday Evening, Feb. 28, Worcester Theatre, Worcester.
Wednesday Evening, March 1, Opera House, Holyoke.
Thursday Evening, March 2, Opera House, Springfield.
Friday Evening, March 3, Roberts' Opera House, Hartford.
Saturday, March 4, Afternoon and Evening, Carll's Opera House, New Haven.
March 6, Booth's Theatre, New York.34

The New England tour was a success. All the reports of the performances which are available indicate that the plays were well attended and well liked. The Morning Mail in Lowell said: "It must have been gratifying to both star and manager to see such a goodly audience as that which assembled in Huntington Hall last evening to welcome Mr. Dion Boucicault to Lowell and witness the latest production from his prolific pen." The Morning Mail ranked Suil-a-Mor along with Hazel Kirke in moral effect, but felt "in point of general interest and picturesqueness of detail, it falls far short of the 'Shaughran' or 'Arrah-na-Pogue.'"35

The Herald stated: "Mr. Dion Boucicault should be satisfied with the audience which greeted him on his first

34 Boston Museum Program, In New York Public Library.
35 The Morning Mail, Lowell, Tuesday, February 21, 1882.
appearance in Newburyport, last evening, for it was not only the largest house of the season but we doubt if any such audience was ever assembled at City Hall before, taking into consideration its size and quality. Although one of the worst storms of the season prevailed every coach in the city being called into requisition by those willing to brave the storm rather than miss hearing and seeing Boucicault [sic]." It was recorded that eight hundred and thirty-two tickets were sold, which made the gross receipts $551 which was considered quite good for a town the size of Newburyport.

And in Springfield, the dramatic critic reported: '
'Suil-a-Mor' was played at the Opera house last night by Dion Boucicault to an audience in full sympathy with the play and its chief character, and which paid both the praise of laughter and tears and applause, that after one act broke out into loud shout.... Mr. Boucicault acts it with a fidelity to nature, and a grace of motion and expression which seem the perfection of art."

The Salem paper carried an interview made in Boston which indicated what Boucicault's future schedule

37 The Newburyport Daily Argus, Thursday, February 23, 1882.
38 Boucicault in 'Suil-a-Mor,' The Republican, Springfield, Friday, March 3, 1882.
was to be. He said that he was scheduled to return to Ireland at Easter. "I have arranged with the manager of the Dublin Theatre to give every year a season of the national drama, and shall take with me a company capable of presenting it as perfectly as possible. I shall cross the ocean early in April." Boucicault stated that after the New England tour he was to play a fortnight in New York, a week in Philadelphia, another in Brooklyn, which would take him up to the 1st of April, and added "I sail on the 4th or 5th. But I return here at the end of September. I open another engagement at the Museum in December—indeed, I have made arrangements with Mr. Field to appear at his theatre every December—and will produce my two new plays here for the first time. I would rather bring out a new play in Boston or New York than in any other place."  

Upon the completion of the New England tour, Boucicault returned to New York City to open at Booth's Theatre, which was then under the management of Mr. John Stetson. On Monday, March 6, Dion began an engagement of twelve nights only. The piece for this engagement was Suil-a-Mor.  

The Times recorded the opening night thus:  

A very large and extremely sympathetic audience greeted Mr. Dion Boucicault at Booth's Theatre last  

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39 The Salem Observer, Saturday, February 11, 1882.

40 Ibid.
night. Mr. Boucicault returns to the stage here after having filled a successful engagement in Boston, and roused London audiences and critics to an amusing state of indignation by means of a new play called "Suil-a-Mor." This play was, it is true, produced in London at a time when feeling upon the Irish question ran high, and its Irish tone is marked enough to be unpleasant to British taste. Here, of course, the play will be taken wholly upon its merits. It was received with favor last night, and is one of the best of a class of dramas which Mr. Boucicault, in spite of his tendency to pillage other writers, has always written with humor and managed with skill. The chief part in it--Michael O'Dowd--was acted by Mr. Boucicault himself, who's appearance upon the stage in the first scene was followed by cordial and prolonged applause.

"Suil-a-Mor" appears to be, in large measure, a new work, though based upon a former play well known as "Daddy O'Dowd." The latter, it may not be generally known, was founded upon one of Cromon's melodramas; so that "Suil-a-Mor," like most of the imaginative Mr. Boucicault's lucubrations, has a French origin. . . .

Mr. Boucicault acted the part of the O'Dowd in his peculiarly humorous and graceful manner. His humor is as flexible and fluent as ever, and his voice has not lost its penetrating and insinuating quality. There were natural touches of pathos in his acting, which was on the whole life-like and charming.

The New-York Mirror reported that the standard of production, mounting and general presentation was not up to that which was usually found in a Boucicault production. It said:

The large audience at Booth's Theatre on Monday evening were more astonished than delighted at the manner in which Boucicault's new Irish drama, Suil-a-Mor, was presented. No new scenery was provided, the company was half good, half bad, and all wretchedly

rehearsed, and Mr. Boucicault, who has accustomed us to the perfection of theatrical detail, was left to bear upon his own shoulders the whole burden of a play that seemed as unfinished as the performance of it. 42

The make-up and costuming for The O'Dowd was almost perfect, for the Spirit of the Times recorded: "When Dion Boucicault, as The O'Dowd, stepped upon the stage of Booth's on Monday evening, his make-up was so perfect that the audience did not recognize him. But, at the first word he said, the applause began, and, breaking forth again and again greeted the author-actor with an ovation which shook even his veteran nerves, and convinced him that New York is as glad to have him back again as he is to be here." 43

But Boucicault apparently had changed his concept of good theatre. Here is another reason that he began to go down hill:

During his whole career, Boucicault has differed from most stars in insisting that every part in his plays shall be properly performed, and that his pieces shall be placed upon the stage with appropriate scenery, and the strictest attention to details. In order to carry out this system, he has sacrificed fortunes, which other stars have put in the bank; but the result has been that he realized greater fortunes, ultimately, than any other star. This season, however, he has changed his tactics, and adopted the old-fashioned star motto—"Myself and a lot of sticks." Just as Patti relies upon herself alone to draw crowds to hear her in opera, so Boucicault plays Patti upon the public at Booth's. Sui lá-Mor could not be

43 Saturday, March 11, 1882.
mounted worse in any barn. The elegant apartments of Young O'Dowd, in London, are carpeted with ragged green baize, and adorned with 12½ cent chromos. The Young O'Dowd's fashionable friends revel upon bottled cider, with the labels turned conspicuously toward the audience, as if the property man were proud of them. Lady Lawless receives her guests in an Italian garden, and when, by the aid of imagination, or a balloon, she transports them to her villa near London, she kindly sends down to Young O'Dowd's rooms for the same ragged old green baize, in order that they may feel perfectly at home. The City of Paris generously loans the town of Galway an entire square, artistically tipped with snow, for a fish-market scene, and the poor fish-fags, who sell their stock at four shillings a creel, lodge in the brown-stone palaces which once frowned upon The Two Orphans. When the O'Dowd is reduced to poverty, he evidently pawns his fire-place; for there is the hole for it in the side of the cabin, charitably filled up with scraps of old scenery, by the liberal permission of Manager Stetson. This economy, so foreign to Boucicault's experience, fascinated him to such an extent, that when his long-lost son returned, he carefully placed upon the table the stone jug he was holding, instead of dropping it upon the floor. Perhaps Manager Stetson had notified him that, if he broke the jug, he should not have another. Why, a jug like that must cost ten cents. There will be no need to transform Booth's into a dry-goods store at the close of Manager Stetson's lease. He has made it one already. He deals in dramatic job lots, offers theatrical remnants to the public, and his display of second-hand bargains in the way of carpets, curtains, and table-linen cannot be equaled by the cheapest Cheap John on the east-side.44

Suil-a-Mor closed at Booth's on March 18, 1882.

Leaving Booth's on March 18, Boucicault journeyed to Philadelphia and played a one week's engagement at the Park Theatre which began on March 27, 1882. The play, of course, was Suil-a-Mor.45

44 Ibid.

45 Park Theatre Program in New York Public Library.
As previously announced, Boucicault left America to return to Ireland and England in April. During May it was reported that a revival of Babil and Bijou was staged at the Alhambra Theatre either in late April or on the first of May, 1882.

"Babil and Bijou" has been revived with singular splendour at the Alhambra, and as a show piece of magnificent proportions has had few rivals even on this celebrated spectacular stage. How well I remember when it was first produced at Covent Garden, and how sanguine Dion Boucicault was for the success of a new form of dramatic entertainment. What a fortune it cost, and how coldly it was then received. Never before had the younger generation in London seen such dancing as that of Henriette E'Or--shall I ever forget her?--now gone from us; Riviere's Spring Chorus took the town; Mr. Maas made his first appearance in public as an operatic tenor; . . . The revival at the Alhambra, in point of splendour, is just as fine as the original, the last scene being especially magnificent.46

Boucicault remained in England until the latter part of December, 1882. In an interview granted to a special correspondent of the Boston Herald, he gave some indications of his plans for the coming season. The correspondent reported:

London, Dec. 8, 1882. Mr. Dion Boucicault lives in luxurious style in New Bond street, where he has quite recently purchased a large house for the use of himself, his daughter and his two sons. I found him there yesterday afternoon, on the eve of starting to Liverpool, whence he sails today for New York upon the Alaska. I was shown by the tidy and smartly dressed man into Mr. Boucicault's library, where he was hard at work preparing to get away. His desk was piled up with papers, and out of the mass of

46 Our Omnibus-Box, May 1, 1882, p. 315.
accumulated manuscript he was selecting the materi-
als he wished to take with him. In his hands were
the printed "parts" of his new Irish play, which will
form the principal attraction of his repertoire
during his forthcoming 10 or 12 weeks' season at
the Museum. I think Mr. Boucicault found Ponce de
Leon's fountain of perpetual youth... He is quite
as active and full of nervous vigor as he was the
first time I ever set eyes on him in Chicago....
I asked Mr. Boucicault what were his
PLANS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE
and he told me that on arriving in America, he should
have time enough to spend a couple of weeks in New
York before proceeding to Boston, where his opening
date is the 1st of January. Mr. Field, he said,
usually gave him four or five rehearsals, all that
were necessary, indeed, for the production of his
older plays, with which nearly all the members
of the company were entirely familiar. If Miss Martinot
had remained in the company, he should have needed
even fewer rehearsals; but, as it is, he will be
obliged to go through the regular routine in this
respect. The first four weeks of his engagement
will be devoted to the plays with which Bostonians
are already familiar. At the end of that time he
intends to produce his new Irish play, the "Omadhaun,"
which is the latest thing he has done. He has an-
other drama in stock called "Boyne Water," which will
not be done unless there is some necessity for it.
I do not think this contingency is likely to arise,
for the "Omadhaun" is one of the most striking and
original pieces of stage workmanship that ever Mr.
Boucicault has as yet produced... The play has
no political significance, as has
been
the case with
nearly all my Irish dramas, excepting, perhaps, the
"Colleen Bawn." It seems to me that it should make
at least an
INTERESTING AND COHESIVE DRAMA.
I shall rehearse it at the Museum very completely be-
fore it is produced, and it will certainly have a very
strong cast... As to my plans for the future, be-
yond my regular engagement at the Boston Museum, there
is nothing definitely settled. I made up my mind last
year that I should not go to New York or Chicago, or
any other city hereafter, excepting I should be in
the possession of an entirely new and very largely
successful play which had already been stamped with
the unmistakable mark of Boston approval. If this
play, or "Boyne Water," should make such a success, as
is quite possible, I think it likely that next year I
may carry out a tour of the entire country. Whatever
I do, I mean that hereafter the Museum shall be the place where I produce any new piece, so long, at least, as the management wants me. . . . I have no desire whatever to play in London, and I do not think I shall attempt to produce any more dramas there. I shall take to America with me a couple of entirely new operas, the music of one which is by Planquette, and I have proposed to arrange for their production during my stay in New York. . . . I wish you would also ask the Herald to contradict the preposterous story which is going about to the effect that I contemplate a series of lectures on dramatic art. That is something I could not be induced to attempt for any consideration. 47

On January 1, 1883, Boucicault opened an engagement at the Boston Museum, where he revived many of his old Irish favorites. The opening piece was The Shaughraun which had proved so popular during the last visit in Boston. For the second week of the "Fourth Annual Engagement of the distinguished Dramatist and Actor, Mr DION BOUCICAULT," beginning January 8, 1883, he produced Suil-a-Mór; on the following Monday, January 15, The Colleen Bawn; and on Monday, January 22, Arrah-na-Pogue. 48

There seems to be some confusion as to when The Amadan was given its initial performance. The word Amadan is usually written "Omedhaun" which signifies in the Celtic

47 "Boucicault, His Forthcoming Engagement at the Museum. What He will Offer to His Boston Admirers. The Author's Sketch of His New Irish Drama." Boston Herald, Wednesday, December 20, 1882.

language a half-witted boy; in English, a "softy"; in French a "Cretin." This was the explanation of the title of the new play. Anderson includes a criticism of the opening of the play dated January 30, 1883, which would indicate that the play did open on the 29th as was announced in a playbill of the Museum on January 8. However, Quinn gives the date of the first performance as February 5, 1883.49

Two items seem to support the date which Quinn gives. First, a Boston Museum Program stated: "Monday, February 5, 1883, --Sixth Week Fourth Annual Engagement of the distinguished Author and Actor, Mr. DION BOUCICAULT Every Evening at 7:45; also, Wednesday and Saturday Afternoons at 2. First time on any stage of Mr. BOUCICAULT'S NEW PLAY an Entirely New and Original Romantic Drama entitled the AMADAN. . ."50 Also a review which appeared in the Daily Advertiser on Tuesday Morning, February 6, 1883, stated:

Mr. Dion Boucicault signalized the opening of the sixth week of his present engagement at the Boston Museum, last evening, by the first production on any stage of his new romantic drama "The Amadan," written, as he tells us, expressly with a view of bringing it


50 Boston Museum Program in New York Public Library.
out originally at this house... 51

Whether the play opened on January 29 or February 5 cannot be decided by this writer. Nevertheless, it did open and the Boston papers were rather excited at the prospects of having a world premier to review. The Herald stated:

The production of the "Amadan" at the Museum may be regarded as an "Event." It is the first time, it is believed, that one of the leading English dramatists has elected to allow a work of importance to see the light in Boston. The theatres of the English metropolis are always open to the works of the author of "London Assurance" and "The Shaughraun," and after the "Amadan" has had its run in Boston, and has been produced in New York at Wallack's Theatre, it will be played in London. Mr. Boucicault wrote this new piece especially for the company at the Museum and a Boston audience, he says. It is worthy of note that he produced both "The Colleen Bawn" and "The Shaughraun" in New York before these plays were taken to London. They fared none the worse thereafter throughout the world, because they dated from the United States, but the author lost his British copyright by preferring an American to an English public for first presentation. 52

Anderson quotes a review taken from the Boston Journal as follows:

As was to be expected, the announcement of the production of a new play by Mr. Dion Boucicault, with the author in the leading role, was sufficient to attract to the Boston Museum a notable array of "first nighters." Few plays have the honor of being performed for the first time before such an audience as that which was present last night to pass judgment upon "The Amadan." The house was full in every part

51 Boston Daily Advertiser, Tuesday, February 6, 1883.
52 Boston Sunday Herald, January 14, 1883.
and the audience was as brilliant as it was large. It was also of excellent disposition, making evident its good will toward the play and its author in the most cordial manner, and according success to the production almost from its outset. Mr. Boucicault possesses two qualities in an eminent degree which secure for him success as a playwright, one being his ability to develop the incidents of his story with a good degree of coherence, and the other his rare skill in making bright interesting dialogue. He does not confine himself strictly to what is probable and sometimes goes beyond what is possible as in the "Octoroon" where the climax is reached by the aid of an incident which the veriest tyro in photography knows could never happen, or in The Shaughraun where in one of the most important scenes there is a simulation of death such as could not succeed anywhere else than on the stage. Still, there is a disposition on the part of even those who are critically inclined not to lay too much stress on such things as this, the general charm of the play being sufficient to cover more faults than the most captious seeker after blemishes could find. The incidents seem to work themselves out naturally, the sequence of the play seems easy and unbroken, the denouement is always satisfactory, and the leading characters are invariably interesting and not infrequently picturesque. This is seen in the new play "The Amadan." There is not to be found in it so much of the bright Irish spirit as there is in some of Mr. Boucicault's previous plays, but in good stead there is found a very original motive and a strongly artistic development of the story. In fact a careful study of the play presents many reasons for considering it the best play of this class which Mr. Boucicault has produced. The story of a half-witted boy's love for a beautiful young woman, the motive of the play, is extremely weird in its conception and the incidents connected with and growing out of it are so effectively grouped that interest in the performance is not allowed to flag for an instant. A special feature of the play is that every incident contributes to the development of the story, and to use a somewhat slangy but suggestive expression, there is no padding. Mr. Boucicault impersonated the central character, Colley the Amadan, and the portrayal of the poor creature was a veritable creation. The character is utterly unlike any other which the author-actor plays, being in contrast to the Shaughraun and Shaun the Post, and as pathetic as those characters are humorous. The pathos, however, is not in any respect bathos, for the
Amadan never becomes ludicrous. Colley is not a picturesque character, and on a first acquaintance not easy to describe. Those who go to see him in performances yet to be given will find him a subject for interested study. Mr. Boucicault had an enthusiastic call before the curtain on the close of the first act, and was obliged to respond twice. At the end of the second act Mr. Boucicault was again called out. The support was good in every respect, and with the exception of one slight contretemps, owing to somebody's lapse of memory, in the second act, the performance was a smooth and enjoyable one. Several of the new scenes with which the stage was set were notable for their beautiful representations of coast scenery.  

