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no.13 [Journal 10]

May 14, 1804-March 12, 1805.

[14. May. 1804]

Waldie: X, 1

In the evening we all went to the play where we met the Lambs, Chattos, & Maudes from Sunnyside -- very crowded indeed -- Mr. Kemble's benefit: and about £120.

The play was the Way to Keep. Liston in Sir Bashful excellent, Mrs. Kemble in Mrs. Lovemore the same, Miss A. De Camp very far inferior to Miss Pope in Muslin, Mrs. Stanley disagreeable in the Widow, & Mrs. Lee silly in Lady Constant. Pritchard in Lovemore & Lee in Sir Brilliant both tolerable.

Cinderella -- got up with new scenes & dresses succeeded, & there were some good things in it -- it has cost a great deal but is too cumbersome for this small stage.

There were 2 or 3 very pretty scenes --

X, 2

Pritchard in the Prince & Miss A. De Camp in Cinderella very good, especially the latter. Fanny Kemble sung charmingly in Venus -- but on the whole it went off ill; & was not much admired.

[15. June. 1804]

Graithwait

Waldie: X, 82

Not well today of breast &c. Read. Walked. Packed up my things to set off to morrow for Kelso. -- Finished reading Miss Edgeworth's Practical Education with which I have been most highly pleased -- it is written in a clear & simple style and must be very useful in education. It conveys many new ideas easily to the mind. She has elaborated here that same insistant manner of simple reasoning which pleased me so much in her moral tale of the French governess. -- Very fine day till after tea, when it began to rain -- which prevented our having a long evening walk -- the day was so hot we could not go out farther than the garden in the forenoon. Studied Mr. Kay's architectural Book: -- but all reading, music, rides, & conversation must now be sacrificed to military affairs. I only wish my health may be able to bear the exertions I must go thro'. Independent of so unpleasant a change of occupations, I shall leave Graithwait and its inhabitants with much regret.

X, 83

[16. June. 1804]

Last night was performed at Newcastle the Play of the Revenge & the farce of the Old Maid. Could wishes have availed, I would have been present at it -- as it would have been a high treat -- Col. Eliot in Zanga -- Col. Wolsely in Alonzo -- & Miller in the Old Maid. -- It was for the benefit of the Infirmary. I can easily figure to myself the crowded audience & all the etceteras. -- To these ideas I must bid adieu, & think of the Volunteers.

[21. July. 1804] Kelso

Read, Practiced. Walked to the House, where my Father & I met Mr. Lockie & Phin to settle some matters. My Father & Jona: then went to dine at Mainhouse.

After dinner rode to St. James Green with Wilson behind. Met there Sir John Riddell, Capt. Williamson, Mr. Millar, Potts & Gordon, & Ballantyne. All my company except the Maxton division met, & Sir George's -- about 80 of my Men, about 100 of Sir George's. We were marched about and manoevered for 3 hours -- then Sir John went to Fleurs with the Duke & Mr. Galler who came to look at us -- and we all marched back to Kelso under Williamson, who dismissed us in the Marketplace, after a most fatiguing afternoon. I did not get home till near 10, quite ill with fatigue. Got my supper & went to bed -- my head, breast, back & side all aching very bad.

X, 125

[22. July. 1804]

Having a bad headache to day & not being very well, did not go down to Kelso. -- Read & practiced. Wrote to B. Ormston. Took a short walk, but very faint & unwell -- after dinner got better & in the Evg we walked to the house. Mr. C. Waldie dined & had tea with us. -- Read a great deal of Miss S. Lee's new Novel, called the Life of a Lover, which is most interesting, impassioned, & the characters admirably drawn; the 2 lovers are really charming characters: & the subordinate scenes very pleasantly relieve their woes -- the letters are in a most elegant style: -- & very attractive -- but as yet I have only read 2 volumes of six.

[3. August. 1804] Newcastle

... At 4 went to Dr. Clark's to dinner, where only John Chatto -- & themselves -- staid tea. After that, went to the play. Poor house -- £40 -- & Siddons benefit. Pizarro: -- most shockingly murdered, except Rolla & Cora -- Siddons & Mrs. Kemble. Both admirable, but Alonzo by Pritchard shocking -- & Pizarro by Liston scarcely decent. Mrs. Stanley's voice is so very unpleasant -- otherwise she looks & acts Elvira well. But the greatest part of the play was a complete burlesque -- & very entertaining in that way, tho' I doubt Mrs. Kemble thought so when Pritchard destroyed the scene with the child in the wild wood by forgetting his lines. When Cora had to prompt his response "Could Cora think me serious" the laughter altogether broke the natural charm.

X, 137

Sat with the Herons, Miss H. Ellison of Whitley, Mrs. Bates, &c. Had a great deal of fun with them -- & spent a most pleasant evening. The farce was Animal Magnetism -- the Doctor, Rock -- La Fleur, Mara -- Jeffrey, Liston -- & Marquis, Pritchard -- Lisette, Mrs. Kemble -- Constance, Mis A. De Camp -- very well done in every part. Liston's figure I shall never forget in Jeffrey -- the whole house was in convulsions -- & Mrs. Kemble could not go on for laughing -- upon the whole was highly entertained. Set the Herons off -- at the end of first act of farce -- sat with the Clarkes till the end -- very pleasant evening & much amusement.

X, 138

[4. August. 1804]

... Went to the play, where I sat with J. Lamb & John Airly & with Col. Eliot, Major Mundy & W. Abbs -- but a poor house -- £35. Speed the Plough -- Rock's benefit. Sir Abel,

[3. August. 1804]

Newcastle

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X, 137

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X, 138

[4. August. 1804]

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Mr. Rock -- Farmer Ashfield, Liston -- capital, the rest all bad except Siddons in Henry & Miss Kemble in Miss Blandford.

Britain's Glory -- and Interlude from Netley Abbey, in which Rock as the Irish Barber Macscrape was truly ludicrous.

The Agreeable Surprize -- Sir Felix, Kelly -- Lingo, Rock -- John, Liston -- Cowslip, Mrs. Kemble -- Laura, Miss Kemble -- all the last capital -- & Fanny sung the Lark divinely.

X, 139

[5. August. 1804]

... Colonel Eliot called on me by appointment. The Gardner led my horse to Turners where he paid his bill & we mounted & rode down to Cullercoats by way of Heaton. Very pleasant ride -- heard all his theatrical details. He seems quite stagestruck.

[3. September. 1804.] Kelso

Waldie: X,170

... Sir George Douglas called & sat 1/2 an hour with my Father & me. After dinner Maria, Jane & I walked to the House.

X, 171

After tea, I rode down to Kelso & went to the play, where I sat with the Duchess The Duke, Lird Wigtown & Mr. B. Gauler are dining to day with Sir John Scott.

The play was the Rivals -- tolerably acted -- a Mr. Evatt in Falkland very well -- from Edinburgh: the farce Raising the Wind -- Diddler, Evatt -- very good -- upon the whole much amused -- the pathetic scene in the play between Falkland & Julia was most feelingly done by Evatt & Mrs. O'Keefe, especially the latter.

Spent a pleasant evening with the Duchess &c. and handing them into the Coach, rode home & got to bed at one.

[23. November. 1804] Edinburgh

Waldie: X, 256

... The Countess of London, Lady C. Rawdon, Lady Flaminia & Lady Harriet Hay, Sir W. Keir, Lord Rancliffe, &c., Tom Sheridan & all the smarts were there: very elegant party as could be -- the Milanese played from 1/2 past 8 to 1/2 past 10. -- and soon after the dancing commenced.

X, 257

... While the Minstrels were playing their weary staccato harmony all on one key, I addressed myself to Mr. Elliot, the singer, & we soon entered into conversation, which was to me highly entertaining & useful. He recommends Cimador as an excellent master -- & above [all] things says it is right never to force the voice either natural or false -- & not to throw it out too much -- nor strain it by attempting to be too sonorous. -- We also discussed the merits of all the singers & composers. He agrees with me in thinking Braham, Harrison, Bartleman, Viganoni, Mrs. Billington, Mara, Banti, Mrs. Mountain & Storace the phalanx of vocal talent in this country.