On Monday, February 19, 1883, which was the eighth week of the engagement of Dion Boucicault and the "last week but one," Kerry was added to the bill of the Amadan. The Herald felt that by adding the role of Kerry to the bill, Boucicault was afforded "an excellent opportunity to vary the monotony of character in romantic drama, and display abilities which 'The Amadan' and plays of similar order [Did] not afford him."  

At the close of the Boston engagement, Boucicault began a tour of the New England States as he had done the preceding year. Both the Evening Gazette and the Daily Spy announced that Boucicault would play a double bill on Saturday, March 17, 1883, in Worcester, Massachusetts. The

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54 The Boston Herald, Tuesday, February 20, 1883.
evening's performance consisted of Kerry and Arrah-na-Pogue. 55

Boucicault then moved on to Springfield the following day where he granted an interview to the local paper in which he gave some indication about his new piece which he was to produce there on March 21, 1883.

The play is full of fun and jollity, and one which I expect will keep the house in a roar from the rise to the fall of the curtain, or I am greatly mistaken. It is in three acts and is somewhat on the order of "Forbidden Fruit" without being so broad. The leading part, which I play myself, is that of an Irish landlord in reduced circumstances; a middle-aged "masher" trying to mend his fortunes by a wealthy marriage, but existing in holy horror of a gushing young widow whose heart he has won and who follows him up with unmistakable affection and tracks him up with a terrible and unerring precision. His efforts to allude her and the lies and contrivances he is compelled to resort to constitute the comedy of the plot. 56

In this "NEW FARCICAL IRISH COMEDY, entitled VICE VERSA," Dion played the role of Phenix O'Flattery and was supported by Miss Sadie Martinot in the role of Mrs. Clingstone Peach. For this tour they were being managed by Mr. Charles H. Thayer. 57

The play was reviewed as follows:


57 Theatre Program for Vice Versa given at Springfield, Mass., dated March 21, 1883.
The performance of Dion Boucicault's farcical comedy "Vice Versa" last night was its first public presentation upon any stage, and so becomes an event of much and unusual interest. The piece differs materially from his other Irish pieces in that the development of its most important character, Felix O'Flattery, constitute the whole of the Irishism in it, and that the scene is laid wholly in and about London. . . . This . . . is only a farce; but it is not farce of the absurdly impossible kind which depends for its laughter upon smashing dishes, breaking china and other tricks of the circus ring. The story is improbable, of course; it does not offend the spectator by the confession of absolute impossibility. The incidents are all of them exceedingly laughable; they follow each other in quick succession to the close, and there are few dull periods in the piece. Mirth is clearly its only purpose; it has not a serious moment; it is a tissue of comic troubles to be heartily enjoyed, and has the elasticity and strong flow of animal spirits which carried "London Assurance" and "Old Heads and Young Hearts" into popular favor, if not all their clear cut intellectuality.

On Thursday evening, March 22, 1883, Boucicault was in Hartford, where he played at the Robert's Opera House. The piece was that of the previous night, Vice Versa. 59

On Sunday, March 18, 1883, the Times announced that Wallack's old theatre on Broadway and Thirteenth-street would be reopened under Wallack's own management. The old house was to be renamed The Star, "a name which sufficiently indicates its future policy." The announcement also contained the information that Dion Boucicault would be the

58 The Springfield Republican, March 22, 1883.

59 Handbill of Robert's Opera House, Hartford, dated Thursday evening, March 22, 1883.
opening attraction in his new farce-comedy, entitled Vice Versa. It was speculated that Vice Versa would be probably succeeded by The Amadan, in which the author's son would appear and that The Shaughraun, Arrah-na-Fogue, and The Colleen Bawn would follow.60

On Monday, March 26, 1883, Wallack did reopen his old theatre, now called The Star Theatre, which had been "restored to performances of English Drama," with Dion Boucicault's production of "an entirely new Farcical Comedy in 3 acts, entitled VICE VERSA."61 The review of the opening stated:

The opening of the new Star Theatre—or, rather, the reopening of Mr. Wallack's old theatre, which has been turned suddenly from its Teutonic course—was an interesting event last night. . . . Mr. Boucicault, who appeared last night, brought back to a good natured and not very large or brilliant audience reminiscences of his acting in the "Shaughraun," and of his peculiar dramatic methods. He was seen as Phenix O'Flattery in a piece called "Vice Versa." Mr. Boucicault, with that scrupulous consideration for truth which has always been his finest virtue, directs attention to the fact that his new play is taken from a French comedy. Its intrigue is certainly neither novel nor vivacious, and what good there is in it brings to mind "Le Valets de Sham." There is occasional brightness in "Vice Versa," but the piece is too threadbare to be entertaining, and too strained to be above stupidity. It cannot be pretended, moreover, that Mr. Boucicault was happily placed in the character of O'Flattery—a sort of Irish light comedian, who, in this presentment, had the voice and not the charm of Conn and of Mr. Boucicault's romantic vagabonds. . . . Miss

60 Times, Sunday, March 18, 1883.

61 Star Theatre program in New York Public Library.
Martinot, for whom "Vice Versa" is said to have been prepared, seemed to mistake superfluous acting for acting. The audience was inclined to be cordial, and the few touches of humor in the performance were eagerly appreciated. Appreciation, in the circumstances, was an amiable condescension. . . .

Although the review of the opening night was not too cordial, on April 1 Mr. Boucicault declared that he was "satisfied with his new play, 'Vice Versa,' and with the public reception of it." To which the Times retorted: "To paraphrase Joseph Surface, there is nothing in this world so beautiful as self satisfaction. But Mr. Boucicault is usually under-critical toward his own work." 63

Vice Versa ran until April 12. It was short-lived. The Shaughraun replaced this piece "after careful preparation." Dion in his old role of Conn was supported by William Herbert, William Elton, Ben Maginley, Mme. Ponisi, Miss Ellie Wilton, Miss Theresa WALDRON, and Miss Sadie Martinot. 64

On Thursday, April 12, a special benefit performance of The Shaughraun was given for the Actor's Fund. It was reported that the play was repeated in the presence of a large and well-pleased audience. 65 The Shaughraun ran until

62 Times, Tuesday, March 27, 1883.
63 Times, April 1, 1883.
64 Times, Wednesday, April 11, 1883.
65 Times, Sunday, April 15, 1883.
Saturday, May 12, when it was announced that it would be replaced by the Maadam on May 14. D. Boucicault, Jr., played the character of Colly (the wild boy) and Dion, Sr., played the part of Michael O'Leary. 66 However, The Star was dark on the 14th and the Maadam did not open until May 15. 67

The review of the opening was just about as unkind as Boucicault had ever received. It began: "What is described on the bills as an 'entirely new original drama,' by Dion Boucicault, was produced at the Star Theatre last evening before an audience which fairly filled the house when the curtain rose on the first act, but which had very materially decreased before the drop fell on the last." 68 The reviewer was a bit more kind to Dion, Jr., than he was to the production for he stated about him that "he alone succeeded in arousing an enthusiasm which was genuine and spontaneous." As to the character portrayed by Dion, Sr., the review commented:

The author assumes the character of Michael O'Leary of Mount O'Leary, a wealthy but vulgar and drunken contractor. . . . There is just a tinge of Irish humor in this character, but it is not of the rollicking, convulsing kind that has made most of Boucicault's Irish plays successful, and it fell flat.

66 Times, Sunday, May 6, 1883.
67 Times, Sunday, May 12, 1883.
68 Times, Wednesday, May 16, 1883.
on the audience. Mr. Boucicault sustained the role with that careful art which is characteristic of him, but it was uphill work, and the applause which was bestowed on him had more of the savor of the trained claque than of genuine enthusiasm.

As to the plot and construction of the play it was stated:

A chart in the form of a synopsis of the plot is kindly furnished on the programme, but even with this to aid him the auditor found it extremely difficult to discover any connection between the jumbled mass of incidents which are thrown together in the nine scenes of the play.69

The reviewer felt that the only thing that could possibly make the play succeed might be the scenery, for he said:

"Some very beautiful and elaborate set scenes were provided by Mr. Mazzanovich, and the 'Ruins of St. Doulagh's' and 'The Puffing Hole' were loudly applauded. If 'The Amadan' holds the stage for any length of time it will be owing entirely to the scenery and the acting of the younger Boucicault."

Boucicault seemed to have resorted to all of his old stage tricks of the sensation scene. The review stated: "Of the stage business of the Amadan nearly all has been borrowed from older plays. There is Boucicault's favorite diving scene, the Amadan jumping from a craig into the river to secure some paper which O'Leary has cast into the waters, the old trick of pushing a man over a cliff, and the well worn device of breaking through a solid wall of stone to escape from a cave at which the audience laughed merrily, 

69 Ibid.
Instead of being impressed with what was intended to be a terrible situation. Evidently Boucicault had made a composite of all his effective sensation scenes and piled them into one great mass of effects. All had appeared in earlier plays.

The Critic passed a benediction on these old melodramas of Boucicault in reviewing this production by saying: "The public has lost its relish for Irish melodrama of the familiar patterns and though, at the wave of Mr. Boucicault's wand, a few fitful gleams of sunshine still fall on the hills of Clare, they will vanish like a mirage when he lays aside his pen." The play was not a success. It ran until Friday, May 25, 1883, when it was replaced by The Colleen Bawn. In this production, Dion, Sr., appeared in his usual role of Myles, and Dion, Jr., assumed the role of Danny Mann. On May 27, the last six nights and last matinees were announced for the appearance of the Boucicaults and a notice was published announcing the Star Theatre "to RENT for the summer months, commencing June 4. Apply to ARTHUR WALLACK, Wallack's Theatre."

70 Ibid.
71 "The Drama," The Critic, May 19, 1883, p. 238.
72 Times, Friday, May 25, 1883.
73 Star Theatre program, in New York Public Library.
74 Times, Sunday, May 27, 1883.
The next thread of Boucicault's activities is to be picked up in Chicago in the following fall. Boucicault appeared at McVicker's Theatre for a two weeks' engagement commencing on Monday, November 5, and running to November 17, 1883. For the first week he played his old favorite, *The Shaughraun*, and during the second week he played *The Colleen Bawn* on Wednesday and Thursday, November 14 and 15. On Friday and Saturday he appeared in a double bill of *Kerry* and *Arrah-na-Pogue*. 75

No record was found of any activity of Boucicault between the Chicago performance and his next New York appearance on March 3, 1884. He was scheduled to appear at the New Park Theatre and the *Times*, in making the announcement, stated that he had been seen "too seldom of late in New-York." He had not appeared in New York since his engagement at the Star Theatre. He appeared in *The Shaughraun* for a one-week engagement, closing on Saturday, March 8, 1884. A review of the opening night stated that "Perhaps this play cannot aspire to the distinction of being intrinsically the best that Mr. Boucicault ever wrote, but it certainly surpasses all his other works in theatrical effectiveness. Its constant activity, its bright dialogue,

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75 McVicker's *Bill of the Play*, November 5-14, in New York City Library.
its dramatic situations, and, above all, the character of Cora have enabled it to maintain a longer life of usefulness than has been allotted to most dramas of the past 15 years." It is evident that Boucicault's portrayal of Cora was still fresh and effective. "It is a delightful piece of acting, and possesses now many bits of finish which it did not have when it was first witnessed at Wallack's."76 It is worthy of note that Nina Boucicault enacted the part of Moya, the part her mother had played at an earlier date. The reviewer described her by saying: "She is yet a very young lady, but her appearance is pleasing, and she gives evidence of talent enough to become an accomplished actress."77

After the engagement at the New Park Theatre, Boucicault journeyed to Philadelphia, where he played a one-week engagement at the Chestnut Street Theatre. It was The Shaughraun in which he elected to appear.78

On April 20, 1884, it was announced that on May 1, Dion Boucicault would deliver a lecture at the Madison Square Theatre on "The Art of Acting." It was stated that this particular lecture had been delivered the previous year in London. Dion had volunteered to give this lecture

76 *Times*, Tuesday, March 4, 1884.
77 Ibid.
78 Program of Chestnut Street Theatre, dated March 19, 1884, in New York Public Library.
as a benefit for the Actor's Fund.\footnote{79}{There was much comment and excitement over this proposed lecture, and before three o'clock, the scheduled time of the lecture, hundreds of persons had arrived at the Madison Square Theatre. However, they were in for some disappointment for "it was learned there, . . . that Mr. Boucicault was sick in bed, prostrated by rheumatic gout."\footnote{80}{It was announced that the lecture would be given on the following Thursday afternoon and also that a Miss Brace, instructor in elocution at Vassar College and recently a student at the Conservatoire, in Paris, would read on Tuesday afternoon at the Madison Square Theatre an essay on "The Methods of the Theatre Francais," as these were taught in the Conservatoire National de Musique et de Declamation.\footnote{81}{On Thursday, May 8, Boucicault did give his lecture on "The Art of Acting." His lecture, or conference, as it was called, was covered by the \textit{Times} and recorded thus:}}

\textbf{MR. BOUCICAULT'S CONFERENCE}

Mr. Dion Boucicault gave his conference on the art of acting in the Madison-Square Theatre yesterday afternoon. The audience was rather large, and contained many well-known actors. Mr. Boucicault came on the stage jauntily, threw aside his spring overcoat, laid his hat upon a decorated table, and then proceeded to make friends with his hearers, who were

\footnote{79}{\textit{Times}, Sunday, April 20, 1884.}
\footnote{80}{\textit{Times}, Friday, May 2, 1884.}
\footnote{81}{Ibid.}
certainly inclined to be sympathetic. Mr. Bouci-
cault pointed out, in the beginning, the distinc-
tion between a lecture and a conference, a distinc-
tion which everybody, it seems to us, ought to
understand. Conferences are, to a certain extent,
informal talks. Lectures have ponderous formality.
Mr. Boucicault said also that a part of his conference
was taken from a book manuscript; he read from the
text occasionally, but for the most part spoke in an
off-hand, graceful way. His remarks were listened to
with serious attention, and were frequently applauded.