X, 258

He also much admires Grassini & Mrs. Tennant, whom I have not heard. Miss Daniels, Miss Parke, & Mrs. Ashe are only second rates: & also Miss Sharpe & Miss Richardson. -- There are no other ladies of any consequence -- & he agrees with me in reprobating Incledon's knock me down style & Kelly's scream & rant.

I gave him my address at N. C. & wished to fix them to give a Concert there in their way to London, which they can easily do, & have some thoughts of. He introduced me to his brother, who plays the piano & sings tenor: -- who is also a pleasant young man. They are noticed too by all the grandees.

My chief amusement was derived from talking with Mr. Elliott
-- & afterwards

X, 259

from seeing the dances, & the great display of beauty. Came
away before 12, & got home, supper, & to bed soon after one,
after a most pleasant day. The weather, tho' rather sharp,
has been, ever since I left Kelso, dry & sunshiny & clear.

[5. December. 1804]

Waldie: X, 280

[Maillardet's Musical Lady] She is nearly large as life -- fitted up in a most elegant style: -- her fingers, arms & hands, breast, & head & eyes move just like nature. She makes a most graceful reverence at finishing, and plays 16 airs on a barrel organ made like a piano forte -- & the flats & sharps are played by her feet below. Nothing can be more natural. She is most elegantly cased in glass, & sits on a pedestal of japan & gold flowers. It is a truly astonishing exhibition & well repays the trouble of seeing. It is in the King's Arms tavern, very good room. -- Mrs. Maillardet is a very intelligent woman. I had much conversation with her in french. Her husband is the sole contriver & executor of these mechanical Wonders. 20 years ago he made a Musical lady the same as this -- which was sent to the Emperor of China & for which he received a large Sum.

X, 281

... Went to the play -- soon after 7 -- It was just begun. A better house than I expected, perhaps £30 -- boxes here are now 4/-- pit 3/-- galleries 2/ & 1/. Theatre very neat & clean -- & scenes very elegant. Much superior to ours at N.C. but the entrance is inconvenient & narrow. That is the only fault, as it [is] certainly superior to ours in every other way. -- The Play was the West Indian. I met nobody I knew, but Mr. Knipe's Irish Friend, Mr. Hime. Sat with him most of the night. (I met Knipe this mornng. Took leave of him & message to N.C.) Upon the whole, not having seen a play for long, I was very much amused -- & indeed the business of the scene was extremely well conducted -- & the dresses & lights capital.

The Company however at present is but indifferent, tho' it is soon to be joined by Mr. & Mrs. Edwin from Bath, Mr. Fennell from America (who was once here before & made a great noise), & Mrs. Young from Drury Lane. -- Mr. Dwyer from Drury Lane is a very good actor -- fine figure, voice, & countenance -- & great feeling. He is sometimes a little too impetuous, but was an excellent Belcour. Stockwell, Mr. Eyre. Mr. Eyre is a stiff, but in serious parts of older men, is a pleasant actor. Charles Dudley, Mr. Toms. Mr. T. is a great friend of the Robsons -- a very intelligent genteel young man-- but rather stilted in his action. He acts with great feeling & in quiet parts must be very interesting. He is a young representation of what Woods was. Capt. Dudley was acted by Mr. Montfort the prompter, to supply the place of Mr. Willoughby who is ill. Varland, Mr. Hollingsworth -- droll enough. Fulmer, Mr. Berry -- O Flaherty, Mr. Evatt -- Evatt is too vulgar & too coarse & monkey like, for the gentlemanly

X, 283

& noble, tho' ridiculous character of O Flaherty. Mrs. Brereton is rather affected -- but lively & performed Charlotte Rusport tolerably. Mrs. Charteris in Lady Rusport, & Mrs. Turpin in Louisa very bad. The Men are much superior, the women far inferior, to ours at Newcastle.

The farce was Animal Magnetism, in which Mrs. Ward performed Lisette, but oh what a falling off from Mrs. Kemble. The Valet by Evatt was barely decent -- and the Marquis by Toms was nothing great: -- Jeffery by Turpin was droll -- but far inferior in richness of humor to Liston at N.C. -- the great entertainment was Mr. Berry in the Doctor -- I never laughed so much at any

faces -- they are so completely humourous and absurd -- I have seen Quick, Rock, &c., in it, but never any thing to equal Berry. In old Men the most laughable I ever saw.