Mr. Boucicault looks at the stage in an honest,
practical way. He, unlike most persons, knows that
the art of acting is a rational art, with a mechanism
and a method quite as real as those of any other art.
If he is short-sighted at all it is in laying too
little stress on talent, genius, the power the pro-
duces great results at times without the help of
mechanism. We do not underrate intelligence and
knowledge, however, but it is undoubtedly true that
Mr. Boucicault has right principles in the main.
These are easily explained: A beginner on the stage
should start modestly; natural and simple manner
should be cultivated; speech, gesture, posture, and
walk should also be cultivated; stage conventionalisms,
like the traditional walk of tragic actors, should be
avoided; above all, character should be studied—not
its outside, but its inside. Actors ought to use their
brains, Mr. Boucicault says, on the theory that most
actors have brains. Finally, burlesque must be
avoided like a pestilence, and elocutionists must not
be confounded with actors. It is likely that Mr. Bou-
cicault used the word "burlesque" indiscriminately.
Burlesque is not necessarily a bad thing. There are
burlesques which are pungently effective and brilliant,
and which serve a good purpose. Bad burlesque is a
bad thing. We cannot follow Mr. Boucicault through
his discourse, which, though it presented few original
ideas, was clear, straight-forward, and sensible in
its teaching, and spirited, often witty or humorous,
in its delivery. Mr. Boucicault illustrated success-
fully, by means of speech and action, the wholly prac-
tical suggestions in his conference. His description
of the Greek walk, for example, was particularly
happy, and there was sound Delartism in his talk about
gesture. The actors in our town may felicitate them-
selves on this opportunity to hear Mr. Boucicault on
the art of acting. It would be an agreeable thing if
most of them would accept his advice.82

82 Times, Friday, May 9, 1884.
On Wednesday, May 4, 1884, Boucicault began a one-week engagement at the Third Avenue Theatre at Third and Thirty-first Streets, where he presented his well-tried Shaughraun again to the New York public. He was supported by Miss Sadie Martinot as Moya and Mr. Charles A. Stevenson as Captain Molineux. 83

There is no record of any theatrical activity by Boucicault until the following fall in Chicago, when he brought out a new historical drama entitled Robert Emmet. Robert Emmet had been ill-fated long before Boucicault took hold of it. Some years earlier, Henry Irving, shortly after his occupancy of the Lyceum Theatre in London, became imbued with a desire to portray the patriot-martyr of Ireland. It was reported that there was an actual facial resemblance of Irving to Emmet, as well as a general physical resemblance. Irving commissioned Frank Marshall to do a dramatization of the man and paid him some six hundred pounds. But when Irving announced his intentions of presenting the play, he received a gentle reminder from the British government that Robert Emmet would be persona non grata just then in London. At this particular troubled time of the Land League, agrarian violence had set in and Ireland was in a political turmoil. With such strong feelings

83 Times, Sunday, May 4, 1884.
about the Irish, the government feared that the production of the piece at that particular time might cause untold "ructions." Irving abandoned the project. The manuscript remained unproduced until Irving offered it to Boucicault to rework it. Boucicault accepted it, rewrote it, re-shaped it, "boucicaulted" it, and produced it in Chicago.

It was presented to the Chicago public on Wednesday evening, November 5. Boucicault could not have selected a worse night for a premier. It was the night before election, when Baline and Cleveland were presidential candidates. No American citizen, even one with Irish blood in his veins, could interest himself in Ireland's martyr hero while crowds were thronging the streets and cheering the bulletins in front of the newspaper office. Boucicault had built high hopes on Robert Emmet, and Joe Haworth, who had the title part, gave a brilliant performance. But the whole thing was so ill timed that it was an inevitable "frost," and Dion never had the heart to revive the piece again.

In an interview which Boucicault gave before the opening of the play, he said:

Robert Emmet really lived only for sixty days. He first appeared before the world July 23, 1803, he perished September 20, in the same year. My play is composed of the incidents that occurred during this period, shaped into a dramatic form. The characters are untouched photographs. Even much of the language is preserved; his conversations and his correspondence have come down to us.
My father knew him well, and our house (in which I was born twenty years afterward) was searched for Mr. Emmet. I have for many years nursed the idea of writing a play on this subject, for Emmet may be regarded as the Rienzi of Ireland. Hitherto my Irish plays have been romantic drama, but Robert Emmet is a grand spectacular page of history. I claim that no historical play from the time of Shakespeare to this day has been written where closer adherence to the truth has been observed.

It was a big production piece. There were eighteen scenes in the play and eighty-seven auxiliaries. The costumes had been made by Bloom, of New York, from designs obtained from the British Museum, and photographs of various scenes in Wicklow and Dublin furnished the scene painters with the designs for the scenery.

Boucicault had originally wanted Charles Coghlan to play the title role, but Coghlan refused because of the ending which Boucicault had written in. Boucicault had closed the play with Emmet facing a firing squad instead of mounting a scaffold according to history, and Coghlan objected to this ending as being undramatic and unhistorical. As has been already pointed out, Joseph Haworth played the role of Robert Emmet. Boucicault appeared as Michael Dwyer, with the following supporting cast: Nina Boucicault as Tinye Wolfe, Dot (Dion., Jr.) Boucicault as Andy Devlin; J. P. Sutton, Lord Kilwarden; Edward Clifford, Lord Norbury;

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84 Unidentified clipping in New York Public Library.
Gus Reynolds, Dingley; William Stark, Finnerty; L. F. Hicks, John Philpot Curran; Joseph A. Wiles, Major Sinn; Donald Robertson, Captain Claverhouse; John Page, Father Donnelly; Helen Leight, Sarah Curran; Mary E. Barker, Anna Devlin; and Gertrude Blanchard, Lady Katherine York. 85

The Tribune reviewed the show and explained, in part, why the play lasted for only three nights. It said:

The new melodrama, Robert Emmet, was indeed seen under unfavorable circumstances. Its chief drawback to success is its sombre tone, which from the nature of the subject was hardly avoidable. Boucicault is a master of popular melodrama, but in this instance he fell between the two schools of melodrama and tragedy. The latter part of the play is entirely taken up with prison scenes and long-drawn-out farewells, and culminates in a gloomy death scene—an execution, not such as Emmet really suffered, but one after the manner of Marshall Ney. The piece pretends to no literary merit, but contains lines that are singularly apt to the situations, and are pointed and incisive after the true dramatic style. The characters are all of the stock type used in The Shaughraun, and the villains and heroes might be transferred from one drama to another with only a change of names. The author has fitted himself with a role that can never be popular because Michael Dwyer's cold-blooded killing of the traitor, although justifiable, is in no degree inspiring.

Mr. Haworth, who appeared as Robert Emmet, has force and dignity, and Miss Boucicault is a slight, sensitive girl who played a minor part in a very touching manner. 86

Boucicault had originally planned to take the piece to Boston and then on to New York, but with such a dismal

85 The Chicago Tribune, November 6, 1884.
86 Ibid., November 9, 1884.
failure in Chicago with a run of only three nights, he closed the show forever with the Chicago engagement. He did not attempt to produce it again.

Little happened that was of much importance in the life of Boucicault between the Chicago engagement and the California engagement which was to follow during the next spring. There are a few scattered references of his playing one or two-week stands at various theatres in the East, but that seems to be about all. For example, Boucicault made one of his "infrequent appearances" at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia during the week of March 9, and played at The People's Theatre (Harry Miner "Sole proprietor and Manager") during the following week. During these appearances he was playing Conn in The Shaughraun with his two children, Nina and Dion, Jr., appearing as Moya and Harvey Duff.

 Probably it was during the month of April that Boucicault gathered a group of actors together in New York and headed for the west coast, for he was to play an engagement in San Francisco in the early part of May.


88 The People's Theatre program in New York Public Library, dated March 16, 1885.

89 Times, Sunday, May 16, 1885.
Sherman relates a story about the trip west. He says that one of the members of the company, Donald Robertson, asked Boucicault, "just as they were leaving New York, what the opening play was to be in the coast city. Dion replied, 'My God, I don't know. I'm going to write it on the way out.' And he did. . . ."  

Among the members of the company that Boucicault assembled was a young lady, Miss Louise Thorndyke, who was to play an important role in the latter life of Dion Boucicault. The play that Boucicault wrote on his way to the west coast was written for her; at least the role of Kitty Woodstock was written for her.  

The new play was entitled The Jilt and opened at the California Theatre on May 18, 1885. It ran until May 30. The members of the cast that we are most interested in were Dion Boucicault as Myles O'Hara, Miss Louise Thorndyke as Kitty Woodstock, Miss Boucicault as Phyllis Welter, and Mr. D. G. Boucicault as Georg Tudor.  

The play was suggested by a racing story by Hawley Smart which was called From Post to Finish. It was a narrative of a "gentleman rider and prophet of the turf,  

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92 California Theatre Program, dated May 25, 1885.
who loses an exciting race, but wins the heart of Kitty Woodstock through his generosity and self-sacrifice." 93

It was relatively well received and proved to be the last of Boucicault's successful plays. After the final performance of The Jilt, The Octoroom was revived and then the company sailed for Australia. 94

93 Quinn, op. cit., p. 386.
94 The San Francisco Bulletin, May 29, 1885.
CHAPTER XII

FINAL YEARS AND DEATH, 1885--1890

At the completion of the California engagement in the autumn of 1885, Boucicault and company left for Australia to commence his "colonial tour." At least three people in whom we have some interest accompanied him: his daughter Nina, his son Dion, Jr., and Miss Louise Thordyke. Dion's professional tour through Australia was pronounced a success. "In Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and the New Zealand cities immense crowds gather nightly to see the veteran actor-dramatist in his own racy creations of Irish character."¹

It was in Sydney that Dion married Louise Thordyke. He had brought her from New York to the west coast to appear in his productions there, and it was for her that he wrote the lead part in The Jilt. The announcement of this marriage created great excitement, not only in the theatrical world, but among all to whom the news became known. The fact that Boucicault had married a third time without a legal separation from Agnes Robertson caused the British theatre-going populace to turn thumbs down

¹ Pall Mall Budget, September 25, 1890.
on his performances of *The Jilt* when he and Louise Thorn-
dyke Boucicault toured London the following year. It was
reported that the day after the marriage in Australia,
Boucicault was entertained at a "down-the harbour picnic
by the Irishmen of Sydney." It was on this trip that
young Dion resolved to settle in the colonies and joined
up with a Mr. Robert Brough, a nephew of Lionel Brough,
as a joint lessee of the Melbourne Bijou Theatre.

At the close of his colonial tour, Boucicault
sailed across the Pacific to San Francisco in a new steamer
which had just been launched, and subsequently contri-
buted to a syndicate of colonial newspapers a capital series
of descriptive papers under the title of "The Maiden Trip
of the *Mareora.*" It was speculated that although the
Pacific route to Australia and New Zealand was becoming
increasingly popular, "there is no handy guide book for
that trip, and these delightful sketches of Boucicault's
would be worth collecting and reprinting to fill the want."²

But it was the marriage of Boucicault to Miss Thorn-
dyke that makes the Australian trip worthy of mention.
Boucicault made no secret of the marriage. Quite the con-
trary. He boldly and proudly proclaimed it. The usual
advertisements of it were published in the Australian
papers and copied into the English and American journals.

² Ibid.
It was reported that at first the news was received with incredulity. Boucicault had been known for years as the husband of Agnes Robertson. They had played together in every part of America and Great Britain as Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault. They had been received in society as man and wife. They had three daughters, Eva (b. 1859), Patrice (b. 1862), Nina (b. 1867) and three sons (one of whom had been killed in a railway accident and sincerely mourned by both parents), and it was at once understood that if Boucicault intended to deny his marriage with Agnes Robertson—a marriage frequently proclaimed by him in public speeches, letters, and advertisements—these children would be stigmatized as illegitimate.

As will be shown at a later time, Agnes, having obtained proof that the ceremony had been performed in Australia, brought suits for divorce both in New York and London, in order to establish her own marriage with Boucicault, vindicate her reputation and the legitimacy of her children, and secure a just allowance as alimony for her own and their support. The incredulity of the friends of the Boucicault family turned to indignation when they found that Boucicault was formally presenting Miss Thordyke as his wife, and had returned to America and visited England with her. The public sympathized with that feeling. Formerly the most popular of Irish comedians, Boucicault was almost ignored when he attempted to play in
London with Miss Thorndyke in *The Jilt*.

Upon returning to America from Australia, Boucicault headed back to the east coast and to Boston, where he had always been welcomed with open arms. He felt sure of the acceptance of himself, his wife, and his new play. And so it was announced on February 1, 1886, that Boucicault would commence his "Seventh Annual Engagement." It seems evident that the play was a success in Boston, for during the fourth week of the engagement he was still playing *The Jilt*. Boucicault appeared in his original role of Myles O'Hara, Henry Hiller played the role of Sir Budleigh Woodstock and Louise Thorndyke played Kitty Woodstock.³

Whether Boucicault played a fifth week in Boston is not known, but it was announced in the *Times* that he would "appear at the Star Theatre... In New York... Monday, March 15, in his new comedy, 'The Jilt.'"⁴ However the Star was closed on Monday, March 15. The reason given was "to afford Mr. Boucicault the opportunity he desired to allow a full rehearsal of his new comedy 'The Jilt,'" to be produced Tuesday evening, March 16. "Tickets for Monday evening will be good Tuesday night or will be changed for any other

³ Boston Museum program, February 22, 1886, in New York Public Library.

⁴ The New York *Times*, Sunday, March 7, 1886. Here-designated as *Times*. 
evening." And thus, on Tuesday evening, March 16, 1886, Boucicault returned to New York with his latest play, The Jilt; or Thunder Clouds Year. In a program note addressed to the public, Boucicault attempted to explain the background of his new play:

The most exclusive class in English society is composed of the "country families." These form an aristocracy, the nobility of which is not derived from the Crown, but from ancient lineage. Simple and stately, their homes are not in London, but in their ancestral county residences. Their occupation is chiefly field sports, and their conversation, therefore, partakes largely of the hunting field, the race course and their shootings. The affairs of England have always been subservient to the habits of this class which dictates the period and duration of the London season and of the session of Parliament. It is only after the hunting and shooting are over that these families can conveniently visit London, and both Parliament and the season end when grouse shooting in August begins. It is in this society THE JILT has been placed. I have endeavored to represent the home of the great north county family in England with as much hearty appreciation as I have painted the homes of the Irish peasantry.

DIoN BOUCICAULT.

The plot of The Jilt was borrowed from Hawley Smart's novel From Post to Finish. The Times reviewed the opening by stating:

"The Jilt" is the work of Mr. Boucicault, and there has been a deal of cackling over it ever since it was

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5 Times, Monday, March 15, 1886.
6 Times, Tuesday, March 16, 1886.
7 Star Theatre Program, March 16, 1886.
8 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
laid—that is to say, written. In a note printed in the Star Theatre programme for a month past Mr. Boucicault implies, with his characteristic modesty, that his latest play is to be of great service in the reformation of the stage. Mr. Boucicault produced "London Assurance," according to his own assertion and the printed records, in 1841; he has since, without intermission, been engaged in the good work of reforming the English Stage. When the improvement of that ancient institution made needful the production of plays taken from the French, with or without credit to the original authors, Mr. Boucicault was on hand to do the work. When still working in the interest of dramatic art, it became necessary to pander to a morbid and vicious taste, Mr. Boucicault kept bravely on. Always mindful of his purpose, which in his latest manifesto he sets forth as the production of "dramatic works of the better kind and pure emotion," he does not forget that Mr. Boucicault, in his long and brilliantly illuminated career has produced a great deal of very good work. Some of his Irish plays are delightful, and he has given the stage several comedies of real worth. For 45 years he has been an indefatigable writer, and his talent and versatility are not to be questioned. But with all his gifts Mr. Boucicault has always been a humbug. His pretensions are generally amusing, though at times they are slightly irritating. Possessed of a quick wit, a ready pen, and remarkable ingenuity, a stock in trade sufficient to secure to him fame and fortune on his own merits, he has never hesitated to appropriate the ideas and inventions of others when he has found them useful. The verb "to boucicault," coined by some clever person many years ago, is synonymous with Falstaff's "convey." The intelligent playgoers of England and America have known Mr. Boucicault for a long while; they understand him, and they like him in spite of his faults. His manifestoes and proclamations never deceive them. When he announces, for the fiftieth time, that he is going to reform the stage, to restore the old legitimate, to its former health and vigor, to banish the sensational drama, and the prurient drama and the frivolous drama, they smile and say among themselves "The old man is at it again!" "The Jilt," will furnish amusement for a short time, and then be laid away and forgotten. The assertion has been made that some of the materials used in the construction of "The Jilt" were appropriated by Boucicault from the work of another. It would not be surprising if the assertion should prove true; but the fabric of the play is very slight,
and the veteran playwright has ingenuity enough to construct pieces of its kind, and stronger ones, without extraneous aid. . . . There is a horse race during the play, and all the characters are interested in it. The principal scene takes place [sic] in a marquee overlooking a race track. The characters take turns in describing a race supposed to be going on out of sight of the spectators. This is an old device, and one that Mr. Boucicault knows how to handle well. Besides this scene there is little excitement in the comedy. Its action is smooth, placid, and rather slow. There is a great deal of talk, and most of it is tolerably interesting. Mr. Boucicault's character is an Irish gentleman rider, Miles O'Hara, a warm-hearted fellow, rather bashful, but overflowing with Irish wit. He wins the heart and the hand of an English heiress, Kitty Woodstock, impersonated by Miss Louise Thorndyke, a tall, slender, graceful young lady, who is known in private life as Mrs. Boucicault. The best things in the play are the love scenes between these two. The play abounds in horsey talk, and it will be best liked by people who understand the lingo of the race track, which it is fashionable to understand just now. . . . The general representation last night was admirably finished and effective. . . . The setting is handsome and appropriate. The house was crowded last night, and the enthusiasm displayed was really remarkable. Mr. Boucicault was often called out, and was compelled to make a speech. When he had finished, a drunken gentleman strolled down the centre aisle and ordered three cheers for "the Shakespeare of the nineteenth century." The cheers were not given, and the gentleman was led away by a kind-hearted usher.9

The Jilt ran at the Star Theatre until April 3, 1886. After this New York engagement Boucicault went to Philadelphia to play at the Chestnut Street Opera House for a "Limited Engagement" where he played the same piece. He carried the same supporting cast with him that he had used in Boston and in New York.10 He then returned to the Star Theatre to play

9 *Times*, Wednesday, March 17, 1886.