[8. December. 1804]

X, 285

... Lundie read to us the beautiful tragedy of Lady Jane Gray, which in point of elegant & poetical language can't be surpassed, but there is a continual succession of grievous incidents without anything striking, & a want of variety & grand Situations, that might make it flat in representation -- but in reading it is very effective.

[21. January. 1805] Newcastle

Very bad of head ache in the mornng. ... The Theatre opened to night for the Season -- much did I long to be there to see the effect of the new alterations -- but fate forbids me to move any such way. The play was the Suspicious Husband -- Ranger, Mr. Betterton -- Clarinda, Mrs. Mason -- both of whom are well spoken of -- & Mrs. Strictland, Mrs. Kemble. The farce -- Love laughs at locksmiths -- Risk, Liston -- Emily, Miss Kemble.

X, 321

[23. January. 1805]

Jane has got a feverish cold & is confined to her bed. Better today myself, tho' still headache & most desperate swelled gums. In the Evg my Father & Maria went to a tea & supper at the Chapman's. My Mother staid at home up stairs with Jane. Terrible stormy day again. Read out Caleb Williams -- very interesting & highly wrought, but some parts like all Godwin trench on absurdity.

This evg at the theatre -- Busy Body & Review.

X, 323

[28. January. 1805]

I am now, I hope, quite recovering my strength. ... Practiced Music an hour. Evg being stormy did not go to the Theatre. ...

[29. January. 1805]

Snow fallen last night. Practiced before & after breakfast. Walked in the Forth 3 miles. Called at the Herons. Staid an hour. Fanny Kemble came in -- sung with her -- & walked her to the Theatre. ...

X, 324

[30. January. 1805]

... Attended a Meeting of the Theatre Resolved that if Mr. K. engages Young Roscius in August or any other time --

the prices will be raised to 5/-- 3/-- & 1/ 6. ...

X, 325

In the Evg went to the play -- thin house, £15.-- Sat with Lorraine, Rolston, Sorsbie, Robertson, &c. -- Theatre looked beautiful -- when the 3 chandeliers & 2 mirrors are fixed it will be complete. -- Know your own mind -- Betterton is a most agreeable gentlemanly & natural actor -- an excellent Dashwoud. Liston very good in Malvil. Pritchard but indifferent in Millamour. Chippendale tolerable in Bygrove -- the rest bad. Mrs. Jones tolerable only in Mrs. B. Mrs. Kemble charming in Lady Bell. Miss De Camp capital in La Rouge. Miss Kemble enchantingly sweet in Miss Neville. Mrs. Mason seems a tolerable actress, but in Lady Jane there is little scope.

Of Age to morrow -- performed as usual -- except Miss Jones in Sophia who did not sing amiss. Liston excellent in the Baron,

X, 326

but Fanny Kemble I never saw in such good spirits & quite recovered her voice -- she sung & acted most delightfully -- & in the Medley Song, was superior to any thing I ever saw, & far exceeded herself -- being quite at her ease. She is always best to an empty house.

X, 327

[1. February. 1805]

... After tea went to the play -- the Merchant of Venice -- & Love laughs at Locksmiths -- very tol house -- about £40. Mrs. Kemble enchanting in Portia -- she looked & acted delightfully -- the trial scene admirable. Liston well in Antonio. Miss De Camp charming, & Miss Kemble also, in Nerissa & Jessica. Miss K. introduced the Nightingale which she warbled enchantingly in the scene with Lorenzo at the beginning of act 5. -- Betterton

in Shylock was too violent -- he is, I find, only excellent in comedy -- certainly his Shylock was torn to rags. The rest of the Men very bad.

The Farce highly diverting -- it was new at Haymarket lately & I never saw it before. -- Lindoe in Totterton -- Chippendale in Vigil & Jefferson in Beldare very well -- but Liston in Risk -- & Fanny K. in Lydia are the support of it -- the mistakes, tricks,

X, 328

and disguises are irresistible -- and the music very pretty & dramatic. Liston's comic song, & Fanny K's 2 songs & trios, charming. I don't [know] when I've been so amused, as it was capitally acted & of itself most ludicrous, well contrived, & amusing, without absolute buffoonery.

X, 329

[4. February. 1805]

... very full house -- 90. -- well amused. The play was the Dramatist.

X, 330

Betterton a most capital Vapid -- nothing can exceed the whim, fun, life & spirit -- and yet gentlemanly style in which he goes thro' it. Miss A. De Camp charming in Marianne. It has enough of the hoyden in it to suit her. Mrs. Mason out of her line in the sentimental Louisa -- but looked well. Mrs. Jones as usual tolerable in Lady Waitfort. Pritchard very well in Floriville -- the noisy & drunken scenes just suit him. Chippendale but indifferent in Ennui -- too refined & gentlemanlike for him. Liston in Lord Scratch, tho' not in his first line, irresistibly comic & laughable. Upon the whole the play very well acted & went off admirably. After the play a ballet by the Young Pritchards -- & the Devil to Pay -- Jobson, Liston -- Nell, Mrs. Kemble.

[8. February. 1805]

... The play was the Wonder -- which was well acted. Don Felix, Betterton -- Frederic, Mason -- Britton, Pritchard -- Lissardo, Liston -- Don Pedro, Chippendale -- Flora, Miss A. De Camp -- Isabella, Miss Jones -- Violante, Mrs. Mason.

Mrs. Mason displayed great comic powers in Violante -- lively, elegant, & expressive -- & she portrayed a most engaging manner of refined incorrigibility in Act 3 -- she improves much & is a great acquisition. Liston & Miss De Camp excellent. Betterton does not become a Spanish dress -- too English -- but acted well the rakish honor of Don Felix, and the counterfeit drunkenness in the last act.

The Farce -- Raising the Wind. Betterton a most capital Didler -- I never saw it so well before -- but his imitation of Lewis in voice, tone & manner almost, when I shut my eyes, made me believe it was really he. Never any thing was so like. Mrs. Jones in Laurelia, Miss A. De Camp in Peggy, Liston in Sam, Chippendale in Fainwoud, & Lindoe in Plainway -- all as good as were required -- it all hangs on Didler -- and Betterton went thro' it most admirably.

X, 335

[11. February. 1805]

Practiced as usual. -- At a meeting of the Theatre -- only Ald. Blacket, Atkinson, Bates & I -- soon over. Bates & I then walked about the town, & met Moseman & Joe Cookson, who walked a while with us. At the rooms, &c. Dinner, music &c. as usual.

After tea went to the play, Jane Shore -- excessive full gallery -- & pit half full -- boxes thin -- but both the pit & boxes filled astonishingly at half price.

There was, I dare say, above £50.--

Nothing can do justice to Mrs. Kemble in Jane Shore -- all the softness, gentleness, & virtue of the character -- all the gradual sinking & starts of feeling which give such effective emotional contrast to the concluding scene -- in short thro' the whole part, she was capital, & looked remarkably well. When the Guards attempt to tear Dumont from her, her clinging to him, & manner of calling out in convulsive agony, "I will not part from him," was heartrending. -- Mrs. Mason performed Alicia with very great merit. She looked well & her action was graceful, her delivery judicious, and she gave a great variety to the different expressions, only at the proper intervals going into any rant. All her jealous malevolence at the opening of Act 3 was turned with ease into sweet cunning hypocrisy at the entrance of Jane Shore. She evidently possesses great abilities for tragedy as well as comedy -- & excels as much in violent & scornful expression as Mrs. Kemble does in more touching grief.

X, 337

Betterton in Dumont shewed much feeling -- and was correct & elegant throughout. Mason in Gloster was decent -- it does not require any great abilities. The play would have been admirably acted had it not been for Pritchard in Lord Hastings, whose voice, manner, & delivery are almost burlesque. Nothing could be more completely murdered than the unfortunate Lord: tho' it did not seem to strike the audience in general, as he met with applause in some parts.