10 *Chestnut Street Opera House program*, Wednesday, April 14, 1886, in New York Public Library.
a one-week re-engagement from April 19 to April 24.\textsuperscript{11}

Following the New York engagement he journeyed to Chicago, where he played an engagement of two weeks at McVicker's.\textsuperscript{12} During the summer of 1886, Boucicault and Louise Thorndyke Boucicault went to England and played *The Jilt*. It was during this unsuccessful summer that the people of London rejected Dion and he quickly came back to America in the fall of '86. On Saturday, October 30, 1886, Boucicault appeared in *The Jilt* at the Standard Theatre in New York for an engagement which lasted until November 13, 1886.\textsuperscript{13} The Standard Theatre program announced that it was "His first appearance in New York this season. Under the direction of Charles Frohman and W. W. Randall. Marcus R. Mayer, manager." Henry Miller had been replaced by H. J. Lithcourt in the role of Sir Budleigh Woodstock.\textsuperscript{14} The review of this opening was rather general, with references to the review which had been given to the play

\textsuperscript{11} *Times*, Sunday, April 18, 1886.

\textsuperscript{12} McVicker's Bill of the Play stated: "Second and Last week, May 3d to 8th, 1886, Mr. Dion Boucicault, in his new and original Comedy in Five Acts, entitled The Jilt, or Thundercloud's Year. Myles O'Hara--Mr. Dion Boucicault. Sir Budleigh Woodstock, Mr. Henry Miller and Kitty Woodstock--Miss Louise Thorndyke.

\textsuperscript{13} *Times*, October 30 to November 13, 1886.

\textsuperscript{14} Standard Theatre program, dated October 30, 1886, in New York Public Library.
when it had opened at the Star the previous season. It did report, however that "Mr. Boucicault was cordially received last evening by a large audience, and his own acting was as note worthy as ever for its inherent humor and artistic deftness. As an actor, within his limited range, Mr. Boucicault is inimitable."\(^1\)

Anderson reports that after the New York engagement Dion went on a short tour, during which he went to "Providence on December 13, 1886, to Montreal on December 20, 1886, and back to Boston early in 1887."\(^2\)

On January 24, 1887, Boucicault was back in Boston, where he opened at the Hollis Street Theatre in The Jilt. It was announced that after The Jilt had run its course he would bring out a new version of his old play Belle Lamar.\(^3\) And so on February 3, 1887, Boucicault produced "for the first time on any stage, the new and original drama, in four acts, entitled 'FIN MAC COOL' (of Skibbereen.)."\(^4\) Dion played the role of Fin, the last of the MacCools, and Miss Thorndyke appeared as Doris, A California Millionaire.

\(^1\) Times, Sunday, October 31, 1886.


\(^3\) Times, Sunday, January 23, 1887.

\(^4\) Hollis Street Theatre program, dated February 3, 1887, in New York Public Library.
During his engagement at Boston, on February 10, Dion Boucicault and company contributed their services for the Elks' Benefit. Other actors of note who appeared during the benefit were Nat Goodwin and Company, Marshall P. Wilder, Effie Ellsler, Mr. and Mrs. George S. Knight, members of the Ideals, Harry Kernell, Carrie Hale, Joseph Haworth and company, Maggie and Lucy Daly and others. It must have been a noteworthy benefit.19

On February 27, it was announced that Boucicault had revived his one-acter, Kerry.20 Apparently Fin Mac Cool needed help. Kerry and Fin Mac Cool remained on the boards at the Hollis Street Theatre until March 12, 1887, when Dion took his farewell from Boston for the time being.

Boucicault then traveled south to Washington where he appeared at the New National Theatre on Monday, April 11, Tuesday, April 12, and Wednesday, April 13, in Kerry and Fin Mac Cool.21

Following the Washington engagement, Boucicault came back to New York City and opened at the Star Theatre


20 Times, Sunday, February 27, 1887.

21 New National Theatre program in New York Public Library.
on April 18, 1887, in the two dramas which he had played in Boston and Washington.22

The critics found the one-act comedy Kerry still a "charming play," and Dion's acting of the old Irish servant "an exquisite bit of acting, perfectly natural in its pathos and humor, and finished to the utmost point of artistic delicacy."23 But the remarks with regard to the four-act melodrama were not as complimentary. It was recalled that the piece, basically, had been brought out on August 10, 1874, at Booth's Theatre under the name of Belle Lamar. "Stimulated by the success of 'Held by the Enemy,' a highly ingenious play, the veteran playwright rewrote 'Belle Lamar,' injecting a new element represented chiefly by an Irish immigrant who enlists in the Union Army. The piece, in its new shape, is no better than it was before."24 It was the plot that seemed to keep the play from succeeding. The story was "slight" and "told in a dragging manner. . . Mr. Boucicault does not get at the heart of the matter. He has too many side issues to take care of." However, the critic felt that Boucicault could still write dialogue and added that "Some of the situations are well calculated to arouse the

22 Times, Sunday, April 17, 1887.
23 Times, Tuesday, April 19, 1887.
24 Ibid.
gallery; but Mr. Boucicault had last night what they call in classic Boston a 'Bald-Headed house.' There was no gallery." One critic observed that the character of Fin "was very similar to the familiar Conn, but transported to America, where his first adventure was unwittingly to enlist as a Union Soldier while supposing that he was merely hiring out as a domestic servant. . . . 'Fin Mac Cool' occupies only about a quarter of the drama, which for the rest was composed of 'Belle Lamar.'"25 This double bill ran until Friday, April 22, 1887, and on Saturday, April 23, Boucicault revived The Jilt. Belle Lamar could not make a go of it and neither could Fin Mac Cool. In the announcement of the opening of The Jilt it was added that The Shaughraun was in preparation.26 Boucicault was trying desperately hard to make a success of his appearance in New York. On the opening of The Jilt it was commented that it was a "change for the better;"27 The Jilt was to continue throughout the week and on Saturday night, The Shaughraun was to replace it. However, the Star Theatre was dark on Saturday night and it was not until Monday, May 2, that

26 Times, Friday, April 22, 1887.
27 Times, Sunday, April 24, 1887.
Dion put in his appearance as Conn in a "Grand Revival of the SHAUGHRAUN."28

The reason for the dark house on Saturday was probably illness. It was reported that during this engagement Boucicault was ill.29 A passing remark included in the review of the revival indicated as much also, for it stated:

Mr. Boucicault's Conn was as irresistibly amusing as ever. The old gentleman has been indisposed lately, but there were no signs of illness in his performance, nor did he seem to be an old gentleman. He was a lad of 20, nimble, blithe, and brimful of Irish humor. ... The whole play received the best tribute a stage representation of its order can receive from a body of intelligent spectators, the tribute of laughter shining through tears. ...30

The Shaughraun continued until Saturday, May 14, 1887.31

At the conclusion of the New York engagement, Boucicault headed west again. He appeared at McVicker's Theatre for a one-week stand, May 23 to 28, 1887, in The Shaughraun. He of course played the role of Conn himself, and Miss Thordyke appeared as Claire Ffolliott.32 At the conclusion of

28 *Times*, May 2, 1887.
30 *Times*, Tuesday, May 3, 1887.
31 *Times*, Saturday, May 14, 1887.
32 McVicker's Bill of the Play in New York Public Library.
the Chicago engagement, Boucicault and company went on to the west coast, where on August 22, they opened in *The Jilt* under the management of Frank L. Goodwin. It is of passing interest to note that Agnes Robertson (Boucicault) was appearing in St. Paul on August 22 with her son Aubrey in *My Geraldine*. The *Jilt* ran until August 27, when it was replaced by *Forbidden Fruit*, which ran until September 3. Boucicault was not favorably received. It was reported that there were too many other attractions at the time, and small audiences came to the Baldwin to see his performances. *Phryne* was scheduled to open on September 5, but Boucicault was attacked by gout and the performance was delayed until September 12. This journey to the west coast was not a successful one. Boucicault laid the blame on manager Frank L. Goodwin's neglect of duty. "According to Boucicault, Goodwin, was a serious detriment to the success of the 'Frisco engagement from the beginning. He left much of his work undone and billed

33 *The New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 17 and August 7, 1887.


36 *The San Francisco Bulletin*, September 12, 1887.
the city badly. Moreover, he [Goodvin] did not bring out to
the star the sort of company he had promised."37

At the close of the San Francisco engagement, Bouci­
cault and his company came back east again and appeared at
the Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, on October 17, 1887,
in Phryne, which he had renamed The Romance of a Young Wife.38
Probably more interesting than the announcement of the
"Annual Engagement" of Dion Boucicault was the announcement
that the theatre was "Lighted by the EDISON INCANDESCENT
LIGHT... No Gas! Pure Atmosphere!"39 However, for the
week of October 17 to October 22, Boucicault and Miss Thorn­
dyke appeared in Phryne: The Romance of a Young Wife, with
Boucicault playing the part of Jack O'Beirne and Miss
Thorndyke the part of Phryne. The performance was pre­
ceded by Kerry.40

For the second week of this engagement the same bill
was repeated. On the third week The Shaughraun was re­
vived and played until November 5, 1887.41 On Monday,
November 7, 1887, for the fourth week, The Colleen Bawn
was revived. Dion played his old part of Myles and Miss

37 The New Orleans Daily Picayune, October 23, 1887.
38 Times, Sunday, October 16, 1887.
39 Hollis Street Theatre program in New York Public
Library.
40 Ibid.
41 Hollis Street Theatre programs dated October 31
to November 5, 1887, in New York Public Library.
Thorndyke appeared in the role of Anne Chute.\textsuperscript{42} Boucicault closed this engagement on November 12, 1887.\textsuperscript{43}

While Boucicault was in Boston during this engagement, he appeared along with such other volunteers as James B. Murdock, Louis Aldrich, H. L. Southwick, Morris S. Kuhns, Edmund T. Phelan, The Harvard Quartette, and others in a benefit at the Boston Press Club on October 20, 1887.\textsuperscript{44}

Boucicault was not long away from Boston, for he was back at the Hollis Street Theatre on February 20, 1888, with a "new" play entitled \textit{Cushla Ma Chree}, which was a dramatization of \textit{Guy Mannering}.\textsuperscript{45}

In a program note of the Hollis Street Theatre, the title was explained to mean Throb of My Heart, about which the \textit{Boston Journal} said:

\begin{quote}
Nobody will doubt the accuracy of the translation, for nobody except Mr. Boucicault knows the Celtic adjectives well enough to tell what his euphonic combination of vowels and consonants may mean if they don't signify what he says.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Ibid.}, dated November 7, 1887.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{44} Tompkins, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 349-50
\textsuperscript{45} "Dion Boucicault," The New York \textit{Dramatic Mirror}, September 27, 1890.
\textsuperscript{46} The \textit{Boston Journal}, February 19, 1888.
The program notes continued to explain the source of this latest piece:

Mr. Boucicault has now selected another novel, to which he thinks full dramatic justice has not been done. This is the "Guy Mannering" of Scott. Discarding the scenes which have served the dramatist who wrote the play fifty years ago, he follows another route, and gives the subject a totally different shape. He places the action in Ireland, and employs a multitude of incidents and scenes. ... In this piece, Boucicault assumed the role of Andy Dolan and Miss Thorndyke that of Barbara Coots. A review of the opening performance commented:

Old friends but slightly concealed under Celtic names made their appearance at the Hollis Street Theatre last evening as the familiar story of Scotland known to readers under the title of "Guy Mannering" and to players under the name of "Meg Merrilies," unfolded itself in what Mr. Boucicault is pleased to call "a story of Ireland," though he makes no pretense of hiding its origin. He has transferred Meg, on her witch's stick, to the home of the shamrock and made her to appear as a peasant girl known to beggarmom. ... Major Guy Mannering became Major and Sir Jeffrey Coote, still continuing a returned Indian officer, while the prodigious walking encyclopedia of dates and facts on which the Major used to depend received appropriately the rechristening of Doctor Ignatius Foldoodle. The Andy Dolan of this new version, "Cuishla Ma Chree" (given last night for the first time on any stage), was easily recognized from the similarity of character as the sturdy honest Dandy Dinmont, and this was the role that Mr. Boucicault chose for himself. The veteran actor-writer has selected the most dramatic episodes of the book for his play and cast aside the predominating lines of the familiar

47 Hollis Street Theatre Program, in New York Public Library.
drama that avail chiefly in bringing the mysterious Meg to the front. . . . "Cuishla Ma Chree" does not carry with its initial performance evidence of success. It is insufferably slow at times, and throughout has a fatal lack of vivacity and interest. In part, the dullness of last night was due to the imperfect acting, but even that draw-back was not accountable for the entire weakness of the play. . . . The dialogue in most positions is commonplace, having little of the flavor of Boucicault's wit and brightness. . . . In short the play goes limping through its four lengthy acts. . . .

Boucicault managed to keep the piece on the boards for two weeks, and at the time of its withdrawal the *Journal* commented:

Boucicault has decided to bury his defunct "Throb of My Heart" and in all probability it will never be revived. The birth of this dramatic infant was not under so auspicious a star as that even which Guy Mannering discussed when the little heir of Ellangovan came into this world, for it seems that the parts were not given out at all until a few days before the production, while according to Mr. Boucicault's statement, the preparatory rehearsal came on Monday afternoon and not being finished before the evening performance had to be postponed till Tuesday, so that "Cuishla Ma Chree" did not really receive its first full rehearsal until the day after its first performance. Those who attended on the opening night will remember how the play dragged, and especially the wait in one scene just before Andy Dolan gave his drunken representation at the front. The "drunk scene" was thrown in gratuitously by Boucicault to fill out some time while the stage hands were putting the scenery in the rear, and was improvised on the spot. But once having put it in, he found it best to continue the episode the night afterward.

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48 The *Boston Journal*, February 20, 1888.
On March 5, the third week of Boucicault's engagement at the Hollis Street Theatre, he revived *Arrah-na-Pogue* which played until March 10, 1888. For the fourth week, Boucicault fell back on a re-showing of *The Shaughraun* and *The Jilt.*

After the Boston engagement, Boucicault went to Washington again to appear for a one-week stand at the New National Theatre on Monday, March 26. He played Myles O'Hara in *The Jilt,* Miss Louise Thorndyke supported him by playing the part of Kitty Woodstock.

Leaving Washington, he went next to Chicago, where he revived *Cuishla Ma Chree,* but it was no more popular there than it had been in Boston. He opened the piece on April 30 and closed it on May 5. The *Tribune* said at the closing of the piece that there was "no reason for putting 'Meg Merrillies' into an Irish gown and endowing her with a brogue." At the conclusion of the engagement

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50 Hollis Street Theatre program in New York Public Library.
51 The Boston Journal, March 10 to 17, 1888.
52 New National Theatre program in New York Public Library.
53 The Chicago Tribune, April 30 to May 5, 1888.
54 Ibid., May 5, 1888.
at McVicker's, Boucicault moved over to the Haymarket Theatre, Chicago, and played a week; giving *The Shaughraun* and *The Jilt*, and it was reported that he did well with the two pieces.55

Coming back east again, Boucicault played next at the Park Theatre, Brooklyn, where he began a one-week engagement on May 21, 1888. The piece he selected to show was *The Shaughraun*.

On Tuesday, June 5, 1888, the anniversary of the founding of the Actor's Fund of America was celebrated at the Madison Square Theatre. A. M. Palmer was president of the organization and Boucicault was scheduled, along with Col. Robert C. Ingersoll, to speak.56

The reader will remember that in 1885, Agnes Robertson had started divorce proceedings, but they were dropped by mutual consent. This was in regard to the naming of Katherine Rogers as the woman in the case. However, when the announcements were made that Dion had married Louise Thorndyke in Australia, the proceedings started all over again, and Agnes finally received, June 21, 1888, a divorce from Dion in London. The record of this announcement is particularly interesting to us in that it reveals that Agnes was united as wife to Dion only through common law. The

56 Times, Monday, June 4, 1888.
report ran in part:

... Eight or nine years ago she [Agnes] applied to the New-York courts for an absolute divorce from Mr. Boucicault, alleging infidelity. The playwright was represented by ex-Judge A. J. Dittenhoefer, but after the proceedings had been pending for some time they were discontinued by mutual consent. Several years later Mr. Boucicault went to Australia, and there married Miss Louise Thorndyke, a member of his company. He claimed that he had a right to marry, in so much as no legal marriage had ever taken place between himself and Miss Robertson. Miss Robertson, however, instituted divorce proceedings in London, alleging that she was Mr. Boucicault's legal wife and hence that his marriage to Miss Thorndyke was illegal. She admitted that no priest, minister, or magistrate had ever married her and Mr. Boucicault, but claimed that there had been an agreement between them to live together as man and wife, and that this under the laws of the State of New-York, where the agreement was said to have been made, constituted a valid marriage. Hence there were two distinct questions to be passed upon by the English courts—first, whether there was such an agreement to live together as husband and wife, and second, whether such an agreement did constitute a marriage. From the outcome of the suit it appears that the English courts must have decided both questions in the affirmative. 57

So here at last the mystery of the marriage of Agnes and Dion is cleared up. They had not eloped, as was reported at one time in London, they had not come to America as man and wife, and they were not married in New York, at least not officially.

Boucicault, after so many years of fame, glory, and success, was now, at the age of 66, a failure. He was

57 *Times*, Friday, June 22, 1888.
penniless and laughed at by many of his contemporaries. He
was to offer only one more script, and it was not much of
a success.

He had earned more than a million dollars. He
took a London theatre, and lost it all. He
began again, made another fortune and once more
saw it swept away. He was getting old. His
domestic life did not endear him to those who
loved him on the stage. The inevitable de-
cadence was at hand. Elba was in sight; St.
Helena glimmered faintly on the horizon. There
is nothing more pathetic in his plays than the
spectacle of this worn old man, who had known
so much of success, coming penniless to a New
York manager, and asking for a position as teacher
in a dramatic school for amateurs.

Let the play-goers of to-day combine to
welcome him back to the stage which he has done
so much to adorn. If Napoleon had returned
from St. Helena humbled, chastened, full of
wise resolves, where was the heart in France
that would not have leapt with joy at the
sight of him?58

In June of 1888 it was announced that A. M. Palmer
had decided to establish a practical School of Acting in
connection with the Madison Square Theatre, and that the
school would open in September. Dion Boucicault was
retained as the instructor and something new was added: the
pupils would not pay a fee to come to the school but rather
they would be paid by the school. Palmer felt that this
would keep the pupils thoroughly under control, and in
addition he would be able to get rid of unpromising can-
didates. The plan was to include practical stage work by

58 The Illustrated American, August 2, 1890, pp.
87-88.
rehearsals in old comedies and new plays, and public performances were to be given every Wednesday afternoon, which it was hoped would help defray the expenses of the school. It was planned that as fast as the scholars developed the requisite ability, they would be taken into the regular stock company of the Madison Square Theatre, or go to other companies which might desire them. 59

Palmer had no sooner announced his plan of establishing a school than applications for admission to it began to arrive from various parts of the country. Nearly two thousand applications had come in by November. It was felt by many that two such men as Palmer and Boucicault, working in concert, should now be able to select promising talent from crude materials, and train this talent to the requirements of the stage. However, Boucicault's method of instruction was simple. It had no fancy or scholastic method; it was direct and useful. For example:

... he requests an application /Sic/ to study some scene from a standard play, the pupil being allowed discretion as to the bent of his talent. After a brief lapse of time the pupil declaims the scene, and Mr. Boucicault then decides whether the applicant is worthy or not of further encouragement. If not, he is dismissed; if yes, he is admitted to a class of interns or to a class of externs. The class of interns, for the present year, consists of sixty pupils. Those receive free tuition, or to be more precise, they

59 Times, Friday, June 15, 1888.
are expected to pay in service alone. They are bound to Mr. Palmer for one hundred weeks, during which they will undertake to perform when called upon to do so, at matinees in the school, or in public at either of Mr. Palmer's theatres. From the sixty interns, Mr. Palmer intends to select fifteen, to be known as his "Auxiliary Company." To these fifteen he will pay a weekly salary of ten dollars, and they will be, in reality, members of his company. As to the externs, they are not subjected to the discipline of the school nor are they required to render any service; but they are admitted to the school on the payment of a fee, and, when vacancies occur, or in case the school shall be extended, they may offer themselves for admission as interns. A term of the school lasts ten weeks, and there will be three terms every year. Instruction consists of lectures, rehearsals, performances, public and private exhibitions and special exercises. Indirectly, the establishment of this school will be of benefit to struggling American dramatists, for it is Mr. Palmer's intention to give afternoon trial performances of new and native plays, and these will be acted by the most competent pupils of the school.60

Boucicault felt that there were certain elements or techniques of acting which could be taught. One of the things which he felt could be taught was gesturing. He said:

The actor and orator can be taught what is graceful and effective in gesture and in movement. For in each of these there is a right and a wrong. There are, nevertheless, many who insist they can trust to the effusion of the moment and prefer to allow their genius untutored sway. Those who have watched the greatest orators will observe how one will thrust his hand in his breast and flourish the other, or tuck it behind his back. A second will wave his arms like the sails of a windmill in a cyclone, or thump down his fist, hammer-vise, to nail his arguments.

Another will stretch out his arm and hold it extended stiffly, as though fixed there by a mesmeric influence. They all have tricks of gesture, and bad tricks. There is no persuasion in any of these senseless gesticulations. Gesture and movement are very important parts of acting and of oratory, and it is the part which can be taught; it is not a matter of conventionality; it is a language for the eye. For example: the gesture which accompanies a thought should precede its utterance. Why? Because the eye is keener, quicker to apprehend than the ear; the gesture that is intended to illustrate or impress conveys a vague idea of what is coming; the words follow complete and fulfill the thought. Thus: we appeal to God. Let the arms first be raised, and then, after pausing slightly, let the words follow. The result is solemn and impressive. Now reverse the process. Speak the appeal, pause, and then lift the arms. The effect is weak, if not ridiculous.

Boucicault drew a definite line between declamation and acting which he called elocution. He said:

We frequently receive visits from stage-struck ladies, who are much pained because we decline to hear them declaim some ode or scene to afford a sample of their powers. It is no such thing. Declamation is not acting; it is the reverse. Do they desire to display the voice? A theatre affords the space where such a trial should be made. And for the rest the aspirant who has not natural elocution had better go home and make pies. We can extract all vocal blemishes and give her better command of the organ, for the voice is an instrument, but the soul plays upon it, and we cannot teach that. Here comes in the effusion we hear so much of. The soul is the spirit of elocution, and that is the gift of God. It may be recognized sometimes in the fugitive and tender inflection of a word, sometimes in a spasm of the features, sometimes in a gesture, eloquent because so exquisitely timed and fit. But we cannot teach all that. We can only remove from the flower any vile things that disfigure or distress its development, but its life comes from the Creator, and for God's sake let Him be.
Boucicault felt that there were many, many people who sought out the stage because they were exhibitionists. To those he said:

Few know how many lives, young lives, are wasted by the vain passion for the stage. These aspirants may be divided into two classes. In one, the more numerous, the craving is for personal display, to be conspicuous, to be applauded, to be notorious. Let the aspirant confess herself to herself, and if such be her object there is a proper field for her on the stage. Let her go into burlesque. But if the young artist feels the power and the wish to incorporate a great passion, to seek no audience but the poet, no applause but the beating of her own heart; if she finds she can abandon herself and stand beside him to witness his soul animate her body—then is she one of the elect, that is, of the mighty few!

The school seemed to be built on a very practical plan. Boucicault felt that acting could be taught only by acting on the stage. How modern this idea seemed to be! Just how successful the school turned out, is not known by this writer, but Boucicault was active in the school until the time of his death. After the initiation of the plan, the papers seemed to lose interest in it. However, there was one mention of a "special matinee of Hunted Down and Kerry, .. in which latter comedy Mr. DION BOUCICAULT will appear. .." This was not announced as one of the regular matinees of the theatre and was probably one of the "special matinees" which had been mentioned above.

61 Dion Boucicault, "The Actor's Art," Pall Mall Budget, July 12, 1888.
62 Times, Monday, December 10, 1888.
Boucicault was poverty stricken. The little that he could eke out as an instructor at Palmer's School of Acting was not much, at least not when compared to the tremendous amounts he had been accustomed to spend. He could not even pay the alimony of £400 a year that had been awarded Agnes Robertson by the courts. Agnes was determined to get the money and asked that the payments be made from the proceeds of her former husband's British copyrights. "Mr. Boucicault, in answer, averred that all proceeds from these copyrights were assigned in 1886 to a Mr. Cadogan of New-York for the benefit of Boucicault's present wife. The presiding Judge expressed doubt as to Cadogan's existence, and said that in any case the assignment was fraudulent and void. He ordered that all such copyright moneys in possession of the court be paid to the plaintiff."63

To help pay the allotted alimony, the Sheriff of County of London ordered a sale of the "COPYRIGHT of NINETEEN CELEBRATED PLAYS by Dion Boucicault," on Monday, May 27. The list of plays that were posted included "Elifie, Faust and Margaret, Rescued, Daddy O'Dowd, Jezabel, Old Heads and Young Hearts, Kerry, Babil and Bijou, Marriage, Foul Play, London Assurance, Flying Scud, Formosa, Streets of London, After Dark, Jilt, Hunted Down, Long Strike,

63 *Times*, Wednesday, April 10, 1889.
and Arrah-na-Pogue."\(^{64}\)

Boucicault kept his hand in at writing plays almost until the day he died. On August 25, 1890, Mr. Roland Reed presented at the Boston Museum a script entitled *Lend Me Your Wife* which had been adapted from the French by Mr. Ernest Warren and had been arranged and rewritten "by Dion Boucicault, Esq."\(^{65}\)

Boucicault's last play, *The Tale of a Coat*, was written for Sol Smith Russell. This play had been originally produced in Philadelphia under the title of *The Poor Relation*.\(^{66}\) The play under its new title was produced on Thursday, August 14, 1890, during a "preliminary Season," at Daly's Theatre. It was done under the personal direction of Boucicault and Ben Teal.\(^{67}\)

In a review of the play given by the *Times* the critic was as kind to the old man as he could be, for he stated:

> There were two things in the representation of "The Tale of a Coat" at Daly's Theatre last night which were especially gratifying. The first of these was the absence of bald theatrical devices from the play, and the second was the success of Mr. Sol Smith Russell in giving a

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\(^{64}\) Identified clipping in New York Public Library, dated 1889.

\(^{65}\) Boston Museum program in New York Public Library, dated Monday, August 25, 1890.

\(^{66}\) *Times*, September 19, 1890.

\(^{67}\) Daly's Theatre program in New York Public Library.
consistent performance without relapsing into his old habit of making unnecessary faces and without having recourse to songs and recitations. Mr. Russell has at last divorced himself from mere mimicry and has become an actor in the strictly legitimate sense of the word. Perhaps the fact that Boucicault directed him had something to do with this.

... Of the play, which is from the pen of Mr. Dion Boucicault, it may be said that the lightness of the story and the absence of climactic strength are not only forgiven, but forgotten, in the pleasure afforded by the brightness of the dialogue and the countless touches of nature in the characterization. . . .

It was reported that Boucicault overtaxed his strength in the directing of the rehearsals of The Tale of a Coat. This strain, along with the bitter disappointment of the failure of the piece, was a determining factor in bringing about his death. At least Sol Smith Russell was of that opinion, for he said:

"People are saying that Mr. Boucicault died of a broken heart, caused by the failure of A Tale of a Coat, . . . and figuratively speaking, I believe this to be true. . . .

"For some years past it has been openly stated on all sides that Boucicault's intellect was vanishing, and that this great dramatist had written his last play. His enemies naturally made the most of these reports, and, in short, when they alluded to Mr. Boucicault at all, spoke of him as being in the last stages of old age, and even of imbecility. Mr. Boucicault was a sensitive man, . . . and he felt these thrusts keenly. He would show me these paragraphs in the papers long before he thought seriously of writing a play for me and would mutter:

\[68 \text{Times, Friday, August 15, 1890.}\]
'I will show them that the brain is still there.
I will show them.'

"One day he called me to his house and told me the story of A Tale of a Coat, or as it was then called, James Watt, Tailor. I liked it....

"Dion Boucicault was an extraordinary man. He would work till two o'clock in the morning--shut up alone in his study, --and yet be up before daylight.

"The day for the first production in Philadelphia arrived and Mr. Boucicault was in the best of spirits.

"The play went on, and the curtain fell to immense applause. Philadelphia pronounced it a success.... The evening papers were less enthusiastic, /the morning papers were all good/ and then, for the first time, Dion Boucicault began to be apprehensive. From then on to the production at Daly's Theatre, he was a changed man....

"Failure, dire and complete, came. Several of the critics pronounced the play bad. I hurried up to Mr. Boucicault's house, and found him sitting in a dejected manner in his study, a mass of morning papers all round him. His head was bent on his chest. His voice seemed changed as he spoke to me. 'I'm sorry for your sake... for me, you know, it doesn't matter. No matter, no matter!' and he shook his head sadly....

"When finally I told him I should have to take it off he said sadly: 'If you think best, do so. Do not mind me. People will think differently of the play one day--They will rank it with the best I have written. A week later Dion Boucicault was dead...."69

What an inglorious death! A man who had tasted the greatest success, a man who had experienced great wealth, who had had expensively furnished homes in London, New York, and Chicago, a man who had yachts, at the time of his death

69 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
was poor, laughed at by his contemporaries—a failure!!

On September 18 at ten minutes after five in the afternoon, Dion Boucicault died at his home, Number 103 West Fifty-Fifth Street. One newspaper reported in detail the last week of his activities thus:

...Mr. Boucicault left his house for the last time on Monday. He took breakfast at Delmonico's with some friends about noon and in the afternoon went to his office on the second floor of the Madison Square Theatre. He remained there for several hours. A few pupils from his School of Acting called upon him, and he went with one of them, in whom he took an especial interest, to the stage on the floor below and there conducted a rehearsal. Then he went back to his office. He complained of the depressing effect of the rainy weather, and laid down on the sofa in his office. The room was damp and disagreeable. About 5 o'clock he returned to his home.

On Tuesday, the following day, he seemed to be affected with a slight cold. Although it was nothing which would be considered serious in a younger person Mrs. Boucicault became apprehensive and sent for Dr. Leo, whose office is in the basement of the same house. He attended the sick man throughout the night. Mr. Boucicault laughed at the fears of his household, and said his illness was nothing more than a cold, from the effects of which he would recover in a day or two.

That night he became worse. Dr. Leo continued to attend him, and the next morning Dr. Delafiel of No. 12 West Thirty-second street, was sent for. The sick man grew brighter during the day, but suffered another relapse when night came. Dr. Delafiel continued to make frequent visits to the house during the day and night and yesterday. His last call was at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, and he remained by the bedside until death came.

No. 103 West Fifty-fifth street is an apartment house. Mr. Boucicault occupied the entire second floor of the building and had lived there
about two years. When a WORLD reporter called there at 8 o'clock last night, no one in the building outside of the dead man's household had ever heard of his death. There had been no callers whatever. The housekeeper said that Mrs. Boucicault was prostrated by her affliction and could see no one. Several friends had called during the day to make inquiries concerning Boucicault's illness, she said, among them A. M. Palmer. Mr. Palmer had also called on Wednesday, she added, but the sick man, although not in a critical condition, had refused to see him. He was peculiarly sensitive when suffering from illness, and at such times would see absolutely no one outside of his family.