A new farce -- The Gay Deceivers -- followed, which I suspect to be by Colman -- full of puns & double entendre -- & tho' very ridiculous very laughable. There is some pretty music

which was very ill executed. Pritchard was quite at home in Pegasus Puncheon, the rhyming Landlord. Chippendale very well as Sir Harry Popinjay. Mason very well as Trap. Welworth, Mrs. Terry -- Mr. Candy, Mr. Jefferson --

X, 338

Mrs. Flaw, Mrs. Jefferson -- Emily, Miss Jones -- Jenny Stumps, Miss A. De Camp. Miss A. De Camp very diverting in Jenny -- a scene of double entendre between her & Liston highly comic, but Liston as Nehemia Flam, the Showman, Quaker, was the life of the piece -- nothing can be so comical as his faces, manner, gait, & air -- in several scenes he drew down peals of laughter -- it is however a farce very flimsy indeed -- & not to compare to Love laughs at locksmiths.

X, 340

[13. February. 1805]

Practiced. Walked with Maria by Elswick, B[enwell] Colliery, & Waterside -- above 4 miles. ...In the evg went to the play. Half the 1st act over. -- Thin house, but it improved to perhaps

25. -- The Play -- the Wife of 2 husbands -- Mrs. Kemble charming in the Countess; A. De Camp in Theodore & Fanny in Eugenia looked & sung beautifully -- a duet between her & Theodore very pretty -- the Men but poor -- Mason tame in the Count, & there is nothing in Carronade which Liston can turn to advantage,

X, 341

The Farce -- Three Weeks after Marriage -- & a most excellent one -- how much superior in spirit & comicality to the dull farrago of puns & ridiculous situations &c. of the Gay Deceivers, &c. The art of character and action is too often neglected in such pieces, so that nothing is left but inanity. It was capitally acted -- Betterton in Sir Charles

did ample justice to the fine gentleman -- and Mrs. Mason in Lady Rackel shewed the most superior elegance, ease, & a pleasantness of graceful indifference very bewitching -- tho' not handsome her face is expressive & figure good; she looks well -- & acts better. The whole of her part was of the best kind pf genteel comedy -- I think her superior to Mrs. Glover as her figure is better & she is more at her ease. She is a very great acquisition to the theatre. Nothing can exceed Liston's comical figure in his red nightcap & dressing gown -- he made a great deal of Drugget. A. De Camp excellent in the hoyden Nancy. & Mr. Rees went very well thro' the foppish part of Lovelace. His face is good, & he will be, I think, a favorite on better acquaintance.

X, 345

[18. February. 1805]

... In the Evg my Mother, Maria, Mrs. Lamb & I went to the play. North Lincoln bespeak. ... above £60. The Heir at Law -- Lord Duberly, Chippendale -- performed with great humor. Lady D., Mrs. Jones -- decent as usual. Caroline, Mrs. Mason -- sentimental parts quite out of her line. Cicely, Miss A. De Camp -- very well, but not equal to Mrs. Kemble. Zekiel, Liston -- capital. Pangloss, Lindoe -- not without humor, but with no discriminating drollery & too much like Fawcet, without his excellence. Stedfast, Terry -- Henry, Mason -- Kenwick, Rees -- all tol lol -- it went off well, tho' certainly not strongly cast.

The farce of the Panvel is full of plot & intrigue, but would be very dull without Mrs. Kemble who is a charming Beatrice. Fanny looked beautiful in Aurora. Muskato, Pritchard -- Iazarillo, Liston -- both tol lol -- rest stupid.

[22. February. 1805]

... The play Love in a Village -- Justice Woodcock by Mr. Moss who is engaged for a few nights. He has a great deal of humor in his face & bye play -- & was dressed, walked, & looked admirably for the character: tho' his voice is a little too strong, he performed it extremely well. A Mr. Knox, who has only once before appeared, performed Young Meadows. He is very awkward & quite new to the stage -- but has a fine strong voice. He knows nothing of music -- nor how to modulate -- & is often out of tune & makes strange faces -- his voice is like Incledon's but not so good & he has all his faults, but he may in time be a good singer. Sir Wm., Mr. Jefferson -- Eustace, Mr. Terry -- Hawthorn, Mr. Chippendale -- Liston excellent in Hodge. Mrs. Deborah, Mrs. Jones -- Miss A. De Camp capital in Madge -- in the first song

X, 349

nothing could exceed her; the expression was admirable; -- but the chief delight of the play was Miss Kemble in Rosetta -- she sung divinely -- in "Tis not wealth" -- "Young I am" -- "Gentle Youth" and the "Traveller benighted" nothing could be more touching, neat, & beautiful. She looked charming -- and acted in the scenes with the Justice with the greatest grace & spirit. She was the life of the play, which went off very well. Mr. Knox introduced the Thorn, but it cost him such violent efforts he had better have omitted it.