Dr. Delafleld told the reporter that while he was not Boucicault's family physician, he had treated him for heart disease. The dramatist first called on him for medical attendance on Aug. 28.

"At that time," said Dr. Delafleld, "he could not walk a block. I saw at once that his days were numbered, and while I did not tell him how serious his condition was, he himself was very apprehensive regarding his tenure of life. When I was called to his house Wednesday morning I ascertained that his condition was a serious one indeed. His heart trouble rendered him peculiarly susceptible to an attack of disease of any kind, and was a contributory cause to its fatality. He sank so gradually towards the end that it was impossible to tell the exact moment he died." 70

The Mirror reported that Boucicault died "in harness. A play with a leading character for his sweet wife; a new comedy; a couple of books; a play for Sothern--these were a few of the interests that engaged his thought up to the moment that he was forced to drop his pen from sheer

70 "Dion Boucicault Dead. The Famous Playwright and Actor Passes Away. He Died Clasping His Young Wife's Hand--None of his Children at His Bedside--Heart Disease Impaired His Vitality--" The World, September 19, 1890.
physical inability to yield it." 71 It was also believed that he was working on a dramatization of Bret Harte's story "The Luck of Roaring Camp." 72

The remains of Dion Boucicault reposed in an oaken casket, lined with copper and covered with a black cloth in the darkened study of his apartment until the day of the funeral. On the lid was a silver tablet bearing the simple inscription:

________________________

Dion Boucicault
Died. September 18, 1890
Aged 68 years

________________________

Arrangements for the funeral were made by A. M. Palmer and on Monday, September 22, 1890, in the pretty little L-shaped "Church Around the Corner" the last drama of Dion Boucicault was played for the first and only time. "It was witnessed, like so many of the Dramas that had gone before it, by an overcrowded and sympathetic house." 74

The Rev. Dr. Houghton officiated at the service at the Church of the Transfiguration, or "The Little Church

71 The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
72 "Dion Boucicault," The New York Dramatic Mirror, September 27, 1890.
73 Ibid.
74 The New York Herald, September 23, 1890.
Around the Corner," as it is better known. The regular funeral service of the Protestant Episcopal Church was read. A choir of sixty voices, under the direction of Organist Dowd, sang appropriate musical selections. Actors came from miles around to pay tribute to this man of the theatre.


Ushers were Dr. T. S. Robertson, W. J. Ferguson of Richard Mansfield's company, Lester S. Gurney of the Actor's and, Howard W. Perry of Palmer's Theatre, and Walter Palmer of the Madison Square Theatre.

After the service the mortal remains of Dion Boucicaut were carried to Grand Central Depot. A special train conveyed the party to Woodland Cemetery where the casket was placed temporarily in a receiving vault. It had been said that Boucicaut had expressed a desire to be buried

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75 *Times*, Tuesday, September 23, 1890.
in Ireland.

However, he was not ever to return to Ireland, according to a letter written by Josephine Cheney (Louise Thorndyke Boucicault) on December 11, 1916, to the New York Times. She was quite incensed at Townsend Walsh, for he had stated in his biography of Boucicault, in the very last sentence of his book, that no gravestone marked the resting place. Mrs. Cheney stated:

Had Mr. Walsh shown the same zeal and regard for simple truth, to say nothing of justice and fair play, that he has exercised in disseminating misinformation, he could have evidenced by his own eyesight, within an hour's time, the monument placed in Mount Hope Cemetery by my order a few months after Mr. Boucicault's death in 1890.

Dion Boucicault died a broken man. He wrote to A. C. Wheeler two weeks before he died: "It has been a long jib, my boy, and I am just beginning to see the pathos of it. I have written for a monster who forgets."76

The will that Dion left behind bequeathed to his last wife, Louise Thorndyke, "after all his just debts and funeral expenses are paid, . . . the remainder of his property--both real and personal--wherever such may be situated, . . ."77

Boucicault left very little--not enough, really, to fight over; but the two living wives, Agnes Robertson

76 The Arena, (December, 1890), III, 60.
77 Unidentified clipping in New York Public Library.
(Boucicault) and Louise Thordyke Boucicault contested the will in court at great length. Agnes came to America to contest the will, mainly, she said, to establish the legitimacy of her children. It seems unsuitable to drag Boucicault's name through all the court proceedings.

After having been concerned with the life of this man for so long, it is perhaps better for this writer to think of him as living on, and to quote the following:

But he did more than give us plays. He left a remarkably clever family, who still amuses us. Rarely indeed has a clever man so perpetuated the essence of his brain as in this case of Dion Boucicault. There is a son an actor, there is a son a dramatist, and there is also a charming daughter whose grace the public cherishes. The wheels of chance have given to the brothers, Dion and Aubrey, a twin success, since Dion Boucicault and Arthur Chudleigh have produced Aubrey Boucicault's play, "A Court Scandal," at the Court Theatre— an adaptation from the French by Aubrey Boucicault and Osmond Shillingford. Miss Nina Boucicault presents the latest Lavender in "Sweet Lavender," and surely her performance is as refreshing as the flower is sweet. Thus, with the present members of the family as public favourites, their popularity is not girded by the island seas, since in Australia and in New Zealand Dion Boucicault formed the guiding spirit of the Brough and Boucicault Company.

So long as the drama wields a certain influence in Australasia [sic] the name of Dion Boucicault will be pleasantly recalled, and it is by those only who are acquainted with the monstrous companies which tour the Colonies that the immense work this son of Dion Boucicault accomplished for the cause of the drama in the Southern Hemisphere can be properly appreciated. It would seem that very, very recently that American and British managers have thought it necessary to send companies of even moderate excellence to New Zealand. It is almost four years since Dion Boucicault visited New Zealand; to him those years have brought success in London, but for quite two years after his
farewell there was indeed a blank page in the histrionic history of Maoriland. . . . 78

78 "Dion Boucicault and His Family," The Sketch, April 10, 1899.
CHAPTER XIII

IN RETROSPECT

In physical appearance Boucicault was often compared to Shakespeare, a fancy in which he rather took pleasure. However, in later life, this pleasure was turned to bitterest gall when he became the target of critical thrusts and the similarity was used in jest. He was of medium height with large, dark eyes, fine intellectual features, and a very open and genial expression. He was prematurely bald. He was often described as graceful, easy and dignified, having a good deal of what is called presence, and a particularly well-bred air. Among his friends, he was the essence of geniality and at times full of rollicking fun. He was described as a brilliant talker, full of reminiscence and anecdote, and his tongue, once set loose, "sparkled like a fountain under the sunshine of friends."

A cosmopolitan by choice, it was often stated by him that he could not tell whether he felt more at home in Dublin, Paris, London or New York. He had the readiness of the Irish, the polish of the French, the independence of the English and the energy and breadth of the American.

Whether by design or merely personal preference, Boucicault dressed as carefully off the stage as on. He
had to look the part. In winter as well as summer, he always wore light colored clothes. The most singular thing about his costume was that he wore no tie. A diamond stud held his collar in place, and he considered this sufficiently ornamental. There was something about his costume that reminded one of a monk. It was certainly not his devoutness, but perhaps his bald crown, with its fringe of hair, or perhaps, his long ulster, which seemed a regular part of him, looked like a cassock. Belasco commented at one time that Boucicault had had a great deal of influence on him. Could Boucicault's peculiar choice of costume have made an impression on him? Belasco always was seen dressed in black, with a long frock coat and he always wore his collar reversed like a priest.

Boucicault's accomplishments were many. He spoke German and Italian, and French was nearly as much his native tongue as English. He was a musician, playing on several instruments, an excellent swordsman and Boxer, a fine horseman, a crack shot, a connoisseur in viands and wines, and not to be surpassed in the creation of a salad. He never appeared to be at work, though he wrote enough to fill a small library.

Caustic at times when the occasion demanded it, and sometimes when the occasion did not demand it, he could be as witty as the next when he was in the mood. An example
of his wit is contained in an anecdote retold by Frank Kennan. Upon hearing a crash of glass outside his window one morning, Boucicault inquired of his servant the meaning of all the noise. "Please, sir," said the butler, "that is the bottle man."

"Who may he be?" Boucicault queried.

"Why, that's the man that I sell the empty bottles to," was his reply.

"What do you get for them?" asked Boucicault.

"A cent a piece, sir."

After quite a pause, Boucicault observed: "It hardly pays me to empty them!"

Merely as a specimen of cleverness, regardless of literary integrity or conscientiousness, regardless indeed, of everything but results, Dion Boucicault had hardly an equal among his contemporaries. His practical success as a playwright was not exceeded in his day nor has it been since. As an example of productivity, it would be vain to look anywhere in America for his peer. Boucicault was the most prolific and the most successful English dramatist of his age. No one knows the number of his plays. When asked by his son how many plays he had written, Boucicault replied: "I have tried hard to make a list of them, but

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1 Taken from an unidentified clipping in the New York Public Library, December 9, 1909.
I'm able to recall the titles of about only four hundred of them. Really, my dear boy, I can't remember the rest."² He conceived, arranged, composed, completed and had his piece upon the stage before another dramatist would or could have made a rough outline of his work.

As a dramatic writer, Boucicault must be given a place in the history of American drama. His influence was a strongly felt one for fifty years. He dominated the New York stage for nearly thirty years. Part of his success was due to his uncanny knack of sensing what the public wanted, even before they knew, and he gave it to them.

The fact that Boucicault has not remained an important name in the theatre and is even forgotten by many, can be explained by three observations: (1) he was too successful, (2) he happened to live at a time when melodrama was rampant, and (3) having a keen mind, he saw through the devices used by a dramatist and thus deduced a formula for a successful reproduction of the same. By bringing the art of dramaturgy down to a formula, his manuscripts lacked originality and significance as a written form. But at the same time, he was a skilled craftsman, and he turned out many a satisfactory script which netted him thousands of dollars: the only measurement

of success according to his way of thinking.

Had success not come so easily, he would have had to work at his writing in order to be successful and it is entirely possible that he would have written better plays. Boucicault knew the theatre and what made up good theatre. His standards were good but he did not have to write up to his standards. The public did not demand it of him.

The fact that audiences of his day reveled in the excitement of the melodrama, coupled with the desire to succeed, made Boucicault write this type of drama. He often said: "I despoil genius to make the mob worship it." It is unfortunate that the majority of his better scripts were developed along the lines of the melodrama, for melodrama is a hybrid form. It cannot reproduce itself. Ergo, his plays were not to last in themselves, neither were they to have a lasting influence on the dramaturgy that was to follow him.

The fact that he reduced everything to a formula made his work lack originality and vigor. He felt that "no art becomes respectable until its principles are acknowledged, methodized and housed in a system." He reduced his methods to such a system and religiously followed the system. And although he preached that "Art and genius cannot be separated. Art resembles the body and genius the
soul. The body without the soul is dead and spiritless; . . ." he lacked that soul of the artist. He had the mind of the artist but not the soul of the artist. His soul longed for success and success to him was measured in money and his mind was capable of giving this kind of success to him.

Perhaps by accident, his early plays were patterned along the line of the 18th century comedy of manners. He had seen the formula used by Congreve and Farquhar, he took this formula and placed it in a modern setting. The result was a success—London Assurance. Part of its enduring success is undoubtedly due to the fact that in this piece he had written the type of roles that actors like to play and they have kept the play alive; even till today one can find now and then a record of its production. He kept this formula for several of his succeeding plays. When this pattern began to wear thin, he took the same basic formula, applied it to the structure of the melodrama and devised his "domestic drama." As his "domestic drama" began to lose its attractiveness, he devised his "sensation" scene which he added to the domestic drama. This added new excitement to his plays which carried him along for a good twenty years. As long as he could think up new sensations to add to his plays he seemed to be assured of success. Out of this latter, grew his Irish drama. It was still the sentimental, melodramatic framework, with
spectacle and action dominating the actor. The only new element was the locale and the Irish folk character. By 1870, he had developed all the dramatic devices that he had to offer. In subsequent plays, about all he added was a change of locale, a change of spectacle such as a live horse and a play with horse-racing as a background as in The Flying Scud, or a moving sham locomotive in Led Astray. Perhaps the most significant element to come out of the sensation scene was the development of scenic techniques. In many of his later plays it was necessary to devise a form of multiple staging in order to stage two simultaneous lines of action. This type of staging is still in use.

As has been indicated above, Boucicault's object in life was to please his audience and put money in his purse—though it never stopped there for long—and in this he was eminently successful, and therefore content. Surrounding himself with the finest luxuries, Boucicault lived a life which only money could purchase. Yachts and stables, town and country houses were only a few of the outward evidences of his success. In his apartment on Fifteenth Street in New York City he

lined the rooms with solid ebony, hung the walls with raw silk tapestry brocades, laid the floors with hard woods in mosaic, draped the windows with magnificent curtains, surrounded with velvet and weighted with massive bullion fringe, and suspended these wonders on rollers that were
gilded until they seemed solid gold; spread the mosaic floors with tiger, leopard and bear skins, and rugs from Persia; and crystal shelves supported by bronzes sheltered massive and solid silver and china, more precious than fine gold. The fireplace was a house of steel where logs burned; there were clocks and statuettes and paintings, and sumptuous sideboards, and the windows in the rear were converted into a gorgeous conservatory.3

But with all his other traits, Boucicault was reputed to have grave defects of temperament and character; he was often very unjust and reckless.

He was vain, self-indulgent, shallow, fickle, weak. Also he was unfortunate in a propensity to strife. He had success in his public career, alike as actor and dramatist; but, valuing himself over highly, he was seldom, if ever satisfied with the recognition that he received, and he lived in almost continual antagonism toward either institutions or individuals. His career was neither great, noble, nor lovely. The more his life is examined the more does it reveal vanity of motive and paltry selfishness of conduct.4

Boucicault had a tendency to tyrannize over the actors who were rehearsing his plays. Never patient nor understanding, he was very excitable and nervous at such times, and was bound to have everything go his own way.5 Boucicault knew what he wanted and how it could be obtained. He would accept no substitute. Fortunately, Boucicault knew

3 Unidentified clipping in New York Public Library.
5 "Boucicault's Career in Boston," The Globe, September 19, 1890.
what was good theatre and had high standards and as a result his productions reached a high level never before attained in the theatres of New York City.

But his industry was marvelous. He probably slept no more than four hours a day on the average throughout his life. He was an actor of rare excellence and merit; he was recognized throughout the profession as the best of stage managers. He insisted that his productions be complete and well mounted. He insisted on adequate rehearsals. As a result, he set a standard of excellence in the New York theaters that was difficult to match.

Morally he was far below the average person. With all his greatness, he was weak. Perhaps, the biggest blot on his character and the one which brought about his ultimate defeat was his disavowal of his marriage with Agnes Robertson, with whom he lived for a quarter of a century as his wife, and who bore his six children. This one act did more to ruin his reputation than all the other errors of his life.

Boucicault and theatrical management had nothing in common. Theatrical management requires method, prudence, constant attention, and watchfulness of detail. These were certainly not characteristics of his personality. In all his attempts as theatrical manager, there was not one example of any success on his part. Observe his failures as manager of the Gaiety in New Orleans, joint manager of
the Winter Garden (this was a success but he could not get along with his partner, Wm. Stuart), Astley's (later called Westminster by Boucicault), and finally his short and disastrously brief managementship of Booth's. Everything that he did was done rapidly, at a bound, as it were. He could not be painstaking; he had no patience, an enduring quality which prosperous management needs. Managerially he was a rock in the sea of business, to be avoided carefully; to run upon it was to be wrecked. He said himself: "Somehow the men who have any partnership with me invariably come to grief; we both lose, but they are apt to lose more than myself. I suppose it is my fault that it must be, and yet I never want anybody to suffer on my account."

To look after his interests and investments he employed agents and lawyers, whenever needed, to see that his pieces were not produced without payment of the required royalty, and he neglected no means of securing his fullest rights. This was one of the reasons that his name appeared so frequently in the Courts of Law.

He loved to make money, and he loved to spend it. And he certainly spent it in a regal fashion. No luxury was too great for him, no extravagance beyond his purse.

In his best years it was stated that he made from $150,000 to $200,000 a year. Out of The Colleen Bawn he made over $250,000. Such earning power seems little less than miraculous. Boucicault cleared in 24 hours more than
twice as much money as some of the most celebrated authors have made in a long life devoted to literature. Pietro Aretino boasted, in the sixteenth century, that with a bottle of ink and a bundle of paper he could earn a thousand golden scudi ($16,000) in a twelve-month period. What would he have thought had he known that in the nineteenth century a rollicking Irishman would have made more than that before luncheon? It has been speculated that Boucicault made $3,000,000 from his 300-odd number of plays—an average of $10,000 each.

Nym Crinkle, writing in the World, sums up the man quite well in saying:

Viewed broadly and generously, Mr. Boucicault was a singularly endowed man. He possessed, along with the recklessness, the humor and the truculency of the Celtic temperament, something of the gayety, the finesse and the wit of a Frenchman. His pen at times had the sharpness of Rousseau along with the suavity and music of Father Prout. But he had no sincerity of purpose in his matured life. He studied to cajole the public, and he succeeded in outliving their consideration. He knew the stage with a rare knowledge, but he mistook the human heart. He did not understand that it remembers, and he could not believe that it despises. His knowledge was encyclopaedic, but superficial. He was stored with the glittering foam of the French press, and he talked like Diderot, not like Bacon. He made three fortunes and died penniless. No one will ever know how much of his income was squandered in idle speculations, nor how much was poured into the needy palms of the poor and helpless. . . .6

6 "Dion Boucicault Dead," The World, September 19, 1890.
Bronson Howard, whose plays replaced the sensational melodramas of Boucicault, felt that Boucicault "was a very great dramatist."

His stage sense, his perception of the effective, have never been paralleled outside of France. Boucicault had the misfortune to be born at a time when the French mine could be worked without exposure from the critics. If he had begun to write for the stage some twenty years later he would have been an original dramatist. But his Irish plays are original in the highest sense of the word. I don't care whether he got the backbone of 'The Colleen Bawn' from Gerald Griffin's Collegians or not; I don't care whether 'The Shaughraun' be a mosaic of odds and ends from other plays. The spirit, the feeling, the atmosphere of 'The Colleen Bawn' and 'The Shaughraun' are all intangibly personal and original. You can feel that the man's heart was in his work. He was, perhaps, more enthusiastic in writing these Irish plays than anything else, and they all bear the stamp of genius. . . .

At the time of Boucicault's death, the Illustrated American wrote:

In Dion Boucicault the English speaking stage loses one of its most picturesque figures and its greatest modern exponent. And, above all, the world loses a genuine man. Paradoxical as it may seem he was genuine in spite of obvious insincerities. Indeed, his very genuineness made these insincerities obvious. He wrapped himself up in no sham respectability, he was content to be a man among men, and if he recognized that he was a somewhat superior man, we can pardon him, even though he threw over that superiority some of the illusion of fancy. . . . He may not have been always truthful,

7 The New York Dramatic Mirror, December 14, 1885.
but he never was a hypocrite.®

Boucicault was actually a child of the theatre. He learned all his knowledge about the theatre from the stage itself. And he was proficient in all theatrical activity. We have seen him first as writer, then lecturer, then actor, then manager, then director and finally as a teacher. "So active was Boucicault in every line connected with the stage that his prolixity became a joke among his associates. He was the wonder of the hour, and he posed as such."9

The fact that Boucicault wrote the scripts which he so beautifully staged gave him a decided advantage over the other stage managers of the day. It is entirely conceivable that he often wrote a script around a concept of staging. Certainly there was an unusually strong coordination between the writing of the scenes and the staging of the scenes. In all his sensation melodramas, the writing was guided towards the one big scene and the staging was so concentrated as to make this sensation scene the "hit" of the evening. His introduction of scenic devices were many: the wagon-stage in Dot, the divided stage in

8 "Dion Boucicault, Actor and Playwright," The Illustrated American, October 4, 1890, p. 7.

Mercy Dodd and Forbidden Fruit, the rapid change from interior to exterior in Robert Emmet, the appeal to sensationalism in the horse-racing spectacle in the Flying Scud. All these are typical of the devices which made him a master craftsman in the art and technique of stage management.

Views on Acting

Typical of his whole line of thinking, Boucicault wished to establish acting as an art with a system of rules and principles of its own. Acting was an art, and "you must absolutely have principles in all art." All other arts were housed in a system, "acting has become a vagrant; for although certain rules and principles were acknowledged by great artists, they were unknown to the young beginners. The tradition of the craft has been lost."

He looked at acting as a rational art, with a mechanism and a method quite as real as those of any other art. An actor without training was to him like a poet who could not spell or a painter who knew no perspective.

A perfect command of voice, gesture and posture were the rudiments of acting. He held that an actor can become an artist only "by the working of his own brain, and not by depending on the brains of others." In a discussion of the voice he maintained that there were three affected voices—those of the clergyman, the stump orator and the
tragedian. The actor and the public speaker should obey quite different principles of elocution. An actor must, first of all, be a good listener, which "means that he must attend to his business and not to the audience." As for character, it should be studied from the inside and "too much attention should not be paid to dress and other paraphernalia." An actor can do best that which "he does with least effort."

Although he looked on acting as a rational art, with a mechanism and a method quite as real as those of any other art, he never for one minute ignored that element which is called "genius." At least in theory, he was a happy combination between the "emotional school" and the "mechanical school." If the truth were known, probably a great deal of Delsartism would be found in his basic concepts. Art and genius could not be separated, he maintained. Although he was a strong proponent of training and stressed emphatically its importance, he never neglected nor ignored those two elements which must always be present to make for an artistic expression: genius and talent. Neither of these could be taught, but there were certain principles which could be taught, as there were in all arts, for no art became respectable or respected until its principles, its tenets and its precepts were recognized, codified and arranged in a system. "Why," he would
ask, "should not this be done for the dramatic art? Why not give the young actor, as well as young painters, the sound principles of their art to begin with? Why should managers be obliged to do on the stage what should be done before? Why is it not practicable," he argued, "to give a manager, instead of ignorant novices, young men and women properly and fairly prepared, and so far educated in the rudiments of the profession as to be able to perform at once the minor parts of the drama?" One could not, of course, teach a man to be a genius, nor to be talented; but preliminary instruction, he felt, would give his genius, his talents, if he had any, opportunities for development which otherwise would be long in presenting themselves.

Nowhere do all the theories of Boucicault on acting appear in a collected form. At least twice in his later life he gave lectures on acting. One such occasion occurred in London at the Lyceum Theatre when Henry Irving paid him a compliment by lending him his theatre for the occasion. This lecture was completely recorded in the Era, July 29, 1882, and has since been made more readily accessible through a reprint by the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University in the series Papers on Acting, I, (fifth series, 1926). When Boucicault delivered approximately the same lecture at the Madison Square Theatre at his "Conference on Acting," the local papers did not give
so complete a coverage as did the London papers. In an article, "My Pupils," which appeared in The North American Review, Vol. CXLVII (October 1888), pp. 435-440, other impressions of his in regard to acting were expressed. Also in an article entitled "The Actor's Art," which appeared in the Pall Mall Budget, July 12, 1888, additional theories were disclosed. All of these reports indicate that Boucicault had very definite ideas on acting, as he did on every other subject under the sun. These are not only interesting in the historical sense but also in a comparative sense, measured against our more "modern" theories of acting. How little advancement has been made since his time in the concepts of acting!

To illustrate his thinking on the subject of acting a series of his ideas are presented herewith in numerical order. These have been excerpted from the above mentioned articles and are quoted exactly as found.

1. Acting is not just mere speech. It is the taking of the dialogue of the author and giving it artistically. Acting is to perform, to be the part; to be in your arms, your legs; to be what you are acting, to be it all over, that is acting.

2. Acting can be divided into the voice for the treatment of the production; the expression of feature or gesture.

3. Gesture is that action of the body above the waist, the arms, the neck, the head, and the bust. That movement below the waist is termed carriage.
4. The first lesson that an actor has to learn is not to speak. The first lesson consists in learning how to walk on the stage, stand still, and walk off again. When an actor walks on the stage he fixes his attention on what is said and what is done on the scene, never removing it to follow the speaker. But his part is to listen, and if he can perform that part well—that is, the part of a good listener—he will have achieved a process in his art that many very favorite and prominent actors have never yet achieved. That one lesson alone, if it is perfectly learned, will actuate his whole career. He will never forget it, and it will be one reason of his success.

5. The stage gesture is bolder and more pictorial, so to speak, than that employed in private life. It is intended to illustrate what the person who makes it is saying, or to convey the impression produced upon him by the action or speech of the other personages.

6. The stage gesture, to be effective, must not be superfluous; it must be exactly such as pertains to what is said, so as to help the meaning, and no more.

7. A gesture should precede slightly the words that it is to impress, otherwise it is likely to appear awkward, or even ridiculous.

8. A gesture must be made with freedom and breadth of effect. If an actor wants to point at anything, his arm should move from the shoulder, and not from the elbow. If he is to look at anything, he must not merely turn his eyes, as he could in a room, but his whole head, if he is to shake his head, he must not give a series of little nods, but a full movement from side to side. All this is necessary to meet the pictorial requirements of the stage.

9. The arm farthest from the audience must, as a general rule, go up.

10. Little and unnecessary gestures—I call them 'gesticles' make an actor seem undignified and fidgety. An audience is very much alive to gesture, and, if it finds an actor means nothing
by his movements, it will grow fidgety.

11. It is a good old rule that gestures must not be made with the arm across the body.

12. In gesture you will observe that when the face is delivered to the public in the ordinary way in which an actor acts you see two cheeks, two eyes, the whole of the mouth, and the whole of the nose, but the gesture is foreshortened; but in profile you see half a face, one eye, one half of the mouth, and one half of the nose, but then the gestural assistance becomes powerful. So [full face], the gesture is weak; so [profile], the gesture is strong.

13. Gesture must be subordinate to the spectator himself. All things in this art must be subordinate to that. It is a sort of picture. The stage is a picture frame, in which is exhibited that kind of panorama, where the picture being unrolled is made to move, passing before the spectator, the art of the persons, being figures in them, is to so present themselves that, although engaged with each other, they may be presented also to the audience, whose sympathies the action is intended to arouse.

14. The art of walking has become a lost art. It is necessary to learn to walk correctly on the stage. Walking means a stride with the foot from one position to another. The leg is thrown forward, but should never be kicked out, but as the leg advances the propulsion is like that of the Greek friezes. The right leg is forward, or if the left is forward the right is always straight. The foot is brought perfectly level with the ground. The foot must not be dragged as some actors do it. There is no elasticity in that way.

15. When you walk backwards and forwards, do not turn upon the ball of your foot in turning round; but, when you come to the end of the walk, it is more dignified to take one step and bring your foot back, and then take the movement again. A lady, if she attempts to do it, walks on the tail of her own dress. She is obliged, therefore, to be more graceful.
The fifteen points above are given to illustrate what Boucicault stressed as mechanics. He would teach the problems of movement on the stage. This did not enter into the actual portrayal of the character. By learning the mechanics of movement, the would-be actor was then free to concentrate on the development and projection of his character. His approach to the portrayal of character was never mechanical.

His advice to the young beginner was sound: "When you go upon the stage do not be full of yourself, but be full of your part. That is mistaking vanity for genius, and is the fault of many more than perhaps you are aware of." He felt that too many young actors were studying themselves when they thought they were studying their character. He said that too many young actors came to him and asked: "Have you any part that will fit me?" To which he commented: "They never dream of saying, 'Have you any part that I can fit? that I can expand myself or contract myself into; that I can put myself inside of that I, as a Protean, can shape myself into, even alter my voice and everything that nature has given to me, and be what you have contrived?''"

Boucicault had very definite thoughts on whether an actor actually felt his part. There were two basically different approaches based upon whether a person were to play comedy or tragedy. But even in tragedy, there should
be some control. "A tragedian may claim to be infused at will by some such frenzy, and to produce his results by a psychic spasm; but let it be acknowledged that a comedian cannot deliver himself over to any such condition."

The comic actor must be circumspect, his deliberate copy of nature was obtained by fidelity to its features, or by caricature of them. There could be no divine frenzy about a comedian. In the tragedian there was no "transcendental stage." He would ask: "Is there such a thing as tragic fits? Hysteria dramatica?" "No!" would be his answer. Shakespeare bore him out when he said: "in the torrent, tempest and whirlwind of... passion acquire and beget a temperance that shall give it smoothness."

In this, Shakespeare had advised the actor of tragedy to learn and cultivate by art, to control his effusion and to study appropriate gesture. "How," Boucicault would ask, "can this be done without a careful subordination of the divine fits to some method?"

Comedy, he said, aspires to portray by imitation the weaknesses to which human beings are subject; and, it may be, to correct such frailties by their exposure to our ridicule. Character, in our dramatic sense, is the distinction between individuals, and it is exhibited by the manner in which each bears and expresses his or her trouble, or deals with his neighbors.
Tragedy, on the other hand, aspires to portray the passions to which strong natures are subject, and a resistance to their influence. But strong natures exhibit no distinctive character. "Heroes are monotonous. Othello, Richard, Macbeth, Lear, Hamlet, are great sufferers from various causes, but they suffer alike; they all cry in the same histrionic key. Edwin Booth, Forrest, Macready, Kean, Salvini, always presented the same man in different costume. Rachel was always Rachel. Bernhardt is always Bernhardt. But Irving in 'Louis the Eleventh' is not Irving in 'Mephistopheles.' Coquelin in the 'Lute Player of Gerona' is not Coquelin in the 'Duc de Septmonts.'"

Boucicault felt that since the objective of the comedian differs so diametrically from the objective of the tragedian, the principles and the practice of one of the branches of the art may not be applicable to the other.

But all in all, the final judgment of whether or not an actor was good depended on how effective he was and just how "right" he was was determined by his effect upon the audience. The final goal, for him, was whether he was effective and whether he obtained the desired reaction from the audience.
Views on Theatres

Few men had as vast a knowledge of all departments of the theatre as Dion Boucicault. He often modeled and sketched much of his own scene design and contrived many of his scenic effects. He often selected appropriate music, fashioned the action of his pieces, drilled the supernumeraries and ballet. He was a designer of theatres and felt that he knew what made up a good theatre and what were the bad features of a theatre.

Evidence would indicate that he did know how to make an attractive house and an effective operating backstage. All the theatres that he had anything to say about in the designing were effective both to the eye and to the mechanics of handling of scenery. Although no actual records admit that he had a hand in the designing of the Gaiety in New Orleans, it is entirely feasible that he did help set up the specifications for it, because he was in New Orleans during the spring that the plans were being formulated and he could have had a very strong hand in the project. He certainly had a definite hand in the designing of the Winter Garden in New York, when the old Metropolitan Theatre was converted and re-named Winter Garden. He re-designed and converted the old Astley's Circus Theatre into the beautiful Westminster Theatre.
Boucicault was proud of his engineering ability. He said that few architects had given special attention to theatrical structures and that he had never seen or heard of any engineering ability being applied to stage machinery. He was proud of what he had been able to accomplish with the Winter Garden.

Some estimate may be formed of the working order of a London theatre by comparing it with an American theatre under precisely similar conditions. In 1859 I built in New York the Winter Garden Theatre, capable of holding 2500 persons, being very little less than the capacity of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. With the same entertainments as at the Adelphi Theatre the Winter Garden consumed 20,000 feet of gas per week, the Adelphi consumes 100,000. The number of carpenters required to work the stage in London varies from twenty to thirty; in New York the same work is done by six. Here we employ five or six gasmen; there the same work is well performed by a man and a boy. While in management at the Adelphi Theatre I saw three men endeavouring to move a piece of scenery, I caused a simple contrivance to be attached to it, and a child was then able to move it readily with his forefinger.

In an article entitled "Theatre, Halls, and Audiences," which appeared in the North American Review, October, 1889, Boucicault gave some very keen analyses of theatres on the whole and their effectiveness. He condemned the large theatre in which the actor's voice could not be heard or in which the actor's size was dwarfed to almost nothing. He felt that the stature of the actor should determine the size of the stage on which he appeared, and the distance at which his features could be
perfectly seen should determine the proportions of the auditorium. The measure of the spectator's eye, he said, should be taken as a standard for his ear, for within that scope the actor will be heard. The two senses, are, so far as the theatre is concerned, of equal capacity.