The Farce is Two Strings to your bow -- which is highly diverting -- I never saw it before. Miss A. De Camp, charming in Donna Clara -- & made a most dashing little man; but Liston in Lazarillo was irresistibly comical. I don't know when I've laughed so much -- as at his distress & perplexity between his two Masters. After a most musical & laughable Evg we all got home at 11.

[25. February. 1805]

... Macbeth was the play. Colonel Mundy performed that arduous part for the 1st time. His gait is ungraceful, his figure bad, and his face flat without expression. Yet notwithstanding, he entered quite into the part -- and tho' tame in some scenes, was admirably impressive and very great on the whole. Especially in the Banquet Scene he excelled. He was most capitally supported by Mrs. Mason, whose discrimination, correctness, & energy are very superior -- the whole of the impassioned & scornful part of the 4 first acts was capital, but her sleeping walk in the last act was not so effective. She does not excel in the nicer touches of acting, but in boldness, passion, or scorn, she is very great. Macduff by Betterton was well performed, but he is at all times too violent in tragedy -- however in the Scene where he hears of the loss of his family, he shewed great feeling.

X, 353

Mr. Griffith performed the first speaking witch very well, but his abilities are said to be entirely comic. The witches, Hecate, Mr. Knox -- & Miss K., Miss A. De C. &c., supported the Music very well. Upon the whole, it went off extremely well & with great applause.

The farce of the Lyar followed -- Young Wilding, Colonel Mundy -- & Miss Grantham, Miss Kemble -- the stiffness of his figure is more apparent in a fine gentleman than in Macbeth, & his utterance was too rapid. There were some very good points in his acting -- but on the whole but indifferent, as he has no humor & does not laugh well. His tragedy far the best -- tho' I am told his Macbeth is not equal to Hamlet, and very inferior to his Richard.

[6. March. 1805]

... after tea I went to the play -- the 1st act of Richard the 3rd was just at the death of Henry: the play was admirably got up with correctness & attention, & was well represented, except by Miss A. De Camp in Lady Ann -- she is not at all calculated for tragedy. Mrs. Mason in the Queen was excellent. Pritchard was tolerable in Richmond, & Liston in Buckingham. Betterton's Richard is capital -- he is at times rather too violent & gives way to his feelings too suddenly, but the spirit, elegance, & animation of the soliloquies, the flattering hypocrisy, & the raging fury of the latter part were admirable. It is certainly a most finished piece of acting, and of an excellence much beyond what we are used to see. ...

The new farce of Matrimony followed, got up in great style, & with new dresses &c., & most admirably acted. Mrs. Kemble in Clara was all ease & charming vivacity & sung her song of Green leaves very sweetly. Miss Kemble sung "Adieu sweet lady" & "On fie" charmingly -- she was most enchantingly drest, & looked most lovely. Pritchard in the Husband was all life & his impudence was rather an advantage to it.

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Rees in the Irishman O'Clogharty displayed humor & spirit more than I had supposed him capable of. His Irishmen are more natural & not so much buffooned as Noble's were -- but they do not take so much at first. He improves much on acquaintance. Liston made all that was possible of the Baron -- the farce is highly diverting, & the music most beautiful -- only in one or two parts the harmony was ruined by Pritchard's being entirely out of tune thro' the whole of the bars. Knox however could not have given any spirit to the action.

[8. March. 1805]

Practiced as usual. -- Wrote my account of N. C. Theatre & nearly finished it. ...

In the evening went to the play; but a thin house -- not above £20. The first act of Isabella was just concluding -- Biron, Knox -- Villeroy, Pritchard -- Carlos, Terry -- all very poor. Mrs. Kemble in Isabella is very great. Her death scene & where she is torn from Biron are horrible, so intense is her impact -- also the varying action of madness & reason -- indeed thro' the whole play she was very great. Nothing could exceed the charming manner of her dignity & despair in consenting to be Villeroy's wife. ...

Love laughs at Locksmiths was the farce. The Music was pretty -- it went off well & I was again much amused with it.