The fact that Boucicault was not an architect and that he was an actor and stage manager made him more interested in the building as mechanism which would aid and enhance the effectiveness of a production. He was not interested in the building as to whether or not it was a good architectural design. Boucicault was particularly interested in (1) whether the actor could be heard and understood, and (2) was the mechanism of the stage adequate. Was it properly rigged and out-fitted in order that his sensation scene could be adequately staged.

Boucicault bemoaned the fact that no science of acoustics was known which would enable men to design theatres so as to guarantee good hearing. He said that the result was always left to chance. "We have never discovered the principles applicable to the proportions of a great hall by which the voice is spread and conveyed evenly and in the most perfect manner to all parts. After the building is complete, it is, confessedly and notoriously, a matter of accident, and a question to be solved by experiment, whether it is 'good for sound.'
When it proves to be defective no one can explain why it is so, or where the defect lies, or prescribe a remedy."

"Why," he asked, "should theatres be built so large that the human voice can not be heard?" He stated that the most powerful and articulate voice, when used in speech, can fill an enclosed area of 320,000 cubic feet— that is, he continued, "a room eighty feet in breadth, eighty feet in length, and fifty feet in height."

Why, why, he would ask, do we build auditoriums (a word which, incidentally, he coined), too large to be heard in? His approach to the arguments which he presented seemed very logical and sound. Perhaps his early engineering training under Dr. Lardner came to the foreground.

Besides dwarfing an actor, Boucicault felt that a too large theatre accommodated an audience too large for the actor to hold and sway with his magnetism.

I have been able, . . . to compare results, and find that when an audience exceeds a certain size, it is very difficult to establish in it perfectly this fusion of minds. . . . Wherefore I am led to believe that a group of more than two thousand persons is not so susceptible to that number. There is a limit to the genius of the actor as regards its reach over his audience; and no auditorium should exceed in size that limit.10

10 Moses, op. cit., pp. 120-121.
Views on Dramatic Writing

Boucicault's greatest misfortune was in being born at a time when dramatic writing was going through a period of decadence. There were no great dramatic writers during the nineteenth century. Melodrama was the popular medium of the day. Audiences delighted in its rapid movement and in its suspense. But the melodrama was a hybrid form of art and being hybrid it could not reproduce itself; therefore this style of writing was not to last for any great period of time.

As a dramatic writer, Boucicault made his name in the field of comedy, and throughout his life he remained identified with that field. His romantic Irish plays were of a slightly different genre. They contained a certain amount of sentimentalism; the audience enjoyed its laughter through its tears. But their basic structure was still the melodrama plus a sensation scene. That was his formula for a successful play.

When asked why comedy, his or another, did not live, Boucicault answered:

Comedy naturally wears itself out, destroying the very good by which it lives, and in constantly and successfully exposing the follies and weaknesses of mankind to ridicule in the end leaves nothing worth laughing at because it drives out what it ridicules. It is not the criticism which the public taste exercises upon the stage, but the criticism
which the stage exercises upon public
manners, that is fatal to comedy, by cor­
recting the subject matter of it until
it is reformed into something tame,
correct and spiritless.

... The present prevailing style of con­
versation is not personal, but critical
and analytical. In the same manner the
extreme simplicity and graceful uniformity
of modern dress, however favorable to the
sartorial and dress-maker's art, has certainly
stripped comedy of one of its richest
ornaments and most expressive symbols.

Buskin and the nodding plume were never
more serviceable to tragedy than the enormous
hoops and stiff stays worn by the belles of
former days were to the intrigues of comedy.
That "seven fold fence" was a sort of foil
to the lusciousness of the dialogue and a
barrier against the sly encroachment of double
entendre.

The greedy eye and bold hand of indis­
cretion were repressed, thus giving a greater
license to the tongue. Love was entangled
in the folds of a swelling kerchief, and the
desires might wander forever around the cir­
cumference of a quilted petticoat or find
rich lodging in the flower of a damask
stomacher. A mistress was an angel concealed
behind whalebone, flounces and brocade. What
an undertaking to penetrate through this
disguise.11

Boucicault's simplest formula for writing a play
was disclosed in a discussion with Henry Guy Carleton one
evening at the Adams House in Boston when he said: "First
take your story and cut it into climaxes of your acts.
Cut your acts into situations. Cut your situations into
scenes. Say who the scenes are by, what transpires between

11 Aubrey Boucicault, "The Boucicault Blood
your characters, and serve hot, or to be well shaken before taking." This was his recipe for a drama.\footnote{Ibid.}

At one time in his life, Boucicault contracted to write a series of articles on "The Art of Dramatic Construction." However, his ever active mind would not remain still long enough to finish this series of articles. The first of these appeared in the \textit{North American Review}, February, 1878. One can see that it is, in reality, a reinterpretation of Aristotle, to which Boucicault added his various thoughts and adaptations to describe the writing of his day.

Boucicault found Aristotle's definition of drama inadequate because "Aristotle labored under a self-imposed difficulty of including two things within one definition—drama, and a particular kind of drama." After quoting Aristotle's definition of a "particular kind of drama," Boucicault defined drama simply: "A drama is the imitation of a complete action formed by a sequence of incidents designed to be acted, not narrated, by the person or persons to whom such incidents befall."

Again, as in his articles on acting, he commenced his "Art of Dramatic Composition" with a cry that "no art became respectable until its principles were acknowledged, methodized and housed in a system. All arts,
except the drama, possessed such a home. If a young student wished to study drama there was no work wherein the art of dramatic composition could be found."

Some of his more salient points of dramatic construction are herewith presented as has been done previously with his theories on the teaching of acting.

1. By a sequence of incidents we mean such a succession that each incident composing it, except the first and last, is the result of some one of the preceding incidents, and the cause of one of the incidents coming after it in the series.

2. The action is designed to be acted, not narrated, the essential object of a drama being to imitate human creatures suffering their fate: and we feel more deeply for those whose sufferings we see, and we believe in a thing we see done to a greater degree than if we heard the same thing narrated.

3. The sequence of incidents must befall a person or persons; for, if they befall an animal or inanimate objects, as may happen during a convulsion of Nature, such an imitation is not a drama. It is sufficient that one person shall be the sufferer, for a sequence of incidents may happen to a single individual.

4. And no other things beyond these are necessary to constitute a drama.

5. The drama, therefore, has two parts: The action which causes suffering, and the persons who suffer. But persons differ by their natures, and suffer differently both in manner and degree according to their natures; this self-distinction defines the character of each.

6. Character is only a quality issuing from and belonging to the persons. And, as the sequence of incidents is supposed to take place somewhere, scenery becomes convenient to
represent such places; or articles, such as costumes, weapons, and furniture are used: so another part is produced, and this is decoration: it belongs to and issues from the action. Neither character nor the decoration is necessary, but only for the better.

7. Of these two parts, essential to each other, the action is the more important. It is the cause of the suffering; for persons suffer in consequence of what they do, or of what is done to them, and not because they are of a particular character.

8. Because of the greater difficulty which poets find in making the action—for many succeed in expressing fine ideas, and in depicting characters, who fail in composing a plot—they can readily spin thoughts, but fail in weaving them into a pattern. By these a tragedy is regarded as a series of noble thoughts, expressing a passion, instead of a sequence of important incidents producing a suffering, of which noble thoughts are the issue.

a. If from a drama we strip away all but the action, there still remains something important. But, if from the same work we take away the action only, all the rest signifies nothing.

b. Second in order are the persons, each distinguished by his character. By character we mean that individuality in a person made by the consistency of feelings, speech and physiognomy.

c. Of least importance to the drama is the decoration. But this essential part, like wine at a feast, though neither the most wholesome or necessary, is the part in which all take the most delight, and with which we come away the most impressed.

9. If such an imitation of human beings, suffering from their fate, be well contrived and executed in all its parts, the spectator is led to feel a particular sympathy with the artificial joys or sorrows of which he is the witness. This condition of his mind is called the theatrical illusion.
10. Let us now examine each part, and perceive what is proper:

First, of the action. This should have a certain length. It is too short when the incidents composing it produce so small an amount of suffering in the persons that the end arrives before the theatrical illusion is established in the mind of the spectator, or, being established, then before his sympathy is satisfied.

The parts of the action should be necessary to each other and to the whole. No part should be superfluous, for however beautiful a thing in itself may be, it becomes displeasing when it is uncalled for by the nature of that to which it pretends to belong. And if any necessary incident be wanting or imperfect, the action must appear incomplete; but, composed of parts indispensable to each other, it will have the quality of cohesion, and nothing can be taken away or added, without injury to the rest and to the whole.

Now as to its movement. It should have progression, neither resting nor retrograding; and direction, neither diverging nor irresolute. Progression, ordered by direction, may be called continuity, having which part of an action can be transposed without injury to the whole.

If a complete action possess a proper length, and have proportion and cohesion in its parts, it is of symmetrical form.

11. The emotion we commonly call interest is the pleasure we feel while contemplating the gradual production of a complete and symmetrical form. It is composed of expectation, suspense, and reflection.

Expectation is aroused by the beginning, suspense is maintained by the process of development, and reflection is invited by the repose to which the action is conducted. But the feelings must be excited in order. For the spectator must not be induced to reflect at the beginning, but rather to be looking forward with curiosity; nor should the past occupy him while the development is
proceeding; but reflection is the proper tribute he pays to the middle and to the beginning when his mind is satisfied with the end. Of these the middle is the most important.

12. It may be convenient to distinguish between the terms interest and sympathy. Interest is concerned about events, sympathy about persons. We feel sympathy with a person, but we feel interest in the career of such a person.

13. We may not speak of the unities. These celebrated precepts are supposed to have been instituted by the Greek tragic poets, and recognized by them as essential principles of dramatic architecture. The French classic school insist on their observance, with less allowance than the great founders of the drama afforded themselves in this matter.

There can be no doubt as to the importance and value of the unity of action, but the utility of the other two appears to be questionable.

The Greek tragic poets disregarded these rules when it suited their convenience to do so.

The French dramatic academy would have us believe that the unities were regarded by the Greek poets (like the principles of perspective in drawing) as essentials in dramatic composition—"hors les unities point de sault." But when they point triumphantly to Racine and Corneille, who conformed to the unities, we might reply that this pair became great tragic poets in spite of these trammels, not because of them.

The nineteenth century was not a century of great dramatic writers. It was a period of great actors. With such actors as Tommaso Salvini, Ernesto Rossi, Frederich Lemaitre, Mlle. Rachel, Sarah Bernhardt, Edmund Kean, William Charles Macready, Henry Irving, and Tom Jefferson, and, yes we must include Dion Boucicault; with such actors
as these, the written drama took a secondary place in the dramatic world. Audiences packed a theatre in order to see a well-known actor play his favorite role, no matter how familiar the spectators were with the role; or would rush to see another actor play the same part in order to compare the merit of this actor with another actor in the same role. These personalities relied on the great roles provided by the playwrights of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Boucicault belonged to the nineteenth century. His plays were not great literary pieces but they were popular pieces and drew tremendous crowds. He was not a great literary figure, but he was one of the dominant dramatic figures of the nineteenth century.

Boucicault was the direct link between the well-made play of Scribe and the melodrama. Through his translations of the French drama, the techniques of the French "well-made play" became common property for the English and American dramatists of the nineteenth century.

Undoubtedly Boucicault would have remained a much more famous name in the annals of dramatic history had he stopped writing at the zenith of his success. Had he elected to stop writing during the period of The Shaughraun he would have remained fixed in the minds of historians as a dominant, successful and popular literary figure of the nineteenth. However, Boucicault could not rest on
his laurels. He could never remain idle and he had to continue writing.

He could continue writing only in the style which he had helped develop and which had made him famous in his day. By 1880, new influences and new ways of thinking about the drama were being introduced. By 1880, Boucicault was an old man and he could see no merit in the new ideas which were beginning to be introduced into the dramatic world and the world of art in general. He could not follow the "revolutionary tidal wave" which threatened the drama, for he said:

Recently another revolutionary tidal wave seemed to threaten the drama. It was part of a widely spread schism that affected generally the artistic world. The grotesque element threatened to swamp the sublime; beauty was discovered in ugliness, grace in distortion, anything was acceptable but what had been accepted. Iconoclasm was not confined to natural philosophy and religious doctrine, so Japanese sculpture displaced that of Rome. Whistler grimaced successfully on canvas, and Zola preached the stercorous in literature. And now this craze reaches the drama. We are told (see "Le Naturalisme au Theatre," of Zola; the productions recently essayed in Paris; the peculiar dramas of Ibsen; the writings of thoughtful essayists in this country and in Europe) we are told, I say, that the drama as it is, and as it has been, is imperfect, and a conventional matter; that a higher, truer form and spirit has been discovered which is destined to sweep into respectable obscurity the works of all the dramatists, great and small, from Marlowe to me, to make room for a new order of things dramatic.\(^{13}\)

It was this inability to see anything in this new movement and his inability to write only in the genre of the melodrama which made Boucicault old-fashioned and laughed at. He was quickly swallowed up by the new movement which was to dominate the twentieth century and thus was forgotten. But Boucicault was a success. He lived an exciting life and was a force in his day. To any careful scholar on dramatic literature, his name will dominate the century of melodrama--the nineteenth century.
## Plays of Dion Boucicault

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<td>Andy Blake; or, The Irish Diamond</td>
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<td>A Bridal Tour</td>
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<td>Fin Maccoul</td>
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<td>New York, 1874</td>
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The Flying Scud; or Four Legged Fortune
Forbidden Fruit
Fezmais; or, The Railroad to Ruin
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Vanity Fair; or, Proud of their Vices
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Boston National Theatre
Handbill: 1854; Sept. 20.

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Program: 1875; April 8, April 20; 1876; Oct. 28. Handbills: 1871; Sept. 15, Sept. 23; 1879; Feb. 22, March 6, March 7.

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Fifth Avenue Theatre

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Program: 1877: Jan. 29.

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Program: 1872: Nov. 15, Nov. 18, Nov. 28, Nov. 29.

Grand Opera House

Haymarket, Theatre Royal

Hollis Street Theatre, Boston

Hull, Theatre Royal

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Handbills: 1860: April 5, April 23.

McVicker's Theatre

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Niblo's Garden (New York City)
Handbills: 1858: November 1; 1865: July 10.
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Park Theatre (New York)
   Programs: 1882: March 27; 1883: May 21.

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   Program: 1885: March 25.

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   Handbills: 1851: April 28; 1852: June 2; 1865: Aug. 7; 1867: January 28; 1868: March 23; 1870: March 21; 1878: Sept. 6.

Robert's Opera House (Hartford, Conn.)
   1883: March 22.

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Springfield (Massachusetts)
   Program: 1883: March 21.

Standard Theatre (New York)
   Program: 1886: October 30.

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   Programs: 1883: March 26, April 12, April 14; 1886: March 16, April 19; 1887: April 20, April 21, April 23, April 26, April 30, May 3, May 13. Handbills: 1883: April 12, May 15; 1886: March 16.

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Wallack's Theatre (New York)

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   Handbill: 1870: Jan. 28.

New Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia)
Wheatley's Arch St. Theatre
Handbill: 1858: May 11.

Winter Garden
1860: July 2.
VITA

Lynn Earl Orr was born in Morgantown, West Virginia, on February 24, 1913. He received his early education in the public schools of Morgantown and entered West Virginia University in the fall of 1931. At the June commencement of 1935 he received the Bachelor of Arts degree. He attended Northwestern University during the summer of 1935. In the fall of 1935 he accepted a graduate assistantship at Louisiana State University to continue work on the Master of Arts degree. In the fall of 1936 he accepted the position of Technical Director of the University Theatre at Louisiana State University and continued in that capacity until 1940. In September, 1940, he accepted a position at Wayne University as Assistant Director of the Theatre and Instructor of Speech. From June, 1942, to October, 1945, he served in the Air Force. Upon receiving his discharge, he returned to Wayne University as Associate Director of the Theatre and Assistant Professor of Speech. In 1948, he resigned from Wayne University and returned to Louisiana State University as a graduate assistant to continue his graduate work. In 1950 he accepted a one-semester appointment as Special Guest Lecturer in the Department of Speech at Brooklyn College. During the summer of 1950 he returned
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Title of Thesis: DION BOUCICAULT AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY THEATRE: A BIOGRAPHY

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Date of Examination:

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